

SIX SCORING CRITERIA

Please use the following six criterion as a guide, to help in the formal process of assessing a photograph. Not every image has to have a high score in each criterion, to be a good photograph, but if an image scores well in all criterion it will be exceptional and should be highly awarded.

Managing the six criterion requires both creative and technical skills.
Each photographer brings a different combination of skills to an image.

1. IMPACT & MOOD

Impact is the first impression an image has on a viewer, and **Mood** is the way the image makes the viewer feel – which is usually more reflective and considered. All the other 5 criterion are each involved for success in this area.

2. COMPOSITION

Composition is the way various elements within the frame are arranged. A choice made by the photographer when “framing the shot”. Often the most important aspect of a composition is the way the image’s main subject is placed in relation to the image’s secondary, supporting and background elements.

Compositional tools include graphic elements such as line and shape, the use of colour, tone and texture, and relationships between elements including space, distance, separation, and visual balance, which are all important compositional tools. A successful composition heightens the impact of the story being told which can further be critically impacted by framing and cropping.

3. TECHNIQUE

Technique considers how the physical tools available to the photographer have been applied to the making of the image, and whether the techniques employed enhance the communication of the idea and overall image. These tools can include camera craft such as lens selection, aperture, shutter speed, and the quality of lighting within the image. Post-processing techniques such as dodging and burning, colour and tonal adjustment, and “seamless” compositing are all considered part of the Technique criterion.

4. SUBJECT

The **Subject** criterion values the thing that has been photographed, and how it is treated. Has the photographer captured something unusual or unique about the subject ?
Has the photographer captured a great example of a common subject ?

Aspects such as camera position, angle, timing, and familiarity are part of this criterion.

5. STORYTELLING

As a means of visual communication, photographs tell a story. The story can be simple or complex. This criterion is about clarity of the story rather than level of complexity. How easily is the story “read” ?
Storytelling aligns the intent of the photographer with the outcome for the viewer. Classic storytelling tools include metaphor, narrative, persuasion, humour, drama, simile, exaggeration, question, and answers.

6. INNOVATION and ORIGINALITY

Innovation and Originality is a measure of “new” or not previously seen. This could include applying a new technique, a new style of composition, or a new way of portraying an old subject. Success in this area can rely on the experience of the judge !!!
What is new for one judge, may have been seen by another.

To score well in this criterion requires some knowledge of what has come before, so is often termed ‘visual literacy’. “Giving a nod to” or referencing other photographer’s work falls within Storytelling.

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