
PHOTOGRAPHY GLOSSARY

This photography terms glossary is what you'll need to know in order to become a walking encyclopedia and learn how to take amazing and effective photographs. Please take advantage of it

Aperture

Aperture is the opening through which light passes through the lens to enter the camera. Its size can be modified to control how much light reaches the sensor or negative film. The diameter of the aperture, also known as the F-stop, affects the exposure and depth of field.

Blue Hour

Blue hour is the short period of time before sunrise or after sunset when the sun is just below the horizon. Indirect sunlight is evenly diffused and takes on a blue shade. The duration on the blue hour varies depending on the location, but generally lasts less than an hour.

Candid

candid is a portrait taken while the subject is not posing. This can be achieved either by capturing a subject unaware of the photographer's presence or by introducing motion and surprising the model during a photoshoot. This kind of portrait photography is highly popular in street photography and is becoming more relevant in formal environments such as weddings.

Composition

Composition is the manner in which elements are positioned within a photo. It is considered one of the most important components of an image, as it allows the photographer to guide the viewer's eye across the image towards the main subject.

Contrast

Contrast defines the range of tonal difference between the shadows and lights of an image. As the contrast becomes higher it emphasizes these variations, resulting in stronger textures and colors. Pictures with lower contrast may be perceived as dull, as a smaller difference between lights and shadows results in a muted appearance

DOF

DOF, which stands for Depth of Field, is the distance between the closest and farthest object within the focused zone of an image. It is determined by focal distance, aperture, and distance to the subject. The higher these numbers are, the more shallow the DOF will be.

FPS

FPS stands for frames per second and determines the speed at which a camera can take photos. It is especially important for sport and wildlife photographers, who need to be able to shoot rapidly to make sure they capture perfectly-timed images.

Golden Hour

Golden hour, also commonly referred to as 'magic hour,' is the period right before sunset and after sunrise. During this time, the sun is low on the horizon so light takes on a redder shade than when it's higher up in the sky.

IS

IS stands for image stabilization, a technology that reduces the effects of vibration on an image. IS can be integrated in the camera body or lens. This system is meant to be used when hand-holding the camera, as using it in combination with a tripod can send the wrong data to the system and incorrectly detect shakes.

JPEG

JPEG is an acronym for Joint Photographic Experts Group and the standard format in which pictures are compressed. Due to this compression, JPEG files are smaller and carry less information .

Macro

Macro is the name given to extreme close up photography, usually capturing really small organisms or objects. In this kind of photos, the size at which the subject appears on the sensor is larger than it is in real life.

Noise

Noise is a visual distortion that looks like tiny colored specs on a photo. It is especially visible in images shot at high ISO or very slow shutter speeds. Noise is the digital photography version of film grain

Pixel

Pixel is the smallest unit of programmable color represented on a digital display. Despite common photography myths, the number of pixels is not the determining factor on how good a camera is

RAW

RAW is a file format that saves the image as it was captured by the sensor, with minimal processing and no compression. This allows photographers to take complete control over the creative edition of the photo. On the downside, RAW files are much larger than JPEGs and other compression file formats

Resolution

Resolution is the dimension in megapixels that a camera sensor is able to capture. For example, the Canon EOS 5D Mark IV maximum resolution is 6720 × 4480 pixels, which rounds out to 30.1 effective megapixels. Higher resolutions allow photographers to capture a larger amount of detail on their photos.

Saturation

Saturation refers to the color intensity of an image. As their saturation increases, colors appear more vivid and are considered more pure. Decreasing saturation results in muted colors, with full desaturation giving a monochromatic version of the image.

Shutter speed

Shutter speed is the length of time a camera sensor is exposed to light when taking a photo. Slow shutter speeds capture the blur of subjects in motion, making it highly valuable for night and landscape photographers. On the other hand high speeds allow photographers to freeze a single millisecond in time, which is usually an absolute must in fields such as sport and pet photography.

Tonal range

Tonal range is the total number of tones in an image, from its darkest to its brightest area. A wider tonal range allows for a higher variety of shades, which translates into more detail. In black and white photography, this translated into shades of gray. In digital photography, tonal range is directly affected by dynamic range.

Underexposure

Underexposure means that the exposure value was lower than necessary, resulting in a photo that is too dark to produce normal contrast .

Vibrance

Vibrance is a post-processing photography term coined by Adobe used to describe a “smart” saturation setting. Unlike the saturation slider, which increases all colors’ pureness equally, vibrance only affects those colors that are less saturated than the rest

Zoom

Zoom lens are those whose focal length can be modified, allowing photographers to make the subject appear closer than it really is. This type of lenses is much more popular than prime lenses, as it offers more flexibility.