

# Photography Lesson: The Secret Life of Ordinary Objects

## Materials Needed

- Any type of camera (a smartphone, DSLR, or point-and-shoot camera is perfect)
- One ordinary household object (e.g., a spoon, a key, a teacup, a single shoe)
- A notebook and pen/pencil (for your "Photo Journal")
- Access to a window for natural light
- (Optional) A simple backdrop like a piece of colored paper or a plain blanket

## Lesson Plan

### Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, Madison will be able to:

- Apply three core principles of composition (Rule of Thirds, Point of View, and Leading Lines) to create visually interesting photographs.
- Use photography to tell a simple, creative story about an everyday object.
- Critically reflect on her own work by identifying strengths and areas for improvement in her photos.

### Part 1: The Warm-Up - Becoming a Composition Detective (15 minutes)

Hi Madison! Today, we're not just taking pictures; we're telling stories. Great photographers are like detectives—they look at the world differently to find clues that make a scene interesting. Our main clues today are three powerful composition techniques.

Let's quickly define them. Grab your camera and your chosen object (let's say you picked a spoon).

1. **Rule of Thirds:** Imagine your screen has a tic-tac-toe grid on it. Instead of placing your spoon right in the center square, try placing it where the lines intersect. It makes the photo feel more balanced and dynamic.
  - **Your Task:** Take three photos of your spoon, placing it on a different intersection point each time. Notice how it changes the feeling of the photo.
2. **Point of View (POV):** Most people take photos from eye level. Let's be more creative!
  - **Your Task:** Take one photo of your spoon from a "bird's-eye view" (directly above). Now take one from a "worm's-eye view" (from below, looking up). How does changing your POV change the spoon's character? Does it look powerful from below or small from above?
3. **Leading Lines:** Use lines in your environment (like the edge of a table, a floorboard, or the pattern on a rug) to guide the viewer's eye directly to your spoon.
  - **Your Task:** Find a line in your room and place your spoon at the end of it. Take a picture where the line seems to point right at the spoon.

### Part 2: The Main Activity - Composition Scavenger Hunt (45-60 minutes)

Now that you've practiced the techniques, it's time for a challenge! Your mission is to take a single photograph for each of the prompts below. The goal is not just to check a box, but to create the most

interesting image you can for each concept. Think like a director setting up a scene!

### Scavenger Hunt List:

- **A photo showing loneliness:** Use the Rule of Thirds to place a single object off-center in a wide, empty space.
- **A photo that feels powerful:** Use a low-angle (worm's-eye) point of view to make a small object look huge and important.
- **A photo showing a journey:** Use a leading line (a path, a fence, a crack in the sidewalk) to point toward an object in the distance.
- **A photo showing a secret:** Use framing. Shoot your subject through something, like a doorway, a window, or between the leaves of a plant.
- **A photo that feels chaotic:** Fill the entire frame with a repeating pattern or a jumble of objects (this is called "Fill the Frame").
- **A photo showing symmetry:** Find something perfectly balanced and place the line of symmetry right down the middle of your shot.

### Part 3: Creative Application - The Story of a Spoon (30 minutes)

Let's return to your original object (the spoon, key, etc.). We're going to create a 3-photo story that reveals its "secret life." What does this spoon do when no one is looking? Does it dream of being an airplane? Is it in love with the fork? Is it training for the Spoon Olympics?

Your task is to create a mini photo series with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

1. **Photo 1: The Beginning.** Introduce the character. Use the **Rule of Thirds** to show your spoon in its normal environment, perhaps looking thoughtful.
2. **Photo 2: The Middle.** Show the action or the conflict. Use a creative **Point of View** (low or high angle) to show the spoon doing something extraordinary.
3. **Photo 3: The End.** Show the result. Use a **Leading Line** to guide us to the spoon after its adventure is over.

Take your time setting up each shot. Think about the light, the background, and the story you want to tell.

### Part 4: Wrap-Up & Reflection - The Photo Journal (15 minutes)

The final step is to think like an artist. Choose your favorite photo from the entire day's lesson. It could be from the scavenger hunt or your 3-photo story. In your notebook, create a journal entry about it.

Draw a simple sketch of the photo's composition. Then, answer these questions:

- What is the title of this photograph?
- Which composition technique is the strongest in this image and why?
- What feeling or emotion was I trying to capture? Do I think I succeeded?
- If I were to take this photo again, what is one thing I would change to make it even better?

### Extension & Differentiation

#### Challenge Yourself:

- **Add Light:** Redo the 3-photo story, but this time, only use light from a single flashlight to create dramatic shadows and highlights.

- **Edit with Intent:** Choose one scavenger hunt photo and edit it on a free app (like Snapseed or VSCO) or software. Don't just apply a filter; try to use editing tools (like contrast, shadows, or cropping) to enhance the story or mood you were trying to create.

**Simplify It:**

- If the scavenger hunt feels like too much, focus only on the Rule of Thirds and Point of View. Take five different photos of your chosen object, practicing just those two techniques.
- Instead of a 3-photo story, create one single photograph that tells a story about your object.