

ENG 1D Media Techniques and Conventions: Photos

The purpose of a photo is often to convey an emotion or message to its audience. The same is true of an image like a meme or image posted to social media.

Here is a list of typical techniques and conventions that are used to analyze photos. Remember that not all of these are applicable depending on the type of image you are analyzing:

Term	Definition	Question(s) to Ask When Analyzing
Subject	The person, landscape, animal, action, et cetera that is the focus of the photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main subject of the photo?• What or who else is in the photo?• What do you think is the purpose for taking a photo of this particular subject?
Composition	How a photo is organized (can be posed or candid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are subjects organized in the photo?• How does this photo make you feel?• Why?• How would this photo make other audiences feel?• Why?
Camera Angles	The technique of taking photos from different heights or depths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What camera angle(s) is/are being used in this photo?• What purpose do these angles serve in conveying meaning to the audience?• Is it successful in conveying meaning?• Why or why not?
Lighting	The technique of using light and dark in a photo. The light can be natural {sun} versus artificial {lights}	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where is the source of the light in the photo?• Is it natural or artificial?• How does it help convey meaning to the audience?• How does it contribute to the mood?• Could it be better?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why or why not?
Mood	The feeling conveyed to the audience by the photo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What emotions are being conveyed by the mood? • How does the audience feel during/after viewing? • Is the mood effective at conveying the meaning to its audience? • Why or why not? • How do colour, camera angles, and lighting contribute to the mood?
Editing	How a photo is altered in some fashion by a tool such as Photoshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the photo look altered in way? (ie filtered) • How does the editing help convey meaning? • How does the editing help express the mood?