

Photography Basics with Jane Frederick

Lighting

Photography literally means **drawing with light**. Light is one of the most basic elements of photography. Understanding its natural qualities is essential in creating great photographs. Sun is our daily source of light.

Let's consider the sun's light and its impact on appearance of photographed subjects:

- Harsh & Soft Lighting/ High key & low key lighting/ High-contrast vs Low-contrast lighting — Think about full sun versus softly cloudy skies
- Clouds are nature's softbox! A **softbox** diffuses the light into a pleasing soft, even light. When used properly, it reduces harsh shadows.

The direction of light:

- **Back light** (sun behind) creates a silhouette; undesirable if you are wanting to show your subject. Try side or front lighting instead. Great to show the outline of a figure.
- **Front light** (sun in front of subject) illuminates subject nicely, can be somewhat "flat" lighting, meaning there isn't strong shadows or highlights to describe the form of the subject
- **Side lighting** (sun to side of subject) creates a light "raking" across subject, visually describes texture and form of subject

Directing light:

- Handmade reflectors can be used to bounce light back into subject, to illuminate shadows, creating a less contrasty image, meaning more visual information in the shadows.

Playing with light:

- Try placing screens, windows, blinds, curtains etc. between light and your subject, to create interesting patterns and colors.

Composition

- A photograph's **composition** is the placement and arrangement of visual elements (e.g. subjects) in the frame.
- Depth: foreground, middle, background
- Rule of thirds
- Frames within frames
- Leading lines
- Patterns, texture, symmetry
- Angles: below, above, and being on the same level can impact how we perceive our subjects
- Don't forget: Include full limbs (unless zooming in really close) & avoid posts/trees/objects appearing from behind subject's heads!