

We, the People

Essential Question	How do photographers create composition using human subjects?
Grade	5th
Time	50 minutes
Art Concepts	Composition, light/shadow, contrast, subject, background, foreground, vantage point, focus
Materials	Cell phone or other digital camera such as iPad or Chromebook, a light source from a desk lamp or a flashlight, background like a wall or curtain, human subject (can be you!)
Artworks in Focus	<u><i>A Beale Street Belle, date unknown by Louis Fleckenstein</i></u> <u><i>Rural Field Worker, New England, 1915 by Lewis Wickes Hine</i></u>
Talking about Art	<p>These two photographs are called portraiture. This means they represent photographs of human subjects posing for the camera. Another kind of photo of a human subject is the “candid,” which means there is no posing, rather a person is captured during a casual moment.</p> <p>By posing the subject and taking their picture, the photographer tries to try to capture that person’s character and personality. That is what makes a portrait photograph different from other types of photographs: sports/action, nature/landscape, or random/candid. Artists create a composition (arrangement of objects and/or people filling a visual space) for their portrait photographs by asking a person to sit facing a certain direction, to make a specific expression or gesture, or to wear certain clothes. Artists then use light on the person to explore the shadows and contrasts on the person’s face and/or to express a mood or feeling from the subject of their photograph. In each shot, the</p>

photographer is making choices regarding where to place the camera (**vantage point**), the **focus** (clarity), and the lighting and contrast (the interplay between light and shadows).

Why do you think these two photographers chose the vantage point they did to photograph their subject? As you look at the two photographs, notice how each is arranged and how the subject of the shot is sitting. Are they looking at the camera? What are they wearing, and what does that make you think about that person's past experiences, identity, or life? How does the color of the **background** (the space farthest away from the camera) affect the mood of the photograph? Where do you think the artists placed the light source for each photograph? What do you see that makes you say that? How does the lighting affect the feeling of the person in the photograph? These photographs have similarities: The subjects are all in the **foreground** (the space closest to the camera) of the photograph, and the backgrounds are solid colors or blurred out of focus. Finally, how are these two photographs different from each other?

Making Art

For this project, you will be taking photographic portraits with a human subject.

1. Begin by choosing your subject. Will you take a photo of someone in your home, or will it be a self-portrait?
2. Then, decide what clothing the subject will wear. Think about how their hair will be arranged and if they will wear makeup. Will they be making a certain gesture or expression?
3. Decide where in your home you will take the photograph and what will be in the background of your portrait. Then, set up the area where you will photograph the subject. Will the person be sitting or standing?
4. Use your light source to light the person. Look through your cell phone, iPad, Chromebook, or digital camera and see if you like the composition. Make any changes to the lighting and to the person's expression, gesture,

posture, or clothing. Take your time and adjust the **focus** of the camera if needed.

5. Ask your subject to breathe normally and relax. Once you like how it looks, take a few photos. View these and think of other things you might try next. Maybe you can
 - move the person into another position
 - have the person make another expression or gesture
 - photograph the person from a different angle
 - move the camera from where you took the photos to be closer or farther away from the person
 - change the lighting to be brighter or dimmer
6. Then, take a few more photos and feel free to share your photos with your family and friends.

Reflection

How does your photograph create a composition using a human as the subject of your artwork? Does your photograph express a mood or feeling of your subject? How does the mood or feeling change with different compositions?

Curriculum Connections California Arts Standards for Public Schools—Visual Arts

5.VA:Cr1.1: Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making. 5.VA:Cr2.2: Demonstrate quality craftsmanship through care for and use of materials, tools, and equipment. 5.VA:Re8: Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

Common Core State Standards English Language Arts

SL.5.5: Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. (5-ESS2-1),(5-ESS2-2)

Next Generation Science Standards

3-5-ETS1-1: Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.

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