

# Tips for Judging, Critiquing and Self-Assessing Photos

## Impact & Interest

Does the image grab your attention and hold it?

Does the image appeal to the senses?

Does the image suggest mystery or intrigue?

Does the image provide a fresh and original view of the subject matter?

Does the image express a unifying thought or idea?

Does the image focus on one simple subject?

Does the image make the most of the available subject matter?

Is the image more than a mere snapshot?

Does the image achieve the creator's objective?

Does the image avoid being too busy or confusing?

If the image breaks with tradition, does this enhance the experience?

## Viewpoint

Is the horizon level; are the verticals vertical?

Is the image free from unwanted perspective distortion?  
*Caused by tilting camera*

Has the creator used a fresh viewpoint?

Does the viewpoint highlight the important features of the subject?

Does the viewpoint avoid unfortunate juxtapositions?  
*Lamp post sticking out of head*

Has the best choice of low, normal or high viewpoint been made?

Does the viewpoint make best use of light and shadows?

Does the viewpoint minimize clutter and distractions?

## Composition

Is the cropping appropriate for the subject?

*Should the crop have been tighter?*

Has the best format been used (vertical, horizontal, square, panorama)?

Is there space in front of animals, faces or transportation?

*Space to move to*

Does the composition lead the eye to the main subject?  
*Through the use of lines and curves*

Does the main subject stand out from the background?  
*Contrasting color, brightness or focus*

Does the composition avoid the "bull's eye effect"?  
*Main subject offset from center*

Does the image make good use of forms, patterns and textures?

Does the image convey a sense of depth?  
*Shadows, perspective, selective focus*

## Color

Was the best choice made from color, black-and-white or sepia?

Is the white balance correct?  
*No yellow, orange or green cast*

Are color saturation levels appropriate?

Has appropriate use been made of contrasting and complementary colors?

## Technique

Is the image free of barrell and pin-cushion disortion?  
*Common with very wide angle lenses*

Does the image avoid lost detail in blown out highlights and dark shadows?

Is the image free of distracting reflections?

Is the main subject in sharp focus?

Is the image free from dust specs, smudges and scratches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the image include elements in the near, middle and far distances?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the image free from lens flare effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the image taken at an appropriate time of day?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was fill flash used where needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was good use made of the hyperfocal plane?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the image have a good tonal range?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Portraits</b>	
Is the image free of excessive contrast?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the correct choice made between flattery and revealing character?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the image free from handshake blur?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the image minimize unphotogenic features?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the image free from digital sensor noise?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the image emphasize photogenic features? <i>Have small blemishes been removed?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was subject motion handled appropriately? <i>Either frozen or exaggerated</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the lighting effective?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the image avoid clumsy or obvious post-processing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the subject appear natural and relaxed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Manipulation &amp; Presentation</b>		Does the image reveal the subject's character and interests?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the image been over-sharpened?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the image tell a story or suggest history?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the image free from the artifacts of excessive JPEG compression?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the image free of red-eye effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has any manipulation contributed to the subject matter and its impact? <i>or is it just a PhotoShop demo?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was a good choice made of lens focal length? <i>No big noses from wide-angle lenses</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does any manipulation represent a fresh style with merit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the background and props appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the size of the printed or displayed image appropriate for the subject matter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the eyes in sharpest focus?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If printed, is the image's resolution high enough to support the print size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the lighting make the hair "alive"?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If used, is the framing suitable for the subject matter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the clothing and accessories avoid drawing attention away from the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Landscapes</b>		Do the lighting and viewpoint reveal the shape of the subject's head?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the horizon <i>not</i> in the middle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the subject free from unfortunate shadows on the face or elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the image avoid wasting space on a featureless sky?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the sharpness of focus appropriate for the situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>