

Photography Vocabulary

35mm	The most common film format and is the standard that is used for SLR cameras.
Aperture	The variable opening in a camera lens through which light enters to expose the film. This also effects the depth of field and is measured in f-stops.
Aspect Ratio	The ratio of an image's height to its width.
Burst Mode	A high-speed camera mode that allows images to be captured in rapid succession. Standard settings allow for 10 pictures taken per second, allowing the photographer to select the best shot at a later time. This setting is often used when photographing fast moving and rapid changing events.
Calotype	A type of early photographic process introduced by Henry Fox Talbot, using paper coated with silver iodide to create an original negative image. It can be characterized by its grainy image quality since the fibers of the paper negative were visible in prints made from it.
Camera Obscura	Meaning "dark chamber" in Latin. It's a box with a small hole or lens that projects an image of external objects in front of the hole or lens. The non-permanent image is shown upside down and backwards inside the box on the opposite side of the small hole opening.
Cyanotype	One of the earliest photo processes. Paper is coated with a mixture of two chemicals, potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium in the dark and left to dry. Once dry, your subject matter is placed on the paper and exposed to sunlight. Once the paper is sufficiently exposed, a white impression of your subject is left on the blue paper. A water bath is needed to fix the image.
Daguerreotype	Developed by Louis Daguerre, this early type of photography has a shiny surface and extremely good clarity. There is no negative and the image is incredibly fragile, brushing the surface can cause the image to flake off.
Depth of Field	The distance in front of and behind the point where the lens is focused that will be sharp in the finished picture.
Developer	A solution that changes the silver bromide crystals on exposed film or paper into a visual image.
Developing Tank	Used to develop film and is light tight.
Diana (camera)	A relatively inexpensive camera with a simple plastic lens. Photographs taken with a Diana experience similar effects/issues as that of a Holga; light leaks, slight blur, and others.
DSLR	Equivalent to a 35mm SLR camera, but captures digital images instead of using film.
Enlarger	Equipment used to project and adjust the size of the image from the negative to photographic paper.
Exposure	How light or dark an image is. Exposure is controlled through aperture, shutter speed, and ISO.
F/stop	The number that indicates the size of the aperture opening in the lens, allowing more or less light. Small numbers are larger apertures and large numbers are smaller apertures. For example, f/1.4 is much larger of an aperture than f/11.
File Format	How your digital camera will save an image to it's memory. JPEG, TIFF, and RAW are the most common.



Film Advance Lever	The lever on the outside of the camera that moves film forward after each exposure is made.
Fish-eye	A type of lens that shows such a wide field of view that the image becomes a circle.
Fixer	A solution used to make the developed image permanent and no longer sensitive to light.
Focal Length	Describes the distance in millimeters between the lens and the image it forms on the film. Essentially, how 'zoomed in' your image will appear.
Focal Point	A point of interest that makes your image unique.
Focusing Ring	What is used to bring your image into focus.
Grain	Particles that form the image on film or photo paper, can also be referred to as "noise".
High-keyed	Areas of bright and light values in a photograph.
Holga	A simple and inexpensive medium format camera. Photographs taken with a Holga are often quite unique and display characteristics that would be considered defects in any other camera; light leaks, soft focus and vignetting to name a few. These low-fidelity attributes have contributed to Holga's huge cult following of unconventional photographic practices.
Hot Shoe	Usually located on the top of a camera, this allows you to mount what is most commonly a flash.
ISO	International Standards Organization; determines how sensitive the camera is to light. The lower the number, the less sensitive it is to light. The higher the number, the more sensitive it is to light.
Large Format	A type of camera that utilizes large sheet film, typically 4x5" or larger. While the process of taking photos with a large format camera is often quite tedious, it's easily rewarded by incredible resolution. A larger negative produces higher quality images because it requires less magnification than a much smaller 35mm negative.
Lead Lines	Line that leads your eye through a composition.
Lens	Curved glass on the camera used to focus light onto the film and capture the image seen through the viewfinder.
Light Meter	A device that measures light. Many cameras have this integrated and can be seen when looking through the viewfinder.
Light-Sensitive Paper	Photographic paper that has been coated with an emulsion that is light sensitive.
Long Exposure	An image that has been exposed for a long time or uses a long shutter speed. This technique is particularly helpful when shooting still objects in low light or if you're wanting to capture moving objects in a blur.
Macro Lens	A type of lens that focuses very close to the subject. Allows for a 1:1 reproduction size of the object or larger.
Medium Format	A type of camera that uses film that's larger than that used in 35mm photography, but smaller than 4x5" which is used in large format photography. It's main benefit is because of it's larger film size, images produced have a much higher resolution.
Negative	The processed film containing an image opposite of the original scene in terms of light and dark areas.
"Normal" Lens	A lens that is generally a 50mm lens and is considered "normal" because it's closest to what the human eye sees.

Overexposure	Film or photo paper that is too dark/black because too much light has hit it.
Panning	Moving a camera horizontally in order to keep a moving subject in the viewfinder usually resulting in horizontally blurred lines showing action.
Pinhole Camera	Sealed box with a pin hole punched in it for an aperture. Prime or Fixed Lens: Any lens that is a permanently set focal length.
Rangefinder	A type of camera that is made with a range-finding focusing mechanism, allowing a photographer to make quick exposures that are in sharp focus. The first rangefinder was marketed in 1916. A noticeable difference is that the viewfinder is offset from the lens. The effect of this is most noticeable from pictures taken at close range, since the image is captured slightly lower than the image you're seeing through the viewfinder.
Resolution	The detail that an image displays. The higher the resolution, the more image detail.
Rule of Thirds	A guideline to improve the composition and balance of a visual image. By dividing the image you're wanting to capture using two horizontal lines and two vertical lines, you'll want to position the subject along those lines or where the lines intersect.
Safe Light	A red light bulb or light cover that provides light for a darkroom without exposing the photo paper.
Shutter	The device between the aperture and the film that opens to allow light on to the film and then closes to shut it out.
Shutter Release	The button on the camera body that is used to trip the shutter and take the photograph.
Shutter Speed	How quickly your shutter opens and shuts during an exposure, letting light in to take the photograph.
SLR	SLR (Single Lens Reflex) cameras have a single lens that forms an image which is reflected to the viewfinder.
Stop Bath	A solution that stops the effects of the developer.
Telephoto Lens	A type of lens that has a longer focal length, which gives a narrower field of view and magnified image.
Time Lapse	This is created when several photos are stitched together that have been taken of the same thing at different times. Eadweard Muybridge is famous for his time lapse photography of animals and humans in motion.
Tilt Shift Lens	A type of lens that simulates a shallow depth of field.
Twin Lens Reflex (TLR)	A type of camera with two lenses of the same focal length. One lens is the actual lens that takes the picture, while the other is used for the viewfinder system.
Underexposure	A photograph with too little light reaching the film. This results in a very dark image that makes any kind of detail difficult to discern.
Value	Smooth transition from black to white, grey scale.
View Finder	The opening on the camera through which the photographer looks through to take a picture.
Wide Angle Lens	A type of lens that shows a wider field of view, allowing more of the subject to fit into the frame.
Zoom Lens	A type of lens that has variable focal lengths. You can zoom in or out by rotating the barrel of the lens.