

Essentials of Portrait Photography

Joe Klocek, Instructor



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The Photography Cheat Sheets

- Specific settings to plug and play
- Simple directions
- Link to instructional video
- 31 cards on all variety of topics
- The best tool to use in conjunction with classes and instruction

Landscape (handheld)

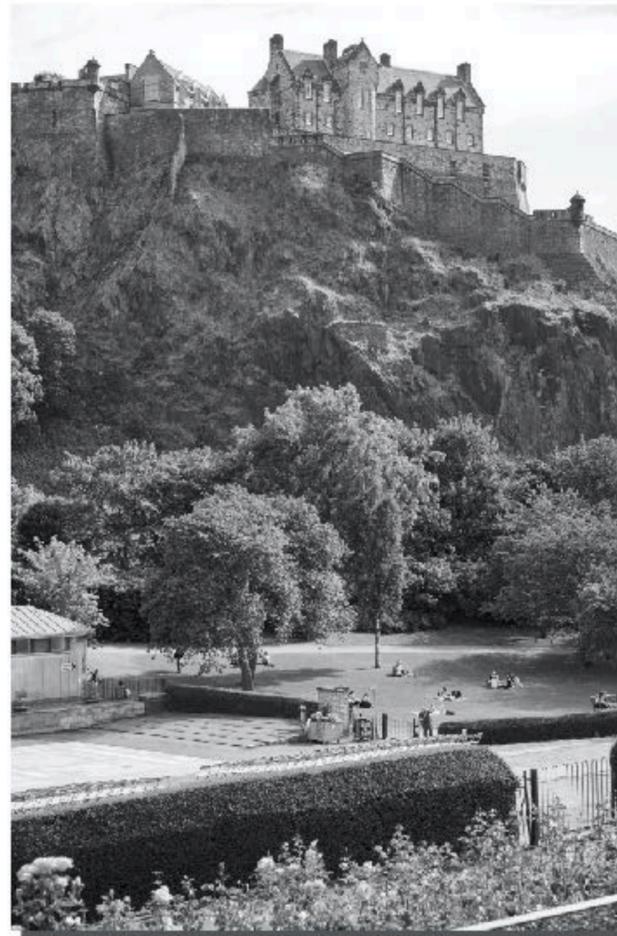
- Aperture set to f/8 or f/11
- Shutter speed set between 1/125 and 1/250
- Set ISO to auto (manual mode with auto ISO)
- Focus mode set to AF-S
- Focus area set to single focus point
- White balance set to daylight or cloudy day, depending on conditions
- Evaluative metering mode



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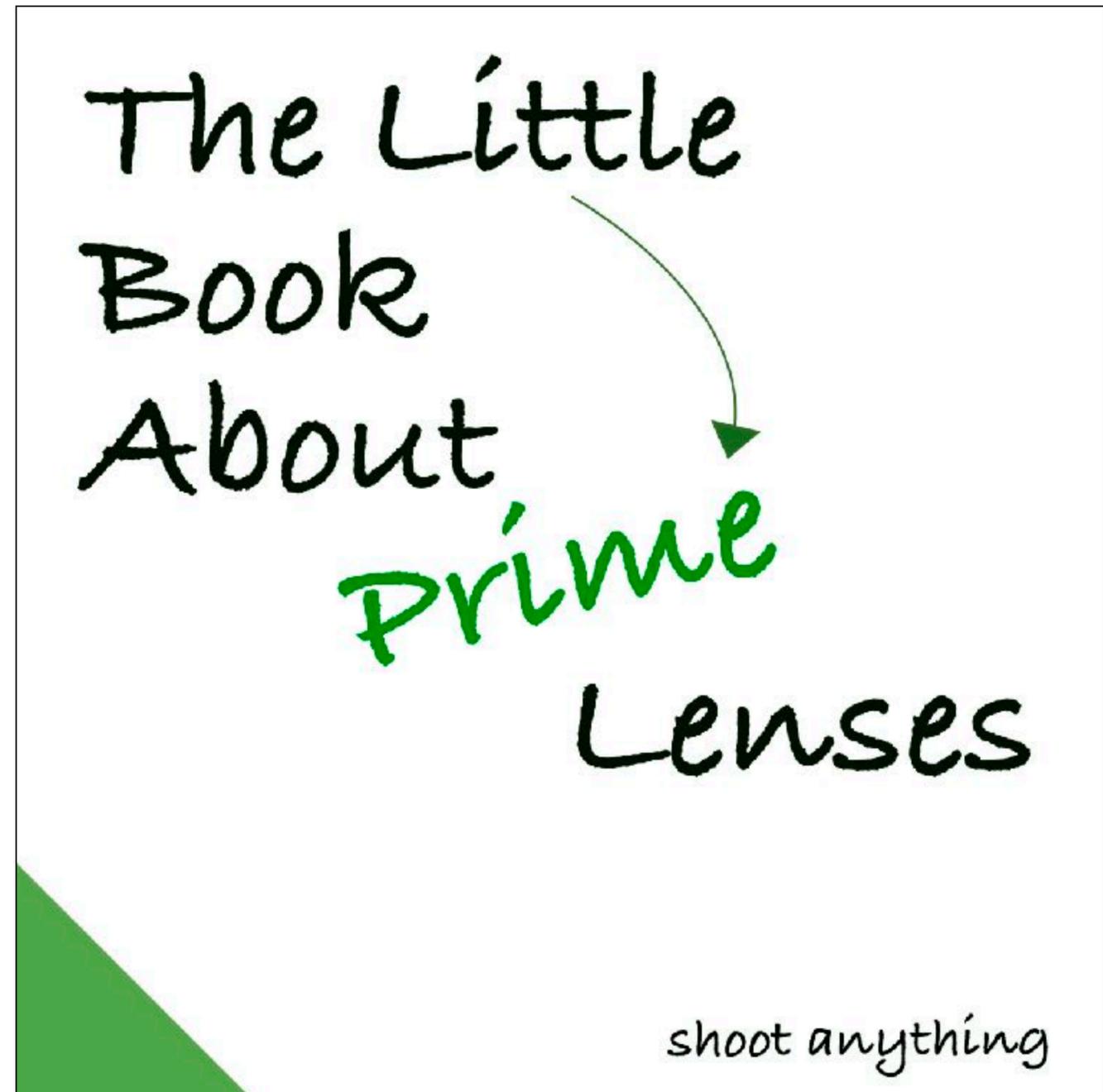
Directions

Navigate focus crosshair over the subject and acquire focus before shooting. Check that there is no motion blur captured in the frame. You can improve many compositions by placing an interesting object close to the camera. Try to shoot at advantageous times of day, such as sunrise and sunset, to get the best shadows and color. In order to achieve both the appropriate aperture and a fast enough shutter speed to hand-hold the image, use the RAW exposure technique and don't be afraid to raise the ISO if needed.



The Little Book About Prime Lenses

- Understanding angle of view
- Perspective and perspective distortion
- Chromatic aberration
- Common usages for common focal lengths
- Aperture varieties



This lecture is available as a PDF

www.TheFStopsHere.org



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Photography Cheat Sheets



The Photography Cheat Sheets are the closest thing to having a photography instructor with you as you can get. This set of 31 cards covers every variety of photographic endeavor a hobby photographer is likely to encounter and gives specific settings to use, simple instructions, and links to short video instruction. They are available exclusively through Mike's Camera.

gear

working without
lights

working with
lights

working with
subjects

working with the
images



portraits

9

“A photographic portrait is a picture of someone who knows he is being photographed, and what he does with that knowledge is as much a part of the photograph as what he’s wearing or how he looks.”

Richard Avedon

gear

gear: tripod

11



gear: lenses

1. Range
2. Aperture
3. AF speed



gear: lights

13

1. flash
2. strobe



working without lights



15

Fill the frame, and wait to capture personality. Your job here is patience.

Assume it will take several minutes for a subject to become comfortable with the idea of a camera pointed at them.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 24-70mm f/4

70mm

1/100

f/4

ISO 100



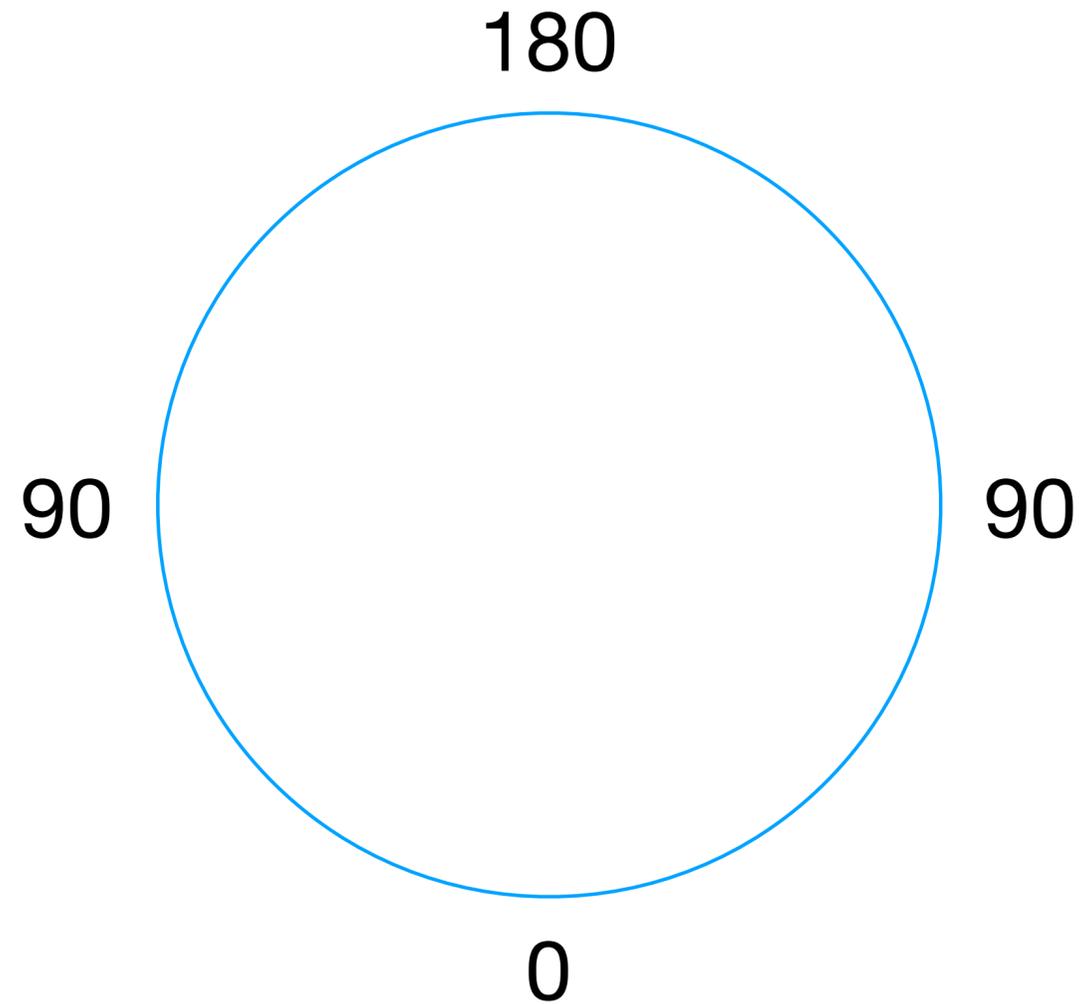
light positions

16

Front light emphasizes detail at the detriment of contrast and separation.

Side light emphasizes contrast at the cost of detail.

Back light has the least detail, but emphasizes separation and contrast.



17

Without a flash we will oftentimes place a subject in direct sunlight to create even light.

Nikon D850

Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8

35mm

1/400

f/2.8

ISO 100



18

When shooting without a flash you can still place the sun behind the subject for even light, though they will be underexposed.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/400

f/2.8

ISO 200



19

This will still create the halo effect. Watch exposure and check histogram often.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/500

f/2

ISO 100



20

This will still create the halo effect. Watch exposure and check histogram often.

Sony A7Riv

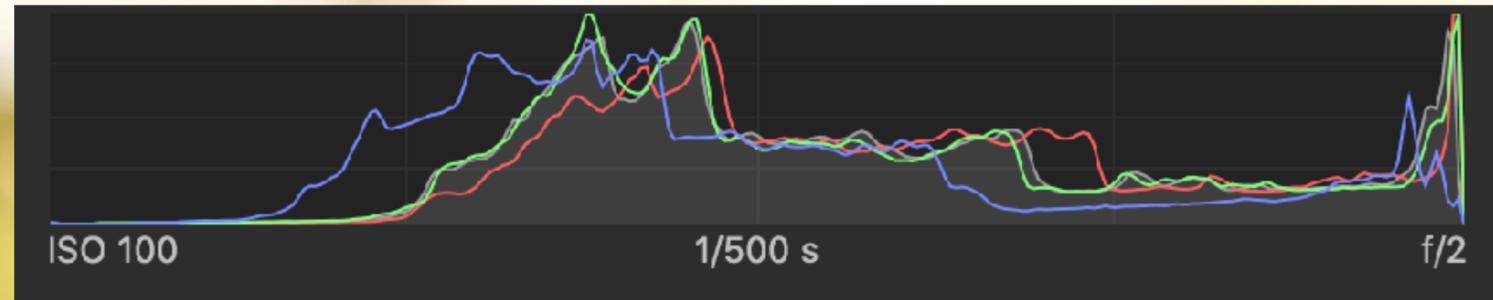
Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/500

f/2

ISO 100



21

Engage with the subject
and be ready to shoot at
any time.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/400

f/5

ISO 100



working with lights



23

Place the sunset behind
the subject when lighting
them.

Sony A7

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/2.8

ISO 80



24

That lighting position immediately creates the halo effect and gives even light on the subject's face. Then light them with a flash or strobe.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/200

f/4.5

ISO 100



25

We first set the exposure for the ambient light conditions. Outside this means underexposing the background. In the studio this usually means creating a black frame.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100



26

Though not always.

It's more universal to think about setting the brightness of the ambient light first and adding flash to it secondarily. In a studio we eliminate ambient light and in an environment we adapt to it.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/200

f/4.5

ISO 100



27

Sometimes we bring in the ambient exposure, underexpose it, and then add a light on top of it. In either case you build ambient exposure first and then add light on top of it. Your degree of underexposure determines how dramatic the image will be.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 320



28

Now that you have your exposure locked in, you can begin the real joy of portraiture, which is creating a mood. The light quality, the background light, and the direction to the talent should be in alignment.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100



29

Remember that costume, expression, and light are all available to tell one consistent story. So, is the way you edit the image.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/1.8

ISO 160



30

Remember that costume, expression, and light are all available to tell one consistent story. So, is the way you edit the image.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/1.8

ISO 160



31

Using lighting equipment gives you control over light contrast, either to increase it or to minimize it. This is an example of expanding it.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/2.5

ISO 200



32

And this is an example
of reducing it.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/2.8

ISO 800



33

When you shoot wide,
make sure to give space
for subject movement.
Locking them in place
becomes very
uncomfortable very
quickly.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/160

f/8

ISO 100



working with subjects

posing

1. Don't look up her nose
2. If it bends, bend it
3. When in doubt, demonstrate
4. Talk. Often.
5. Don't give specific instructions, give mood or impression direction
6. Use props. Best are hats, fabric, and sunglasses.
7. Never look straight into the camera.
8. Crop before a joint, not after.
9. Use hands.
10. Show images. But not too much.

36

First, be prepared. I find example images that I like on Pinterest and then show them to the talent beforehand that way they know what I'm trying to achieve. If they asked me to shoot the images, I ask for those example images from them.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100



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Next, you must speak often and in depth about how things are going, show images from time to time, and choose focal lengths appropriately so you are not sitting too far away. You need to know what it's like to be the subject and to communicate with the photographer.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 250



38

With kids, you give them a larger space to work in and follow. Trying to get them to stay in place and smile at the camera is a fool's errand.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/160

f/8

ISO 100



39

Once you develop rapport you can ask for specific emotions, but I avoid specific physical directions.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 250



working with the images

Thank You

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