



How to Read a Photograph

Photographs can tell a complex story, if you know how to read them! Take a closer look by following these simple steps.

1. Examine the photograph for 10 seconds, describe what you see.
2. Divide the image into quadrants and examine each one closely. Did you notice anything that you didn't notice before? Write your additional observations below.
3. Break down what you see in the photograph. What can you deduce or infer from your observations? Use the table below to guide you.

Visual Element	Observe, Deduce, and Infer: What can you tell by looking closely at the photo?
<p>People</p> <p>How many people are there? Are they all part of the same group?</p> <p>What is their sex, age, relationship to each other?</p> <p>What are they wearing?</p> <p>Can you identify any of the people?</p>	

Time What is the time of day, season, year, period, or century?	
Activities/Events What are the people doing? What event is taking place?	
Objects/Plants/Animals Can you identify any plant or animal species? Are the animals wild or domestic? Do you recognize any objects? What are they used for?	
Place Is it rural or urban? Indoors or Outdoors? Describe the buildings, landscape, and other features	
Photo title/caption Is there a title or caption? What does that tell you?	
Other	

Extensions

Historic vs. Modern Photo Comparison

Do the above activity twice. Once with a historic photograph and once with a modern photograph of the same area. What is different about the two photographs? What is the same?

Tell a Story

Use your observations, deductions, and inferences to tell a story about the photograph.