

Nature Photography

Location: Wildlife Photographer of the Year temporary gallery

Intended Grade Level: K-12

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Objective: This trailhead tour is meant to introduce students to the artistic and scientific applications of photography. Following a brief composition lesson, students will be given the opportunity to explore the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit, to gain a better understanding of the technical foundations of taking *the perfect shot*.



Introduction: 30 minutes

Photography is a multifaceted form of expression. Not only can it serve as an outlet for the artistic self, photography serves a more practical application in the scientific field. It can be used to document an astronaut's visit to the moon, unique weather patterns, a new insect behavior, or your family vacation...

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition celebrates the best examples of nature photography throughout the globe. Winning images are chosen and exhibited for their: "artistic composition, technical innovations, and truthful interpretation of the natural world."

There are many elements that make a photograph great; Personal aesthetic and preference is not the only important factor, there's a scientific and mathematical explanation behind a lot of what we find appealing.

Activity: The *Rules of Artful Composition*

Pattern, Texture, Symmetry and *Depth* are all elements photographers use to make their photos more captivating to the viewer's eye. The more visually stimulating and artistically pleasing the photograph, the easier it is to convey the message or idea the photographer may want to share.

Compositional styles commonly found in photography include: *The Rule of Thirds, Framing* and *Leading Lines*. Our eyes tend to *read* photographs much like we read a book for information. Using these compositional features, it helps our eyes focus in on a specific subject matter and helps create a more pleasing image to the eye.

With the aid of a tablet and overhead projector, the trailhead docent will introduce the various elements to students, giving them an opportunity to analyze past Wildlife Photographer of the Year images as examples.

They will work together and reflect personally to list and describe the different

compositional elements of the photographs they see and defend the images they find most appealing.

Big Questions to Brainstorm

Before heading upstairs to explore the Wildlife Photographer of the Year gallery, docents will guide students through an image critique.

What are the artistic elements of the photograph we notice?

Does the photo feature elements of composition?

Where is our eye drawn first?

Is the photograph emotionally appealing?

What does it make us feel?

Does the photograph tell a story?

Do we know what is going on in this photo?

Exploration: 30 minutes

Keeping the different artistic and compositional elements in mind, students will have time to explore the Wildlife Photographer of the Year gallery. This portion of the tour is largely unguided. Teachers may ask prompting questions to help frame students' thinking.

Discussion and Conclusion: 15 minutes

Gather together as a group and share the different photographs students saw. Students will be encouraged to share what photos they liked or disliked and asked to defend their reasoning.

Back in the Classroom or Out in the Field

Using the artistic and compositional elements students learned at the Museum, hold your own classroom wildlife photography competition. Challenge students to utilize different photography styles and techniques for composing a great photo. Host a gallery viewing to give students an opportunity to describe and defend their best images.

Prior to Your Visit

This tour does not require preparation prior to your visit; however, the following questions and activity are here to help prepare your students and enhance the tour experience.

Ask Some Preliminary Questions

Think about photography in general...think about what makes a great photo. *Why do we take photographs? What do we take photos of? What about thinking specifically about science; how can photography help scientists and researchers?*

Take a peek at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year website and look through some of the winning photographs. *What makes those photographs this year's winning shots? Would that photo be your top choice? Why or why not?*

Curricular Connections

As opposed to highlighting lists of prescribed learning outcomes this program will focus on the new BC Curriculum's core competency objectives. These core competencies are expected, at increasing levels, for any grade. By steering this program away from explicit learning outcomes we have been able to put more focus on the student's exploration of broad themes, applicable to several areas of classroom and real-world experiences.

Core & Curricular Competencies	Objective	Program Exercises
<p>Inquiry Process Ask questions Gather, interpret and analyze ideas Communicate findings and decisions</p> <p>Evidence Gathering Ask questions and make inferences about the content and features of different types of sources</p> <p>Big Ideas Different environmental features present people with different challenges and opportunities.</p>	<p>Explore connections between science and art</p> <p>Critical & creative thinking</p> <p>Develop an understanding of the interaction between humans and the natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will participate in several hands-on, exploratory-style, learning activities, which will expose them to the visual components of photography • Recognizing that photography is a means of scientific evidence gathering, and that the natural world yields descriptions and explanations that are continually changing within the context of our cultural values and ethics • Investigate the artistic elements of photography by exploring and creating, reasoning and reflecting, and communicating and documenting • Respond to and document photography using inquiry, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills • Inspire a lifelong interest in photography and the confidence to create and contribute to the community • By analyzing the photographs, students may witness or infer the impact of the physical environment on the development of human societies and cultures, and the impact of humans on the environment • Be exposed to multiple perspectives, and be expected to respect different values and points of view