



## TRADE SECRETS

### Take great photos

Want to compose your pictures like a pro? Our CNN photo experts say these are the top tips to remember when you are out in the field.

#### Use the rule of thirds

When taking a picture, it's not surprising that your first instinct may be to place the subject smack dab in the center of the frame. But for a more compelling composition, imagine the scene that you're going to photograph with imaginary lines dissecting the frame into three sections, horizontally and vertically. Rather than always placing the subject in the center of the frame, put it in one-third of the frame – just a bit off-center. This placement gives the subject room to “move” in or out of the frame; it also adds pizzazz to the overall photograph, showing the viewer the environment the subject is in.

#### Know how to use your flash

In low-light situations, use a tripod, film with a high ISO rating or a flash that is balanced with the available light. You can also try using your flash with a slower shutter speed. Take the flash off your camera and avoid pointing it directly at the subject. You can bounce the flash off the ceiling or wall if your camera has the ability. When you're outside, keep the sun behind you. And keep this in mind: The best flash photographs are those in which you can't tell if the photographer used a flash.

#### Take as many photos as you can

It's always better to have more material than you think you need. And who knows, the photographs you take on a whim may turn out better than your planned shots.

#### Check the background

Try to avoid distracting backgrounds. Plain backgrounds often work best. And don't forget to make sure your subject doesn't have anything sticking out of his or her head, like a tree or a utility pole. (It happens more than you think.)

#### Keep it steady

You've got to hold your camera steady to get a quality shot. A tripod comes in handy, but you can also try to use something to prop your elbows on to help steady the camera.

#### Frame your elements

Try using elements from the foreground of a scene, like tree branches, to create a frame within the edges of your photograph. The use of framing draws the viewer to the main subject and helps to add depth and interest.

#### Map out the story

Think ahead about what shots you'll need. You can even write out a script if you are shooting a narrative. And remember to vary your shots. It takes different angles to tell a complete story.

#### Light it up

Be sure to consider the quality of the natural light around you when you're taking your pictures. The great, golden light available in the afternoons and early evenings is much more illuminating and flattering than the harsh daylight in the middle of the day.

#### Get close

The best shots are often the most simple, get in close to your subject to capture emotion and intimacy. So, no matter what story you are telling, always be sure to get plenty of close-ups.



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