



# A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Photojournalism



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## Essential Question(s)

- How do photojournalists capture stories?

## Summary

This educator resource introduces students to photojournalism, photography basics, and digital cameras. Students examine famous examples of photojournalism and discuss how photography can be used to tell stories. Students then learn about digital camera settings and practice taking photos with a camera simulator. To conclude the lesson, students use digital cameras to take a series of three photographs that tell a story. Students present their photographs to their peers who offer feedback on each series of photos.

## Learning Goals

- Discover how photographs tell a story.
- Describe the components of cameras.
- Create stories with photographs.

## Attachments

- [Activity Slides—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.pptx](#)
- [CameraSim Task Cards—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Spanish.docx](#)
- [CameraSim Task Cards—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [CameraSim Task Cards—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.docx](#)
- [CameraSim Task Cards—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.pdf](#)
- [Famous Photos—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.docx](#)
- [Famous Photos—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.pdf](#)
- [Photo Analysis—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Spanish.docx](#)
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- [Photo Analysis—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.docx](#)
- [Photo Analysis—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.pdf](#)
- [Photo Feedback—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Spanish.docx](#)
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- [TIP Chart—A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Spanish.docx](#)
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## Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Famous Photos document (attached; one per class)
- Photo Analysis handout (attached; one per student)
- TIP Chart handout (attached; one per student)
- CameraSim Task Cards (attached; one set per student)
- Photo Feedback handout (attached; one per student)
- DSLR cameras
- Devices with internet access

10 minutes

## Engage

Use the attached **Activity Slides** to facilitate this activity. Begin by displaying **slide 2** and introducing the topic of the activity. Display **slides 3–4** and share the essential questions and learning goals with students.

Move to **slide 5** and share the mockup of a newspaper page without photos. Prompt students to share out what they see missing from this page as compared to a typical newspaper page. Students should respond that the photographs are missing. Have students read through the newspaper headlines and discuss with a partner what they think the missing photographs would look like. Invite students to share out how adding photographs to a newspaper enhances storytelling.

Display **slide 6** and introduce the well-known example of photojournalism on the slide. Introduce students to the [I Notice, I Wonder](#) instructional strategy. Have students examine the photo and discuss observations and questions with a partner. Invite a few students to share out their observations and questions.

### Teacher's Note: Photo Information

Slide 6 includes a famous photo of former President Barack Obama and a young boy. The photo, titled *Hair Like Mine*, was taken in the Oval Office in 2009. The boy had asked the President if his hair was similar to his own, President Obama offered to let the boy touch his hair.

Ask students to further discuss with their partners what they think is happening in the photo and what the story behind the image may be. Invite individuals to share out their thoughts.

Show **slide 7** and inform students that the question of what is happening in a photo is central to photojournalism. Tell them that photojournalism is about capturing pictures that tell a story.

15 minutes

## Explore

### Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

This phase of the activity has students examine the attached **Famous Photos**. Consider printing these photos, which can be printed in black and white, and displaying them around the room, or consider digitally sharing them with students in your class LMS.

Display **slide 8** and pass out one copy of the attached **Photo Analysis** handout to each student. Draw students attention to the Famous Photos, whether they are displayed around the room or available digitally.

### Alternate Photo Options

The Famous Photos document contains five well-known photographs. You may choose to select your own alternate photos for the activity.

Have students examine the photos and take notes about observations and inferences related to each photo using their Photo Analysis handouts. Encourage them to think about what they see in the photo when recording observations and think about what the photographer is trying to say with the photo when writing inferences.

Show **slide 9** and introduce more background information on photojournalism. Discuss these with students to the extent you feel necessary.

Move to **slide 10** and have students discuss the stories they believe are being told in each of the Famous Photos. For each photo, invite a few volunteers to share the story they believe is being told by the photo. After some discussion, reveal the background of photograph.

### Teacher's Note: Photo Backgrounds

The following are the backgrounds for each of the Famous Photos:

1. The photo is of American soldiers landing in Normandy, France on D-Day during World War II.
2. The photo is of a child working in a factory. The head of the factory said that the child wandered in to help.
3. The photo shows a woman who cleaned the offices at the Farm Security Administration in the mid-1940s. It became a defining photo of the Civil Rights Movement.
4. The photo depicts a woman and her children at a farm camp who were struggling financially during the Great Depression after their crops had frozen. The photo was featured in a newspaper and the federal government sent 20,000 pounds of food to the camp.
5. The photo shows women in the United Kingdom working in a weapons factory during World War I.

### Teacher's Note: Pacing

Consider stopping here until the next session.

40 minutes

## Explain

Pass out one copy of the attached **TIP Chart** handout to each student and introduce the [TIP Chart](#) instructional strategy. Display **slide 11** and briefly explain the photography terms on the slide to students. Have students add information about each term on their charts and draw a picture to represent each term.

Move to **slide 12**. Show students the video [How Digital Cameras Work | How Things Work with Kamri Noel](#) to reinforce the previously discussed terms.

Show **slide 13** and pass out one copy of the attached **CameraSim Task Cards** to each student. Have students access the [CameraSim website](#) on their personal devices. Allow them time to complete the tasks.

### Teacher's Note: Pacing

Consider stopping here until the next session.

20 minutes

## Extend

Have students use the school's digital cameras to practice taking photographs. Organize students into groups depending on the number of cameras available and the number of students participating. Have them learn to take different photographs by experimenting with the camera settings. If possible, provide the manuals included with the digital cameras as resources for students. Have them take several photos with different settings to see the different results.

Show **slide 14** and introduce the next task. Have students visit a place or event and take three photos that tell a story. Encourage students to brainstorm where in their communities they can capture different parts of life.

Determine how much time students will have to take their photos based on the number of cameras available. Communicate the parameters and timeline to your students and clarify how long each student will be given a DSLR camera.

20 minutes

## Evaluate

After students have had time to take three photos, display **slide 15**. Have each student present their photos to the class. Introduce the [TAG Me](#) strategy to students and provide each student with the attached **Photo Feedback** handout. As each student presents their photos, students that are being presented should use the Photo Feedback handout to think of feedback that can be given to students after they present.

## Research Rationale

Research rationale for this resource is provided in the literature review, [When "Journalism" Kids Do Better: A Reassessment of Secondary and Postsecondary Achievement and Activities](#).



## Resources

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- *Women working in the munitions industry during the First World War* [Photograph]. (1917, May). Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Women\\_Working\\_in\\_the\\_Munitions\\_Industry\\_during\\_the\\_First\\_World\\_War\\_Q108474.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Women_Working_in_the_Munitions_Industry_during_the_First_World_War_Q108474.jpg)