

June, 2012

Dear 7th graders and parents,

This communication is four pages long. It explains the photography assignment and provides pointers and info on airport security and use of the camera. I hope that you find the time to read through all of it. The students were given hard copies of most of this information on the last week of school.

Your young adult should have two rolls of tri-x 400 film which was given out on June 4th. Please have them review the techniques for successful black and white photography and go over all communications regarding this assignment. They are encouraged to shoot more than the two rolls over the summer if it is warranted.

If your 7th grader has borrowed a camera (almost everyone), they are responsible for bringing it back in one piece. Cameras do malfunction and that's expected. If negligence is involved, then the student may be held responsible for the cost of the camera. I've requested payment for only two cameras out of over 350 summer loans, and I have been impressed with how careful Green Acres students have been with relatively expensive cameras.

Most of the students received Canon Rebel or Elan full size single lens reflex cameras. Rebels take two CR2 batteries, and Elans require one 2CR5. Almost all of the batteries should last through the summer. However, if you are going somewhere special, you should purchase one extra set of batteries so that you are prepared. All cameras have lens caps with "cap keepers."

While the 7th grade class is all black and white (the 8th grade is about 40% digital), students should be thinking about building up and acquiring many high quality digital images for their 8th grade experience. If there is the desire from students to work with digital images in the 7th grade, then it may be possible to fit some time in for that. I would hope that they will be taking digital images as well as shooting traditional film.

Have a great summer and I look forward to teaching your 7th grader next year!!

Sincerely,

Victor Stekoll

7th Grade Summer Assignment

1. Shoot the assignment outdoors-avoid indoor flash photographs. Take your camera with you on vacations.
2. If you have a **digital camera**, please also take photographs with it, burn the images to a CD, and bring in the CD at the beginning of the year. If you are using your parents' digital camera, how about having your own compact flash card, and putting it in to take photos with their camera when they'll let you.
3. Never open the camera back until you are sure that the film is rewound-shoot at least the two rolls that you have been given. Tri-x is the best film and what you have, T-max 400 is also OK, black and white CN (c-41 color process) should be avoided, it's not really black and white and is hard to print and must be developed at a lab. Speeds other than 400 that are black and white are OK.
4. **The subject should fill the frame-move closer if it doesn't or zoom in. (You have to decide what the subject is, you're not just shooting away!)**
5. These cameras focus pretty close, about a foot, so use macro! Shoot people or things real close up for a photo of impact. The camera will not shoot if the subject is not in focus. Zoom in when you are doing this to make subject maximum size.
6. Don't wait until the last two weeks of the summer-don't shoot up the film around the house-go out somewhere.
7. Remember the techniques for black and white- reflections, repetition, circles and ovals, lines, texture, patterns, rule of thirds, etc.
8. Take photos of people whenever possible.
9. Shoot in all sun or all shade, not mixed-the sun should be behind your back when possible.
10. **About airport security: TSA claims that the film will be fine if the ASA is under 800, but many rolls of Tri-x 400 (what we are using) have been fogged by security machines at airports. Best: hand carry the camera through the detector with you, ask for a hand inspection of the camera. Second Best: if they insist, put the camera through the machine as with your carry on luggage. Never: send film or camera that has film in it with luggage, the x-rays are super strong on baggage and will likely ruin the film.**
11. Bring in your film the first day of school in September and Victor will collect it.

Techniques in Black and White Photography

1. use lines and patterns
2. good contrast range from black to white
3. Use of shadows
4. use Rule of Thirds-have subject off center, not in the middle
5. Sharpness-image must be sharp
6. Repetition of objects, shapes, or subjects
7. Texture in wood, rock, clothing
8. Geometry, especially circles and ovals
9. Create diagonals in your photos
10. capture the “decisive moment” when possible
11. the subject should fill the frame, the subject should fill the frame!!
Get closer if it doesn't
12. create mystique-make the viewer wonder how the photo was done
13. reflection in glass, mirrors, and walls
14. make the photo 3-Dimensions, have a foreground, middle ground, and background-include trees or vegetation in a mountain shot-keep out the sky, make the sky no more than 1/3 of the image!
15. Camera Tilts! But not too many! Choose what works, look through the camera viewfinder all of the time!
16. Perspective-look up, look down! Don't always shoot straight on!

Guidelines for using Canon EOS Cameras Rebel/Elan/A-2

1. Keep the lens clean and be very careful to never drop the camera or bump it into things. It is made of plastic and is fragile. Keep the lens cap on when not using for a while. Some of you do not have lens caps. Be very careful with what you bump into with the lens. Always keep the camera around your neck! Never run with the camera!
2. The cameras use two CR-2 batteries (Rebel). Elan and A-2 use one 2CR-5 battery. **You should purchase an extra set of batteries to have on hand as these may go bad during the summer.**
3. Place the switch on the lens to AF for automatic focus, the cameras will focus for you before you take the photo. Place on MF and you will need to focus it yourself. This might happen if the AF setting won't focus on what you want it to.
4. Load the film by putting it into the slot in the back of the camera. Pull the film out right **to** the red dot or line on the other side while the film is flat. The common error is to pull the film out too far, thus incorrectly loading the film. Pull the film to the red dot, make it lie flat and close the back of the camera. The film should go all the way out to 37, then shoot back to 36, shooting down from 36 to 1 and then rewinding automatically when it's done (for Rebels). For Elan and A-2, the camera will move to one and shoot from one to 36, rewinding all the way back when it is done.
5. The best position for the dial on the top right is P, for Program. It will set the best combination of shutter speeds and F stops for the lighting. Turn the camera to the off position (red L) when you are not using it for several hours or days. You may experiment with other settings. The flower setting is macro, taking real close ups of small things. Think about taking photos of things real close up.
6. You may use the flash if you need light on subjects. Push the flash button on the top left side of the camera, and it will pop up. Push it down to close it. The camera setting must be on P (program) for the flash to work this way.
7. Remember to shoot in all sun or all shade, not mixed.
8. Remember that the subject should fill the frame.
9. Happy Shooting!!!