

# Applying the Seven Keys

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## Landscape photography

- **Create a sense of depth or dimension.** In a big scene, first choose your subject, and then find a second element up close to add perspective. Depth is indicated by size change as objects become smaller towards the horizon. Overlapping elements also shows depth.

- **The eye goes to the brightest part of a photo.** If the brightest part of your photo is not the subject, then compose the photo so bright areas don't distract. Reduce the impact of an overly bright sky by cropping it out or use an overlap like a branch in front of the sky.

- **Make photos that include your subject, not of your subject.** Invite the viewer to find the point of interest by placing it off center. Rule of Thirds says to place your point of interest one-third the distance between frame edges top-to-bottom and side-to-side.

- **Backlight adds drama.** Shooting towards the sun adds dramatic color vibrancy to plants in a scene. Use your hand to shade the lens from glare.

## Macro/Close-up photography

- **Get very close to a subject to magnify a part of it.** Your mind finds it fascinating to see a subject in a new way. Find details in common objects.

- **What's behind a subject is as important as the subject.** Keep the background simple so it doesn't compete with the subject. A complex background can be distracting.

- **Juxtapose opposites.** Dramatic opposites engage the eye. Include light/dark, large/small, sharp/soft, warm/cool, and near/far.

- **Lines have personality.** Vertical lines are stoic. Horizontal lines are laid back. Curved lines are playful. Diagonal lines are rebellious. Use diagonals to add drama. Diagonal lines capture our attention because our mind thinks something is out of place, so it investigates diagonal lines.

## Architecture photography

- **Check the angle of light.** Move around the subject to find the most interesting angle of light. Front light is safe and boring. Side light highlights form and texture. Back light can control contrast and simplify shapes.

- **Investigate alternative angles.** Sometimes shooting from the side or behind your subject can be more interesting than the front view. Try extreme angles low to the ground or high above the subject.

- **Vertical or horizontal.** Frame your subject to compliment its shape. Horizontal subjects look better in a horizontal frame, called landscape format. Vertical shapes usually look better in a vertical frame.

- **Create relationships.** Give your main subject an obvious relationship to subjects behind it. Cloud shapes can be as important as monumental rock formations so treat them as equals. Position these subjects so they appear part of one story and not disjointed, too close or too far from each other.

## Portrait photography

- **Find good lighting.** Bright sunlight makes people squint, and causes dark shadows. Soft or diffused lighting makes everyone look better.

- **Keep the background simple.** Keep the attention on the eyes and smile. Use a low-contrast background without lots of bright and dark areas. Watch out for strong lines behind the person's head.

- **Use a vertical frame.** A person's face is a vertical shape and usually looks best in a vertical frame.

- **Show one ear.** Avoid making a driver's license photo. A slight turn of the head, so the subject only shows one ear, makes a more interesting portrait.

- **Fountain of Youth.** Shoot from slightly above older people. Have them look up towards you, it pulls the skin tighter reducing wrinkles under the neck and eyes.