

Take 5

Essential Skills for Every Photographer

By Gary Lindsay, MJE

Formerly adviser at

John F. Kennedy High School

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The five essential skills

- Handling your camera with mastery
- Using a documentary approach, telling stories with interesting photos
- Cropping photos to improve the composition
- Save and file photos correctly
- Color balance and tone images

1 - Camera handling

- Basics - understand exposure and how the camera controls it
- Know what every control does and how to use it - memorize the manual
- Understand the modes and when to use them
- Master both horizontal and vertical grips



Online: Beginner's Guide



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Photonhead website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.photonhead.com/>. The website's header includes the Photonhead logo and navigation links for 'DIGITAL CAMERAS', 'PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS', 'PHOTO EDITING', 'BEGINNERS GUIDE', and 'SIMCAM'. The main content area features a large green camera image and several article sections:

- Beginner's Guide to Photography**: Introduction to the world of modern film and digital photography.
 - The Camera
 - Camera Modes
 - The Half-Press
 - Controlling Flash
 - Processing and Printing
 - Introduction to Exposure
 - The Universal Stop
 - Shutter and Aperture
 - Film Speed
- Digital Camera Buying Guide**: New digital camera reviews and shopping guide.
 - Quick Picks
 - What Kind of Camera
 - Research Tips
 - Where to Buy
- Photography Tips**: Hints, tricks and tips for taking better pictures.
 - Camera Shake - Enemy #1
 - The Digital Push
 - Alternative Landscapes
 - Golden Guides

Other visible sections include 'the SimCam' (Learn about the basic concepts of photography with the SimCam online camera simulation), 'Film Magic' (Easy tutorials that show how to transform your digital photos to look like classic film), and 'Quick Picks' (Which Digital Camera? Browse a custom picked selection and read camera reviews).

- <http://www.photonhead.com/>
- [Pentax USA](#)
- [Nikon cameras](#)
- [Canon](#)

Stable camera grips

- Horizontal
(landscape)



Stable camera grips

- Vertical
(portrait)



Use the right camera mode

- Portrait mode
- Sports mode
- Av (Aperture priority)
- Tv (Shutter speed priority)
- Stage mode



2 – Documentary approach

- Tell the story honestly, as a visual reporter
- No faking it – if you set up a photo, or alter it, label it as an illustration
- Provide options for editors
- Get the standard shots and something unique

Get these shots

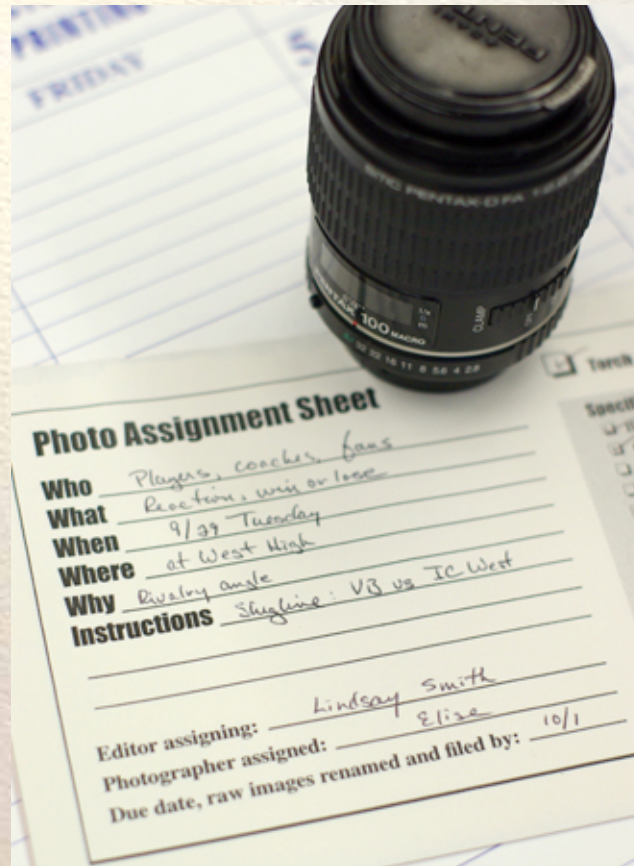
- Establishing shot – an angle that gets the overall view
- Close up / Detail shots
- Portrait
- Time captured: before after, slow movement, fast movement
- Interaction
- Closing shot – summarizes, signals end

3 - Organize with Batch rename in Adobe Bridge

- Planning - assign a photo slugname with the assignment sheet
- Three folders for every assignment
- 'Batch rename' to move images from the card and file, and rename them

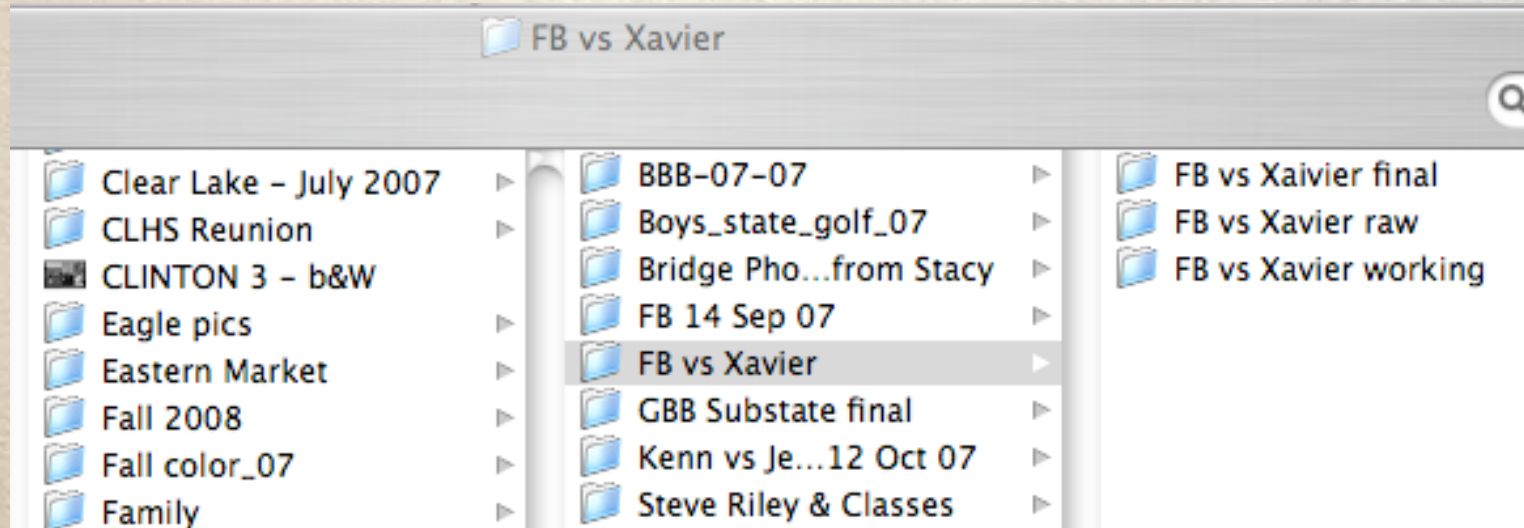
Good planning - assign a photo slugline

- Slugline = a simple name for the photo shoot
- Example: FB v Xavier



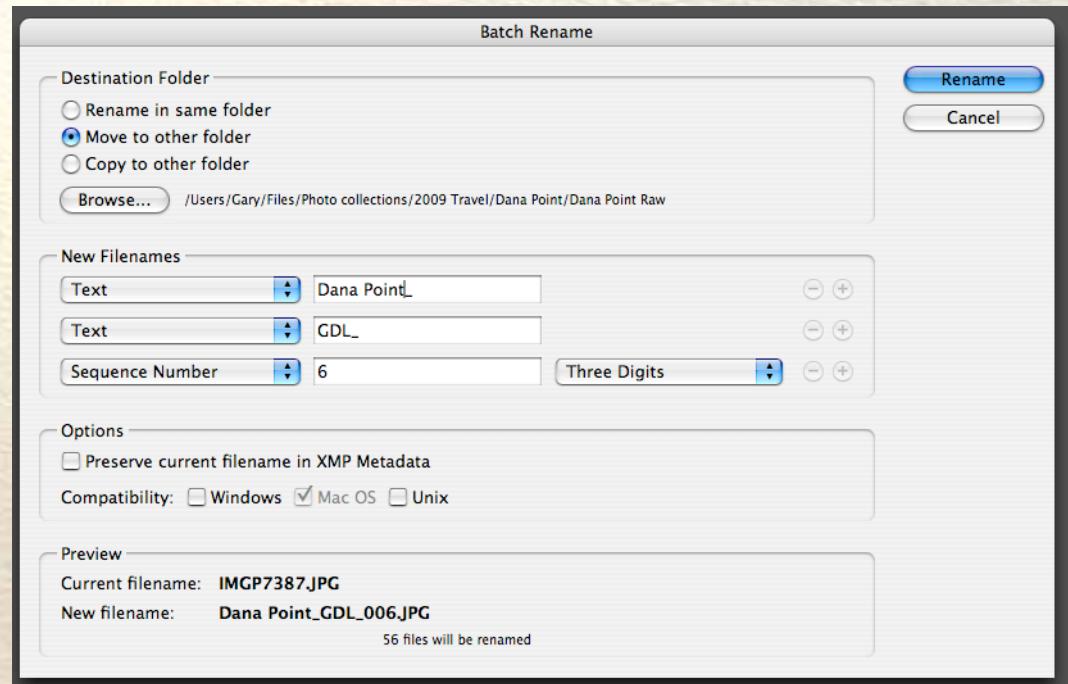
Three folders

- Raw (for the images moved from the card)
- Working - selected images for publication, web galleries
- Final - images after color balancing, toning, sharpening, cropping, captioning and mode change



Batch rename

- Move images
- Rename with
 - Photo slugline
 - Photog' s initials
 - Sequence number
- Becomes searchable data!



4. Crop images to improve composition

- Center of interest
- Unity
- Rule of thirds

Center of interest

- From this ...



- ... to this.



Unity

- From this ...



- ... to this.



Rule of thirds

- From this ...



- ... to this.



5. Color balance and tone for good printing

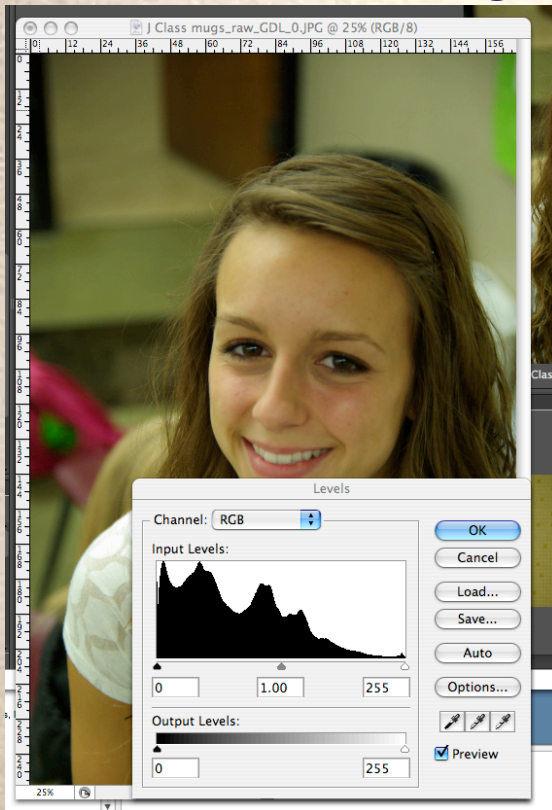
- Basic PhotoShop technique
- Color balance - every image needs it
- Grayscale toning
- Dot gain with newspaper printing

Color balance with PhotoShop

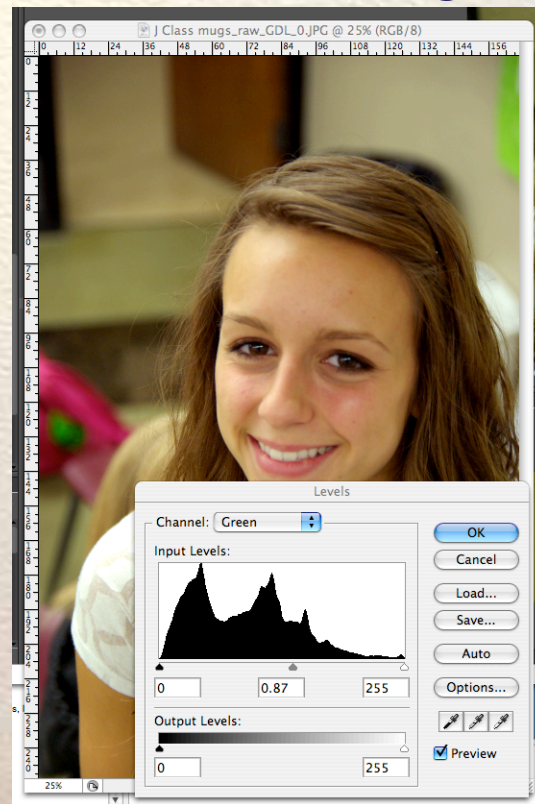
- Google it: videos and tutorials online
- Color balancing

Color toning

- Before toning



- After toning



Why toning is needed

- Dot gain - droplets of ink expand on newsprint making images 20% darker
 - Whites become gray
 - Grays become black
 - Contrast is lost
- Target tones: highlights = 3% K, darkest black = 87% K
- Adjust midtones: white faces 20-25% K

Review: 5 essential skills

- Handling your camera with mastery
- Shooting people pictures readers want to see
- Cropping photos to improve the composition
- Save and file photos correctly
- Color balance and tone images

Gary Lindsay, MJE

- journalismguy.wordpress.com/
- Glindsay711@mac.com