

## Photography Assignments

The following photography assignments can be done by individual students or as a class project. Through these three hands-on assignments and a writing assignment, students will explore their surroundings with a camera.

Eliot Porter photographed nature in remote locations, but he also found interesting imagery in his own backyard. Like Porter, students can find interesting subjects in their own environments.

Photography assignments are most effective after students:

- learn about Porter's life and photographs from the Web site, using the activity log;
- visit the exhibition *Eliot Porter: The Color of Wildness*, if possible.

The Photographic Record Sheet will help students make notes of their thoughts while taking each photograph.



### **A Note on Film and Cameras**

You may use any type of camera (disposable, point-and-shoot, or single lens reflex), but you should use color film.

When photographing in low light (shadows and dark areas), use a 400 or 800 speed film.

On a very bright day, you can use 200 speed film.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD SHEET**  
*Eliot Porter: The Color of Wildness*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of pictures you will take for this project: \_\_\_\_\_

(If you take more than twelve pictures, you can make a copy of this page.)

<b>Picture</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Field Notes</b>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

Keep in mind these techniques:

- framing/composition
- angle of view
- light quality

Keep in mind these elements of design:

- line, shape,
- color, texture,
- form, and space

## LOOKING FOR COLOR

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Jot down a list of colors that you think you will see in your neighborhood.

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Now, go out and compare your list to what you actually see. Which colors were from nature? Which were manufactured?

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What are the dominant colors in your neighborhood?

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**Use the Photographic Record Sheet to record your thoughts as you take each picture.**

### **Pictures 1-2**

First, take two pictures of your favorite color outdoors. Look for this color in places you would not expect to find it. Be sure you have enough light to take the picture. Like Porter, you can use color close-ups to describe a place, using details only you would recognize.

### **Pictures 3-6**

In four outdoor pictures, show color in your neighborhood related to:

- the time of day;
- the time of year;
- creating a sense of place or “portrait” of your neighborhood;
- the mood, atmosphere, or emotional impact you want to show.

### **Pictures 7-10**

Find unexpected color in the details of nature. Consider how Porter spent time closely observing his environment. Spend time looking around your world and observing it close up.

## WHAT WOULD OTHERWISE GO UNSEEN

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Think of things in your environment that typically go unnoticed—a plant, fence, old building, or drainpipe. How can you use photography to encourage others to see things that usually go unnoticed? How can your photographs invite viewers to think differently about people, places, and objects?

Eliot Porter achieved this in the photographs he took close to his home, as well as the ones he took around the world. Like Porter, give it a try!

### **Assignment**

Create a photo essay entitled *What Would Otherwise Go Unseen*. The essay consists of six to twelve pictures that invite a viewer (classmate, teacher, family, and school visitor) to look more carefully at the unique qualities of something.

Experiment with angle of view and framing. Look below your knees and above your head. Consider how other visual elements might help you achieve your goals (a list of these is on your Photographic Record Sheet).

**Use the Photographic Record Sheet to record your thoughts as you take each picture.**

### **Follow-up Activity**

After your film is developed, sort and mount your pictures into a small photo album. Reflect upon your photographic choices. Think about why you chose specific subject matter and what you might have done differently to make the pictures more interesting or successful. Write all of your thoughts in your album. Use the space below to jot down notes.

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## DEFENDING THE ENVIRONMENT

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Think of a particularly beautiful outdoor setting in your community. Consider what would happen if this special place were threatened by development or change.

- What would you do to protect your special place?
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- Who would you need to convince that this place should be protected?
- Make a photographic essay about this place, taking pictures that would show your point of view. Like Porter, take only details of the place to show the character and value of preserving it.

**Use the Photographic Record Sheet to record your thoughts as you take each picture.**

- Make a convincing argument in two paragraphs that would persuade someone to listen to your point of view. *Use a separate sheet for your argument.*

## MAKE A BOOK ABOUT YOUR PLACE

- **Write:** After you take photographs, write a paragraph or poem to go along with each image.
  - **Research:** Next, find poetry or writings that fit your photographs. Type them out and include the name of the author whom you quoted.
  - **Make:** Combine your own words, the words you found through research, and your photographs together in a book.
  - What are the drawbacks of publishing pictures that give widespread attention to a natural place? What happens to the place if many people visit it?
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