Tips for Taking Photos

The Subject

Identify and focus on your subject
Help the viewer understand the focus for the photo by making the subject stand out. You can’t always keep other objects out of the picture, so try to keep them in the background or make them part of the story.

Consider the background
Try shifting your viewpoint or position to replace a cluttered background with one that complements and balances the photo nicely.

Fill the frame
Zoom in or crop images to focus on your targeted subject.

People

Posed vs. Candid Shots
Posed shots are photos taken where the subject is actively interacting with the camera. Candid shots are photos taken while the subject is engaged in an activity or not actively posing for the photo. Take a variety of both kinds of shots.

Posed shots
Separate the natural shots from the goofy shots. Don’t be afraid to request a “normal, nice photo” and then give the opportunity to take a “goofy” photo afterwards.
Candid shots
Make sure to angle the view so that you can see most of the subjects’ faces and not their backs!

Group shots
• Take photos of people working on things together, learning together and having fun together.
• Take smaller group shots (2-4 people) more than large group shots.
• Shoot multiple images to increase your chance of getting the perfect group shot.

Awkward things to avoid
• Beware of items in the background that appear to “stick out of someone’s head.”
• Do not cut off feet or hands when framing the photo. Take photos of people waist up or full body.
• Encourage people to remove sunglasses and hats to avoid glare and shadows on their faces.

Composition checklist
Check your lighting
For the best results, make sure your light source (whether natural or artificial) is in front of your subject, not behind it. Don’t be afraid take photos in the shade if the sun is too harsh.
Leave space to move
If there’s action in your picture, leave space on the side of the frame where the action is headed. For example, when you look at a portrait you tend to follow someone’s gaze, and they need an area to look into before the frame runs out at the end of the photo.

The Rule of Thirds (Avoid the Middle)
Imagine that your image is divided into nine equal segments by two vertical and two horizontal lines. The Rule of Thirds says that you should position the most important elements in your scene along these lines, or at the points where they intersect. This will add balance and interest to your photo.

Where to place the horizon line
Position the horizon above or below the middle of the frame, not directly in the center of the image.