

LESSON
4

capture presents, paper, and ribbon



LESSON #4 OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- ★ Create well composed present, paper, and ribbon photos.
- ★ Find the best angle of view for your subject.

Are your presents wrapped under the tree or are they stuck in closets awaiting the moment to be tied with a ribbon?

With all of the work you put into creating beautiful packages, it is only fitting you capture them before they are ripped open on Christmas day!

My little holiday reminder(once again)! Please enjoy this process. If you find yourself frustrated over the settings, ask questions! Make this holiday about capturing your memories with as little stress as possible!

WELL COMPOSED

Have you ever wondered why some things placed in a frame look amazing and others look, well, ho hum? As we shoot the paper and packages of our holidays, think about a few design components to move your photos to the amazing side.

In the ornaments lesson we discussed creating a strong focal point. Now lets add in a few angles to our composition.

The composition of a photograph relies upon three things:

- 1 The Frame:** the frame refers to the crop, perspective and placement of your subject.
- 2 Negative Space:** the negative space is the white space around your subject.
- 3 Positive Space:** the space filled by your subject.

We work with these three elements to create a visually appealing photo.

RELAX!

For this lesson, use settings you are comfortable with. Focus on composition!

PRACTICE

This is a great lesson to practice composition with the techniques you've learned.

RULE OF THIRDS

Let's start with the frame. How do you know where to place your subject?

When you look through the viewfinder, imagine your image divided in thirds both horizontally and vertically. Use any of the thirds to create visual appeal.

An L shaped connection between the three intersection (or inverted L shape) can be effective too. The present photo shows a not quite so obvious use of the rule. See how the strong parts of the photo fall along the lines?

Taking a look at the present photo, notice how the weight falls into the right hand side of the frame. This is where our eye typically rests in a frame. A heavier object on the left side of the frame would make this photo look unbalanced, causing the viewer some confusion.



Photograph the same item placing it on each of the four red intersection points. What do you notice?

NEGATIVE SPACE

Negative space draws the viewer's eye right to your subject leaving them with little question about the story being conveyed. It can isolate an important detail and create a feeling of curiosity about the surroundings.

Negative space is also referred to as white space. It is the same technique used on a layout, applied to our photos. Leave space with nothing. No clutter, no body parts, no stuff, simply nothing. It pleases the eye and the brain!

I think of two types of negative space:

- ★ Negative space through absence.
- ★ Negative space through blur.

Negative space is created using some of the same techniques we used shooting ornaments. Nothing else is in the frame. You can get this look by:

- ★ Placing your subject against a solid colored wall
- ★ Shooting with the sky as your backdrop
- ★ Placing your subject on a backdrop or solid colored table

Your negative space is actually not negative at all. The space left without detail of your subject creates shapes. If we look at a photo in this way, you can see how the negative space creates visual appeal and movement through the frame.

When shooting negative space, consider too the shape of the negative space as much as you consider your subject. Play with placing the negative space in different parts of your frame to see how it changes the image. Of course all rules are made to be broken!



POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

Negative space helps to place emphasis on your subject. A viewer is left with no question about where you want them to look.



LINES & REPETITION

I find leading lines a little more difficult to find in my own everyday photography. With a little creativity we can create them in our holiday photos.

Notice the lines created in the animal bins at a local store. I shot this while shopping for my son's stocking stuffers. Notice how the lines lead you through the photo? Where do you notice your eye falling?

Repetition in photos creates lines that lead us into the photo as well.

SHOPPING SHOOT

Photograph presents as you are selecting them in the store. Its a great record and a source of repetition!



FILL THE FRAME

When filling the frame with your subject we can still draw from the other rules of composition we've covered.

Think about the lines your subject creates and how your eye physically moves around the frame. In the reindeer photo, do you notice that you start somewhere and end somewhere? Where does your eye naturally rest? Does anything distract you?

You also want the elements of your photo to be balanced. Avoid creating a feeling that something is going to slide right out of the frame.

Remember, our eyes naturally go from left to right expecting the weight to be in the right hand bottom corner.

ANGLE OF VIEW

There are so many ways to see the same thing. Differences occur as we look at something from above, from below, or from eye level. Not only do you emphasize different features, but your subject is transformed through the lens.

Playing with your angle of view will change your photos no matter what mode you shoot in! Try bending your knees getting on the level of your subject, looking down on things you might not normally view from above. Consider standing on a chair or stool to shoot down on your present. Avoid just standing and clicking the shot.

- ★ **High angle:** minimizes your subject, making it smaller, more delicate.
- ★ **From above (bird's eye view):** a dramatic view, unusual, emphasizing proportion.
- ★ **From eye level:** creates a sense of equality.
- ★ **From below:** makes your subject larger, and more powerful.



Shoot the same present from each angle. What do you find?



INSPIRATION & IDEAS

Here are a few present ideas to try:

- ★ Fill the frame with presents.
- ★ Shoot presents under the tree.
- ★ Shoot presents on the floor at their level.
- ★ Not wrapped? Photograph the area and items you use to wrap.
- ★ Photograph presents before they are wrapped.

While you have your camera out, consider taking photos of the decor around your house.

I've created a [Flickr Ornament Gallery](#) for your inspiration and a [Pinterest Capture Your Holiday board](#). Try to recreate one of your favorite photos!

If you are having difficulty with anything during the lesson, please ask questions! I want you to be successful!