

Silhouette Technique

Goal: Make sure that the silhouetted figure makes sense as a silhouette, that it's clear and distinct. In addition, be very aware of negative space, especially if the figure is entirely within the frame of your photograph.

Tips: This assignment is difficult because you'll be shooting an object against the sky. As a result, your light meter will get *very* confused. The "point of departure" setting is no help because you don't want a normally exposed image: the figure should be black against a white sky.

So, take a meter reading off the sky and then open your lens up two stops wider than indicated by the meter. For example, if the meter indicates f/16, shoot at f/8 instead. (Remember, the meter will want the sky to be gray, which is *not* what you want.) Bracket a few stops in both directions to see what effect that has.

Try to clearly isolate your subject, unless other details work well with it. Good subjects include trees, people, playground equipment, machinery, objects with holes in them that allow some light to show through. Avoid plain rectangular shapes like a building or door, since they don't tend to produce interesting silhouettes.

Night Exposure Technique

Goal: By now you should have a good idea of how the camera responds to variations in daylight. How does it respond to the night? Your task is to find this out.

Tips: For best results, select a location with some artificial source of light. Streetlights, car headlights, lighted windows of a house or other building will all work well. The moon can work, but it requires good timing, luck and patience.

Take some time to find a subject that is interesting enough to deserve a lot of your time. Unless you're very lucky, you'll need to do a considerable amount of experimenting to get a single photograph that is "just right." Be patient and creative.

This is one situation in which a hand-held meter can be very helpful. If you don't own one (or can't borrow one), try shooting at f/5.6 for about 1 minute to start. (Use a stop watch to keep track of your time.) Then bracket in both directions: 2 minutes, 30 seconds, 15 seconds, etc.

Remember that doubling the time (from 1 minute to 2 minutes) will have basically the same effect as opening the lens one stop (from f/5.6 to f/4). However, at very slow shutter speeds, the ratio is not accurate, due to what is called "reciprocity failure." Basically, this means that you'll have to guess a lot. So be sure to experiment with a wide range of exposures.

You might also try using a small ("penlight") flashlight to "draw" your subject. Here's how to do it: Set your camera up on a tripod. Place your subject carefully within the frame. Open the shutter, using the "B" setting and a fairly small aperture (try 178). Stand behind the subject and turn on the flashlight. Move the flashlight quickly along the edges of the subject, aiming it so the light is visible to the camera. After a few seconds (try 15 to start), turn off the flashlight and close the shutter.

Repeat the same procedure at different shutter speeds.

Pan Motion Technique

To pan, you stand in one place and swing your camera to follow the movement of your subject while you click

the shutter. If you're using a fairly fast shutter speed, you may be able to freeze even a quickly moving subject by panning.

If you're using a relatively slow shutter speed, however, the subject may blur less or not at all, but the background may blur considerably. This will result in a fairly crisp image of the subject, but it will seem to be moving very quickly, due to the streaks of the background.

Tips: Set your camera at $f/16 @ 1/15$ to start or equivalent based on meter reading of light. Once you get going, experiment with shutter speeds as low as $1/8$. You'll find the assignment easiest on a gray, overcast day, since you don't want too much light. Alternatively, you might use a neutral density filter, which cuts down the amount of light entering the camera.

Aim your camera so your subject is moving into the frame. Begin following your subject's movement and then release the shutter. Keep moving with the subject as the shutter opens and closes. This will produce a blurred background with your subject more or less "frozen."