

Judging Photos

Modified from a website at
<http://hometown.aol.com/newimages9;photo/begin.htm>

1.) Have a set of criteria or guidelines for judging BEFORE you start

These may be given to you by the organization for which you are judging. If not, you need to develop your own.

2.) Check the range of quality in photos to be judged BEFORE you start

In other words, insist on previewing at least some of the photographs before judging to get an idea of the quality of material submitted.

3.) Clear your mind of subject matter prejudice.

This is most important for photographic categories (such as General or Pictorial) where many different subjects are judged together.

4.) Avoid "snap" judging caused by initial sensory overload

Over the first 5 seconds of viewing, there are some photos that assault the eyes with beautiful bold colors, spectacular vistas, or captivating close-up views. **Try to resist this urge and regain mental composure!**

5.) Avoid judging that favors "technical proficiency" over "creativity"

Judging should revolve around 2 major considerations - what the photographer is trying to say (creativity) and how well this is portrayed in the photograph (technical proficiency).

6.) Consider "pluses" as well as "minuses" in commenting and scoring

In the process of objectively judging photos, one should mentally tally up the **pluses** as well as **minuses** of a given image.

7.) Avoid overadherence to one arbitrary "rule of composition".

In general, it is best to realize that photographic quality can be influenced by **many** different aesthetic elements, all of which deserve consideration in photojudging.

8.) Avoid obsession with minor imperfections.

The moral here is: **A minor imperfection should not mean a major reduction in your final score!**

9.) Be careful with photos that evoke a strong emotional response

First, ask yourself whether your emotional response is representative of the typical observer or a uniquely personal reaction. Second, **images that elicit anger, shock, grief, melancholy, frustration, etc., should not be scored less than images yielding good emotions, if they are of otherwise similar photographic quality!**

10.) Stick to your guidelines for judging throughout the ENTIRE contest.

Thoroughly evaluate the picture for exposure, composition, etc., the **same** way you (hopefully) have judged all previous photos in the competition.

11.) Your final score should reflect your initial comments

"Nicely composed, great leading lines, perfect exposure, strong subject --I'll give it a 4 out of 10..."

DUH?!! This happens more often than you think, and can be particularly irksome to the maker of the photo being judged. In my experience the reverse (bad comments, high score) is much less common. Stay alert and make sure that for every photograph judged, **your comments justify your final score!**