The rules of photo composition will help your photographers take great photos the first time. Integrating these rules can result in quality story-telling photos.

1. Fill the Frame
Get close to the subject and eliminate any dead space that doesn’t enhance the photo. However, you can use space to show the subject moving or looking purposefully in a logical direction. During the page layout process, the photos should be cropped to eliminate space behind the subject and above the heads.

2. Rule of Thirds
Think in terms of placing a tic-tac-toe grid on top of a photo. Place your subject in the intersections of the grid, rather than dead-center. It is important for designers to understand this concept when they place and crop photos.
3. Leading Lines
Leading lines are visible or perceived lines that draw the viewer to a specific place in a photo, usually the subject. A visible leading line could be a fence line or the length of a table that brings the viewer to the subject. The key is getting close enough to the subject. Invisible leading lines could be a group of students looking at someone conducting an experiment. The viewer’s eye is drawn to the place where the people are looking.

4. Simplicity
Keep the backgrounds uncluttered and create a strong center of interest by keeping the subject(s) in focus.

5. Vary the angle
Avoid the “straight-on” photo. The way we see the world is not the way we want to show it. Even something ordinary can appear unique when photographed from a different angle. Think bird’s-eye view and worm’s-eye view. A good tool for teaching students is to liken photography angles to the face of a clock. Except for group photos, avoid taking photos from 6 o’clock if the subject is at noon. Consider taking photos from angles equivalent to 3-4 and 8-9 on a clock. With an overhead angle, be aware of faces, because it is easy to get mostly tops of heads.