

**Intended for Grades:** 6-12

**Est. Time:** Intro-Basic Photography, 15 min.; Taking Community Photos, varied; Editing, 20-40 min.; Project Presentations, 3-5 min. per person

**Lesson Title:** MY COMMUNITY LENS

**Lesson Purpose: Students will:**

- \* Look at their surrounding community and environment through the lens of a camera.
- \* Create a mural with images of community.
- \* Increase collaboration and observation skills while expressing creativity and learning about their community.

**Background Information:**

“A picture says a thousand words.” The oldest method of learning is observation. A picture is a record of a moment in time, which can then offer others unlimited time of observation.

Since the invention of the camera in the early 1800s, humans have been enraptured with the idea of freezing moments in time through photography. Cameras have evolved from big boxy devices that required subjects to stand still for minutes to miniscule digital devices in our mobile phones. *What is it about photographs that still have us obsessing over this technology?*

Perhaps we are passionate about photography because it offers a lens, literally and metaphorically, for which one can express their own views on life. As photography has advanced, it has become possible for even the youngest child to share his world-view through the camera lens. Often times in today’s society we refer to this world-view as a cultural lens.

*“The cultural lens is a programming and analytical tool that assists policy makers and development professionals to evaluate, understand and use positive cultural values, structures and resources in their programming and planning processes. It can enhance the objectives of programming successfully and efficiently with strong community acceptance and possession.”* ([www.ask.com/question/what-is-a-cultural-lens](http://www.ask.com/question/what-is-a-cultural-lens))

This lesson is an opportunity for learners to share how they view their community, simply through the subjects that they choose to photograph. A child may choose to photograph his weekend hunting or surfing, or perhaps she may choose to shoot her favorite urban scene. This is the learners’ chance to capture the community that surrounds them through their own lens.

**Application to Learning Environment:**

\* *Artwork Display:* Set up an exhibit where learners can display their photographs. Invite community members to visit the display, allowing students to share their images and the story behind them.

\* *Link to “This Is \_\_\_\_\_” Mural Collage Lesson:* Have the learners when they create multi-media murals from images of their community. Find this lesson in the GPS Community section.

\* *Advisory Project:* The style and mood of artwork that a Learner favors is often a great window into that individual’s personality, preferences and even behaviors. What the Learner chooses to photograph will also show what each student finds interesting. Even

if a group of Learners are taking photos at one site, individuals will choose to shoot different things, from nature, to people, to architecture.

**Materials:**

- \* Digital Cameras
- \* Computer with basic photography software (*Most computers come with a simple photo software program*).
- \* Printer and paper
- \* My Community Lens Learner Handout
- \* Framing Your Lens Student Worksheet
- \* Transparency paper

**Lesson Preparation:**

1. Copy the Framing Your Lens Student Worksheet onto transparency paper, making enough for each student.
2. Collect as many cameras as possible for student use.
3. Review the resources on basic photography to become sufficiently knowledgeable on the subject.
4. Run through the project one time yourself, taking your photos to share as example images.

**Steps:**

1. Introduce Basic Photography to the group. Discuss what they already know about taking photos, including why we do this.
2. Introduce the Project “My Community Lens” by distributing and discussing the two page student worksheet. Also share with students your example of your “My Community Lens” images.
3. Go over some techniques of Basic Photography with Learners:
  - Composition (See the Framing Your Lens Student Worksheet to practice)
  - Exposure (How much light is your shot exposed to)
  - Selection of subject
4. Have your class go outside to practice the basics in photography with the school cameras and their Framing Your Lens sheets.
5. Assign your students to go out and capture their community through their personal lens. Help those without access to a camera borrow one from the school or take pictures on campus of the school community.
6. Have students bring back their cameras/memory cards to print images at school. (*Help them use basic photography software to fix color, contrast, red-eye, and any other small edits to their photos.*)
7. Facilitate a time for photographers to present their images and the stories behind them to the class and larger community if possible. (Learners may work in groups or as individuals for this project.)

**Assessment:**

1. Have students present photographs and the story to classmates; have each person write a post-it note with feedback on what they liked.
2. Use the rubric attached to assess class presentations.
3. Follow up with the student handout answer sheet.
4. *Hō'ike* (visually display) their photographs for their school or larger community to see. Have comment cards available to capture community impressions and feedback.

**Resources:**

Basic Photography Slide Show (Free Resource):

<http://www.slideshare.net/hweeling/basic-photography-lesson>

Composition:

[http://www.silverlight.co.uk/tutorials/compose\\_expose/compse.html](http://www.silverlight.co.uk/tutorials/compose_expose/compse.html)

Rule of thirds

[http://www.silverlight.co.uk/tutorials/compose\\_expose/thirds.html](http://www.silverlight.co.uk/tutorials/compose_expose/thirds.html)

Basic Information on Exposure

<http://m.digitalrey.com/#article?id=42872936>

**MY COMMUNITY LESSONS**  
**Student Worksheet (Page 1/2)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The oldest method of learning is observation, and pictures provide still shots of a second in time that provides hours of observation. Since the invention of the camera in the early 1800s, humans have been enraptured with the idea of freezing moments in time through photography. Cameras have evolved from big boxy devices that required subjects to stand still for minutes to miniscule digital devices that combine with our mobile phones. What is it though, about photographs, that they still have us obsessing over this technology? Let's see what we can discover through this lesson.

Instructions:

1. Review the basics of photography with your Instructor.
  - Composition
  - Lens
  - Exposure
2. Practice with your class the basic steps of photography.
3. As an individual or group (dependant upon your teachers instructions) decide what theme or subject matter you will be photographing in your community.
4. Go out into your community/environment and begin to shoot away with your camera. The idea is to get as many photos as possible to have the best selection for a final image.
7. Take your images back to the classroom and download them onto a computer with basic photography software programs.
8. Select your final image for this project and make any final edits necessary. Remember your photo should tell a story, whether it's a famous wind blowing across a landscape, or a mother feeding a child.
9. Print your image and answer the review questions on this hand-out.
8. Share with your peers your image and the story it represents.
9. Submit your worksheet and your image to your Teacher.

**MY COMMUNITY WORKSHEET**  
**Student Worksheet (Page 2/2)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

**Photo Information**

Name of Image:

Photographer:

Subject (Description of the image):

Location:

Date:

**Review Questions:**

1. Why did I choose this subject?

2. What is the story behind my photo? (Minimum 3 sentences)

**Learner Assessment Rubric**

<b>Assessment Questions</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Assessed Points</b>
Did the Learner consider/use composition appropriately in the photograph?		
Did the Learner consider/use proper lighting and exposure for the subject of his photograph?		
Does the photograph capture the story of the Learner is trying to share about his community/environment?		
Did the Learner sufficiently answer the review questions on their worksheet in a timely fashion?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

**Comments:**

**Framing My Lens  
Using the Rule of Thirds**

