

Beginning Photography Vocabulary

DSLR – Digital Single Lens Reflex. A type of camera that uses mirrors to reflect the image through the lens and back to the viewfinder. These cameras have larger sensors than most point-and-click cameras so they can create a much higher image quality, even with the same pixel size.

Aperture – The hole that lets light into your camera. It can be adjusted to various widths that are known as f-stops.

Shutter – The apparatus that opens and closes to let light into your camera. It can be set to different speeds.

Film Speed (ISO) – This used to be the rating of an individual roll of film. In a digital camera, it refers to your camera's sensitivity to light.

Light (Exposure) Meter – A scale that measures the amount of light that is currently being let into your camera. It will tell you if you have too much, too little, or just enough light.

Depth of Field – How much space in the photo is in focus. If the background, middle ground and foreground are in focus, it is a wide depth of field. If only one slice of space is in focus, it is a narrow depth of field (also known as selective focus). Depth of field is controlled by the aperture.

Photo Noise – This refers to a loss of smoothness and crispness in a photo as you raise the ISO.

In Focus – the area of the photo that is sharp (you can see it most clearly)

Shutter speed – the length of time that the shutter is open and the camera sensor is exposed

Exposure – the level of brightness of a photo

Over-exposed – the photo has been too exposed to light, making the photo too bright

Under-exposed – the photo hasn't been exposed to light long enough, making the photo too dark