

Part II

Student Handbook



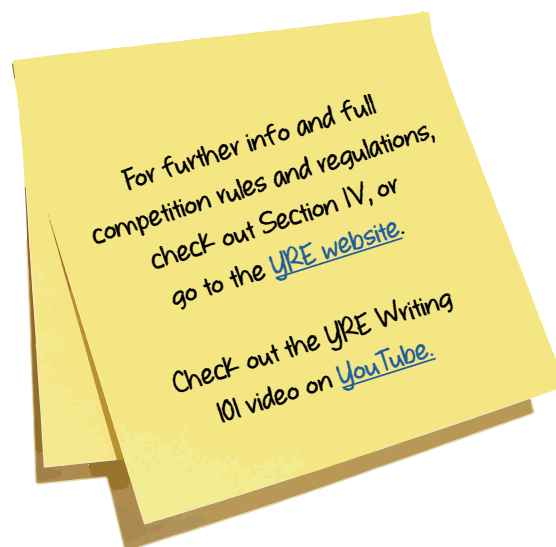
4. YRE International Competition: Get involved!

YRE holds an annual International journalistic competition for participants in the programme. The purpose of this competition is not only to engage youth on environmental issues and problems, but also to disseminate great work produced by enthusiastic youth, and to share their thoughts and ideas with the network and an international audience.

National Juries will first evaluate and award national submissions. These may, then, be submitted to the International competition, where they will be evaluated by a jury representing notable international organisations.

The competition serves to motivate participants and give them an opportunity to learn from each other. In order to participate in the YRE International competition, however, the Young Reporter must reside in a country where the YRE programme is currently implemented.

Every submission to the International competition must first go through the national competition evaluation process.



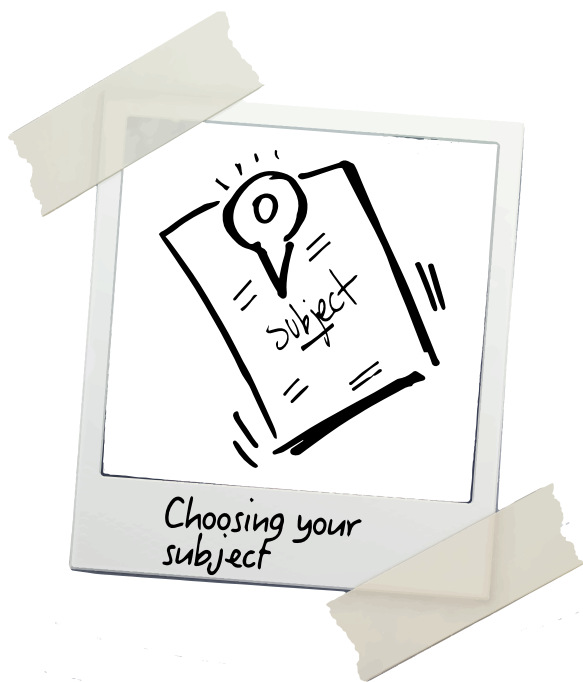
5. Writing 101: Top tips for your articles

Step #1: Choosing your subject

Submitting an article to YRE requires you to look into an environmental issue, but it could be difficult to pick one.

You can make your life easier by focusing on what's local. Not only is that a requirement for YRE, but also when you focus on your own community, your knowledge – and that of people you know – will go further, and you will have access to experts and passionate people to whom the issue really matters.

Help yourself by reading up on environmental issues in your community, to figure out what angles have been



used, and what other angles could you focus on.

Most importantly, pick something you feel passionate about, and is directly relevant or important to you. That passion will show in your writing, and will make your job significantly easier.

Step #2: Making it global

So, you're writing about your school, your neighborhood, your city – your community. That's great!

Young Reporters for the Environment is an international project, however. How do you make your story relevant to readers around the world? Why should readers care about your community? Because you make it global, that's why.

Your article should throw a magnifying glass over the local issue of your choice. Think about the connections between that issue in your community and elsewhere on the planet.

That's your bridge.

Keep it local, but be sure to take it global by providing context and relevance for your international readers. Hover that magnifying glass over the Earth.

Step #3: Do your research

Nothing says "I'm an informed Young Reporter" like **being** an informed Young Reporter! Once you pick a theme, do some research on it...

Research. Research. Research.

And we don't mean Wikipedia either.





You can do better. Google it. Follow threads. Call the experts. Be an investigative reporter!

Find out different angles of your story in your local community; who the parties involved are; what has been written about it; if there are any local campaigns about the issue. What about internationally, what does that look like in other countries? You might want to pick just one or two international cases to provide your global context.

Step #4: **Write for the 21st Century**

You're part of the Digital Native generation. That means that you were born in the digital era, and have been dealing with digital stuff all your life.

Analog doesn't float your boat (what's analog, anyway...?).

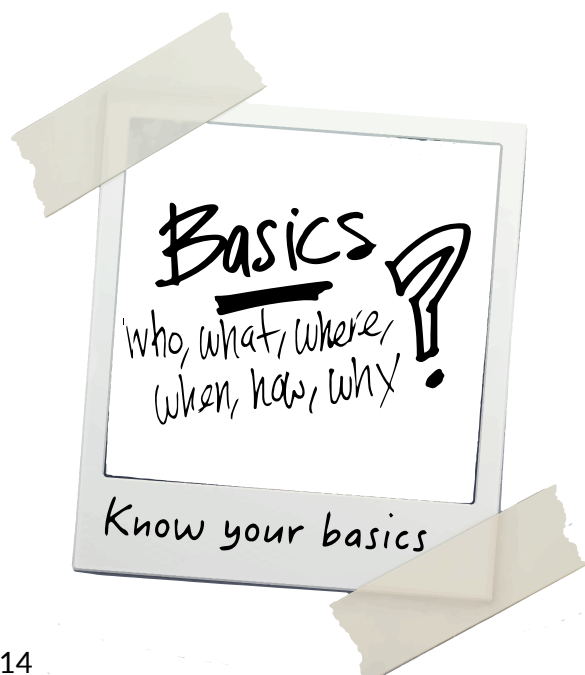
So, when you're writing your article, think about the media **you** use, where you get your news from, and how they are written. Think about Facebook titles, Tweets, #hashtags, and BuzzFeed headlines; think about reading news on your phone. Remember that people's attention span online is much shorter than when they're holding a paper. Keep people interested by writing an engaging text for busy 21st century readers.

Step #5: Journalism basics

It's an easy one.

Who did what where and when?

That's your key information. Respond to these questions when framing the



issue. Then you can go on to additional information:

How did the what occur, or how did the who do the what?

Why did the who do the what?

Nail these 6 basic questions and you're on your way to writing a most excellent article.

Step #6: Journalism vs. Opinion

OK, this is a tricky one. You're asked to be a reporter. So, when you write, make sure you **report**. That means you're telling a story, and it might be interesting to you, but you and your friends are not the story, neither is your opinion part of it.

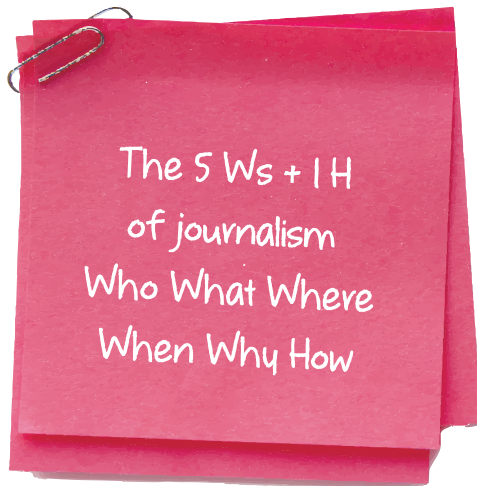


You should cover every side of the issue, which often includes conflicting views. As a reporter, you should keep your tone neutral, and remain unbiased. Don't editorialize.

You are reporting, not writing an opinion piece.

If you want to present a solution, find someone to interview who harbors the viewpoint you have in mind, and have him/her express it for the record. It's always more valid when someone else says it...

For more on typical editorial guidelines, and on presenting all sides of an argument, check out this [link](#) in London's The Guardian newspaper.



Step #7: Write your Lead

Most straight leads should be summary leads, i.e. they summarize the key 5 Ws + 1 H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How) of your story. But that's often too much information.

Before writing a lead, decide which aspect of the story – who, what, when, where, why, how – is the most important. You should emphasize those aspects in your lead. Explain less important aspects in the second or third sentence.

Good stories have conflict. So do many good leads. Find the conflict in your story and use it in your lead if you can. Two different views on the same issue can often constitute conflict.

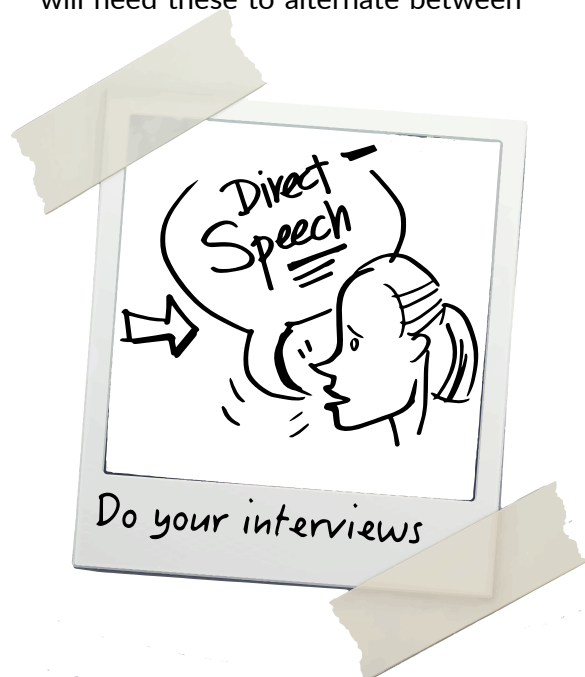
Though most leads essentially summarize, try to be specific as possible. If your lead is too broad, it won't be

either informative or interesting to your readers.

And be brief: Readers want to know why the story matters to them and they won't wait long for the answer. Leads are often one sentence, maybe two. Aim for 25 to 30 words, 40 at the most. This is somewhat arbitrary, but it's important – especially for young journalists – to learn how to deliver information concisely.

Step #8: Direct Speech, or How to Use an Interview

Surely you have some interviews in your pocket by now. Whether it's experts, community leaders, teachers, or other students, interview them and select a handful of **soundbites**. You will need these to alternate between





direct and indirect speech when writing your article.

Provide the context, and then provide evidence by quoting someone who is an informed party. Often times, people with an emotional connection to the subject make the best interviewees. Sometimes it's the expert whom you need. Select wisely.

And then give us some "She said", "he said".

Step #9: Write your headline

You might be tempted to start out with your headline. Don't.

It's much easier to do at the end of your article, once you know the entire story inside out. Remember the key facts about headlines:

- ✓ Headlines are short, direct, and snappy
- ✓ Headlines should be smart and witty
- ✓ Headlines should **not** be boring (even if writing about new planters in the town square, make them sound rad!)
- ✓ Headlines often inform the Lead

Step #10: Photos & Captions

You know what they say, one picture is worth a 1000 words. Oftentimes it's easier to add a photo than to write 3 paragraphs. Use images to illustrate your story. Ensure they're not random, unrelated, or generalist photos.

How does that specific photo illustrate your article? Does it comment on a section of it? Does it show one of the experts you interviewed? Does it show the problem? Does it hint at a solution? Does it set a tone?



Pick one aspect to illustrate and, if you can, use 2-3 photos.

Your captions should be really short: try to cap it at 10-15 words, and make sure they add or summarize information, drawing your reader's attention to something. Definitely don't use your caption to describe the photo – that's annoying and condescending to readers (e.g., if the photo shows a car in front of a factory, your caption should not read "a car in front of a factory").

Step #11: Editing

Once you're done with your story, pretend you have a newspaper editor hovering over your head, and go back to do what a newspaper editor would tell you to do: go edit!

Then go edit some more.

What should you be looking for?

Spelling. Use the spell check function on your computer.

Check the Facts. Did you cover all the basic questions in your article? Did you justify them all? Are you sure you got the facts right?

Read out Loud. Does your article make sense? Reading your article out loud may make you look a bit crazy, but it will help you detect any parts that don't sound too good. You can also read for someone else.

Grammar. Get your tenses and sentence structures right!

Finding Balance. Did you strike a fair balance between all opinions and sources on the issue? Remember, it's not an opinion piece, you should be fair to all sides.

Step #12: Check list!

Now that you think you're done, go back and do some more editing. Make sure it all sounds good.

- ✓ Check for the 5 Ws + H.
- ✓ Do you have a great headline?
- ✓ Do you have an awesome lead?
- ✓ Do you have expert interviews?
- ✓ Did you cover a local issue in a global context?
- ✓ Did you fact-check?
- ✓ Did you check for grammar and spelling?
- ✓ You did? Well, click "send" then!

Article Case Study I

International YRE, 2014

1st Place Winner

Morocco

EXPERT ANALYSIS

- ① **Title:** A better title would read **Morocco's Kebdana forest is history**. Saying "Morocco" allows international readers to geographically place the article - it makes it global; using "is" (present-tense) gives the text a current tone. It's not relevant to reveal the exact number of hectares burnt in the title. Keep it for the body.
- ② **Subject:** The choice of language implies passion and sorrow. This YRE cares for this forest. Always chose themes you identify with and feel strongly about.
- ③ **Who-Where-What-When Lead:** Kebdana Forest, in Eastern Morocco, lost 1810 hectares to a devastating wildfire in 2012, marking the region's worst natural disaster.
- ④ **Do your research!!!** The lead *isn't* the place to ask questions! Instead, you should be hinting at the answers.
- ⑤ **Journalism vs. Opinion:** Is this a report or an article? We should not be reading about what students decided to research - we should be reading about what they found out. Keep yourself out of the story... just report!
- ⑥ **Photo captions:** Not captioning the photo misses the chance to share an off-beat story about the fire.

YRE International Times

① KEBDANA FOREST

② 1810 Hectares have become history

- ③ The Eastern region takes the lead of fire—affected areas in the year 2012. The most important of these is Kebdana forest—fire which devastated 1810 Hectares to score as the worst disaster in the region. What is the cause for this heavy damage? What are its repercussions on man and environment? Do precautionary measures contribute to limiting the fire spread?
- ④ These questions and many others are the questions we have put in this report.

- ⑤ Five months after "Kebdana forest fire, our reporter pool decided to make a tour in this region which is located about 65 Kilometres far from Nador and is situated north of the town of Zaiou, Lotta District, Caidat of Kebdana—Ras El Ma, coming under the authority of the two rural communities: El Berkaneen and Ouled Daoud—Zekhanine. The Goal was to make a recapitulation of the events of this devastating fire which lasted four days in a row and depict the scale of this environmental disaster and its repercussions.



Article Case Study 2

International YRE, 2014

1st Place Winner

Malta

EXPERT ANALYSIS

- ① **Amazing headline!** Smart and witty, which is great for 21st century readers, who like to be entertained.
- ② **What's missing on this headline?** A subtitle!! We need more information...
- ③ **Who-Where-When-What Lead:** This lead can be improved by adding a word to the second sentence, to read: "Malta's rubble trouble..."
- ④ **Body of the text moves too quick here.** This first paragraph should re-iterate the problem and its root causes, even re-iterating the lead.
- ⑤ **Photo captions:** In an article, a photo and its caption offer an opportunity to complement the story by adding something on the side. A texture, a comment, a suggestion... Never miss a chance to caption your photos!
- ⑥ **Could an interviewee** make the statement about animals up in arms, "says Mr. Such-and-Such"...?
- ⑦ **Check List:** Always remember to check your facts, the story's balance, and its quality. Run through the check list (#12).

YRE International Times

① THE RUBBLE TROUBLE

②

③ Snakes, hedgehogs and snails are up in arms! The rubble walls that provided a safe haven come rain or shine are now in a steady decline.

④ The area once a garigue habitat is now a mismatched eyesore with a patchwork of fields with different coloured soil brought over from different locations, and even debris from nearby quarries.

⑥ To replace the rubble walls the farmer has alternated between planting palm trees and surrounding his land with globigerina limestone blocks, and in some places there isn't even anything to cover or protect the soil from the frequent strong winds and heavy rainfall because the soil is level with the boundary wall itself. When it rains one can see a distinct trail of red-dish brown water oozing from the naked field and snaking down the country road. Here the greed of the owner to reclaim land for cultivation and minimize time and money by choosing not to surround his land with rubble walls is simply providing his children with a legacy of eroded land were nothing, or very little, can be cultivated.

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6. Photography 101: Top tips for your shot

Step #1: What's the story behind your photograph?

It's important to remember that photojournalism is different from other kinds of photography – and also from other kinds of journalism! Sometimes your photo will illustrate aspects of an article, others you'll need a really good caption to just complement it... And a lucky few times you might even be able to capture an entire story with just one photo! As the saying goes, a picture is worth 1000 words!

Maybe something develops right under your nose. If that's the case, pull out your emergency camera (i.e., your phone!), and snap first, think later...

More often than not, however, telling a story with a photo is a combination



of luck, planning, and proactively looking for a shot. Put yourself out there.

You should think long and hard if photography is the best medium to convey what you are trying to convey. And, if it is, can you visually connect an issue in your community with something in the wider world? Is your photo just exposing a problem, or can you demonstrate or suggest a solution?

Remember the basic rules of journalism: Who? What? When? Where? Have a hook (something that grabs your attention).

And make it current.

Check out the
YRE Photo
101 video on
YouTube.

Step #2: Plan your photo

Having a rough idea of the story you want to tell before you hit the pavement will make your photo that much easier to find!

Then, you need to decide what kind of photos to take.

Start by analysing other people's work to see what you like. You could pick up random papers, or learn by studying the work of the master photographers of today.

- ✓ What makes their photos so amazing?
- ✓ What draws **you** to a particular photo?
- ✓ What story is it trying to tell?
- ✓ How does it fit into the rules of composition?

Study the work of master photographers:

Click on the links below

The New York Times

Thomson Reuters

National Geographic

World Press Photo

Masters of Photography



Once you've answered these questions, consider how you'll go about doing the same for **your** own photo. Think. Plan...

And remember: tell the story visually. Show, don't tell!

Step #3: Lighting

Lighting is one of the key aspects of every great photograph. There is no single right way to do things, but there are certainly ways to obtain better results.

Make sure you know what kind of light you will be dealing with, or better yet, plan to take your photos when you have the best light available! Generally speaking, you'd want to shoot with the sun behind you, but you could also play with other types of lighting, until you find the kind of effect you like.



The golden hour is a short period after sunrise or before sunset, during which daylight is redder and softer compared to when the Sun is higher in the sky. The colours on your photos will pop out in all sorts of beautiful hues. Avoid photographing when the Sun is at its highest in the sky (usually 11 am to 4 pm).

If you are shooting indoors, things get trickier. Try to use natural light (from a window), if you have insufficient natural light, it's sometimes best to eliminate all natural sources, and to create a 2-point or 3-point lighting artificially (see a tutorial [here](#)). Try to mimic the kind of lighting you'd find outside.

Step #4: Depth of Field

In optics, depth of field (a.k.a. focus range or effective focus range), is the distance between the nearest and the farthest objects in a scene that

appear acceptably sharp in an image. Textures, colours, and contrast look much richer when you achieve a good depth of field.

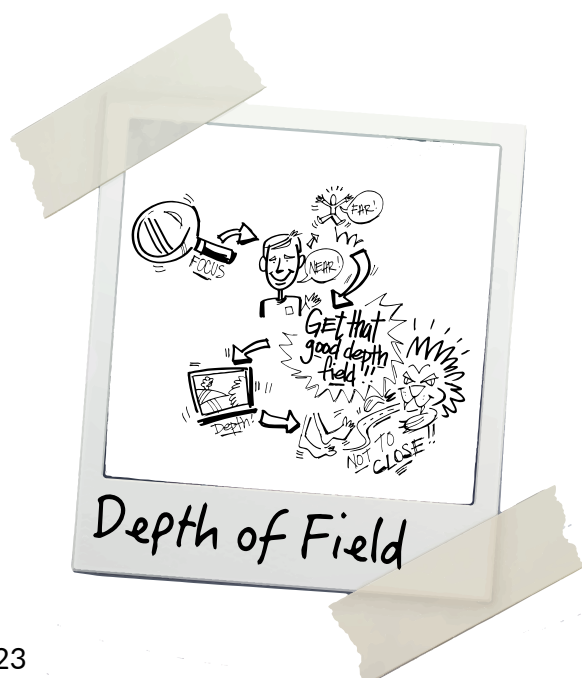
There are a couple of simple tricks to do this.

You could take a photo in such a way you have two objects in the frame, at two clearly different distances. The human eye will automatically process the distance and generate an optical perception of depth.

You could also just move close to the closest object.

Don't use your zoom, just use your feet.

Move closer. Closer. Closer! Move as close as you can without losing the furthest object as a reference – and without endangering yourself.



Experiment with your rack focus, moving your focus from the furthest to the closest object, or vice-versa, until you find a sweet spot you are happy with.

You could also try filling the space with your subject, to create impact in that photo. Remember: a great photographer knows no bounds on his/her efforts for a great shot!

Step #5: Perspective

Oftentimes you need to change your perspective to get a good photo. One of the simplest methods for a more compelling photograph is to get a closer look. Or to sink to someone else's level – kneel down, get down on your stomach, do whatever you have to so that you get that lens where you want it!

If you're not exactly sure what you're trying to say with your picture, try different perspectives – close up shots, wide angles, full frontals, angled... Check out the photos on your viewfinder and decided what speaks to you, and which one tells the story better. Then go back and re-shoot that photo with confidence.

Composition Rules

Horizon lines: Make sure that you line up the horizon in your photo. Turn on the in-built grid in your camera, if you need it.

Rule of thirds: The most important of all photo rules. Mentally split the screen with 3x3 tiles (like a tic-tac-toe board!). Most recent SLR cameras and smartphones have this optional feature. Place key elements of your photo at the intersection of the lines, and important elements right along the lines...

Leading lines: Use natural lines to lead you to a focal point.

Diagonal lines create great movement in a photo.

Frame your photo using things such as windows and doors.

Figure to ground: Find a contrast between subject and background.

Fill the frame: Get closer to your subject, for an intimate view.

Patterns and repetition: patterns are pleasing to the human eye, but interrupted patterns are even more pleasing. Like 20 poppies and one violet spread in a field.

Symmetry is a winner. Use and abuse it.

Step #6: Composition

Well. Composition is a masterclass. Professional photographers struggle with it every day, and often have to stop and think. So, don't expect to get it all right the first time. But keep at least a couple of these in mind when you're taking your photographs.



Step #7: Break the Rules!

So... now, like a real pro you've memorized your rules and are trying to take photos that respect them. Don't let this stop you. Composition is important but rules are made to be broken. Enjoy yourself. And if your gut tells you something's good, it probably is. Every now and then, you need to know when to follow your instinct, and when to ignore the rules. Improvise.

may have, and you should respect that rule.

Write your caption like a lead in an article. Make it impressive, snappy and informative, but not descriptive. Captions should tell you about the background of a photo, not describe the photo. It might take a few tries, but make sure you get it right.

Step #8: Writing a caption

Well, not all rules are meant to be broken. Remember, in YRE there is a limit to how many words your caption

Step #9: Journalistic Ethics & Editing

Back in the day, any sort of editing was frowned upon. But nowadays



most media have people called “photo editors”. Photos are enhanced, colour-corrected, cropped, played with. This is done under close supervision by editors, and under strict guidelines about what can and cannot be done, and what a newspaper does or does not do.

For more information on photo-journalism editorial guidelines, check out these links:

What is never done is altering or manufacturing the contents or context of a photo. Of course everything is always subjective, and you are making decisions (i.e., “editing”) even as you choose what to photograph. But, at the end of the day, your photo should be an ethical, accurate portrayal of reality.

Remember: No amount of editing should ever, ever, ever alter reality! After all, you’re a reporter, not a photographic artist... just sayin’...

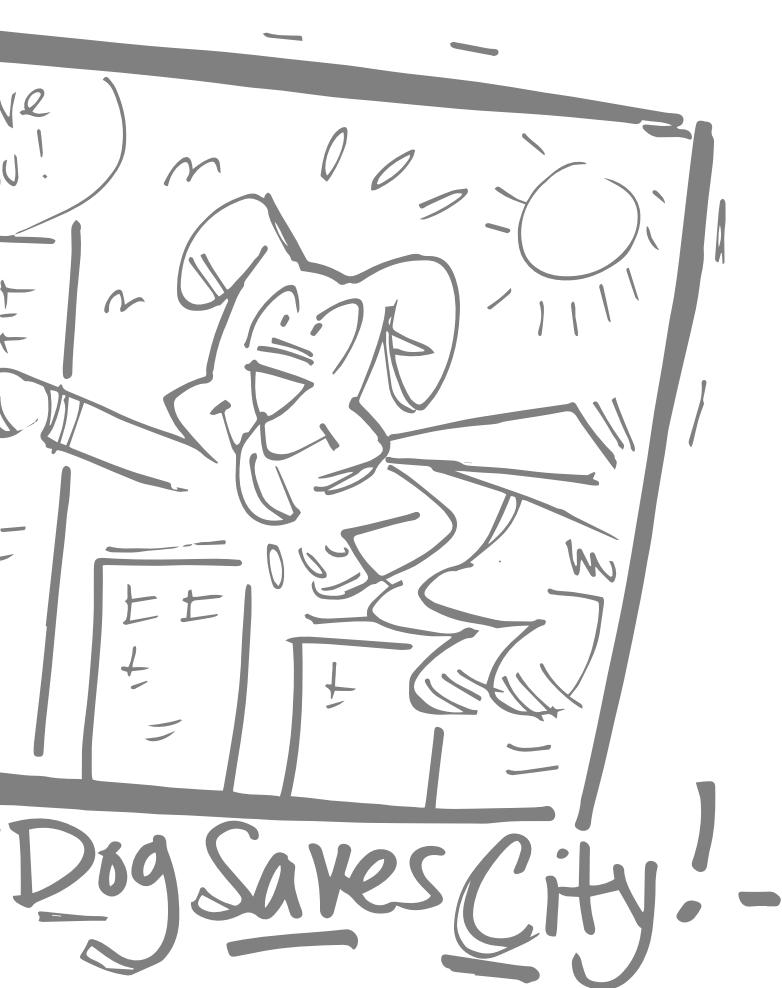
For more information on photojournalism ethics, check out these links:

NPPA Code of Ethics for Photo Journalists

Centre for Journalism Ethics — Online Ethics

Debating the Rules of Ethics in Photojournalism





And a final note, to reiterate:

Composition in photography is far from a science, and as a result all of the “rules” above should be taken with a pinch of salt. If they don’t work in your scene, ignore them; if you find a great composition that contradicts them, go ahead and shoot it anyway. You need to know when to trust your gut, and when to be rational and follow the rules... They can often prove to be spot on, and are worth at least considering whenever you are out and about with your camera.

You can get a complete photography crash-course with the masters of the art, following these 10 tutorial videos:

9 Photo Composition Tips by Steve McCurry (Video)

5 Keys to Finding the Perfect Portrait Location

10 Photography Lighting Facts You Should Know

4 Best Types of Natural Light for Your Photo

Natural Light in Photography

The Golden Hour in Photography

Photographing Water Drops

Using Focus Lock on Your Digital Camera

The 3 Best Lens Filters for Landscape Photography

Shutter Speed: A Beginner’s Guide

Photography Case Study I

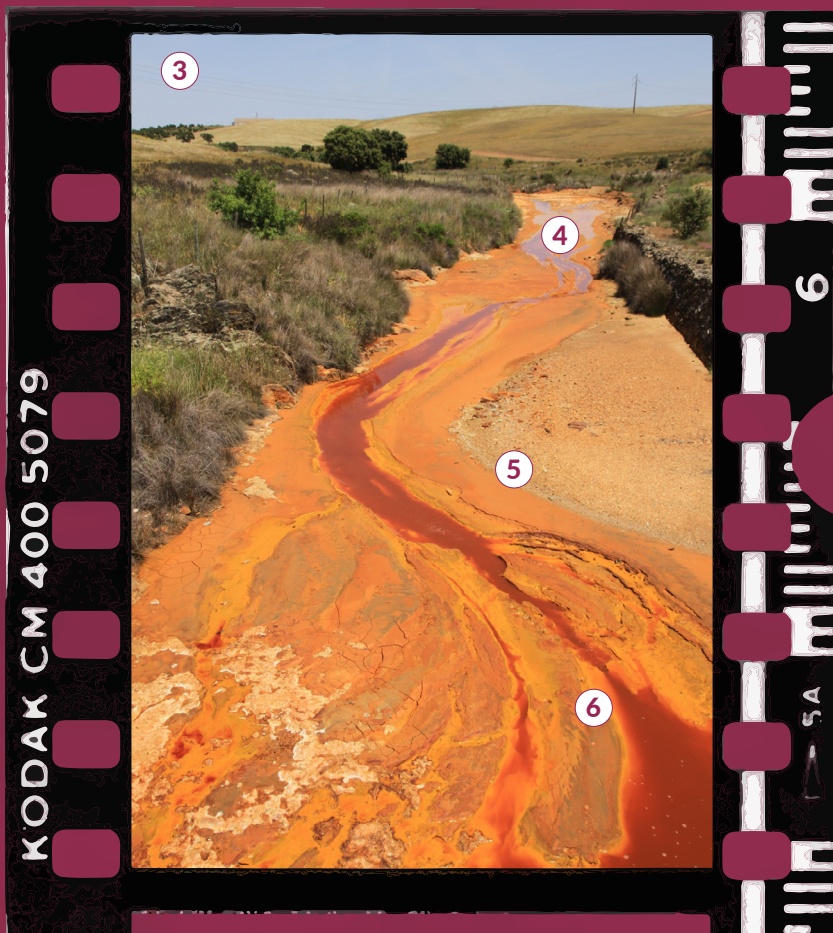
International YRE, 2013

2nd Place Winner, Photo Essay

Portugal

EXPERT ANALYSIS

- ① **What is the story?** Mining is a major global concern, so this story resonates with readers anywhere. The title could be shortened to read **"Acid Mine Drainage in Águas Fortes"**
- ② **Plan your photo:** I.e., study the terrain and look for the best **angle**. In this case, scouting the location paid off with an outstanding photo of shocking, disturbing beauty.
- ③ **Lighting:** Be patient. Wait until the sun is behind you, so you can capture the angle you chose in the best light (sunrise, late afternoon, sunset..).
- ④ **Depth of field:** With the right angle and light, your photo can easily have two focal points. In this case, there is one on the foreground, and one where the creek disappears.
- ⑤ **Composition:** This photo delivers an almost perfect score! From straight **horizon lines**, to the **leading lines** conducting the eye to the end of the creek, to a **diagonal progress** creating a sense of water flow.
- ⑥ **Get close to the action.** Do not fall in a river like this, but get as close as you can to your subject, and lower your lens close to your point of view.
- ⑦ **Editing:** Never alter the context of a photo - don't cut things out, don't add things in. Adding a little bit of contrast, however, can greatly improve your shot!
- ⑧ **Captioning** is an art. This photo is so powerful that a short caption would have done it justice. 291 is a long caption...



②

① Acid Mine Drainage at Ribeira
Águas Fortes

⑧ Caption (291 words for 2 photos): The Aljustrel village (at Alentejo, Portugal) developed around 5 massive polymetallic sulfide deposit explorations. These have had a positive contribute for socioeconomic growth in the area. [...]

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Photography Case Study 2

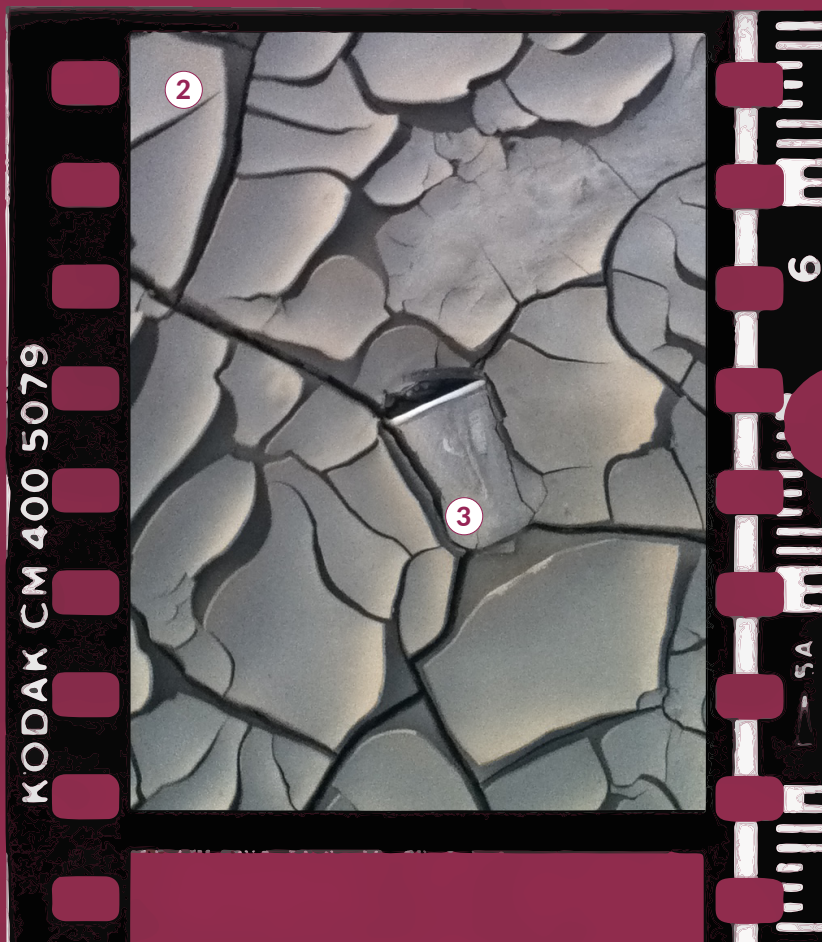
YRE Canada, 2014

1st Place Winner, Ages 11-14

Canada

EXPERT ANALYSIS

- ① **What is the story?** In a case like this, where the story isn't evident, your title should tell the reader about it. What's missing here is a subtitle containing the word "garbage" or "litter"...
- ② **Perspective:** You can't always plan a photo. Sometimes, it's just there and you need to react. When that happens, think about your angle. In this case the photo-reporter leaned right over the subject, perhaps zoomed, focused, and shot...
- ③ **Composition - Symmetry, Patterns and Repetition:** The human eye loves order. Look for patterns (here, cracks in the mud); find the elements that break the pattern and draw the eye (the coffee cup); and keep everything nice and balanced.
- ④ **Editing and photo-journalistic ethics:** A photo like this begs to be digitally enhanced for texture and drama (colour, contrast, sharpness, and definition). What you must never do is alter reality. When we see this photo we imagine it to be a muddy pond in a park. But, What if the photo zoomed out to reveal it as part of an urban parquette? Would that change the story?
- ⑤ **What is the solution?** This photo illustrates a problem, but does it visually suggest a solution?
- ⑥ **Captions:** At 236 words, this photo entry surpasses the 150 words allowed in the YRE international competition. Make sure your captions stick to the stipulated limit. Your photo should do the story-telling, not your text.



① Hidden but still there

- ⑥ Caption (236 words in total): In the photo you can see dry sheets of mud but if you look carefully you can notice a paper cup that you most likely drink coffee out of camouflaging with the dry sheets of mud. [...]

④

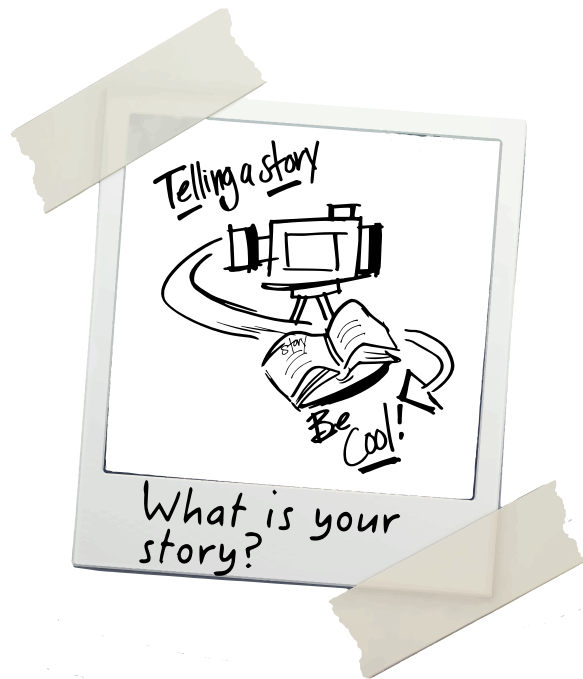
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7. Video 101: Top tips for your short docs

Becoming an effective filmmaker will take a little practice, but the process will also be fun, you'll get some awesome skills, and will have a great film in your hands by the time you're done.

Step #1: What's your story?

All journalism tells a story. Having a rough idea of the story you want to tell before you hit the streets with your video camera will make it easier to shoot. You don't need to know what every scene will look like. In fact, in documentary filmmaking you cannot always control what happens on camera, so you do need to keep an open mind, and often change your angle on the fly. Be cool.



Some questions you might want to ask:

- ✓ **What's the problem?** Green journalism is about creating awareness about environmental problems, and informing viewers about possible solutions.
- ✓ **What's the solution?** Since many environmental solutions don't exist yet, you may need to use a little visual imagination. Be creative but keep it realistic. It's not sci-fi.
- ✓ **Visualizing the invisible:** You will need footage (called **coverage**) for every single second of the story you want to tell. The longer the story, the more coverage you'll need. Make sure you account for that!