

PCQC Video Presentation

Fundamentals of Travel Photography by Bob Krist—National Geographic

Lesson 6: Composition and the Power of Lenses

This lesson will demonstrate how to use different lenses and composition techniques to maximum benefit.

• The Zoom Lens

- **This course strongly recommends a zoom lens, 18-200 mm or 28-300 mm as the travel lens of choice.**
 - The angle of view of a lens is discussed in terms of focal length and is based on 35mm film. For digital cameras, this is called full frame sensor (chip) and measures 24 X 35 mm. However, many photographers use cameras with a smaller sensor called the APSC which is 24 X 16 mm. Another variant is the four thirds format.
 - The video examples compare a camera with full frame sensor to one with the APSC sensor in terms of focal length. Let's say you shoot with a full frame camera and an 28-300 mm focal length lens. To get the same angle of view with an APSC camera would require a 18-200 mm lens.
- **Wide Angle Shots: The wide-angle lens expands perspective and places emphasis on the foreground.**
 - Leading lines are useful in wide angle shots. The lines draw the eye into the composition. They can be fences, roads, tracks, etc.
 - Foreground frames are also useful. Note that if your foreground is very dark, meter your exposure on the brighter scene without the frame otherwise your photo will be washed out.
- **Telephoto Lens Examples: The telephoto lens compresses the perspective as opposed the wide-angle lens (which expands the perspective).**
 - Elements of the composition look closer together than they really are. Telephoto lenses limit the depth of field.
 - See video example of Badlands National Park shot with at 300 mm vs. 70 mm.
 - Telephoto lenses are also good for Bokeh (see below), for shooting unobtrusively, or to keep safe distance from danger.
- **Bokeh: Telephoto lenses limit the depth of field. Backgrounds and foregrounds are out-of-focus. The quality of the out-of-focus image-surrounding the sharp subject is called Bokeh. Four factors determine the quality of the Bokeh:**
 - Camera-to-subject distance. The closer the camera is to the subject, the narrower the depth of field.
 - The subject-to-background distance. The further the subject is from the background, the softer the background will be.
 - The focal length of the lens. The longer the lens focal length the less the depth of field.
 - The aperture of the lens. The wider the aperture, the less the depth of field.

• Exercises

- Try to find and shoot examples of leading lines and other foreground filling techniques using a wide-angle lens.
- Find and shoot an example of a scene/subject that is improved by the compression of a telephoto lens.