

Photography for Young Beginners

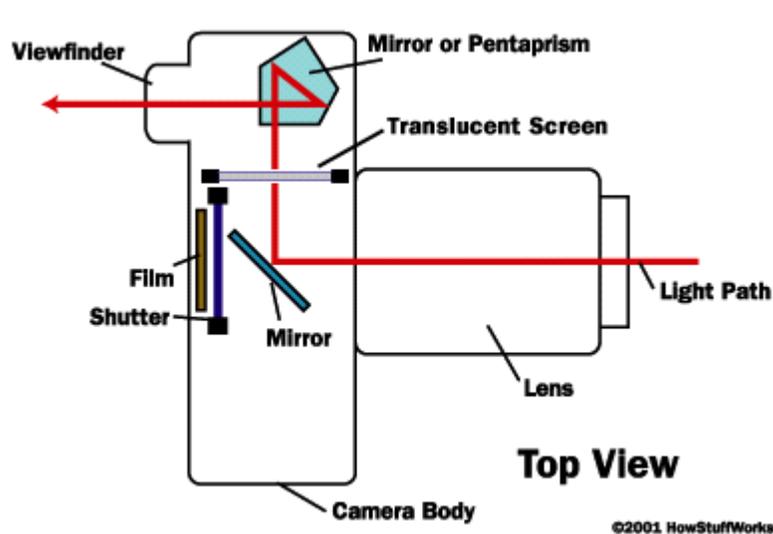
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MATERIALS:

- Flashlight
- Index Cards with holes punched in them
- Paper Towel Rolls
- A big print-out of a camera diagram. Or a drawing on a big chart sheet.

The goal of this lesson plan is to introduce the basic concepts of light as they apply to the art of photography. By splitting up each short lesson with fun activities, the children will be able to learn basic skills and science while also having fun and being creative.

1. Circle Time (15 minutes)
 - a. Gather everyone into a circle for introductions and name-learning, if necessary.
 - b. Ask if anyone knows what photography is. Describe it with its origin of two Greek words: *phos*, which means "light," and *graphe*, which means "drawing." Together, photography literally means "drawing with light."
 - c. Read a short book having to do with photography, or an excerpt from a longer book to introduce the topic.
2. 1st Activity (5-10 minutes)
 - a. With the kids remained seated, the lights will be turned out. With a flashlight turned onto the wall, the teacher will ask the children to identify which is light and which is shadow.
 - b. The distinction between light and dark will be emphasized here. To do this, some volunteers will come up and make shadow puppets on the wall. This will create entertainment as well as demonstrate the ability to create images using only light and shadow.
 - c. Elaborate that without light, we couldn't see anything. When light touches anything, it bounces off of what it touches so that our eyes can see.
3. Camera Diagram (15 minutes)



- a.
 - b. Present a diagram similar to the one above.
 - c. Explain that a lens is a piece of glass, like in a magnifying glass or a microscope, and that the lens is responsible for taking in all of the light around us and records it.
 - d. Explain in very simple terms how the eye functions almost exactly like a camera.
 - i. The light travels through the eye, just like light travels through the lens of a camera
 - ii. Then the light goes through a camera's shutter, just as light will go through the little optic nerve. If the children have trouble understanding what the optic nerve is, explain to them that it's like a power cord going to your brain so your brain knows what you're seeing.
 - iii. The light finally reaches the film (or memory card, since digital is much more common now) where the image can be kept, just like what we see goes to our brain where we can remember it.
4. Aperture and Shutter Activities (20 minutes)
- a. The camera records light in two ways. Both need each other so that we can get a picture.
 - b. First there is the aperture. Basically, the aperture is like a pupil (the little black dot in your eye). The bigger it is the more light you can see, just as the smaller it is, the less light you can see.
 - i. To demonstrate, have each child partner up with someone and take turns covering and uncovering their eyes while the other watches to see their pupils get bigger and smaller.
 - ii. Explain that the pupils will get bigger and smaller just like the aperture will need to be bigger or smaller so that there isn't too much light and we are blinded, and so that there isn't too little light so we can't see anything. (Overexposed vs. underexposed)
 - c. Explain how eyelids are like a camera's shutter, only opposite.
 - i. A camera's shutter, unlike our eyelids, stays closed until a picture is taken. When a picture is taken, the shutter opens very fast and then closes again. Depending on how fast it opens and closes, the light will change. If a picture is very bright,

the shutter won't be open for very long. If a picture is very dark, the shutter will have to be open for a long time. With eyelids, it is the opposite. If it is very bright we must shut our eyes so they don't hurt, just as if it is very dark we try to open our eyes as wide as we can so we can see.

- ii. The children can take a moment to open and close their eyes and pretend they are cameras.
 - d. Lastly, explain focus.
 - i. Shallow Focus
 - 1. Shallow focus means that the camera will blur a lot of the picture, leaving only one or a couple of things in focus.
 - 2. To demonstrate this, the children can look through a paper-towel tube and then place their hand in front of their eyes. Point out that everything behind their hand is blurry and out of focus.
 - 3. You get shallow focus when the aperture on a camera is big, just like the paper towel roll.
 - ii. Deep Focus
 - 1. Deep focus is the opposite of shallow focus, where everything in a picture is sharp and in focus.
 - 2. Demonstrate this by having the children look through a small punch-hole in a card.
 - 3. You get deep focus when the aperture on a camera is small, like the little hole on the card.
5. Journal Entry and picture time
- a. Finally, bring out a real camera and give a quick demonstration, explaining everything learned with the action. Take a picture of the class, asking for one volunteer to come up and give it a try.
 - b. Then, have the kids write in their journals with this prompt question:
 - i. If you were a photographer what would you take pictures of?
6. With the time remaining, let children use the camera to take pictures of others, and answer any questions they might have.