



classroom photographic assignments for years 1-8+

curriculum strands:

Teacher Notes

A stimulating feature showing how photography can bring an exciting new dimension to the classroom programme and enhance learning across all curriculum areas.

YEARS 1-4

The Photographic Assignment

- Have pupils in your class take pictures of at least three of the following topics:
 - *My friends*
 - *learning to swim*
 - *enjoying books*
 - *playtime*
 - *our best art work*
 - *my school.*

Pre Assignment Starters to motivate the children before you start taking your photographs.

MY FRIENDS

Discuss and develop the idea of friends.

- What makes a good friend?
- How did you meet your friend? How do you help your friend?
- Establish a 'best friend of the class' box and have the children cast their vote once a week and award a certificate at the end of each week.
- Pupils paint a picture of their best friend.

LEARNING TO SWIM

- Brainstorm ideas and list on why it is important that we learn to swim.
- Have children mime the actions needed for swimming.
- Make a list of how to keep safe around the pool. Make a wall chart of rules to follow. Enjoying books.
- Have regular times when children can share their favourite books with the rest of the class.
- Have children paint/dress up as their favourite book character.

OUR BEST ART WORK

- Always involve the children when you mount or display their art work.
- Look at each individual picture/model/print etc. and have them pick out the 'things' that they like best about it.

MY SCHOOL

- Have pupils explore the school - each nook and cranny.
- Who works at the school besides the teacher?
- What do they do?
- What colours are our school painted?
- Can we recognise the trees?
- Are there gardens?
- Do we have a secret place?
- Listen to the sounds of the school.
- Make a map/model of the school.

YEARS 4-8

The Photographic Assignment

- Have pupils take pictures for a class portfolio of at least three of the following topics:
 - *summer sports*
 - *a busy classroom*
 - *my school friends*
 - *a class trip*
 - *interesting textures*
 - *the new entrants*
 - *home time*
 - *my school*

PRE ASSIGNMENT STARTERS

- Get the students thinking how they will be able to capture the essence of each topic when they take photographs.
- Have groups work through each topic and list aspects that they would like to highlight. Have them come up with lists of 'moments of time' that they could capture on film e.g. action in a sport elation, joy, disappointment, action in a classroom.
- Have students research one or more topics in detail, e.g. they may have to ask permission to go into a new entrant classroom and watch the children learning; become friendly with them so they are at ease with them; have them observe people playing games from different angles etc.
- Have each group plan out their photographic assignment in some full detail and present it to the class along with justification for their plan. Discuss, modify, improve, add.

BASIC PHOTOGRAPHIC POINTERS

- Discuss basic ideas (especially with juniors) such as
 - *holding a camera*
 - *looking through the view finder*
 - *loading a film*
 - *holding the camera steady*
 - *gently squeezing the shutter*
 - *identifying the parts of the camera*

BASIC PHOTOGRAPHIC POINTERS *continued*

- Most simple modern cameras are simple to use and often automatic focus and give satisfactory results.
- If possible invite a parent/local photographer to talk to the class about the basics.
- Have pupils begin to look carefully and regularly at photographs that they can bring home. Discuss them. Which are the most interesting, effective. Try to discover why this is so.
- Show children how to load a camera and make sure they know to always load it in the shade.
- Have pupils practice holding the camera firmly with the index finger on the shutter release (button).
- Tell them it is important that they keep the camera as still as possible when they take their photographs. Elbows should be rested on a ledge, knees or even the ground to keep it steady if necessary.
- Remind them not to take pictures looking into the sun.
- Older pupils can begin to take notice of backgrounds. If a background is very bright and 'busy' it will distract from the subject of the picture. Check the background through the view finder first. Try moving to different locations until satisfied.
- Pictures taken in a classroom may need a flash. Many small modern cameras have a built in automatic flash. Have pupils be careful not to take a picture with a bright outside window as a background.

HOW DOES A CAMERA WORK?

- You can explain to older students that a camera can be thought of as a very small and completely blacked out room.
- A shutter like a blind is at one end of the room and is closed. This stops the light from the lens reaching the back of the camera until the right moment.
- When it opens it allows an image to be formed on the film at the back of the camera.
- No matter how complicated other parts of a camera seem, this is basically what they do.