

# Unit 01: Photography as a Communication Tool

Content Area: **Fine Arts**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **1-2 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

---

Students will review the many facets of communicating through images. Heightened awareness of the media culture in which we live will enhance student's understanding of the world around them. The daily bombardment of visual images and social media forces students to look and understand their world in a non-verbal way. Through lecture, discussion, multi-media presentation and selected text readings they will build an understanding of the role of photography in the image making process. Photography was not discovered but evolved over years of use and innovation, new technologies continually affect its change and growth.

## Transfer

---

- • Compare images based on design strengths and weaknesses.
- • Develop an advanced understanding of the role of photography as both an art form and an important form of communication in our digital media society.
- • Extrapolate meaning from visual cues.

## Essential Questions

---

- • How are photographs used to communicate in society?
- • How do we communicate visually?
- • How has the role of photography changed over time?

## Essential Understandings

---

- • Photography is a nonverbal form of communication that is prevalent in today's society.
- • Visual images are becoming a universal form of communicating ideas, thoughts, and feelings in our society since images transcend language.

## Students Will Know

---

- • Images are used to communicate a variety of different ideas through media outlets such as print, film, advertising and social media.
- • The key terms of photography and design.
- • The rapid change in social media platforms contributes changes to how we communicate visually.
- • The uses and applications of photography as a tool for communication.

## Students Will Be Skilled At

---

- • Collaborating with peers to brainstorm ways in which visual images are used to communicate.
- • Expressing their ideas and findings orally and in writing.
- • Using research skills to delve deeper into how we use photographs to communicate.

## Evidence/Performance Tasks

---

- • Brainstorm ways in which photographs are used to communicate.
- • Create a visual board illustrating the various ways we use photography to communicate.
- • Identify what makes for a successful image through group critique.
- • In small groups, decipher message and meaning from selected photographs.
- • Students will respond to the following statement from Berenice Abbott, “The world today has been conditioned, overwhelmingly, to visualize. The picture has almost replaced the ‘word’ as a means of communication.” Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Cite examples to support your position.

## Learning Plan

---

- • Discussion topic: How do we communicate photographically? Presentation of images; including prints, PowerPoint, and Internet sources for class discussion will be used.
- • Discussion topic: Past vs. Present. How has the role of Photography changed over time? How do new technologies affect change?
- • Group critique of images will identify Design Elements and Principles.
- • List of findings will be posted in class for reference to reinforce Design Elements and Principles.
- • Presentation of “Then and Now” images selected to further class discussion.
- • Students will brainstorm ways in which photography is used to communicate. This task assists in assessing prior knowledge.
- • Students will individually write their answers to these questions to contribute to class discussion.
- • Students will read textbook chapter 1 on visual communications and take notes.
- • Students will share their ideas from notes.
- • Working in small groups, students will decipher visual messages and cues from selected photographs. They will present their findings to the class.
- • Writing prompt. Based on your learning and understanding of Photography as a communication tool, respond to the following statement from Bernice Abbott, “The world today has been conditioned, overwhelmingly, to visualize. The picture has almost replaced the ‘word’ as a means of communication.” Do you agree or disagree? Cite examples supporting your position.

## Materials

---

- Large photographic prints
- Markers, glue, scissors, posterboard

- Photographic magazines as image resources
- PowerPoint
- Smartboard and Projector
- Textbook: Photography In Focus, Jerry Burchfield, Mark Jacobs and Ken Kokrda, NTC Publishing group, Lincolnwood, Illinois, 1997.

## **Suggested Strategies for Modifications**

---

- Auditory re-phrasing to assist students.
- Examples of successful projects to model.
- Hands on activities in addition to writing activities.
- Individualized instruction where needed.
- Peer critique of presentations.
- Smartboard projector.
- Use of rubric as self-evaluation tool.
- Use of Visual Aids such as photographs, and presentation tools.
- Working in small groups.