

Photojournalism:



Put simply, photojournalism is a form of journalism that employs images rather than words in order to tell a real-life story.

Many of the greatest photographs ever produced have been taken by photojournalists. These images are designed to either capture a specific moment in time or convey the essence of a wider story. Unlike with written words, they physically *show* the viewer things they otherwise might not have seen, or believed.

These images feature people, places, objects or events that can be of wide international significance, or much more personal and small-scale. They might for example depict the massive rescue effort after a large-scale earthquake, but alternatively they might capture the moment a single family is reunited after being separated due to war. They can be full of hope and happiness, or total desperation and misery.

The only thing they all have in common is that they are designed to tell a story.

The Task:

I want you to produce a collection of TEN images that collectively tell YOUR PERSONAL experiences throughout the coming months.

Right now, we are living through history. The last time there was a global pandemic was over 100 years ago, and the world is currently facing its biggest crisis since WW2 75 years ago. This crisis involves events both big and the small – from large-scale hospitals having to be built and medical equipment and supplies having to shipped throughout the world, to people having to stay indoors for what could be several months. Normal life isn't going to be normal for some time.

Your task is to document the events that are unfolding around you over the coming few months. What does COVID-19 and the subsequent lock-down mean to you? How has it affected your family/life? What has become unusual? What is the new normal? What do you miss? What have been the positives, if any? What has changed, and what remains the same?

The images can be as varied and unusual as you like e.g. one could be the empty streets as seen from your window, whilst another could be a strange combination of food you're having for lunch because supplies are a bit low, another could be a room full of toilet paper if you were one of those naughty stock-pilers! The TEN images will be accompanied by short excerpts of text, but primarily try and let the camera do the talking.

The success of this task will be determined almost entirely by how well you have managed to capture the reality of the situation, and the originality of your work. Therefore, whilst of course the images should be suitably well lit, in focus, carefully composed etc. it is the content and the story behind each image that is most important of all.

Phone cameras should more than good enough, and are actually often even better for taking photos indoors anyway. Please be safe when taking any photographs outside of your homes and follow government guidelines regarding the lock-down at all times.

Of course, you will probably take a lot more than ten images over the coming months, but eventually you will need to choose the very best ten to tell your particular story.

This work will be presented in your books at the start of the course in September, and does not need to be printed out at all until we get back to school. Likewise, written work will be done at a later date, but you may wish to write down notes as you go if it will help you to remember things later on.

Advice:

Produce a wide variety of images. The changes we are all facing take many different forms, from what we do, where we do it, what we eat, changes in our hobbies/interests, the way we look etc. Don't just have ten photographs of empty roads, or the pet dog!

Think... REALLY think. The job of a photojournalist is to come up with the VERY best way of capturing a moment or story. Things can be 'staged' and often are, as long as they tell a 'wider truth'. What way up should the camera be held? Zoomed in or not? Black and white or colour? Who/what needs to be in the photo, and who/what doesn't?

Take lots of images – you can always whittle them down later on. You might take a photo in three months' time that replaces one you take tomorrow, but you can never go back in time so get as many as you can along the way.

If you have any questions/concerns, please email me rwest78rw@nsix.org.uk

Also, feel free to send me images for feedback. Just be aware that you are unofficially A Level students now, so be ready for some frank and honest criticism! I can also help with editing etc.

GOOD LUCK!

Mr West