

# Elements of Photography



The qualities of good photographs

# Elements of photography

- **Composition:** The arrangement of items within the frame of a photograph. This includes people, objects, foreground, background.
- **Technical:** Specific qualities of the way the photo was taken. This includes focus, sharpness, contrast, and clarity.

# Elements of Photography

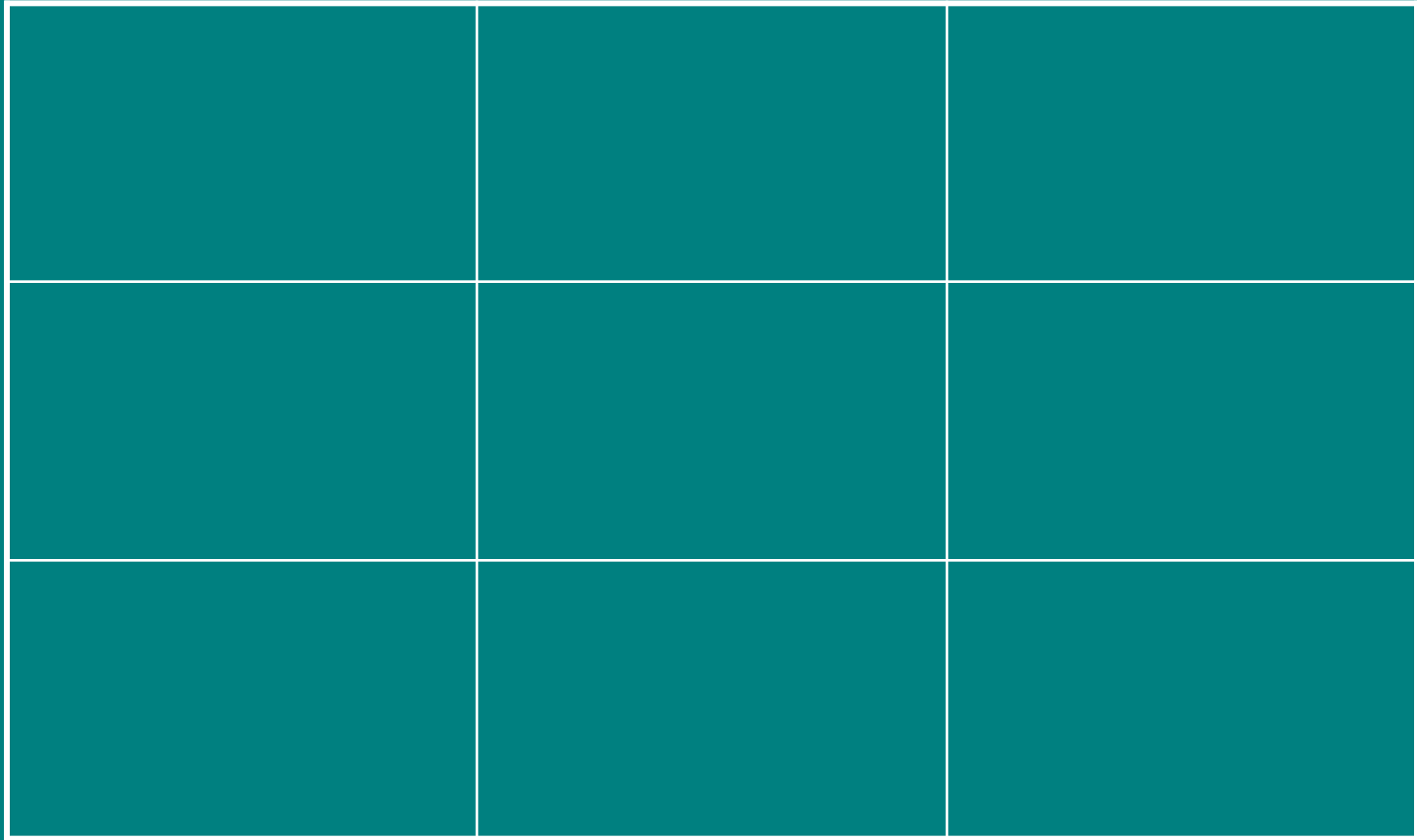
- CVI = Center of Visual Interest
- CVI is the one part of the photo composition that your eye is drawn to.
- There are many ways to emphasize the CVI. A good photographer uses a variety of methods to do this.



# 1. Rule of Thirds

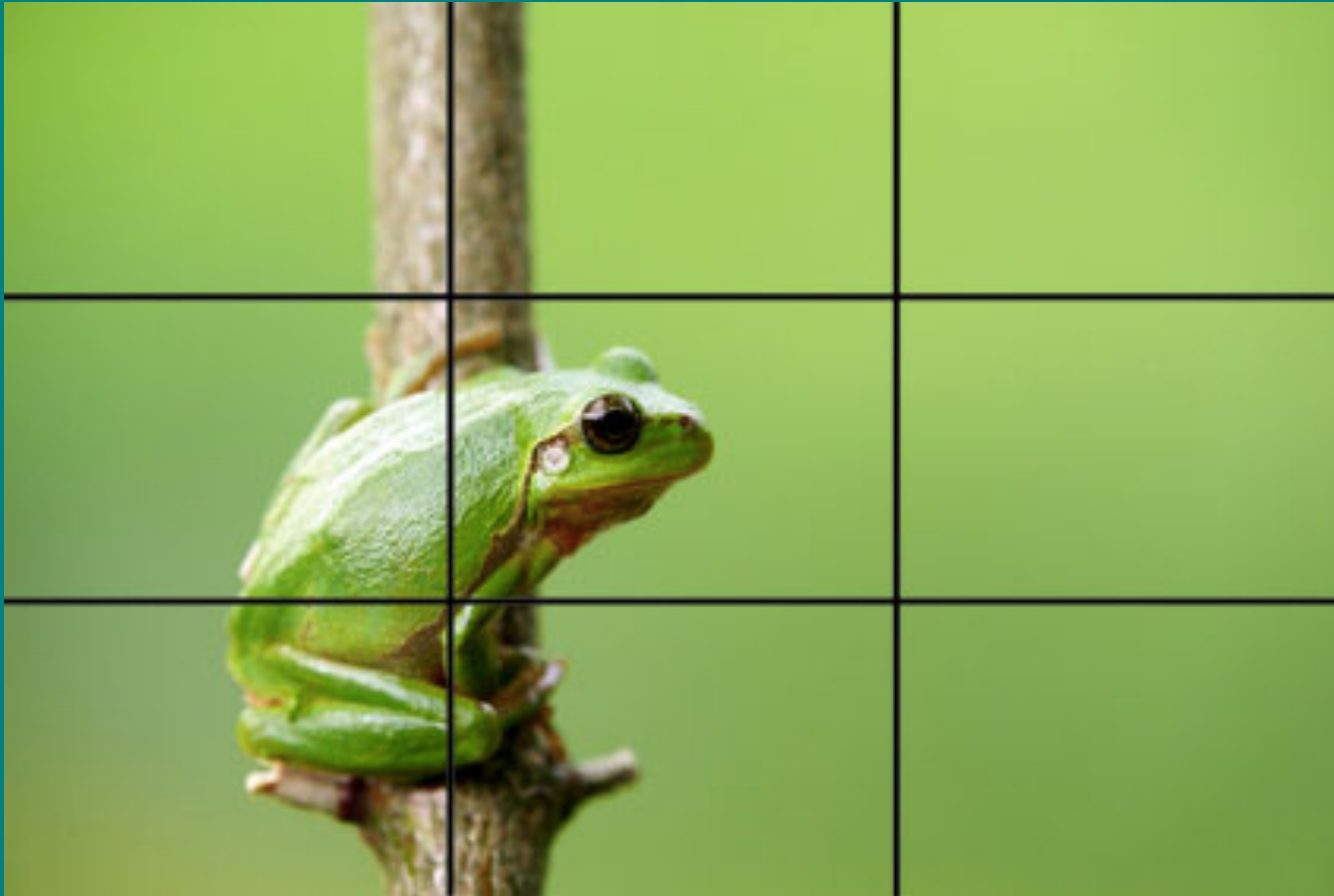
- Divide your frame into nine segments
- Place the CVI along one of the lines or at the intersection of two lines
- “Dead Center” = placing your CVI in the middle of the frame is the quickest way to kill your photograph and make it boring
- Rationale: Placing the CVI off center creates natural aesthetic tension, which is pleasing to the eye.

# 1. Rule of Thirds



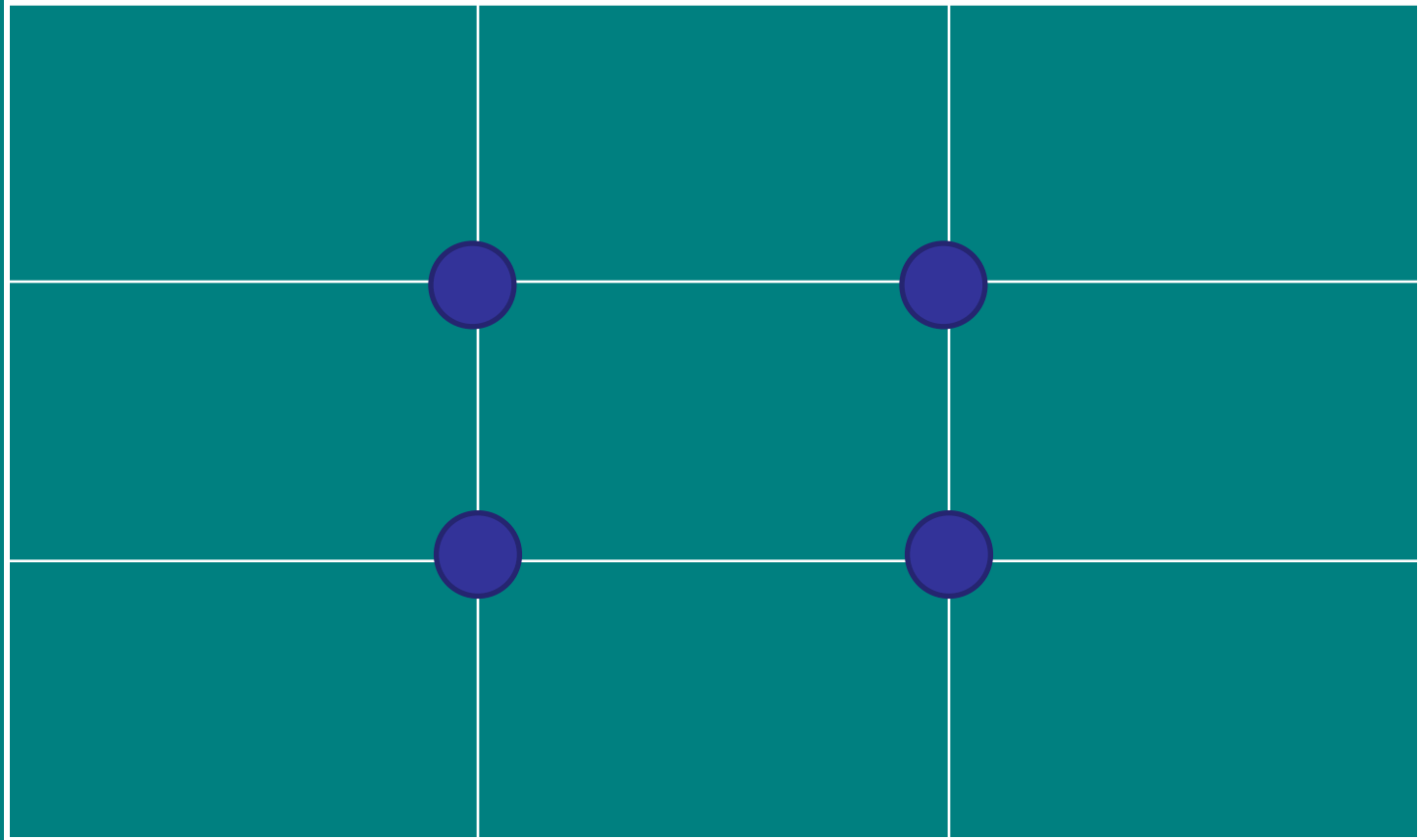
Notice how the frame is divided into third both vertically and horizontally. These are your guidelines for composition.

# 1. Rule of Thirds

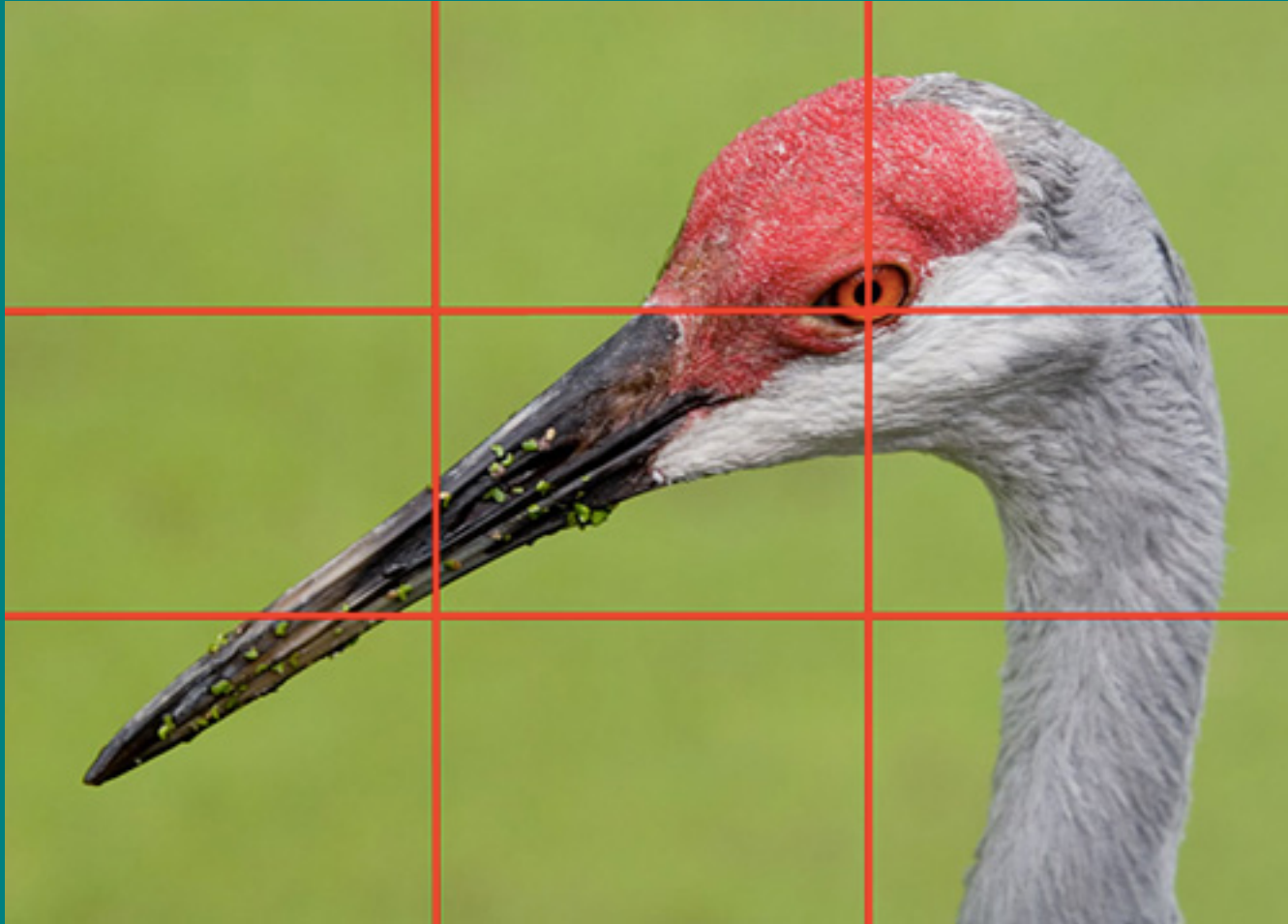


# 1. Rule of Thirds

“hot spots”



# 1. Rule of Thirds



# 1. Rule of Thirds



# 1. Rule of Thirds

Notice how the people occupy the line along the lower third of the frame.



The Yoder family of Bonduel, Wis., watches an exhibition at the 50th annual Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Bear Creek, Wis.

## 2. Leading Lines

- Lines -- either visible or invisible -- lead the eye to the CVI



A 5-year-old Labrador-greyhound mix named Bambi beats the heat by charging sprinklers in a dog run at Centennial Hills Park in Las Vegas

## 2. Leading Lines



## 2. Leading Lines



# 3. Diagonals/unusual angles



### 3. Diagonals/unusual angles



### 3. Diagonals/unusual angles



# 4. Framing



- An object in the foreground or the background draws attention to the CVI
- This usually works best with photos of people.

A young girl holds a copy of the Koran during an Islamic teaching session at a neighborhood mosque in Baghdad.

# 4. Framing



# 4. Framing



# 4. Framing



# 4. Framing

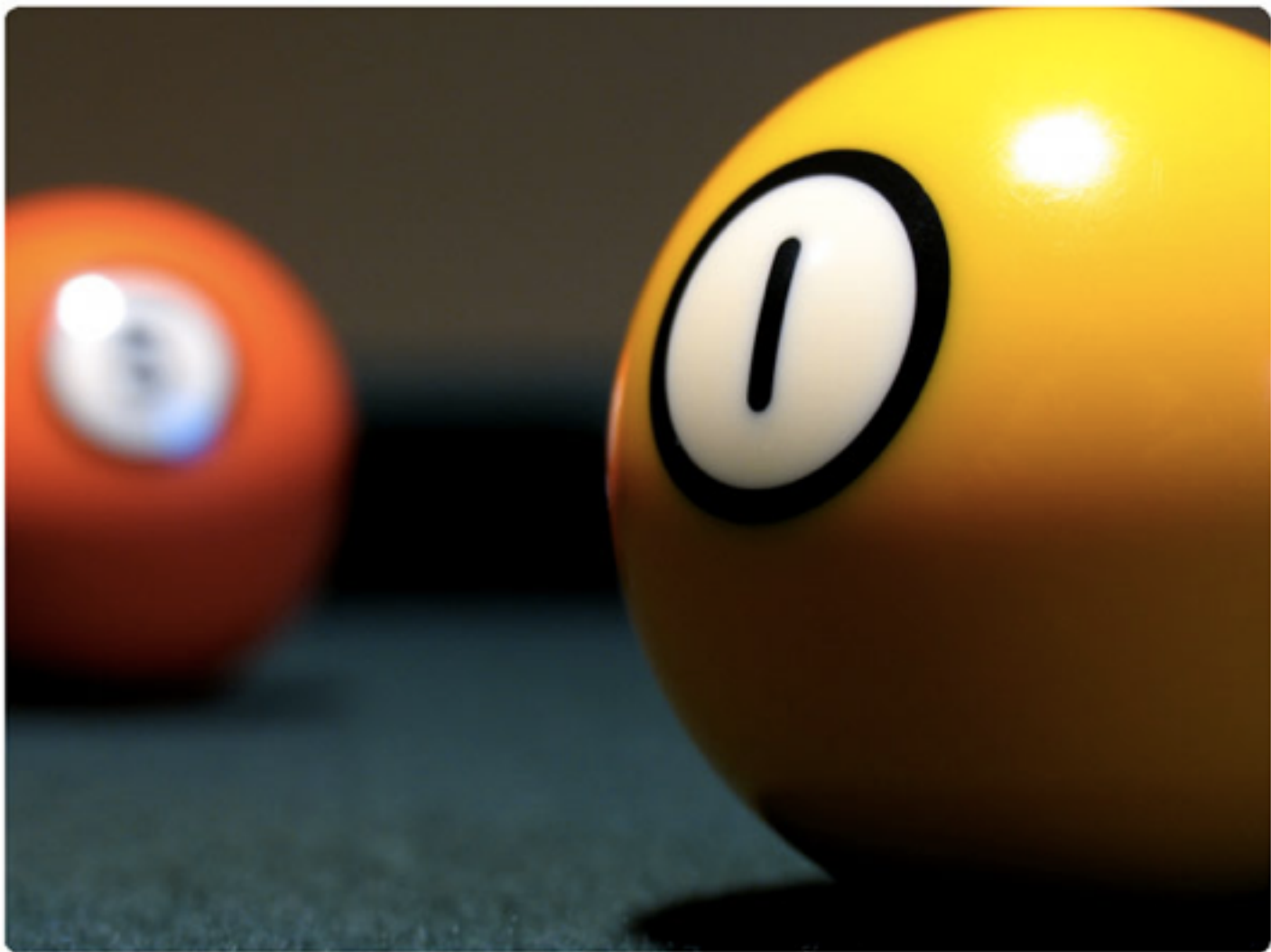


# 5. Depth of Field



- By creating contrast between your subject and the background, you can create depth.
- It also helps your viewer orient the subjects within the space.

# 5. Depth of Field



# 5. Depth of Field



# 6. Fill the Frame



- Get close!
- The size of an object within the frame directly determines how much aesthetic energy (i.e. importance) it has.
- The bigger it is, the more "important" it is.
- Usually works best with photos of people.

# 6. Fill the Frame



# 6. Fill the Frame



# 7. Repetition



Swiss athletes wave their arms during the opening ceremonies of the 12th World Gymnaestrada in Lisbon

- This can be one of the most effective methods of composition
- Repeating shapes, figures, lines, or patterns creates something pleasing to the eye

# 7. Repetition



# 7. Repetition



# 7. Repetition

- Sometimes a break in the pattern helps to emphasize the CVI and can be visually appealing.
- What elements are visible in this photo?



# 7. Repetition



# 7. Repetition



## 8. Action/Emotion



- Perhaps the most important element of composition
- If your photo has nothing else, make sure it has action or emotion
- Sports photos are great for action

# 8. Action/Emotion



- **Grip & Grin:** The deadliest kind of photo to run in a newspaper
- Don't let your paper run photos like this. No action OR emotion in this shot.

## 8. Action/Emotion

- Most photos of people need to have some emotion present
- Even portraits should at least show the subject expressing a **genuine** emotion



Residents of Monrovia, Liberia celebrate with a U.S. flag as a convoy of U.S. military experts drives past

# 8. Action/Emotion



# 8. Action/Emotion



# 8. Action/Emotion

CNN  
iReport



COURTESY ALIZEH IMTIAZ

# Photo Quiz

- On the following slides, you will see some photographs.
- Note the compositional elements you see in them.



# Photo #1

**U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates shakes hands with a reporter before a television interview in Baghdad, Iraq.**



# Photo # 2



A list of names of high school students who survived the massive earthquake that struck Sichuan, China in May is scanned at a stadium housing people made homeless by the tragedy.

# Photo #3



# Photo #4



LOCAL CELEBRITY: Robert Pugh, in photo at left, signs autographs outside the Christ Casebeer Lutheran Church

# Photo #5



In pursuit of his seventh gold medal, US Swimmer Michael Phelps (left) races Serbian Milorad Cavic in the 100M Butterfly. Phelps would push past his opponent in the final meter of the race, miraculously beating him by .01 second.