

1) Look

First of all, take a close look at the photograph. Let your eyes scan it closely:

Make sure that you've caught every possible detail of the photo.

If something jumps out at you as being really good or really bad, note it, but don't say anything, what is its context?

2) Interpretation (theme)

Now, talk about the photo for a little bit. This is the thing that is most frequently overlooked when doing critiques, but is actually one of the most useful things you can do to a photographer.

For the interpretation, start off by saying "When I look at this photo, I feel...".

Explain what sort of emotional response the photo raises in you.

Follow up with "I think this photo is about...".

Any symbolism you spot, tell the photographer. If you aren't sure, let them know that.

3) Technical points

The next thing to take care of, is the technical points. Is the photograph technically okay?

Did you spot dust, is the exposure okay, is there any unwanted blur (wrong focus, motion blur, zoom blur etc)? Are the colours accurately represented?

What's the contrast like? Could the photographer have used lighting differently?

Would a bigger or smaller aperture have been beneficial?

4) Artistic points

What do you think about the crop and aspect ratio? If the photo is in black and white, should it have been in colour and vice-versa?

Is there a good balance between the foreground and the background?

Would the photo have worked better with a different prop / model?

5) Good points

This is where you point out what you like about the photograph, and why.

The why bit is most important: If you can't tell why you like X, Y, or Z,

there's no point in mentioning it. "I like the sky" is useless. "I like the colour of the sky" is better.

"I like the deep blue colour of the sky because it contrasts nicely with the yellows and reds in the photo" is perfect. Put some thought into this.

6) Points worth improving

This point is saved for last, because you've made the photographer more confident about their photograph by now. It is still important to remember that the photo has been taken, and that this photo can't really be changed anymore.

As such, there's no point in slating people for their photographs.

Tell them one or two specific points that could be improved on this particular photo

('clean up dust', 'turn into black and white', 'different crop' are useful suggestions,

as they can be done in the darkroom / photoshop), and perhaps one or two points that you would have done differently,

if you were the one taking the photograph

7) Overall impressions.

Given its context, did it work as a picture?

TITLE:		DATE:
CRITIQUE		
SCORE	CATEGORY	NOTES <i>BE POSITIVE</i>
	1) LOOK	
	2) Theme INTERPRITATION	
	3) TECHNICAL points	
	4) ARTISTIC points	
	5) GOOD POINTS	
	6) POINTS WORTH IMPROVEMENT	
TOTAL Score:	7) Overall impressions	
SCORING:	1 - 10	
1 - 5	Work in progress	
5.5 - 7	Quite good	
7.5 - 8.5	Good	
9+	Very good	

