

Exercise: Answers

Photo A

Large groups of people rarely work as news photographs. The viewer's eye is not drawn to anything in particular in the image, so the viewer does not engage with the photo. Also, photos can be quite small when published in newspapers, so the image would become even less engaging.

The subjects are all wearing leis. It would have been better to have a close-up photo of one or two of the subjects resplendent in their leis.

Photo B

This subject is out of focus. News organisations will only publish photos that are in focus.

The difficulty here is that the photo was taken at night under artificial light. The kākāpō was in a glass enclosure. Using flash was not possible, as that would have startled the bird and reflected off the glass. Automatic focus does not work well in dark conditions.

The best solution would be to open the aperture further, set a faster shutter speed, use manual focus and then take multiple shots, preferably when the bird is not moving.

Other good ways to avoid fuzzy photos are to hold the camera steady in your hands, rest your elbows on something or use a tripod.

(And, yes, the bird is the world-famous Sirocco!)

Photo C

The light is not balanced, with the top of the photo over-exposed. The easiest solution would have been to take the photo from another position, where it and the surrounds were all bathed in the same light level.

Photo D

Photos of the backs of people's heads do not engage viewers. Also, the photo is poorly composed – the eye is not drawn to anything: the band is in the distance and the top half of the photo is of nothing.

Get in close to the action. A better shot would have been a close-up dramatic shot of one or two of the musicians.

Photo E

The eye contact in this photo is good, but the image is too far away. Also, the grey of the rock tends to mingle with the grey of the gorilla's fur.

A better approach would have been to zoom in for a closer shot and throw the background out of focus.

Photo F

Sometimes you don't see what your camera sees. Here, the planes look like they are tiny and are going to fly into the tree trunk! Also, the image is unbalanced in that two of the planes do not have a vapour trail.

A better shot would have all five planes against a clear blue background, all with vapour trails. Setting the camera to take multiple shots would help snare the great photo as the planes do their aerobatics.

Photo G

Again, the composition is poor. The viewer's eye is not drawn to anything in particular. Further, the overhead cables look ugly and mostly all we can see are people's backs. The viewer does not engage with this photo.

A much better shot would be a close-up of, say, kids making a snowman.

Photo H

This was potentially a good, striking shot, with the girl's eye contact and the use of props - the orange pumpkins. But the boy in the front throws off the composition. He is a distraction.

The photographer should have taken the shot without the boy. Also, the girl could have been lower in the shot (ie, where the boy's head is), to comply with the rule of thirds.