

The Photo Essay

Journalism 12

Overview

- Creating a photo essay is a combination of art and journalism.
- As with a written essay, the elements of a photo essay should be structured in a way that easily conveys a story to the viewer.

Overview

- There are two types of photo essays: the narrative and the thematic.
- The narrative essay tells a story through a sequence of events or actions. They may follow an individual or activity over a period of time and present this story in chronological order.
- A thematic photo essay focuses on a central theme (e.g. homelessness, the environment, etc.) and presents photos relevant to that theme.

Elements to Consider/Include in Essay

- **The story:** Your essay should be able to stand alone, without a written article, and make logical sense to the viewer.
- **A range of photos:** A variety of photos (wide angle, detailed, portraits etc.) should be included.
- **The order of the photos:** It is important that the order of your photos effectively tell a story, in an interesting and logical sequence.

Elements to Consider/Include in Essay

- **Information and emotion:** Your photos should include both informational and emotional photos. Those essays that effectively evoke emotion while providing information tend to convey their messages the best.
- **Captions:** In a photo essay, captions are your best opportunity to describe what is happening in words and ensure that the viewer understands. Include informational content in these captions if necessary.

Final thoughts

- Photo essays are a form of art, and like any artistic creation, breaking the rules can sometimes create the most powerful result. Don't be afraid to try something different.