

Criteria for Judging

An image that creates emotion, passion and a lasting impact is much better than one lacking the former but is technically perfect, well composed and in perfect focus and with great color. Images with impact and emotion that might break the standard technical and compositional rules might be better images than those that meet 100% of the normal rules. What the image communicates is more important than the image's content or technical aspects. Static and predictable images rarely become contest winners.

Judging, by definition, is a subjective process with a strong emotional component that involves some objective criteria, which is why we use three judges at each competition.

Three judges will each score the image with a score ranging from 1-5. A combined score could range from 3-15 points.

Instructions to Judges

The judge is instructed to score pictorial images on these three basic elements: **interest, technique, and composition.** Of the three, interest is the most important and more weight is to be given to interest than to technique or composition.

As a suggestion, you may want to use 3 as a starting point (the midpoint between 1 and 5) then add or subtract from that to reflect positive or negative aspects of the image.

The following are scoring guidelines (scoring on a scale of 1 to 5):

1. Poor technical execution - focus not sharp, (unless intentional), poor exposure (badly over or underexposed), composition uninteresting.
2. Somewhat weak photo - but has some positive aspects, has specific shortcomings that keep it from being a good average image.
3. Good average image, technically good, composition good but not outstanding.
4. Better than average - an image that would get your attention but may have some minor flaws.
5. Excellent image-no technical flaws, exceptional impact on viewer.

Again, using 3 as the average good image, here are some reminders of things that:

Raise the Score

Lower the score

Perfect exposure

Poor exposure

Sharp focus

All or some out of focus
(unless intentionally)

Originality

Same old subject & treatment,
uninteresting

Excellent lighting

Flat

Interesting composition

Poor composition

Has immediate impact,
unusually interesting subject

Nothing outstanding

Flaws are minor in nature

Flaws are conspicuous

Subject does not fit assigned Category