



Let's Create A Digital Photography Project

Explore value and light in a monochrome digital photography project inspired by the work of Ansel Adams

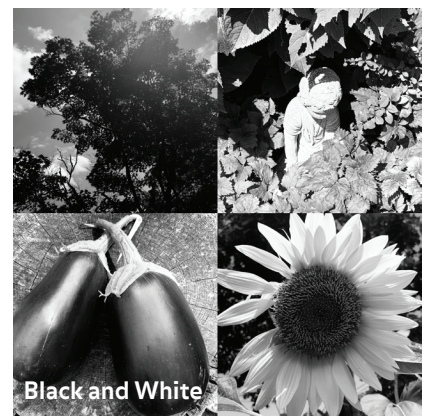
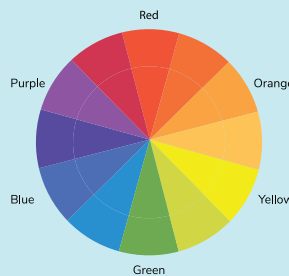
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY is the process of capturing and editing images without the use of film. Today, most people use digital cameras and phones to take those pictures. Smart devices (such as an android phone or iphone, ipad, or tablet) have cameras with settings to change the lens filter to black and white (also known as *monochrome* or *monotone*). This setting can be changed prior to taking the photograph or after you've taken the photo as an edit function.

MONOCHROME PHOTOGRAPHY utilizes differing amounts of light instead of different colors to capture and represent images. This is the case in black and white photography, which uses varying shades of neutral gray instead of the actual colors of the objects photographed. Sepia and cyan are also often used in monochrome photography.

UNDERSTANDING VALUE OR GRAYSCALE



Gray is a neutral color that combines black and white. You will not find gray on the color wheel because a true colorless gray has no opposite color on the other side of the wheel. Gray values are made by adding or taking away black and white. The lightest tones of gray have the most amount of white where the darkest grays have the most amount of black. These grays can be categorized in light tones, mid tones, and dark tones.



UNDERSTANDING SHADOW AND LIGHT

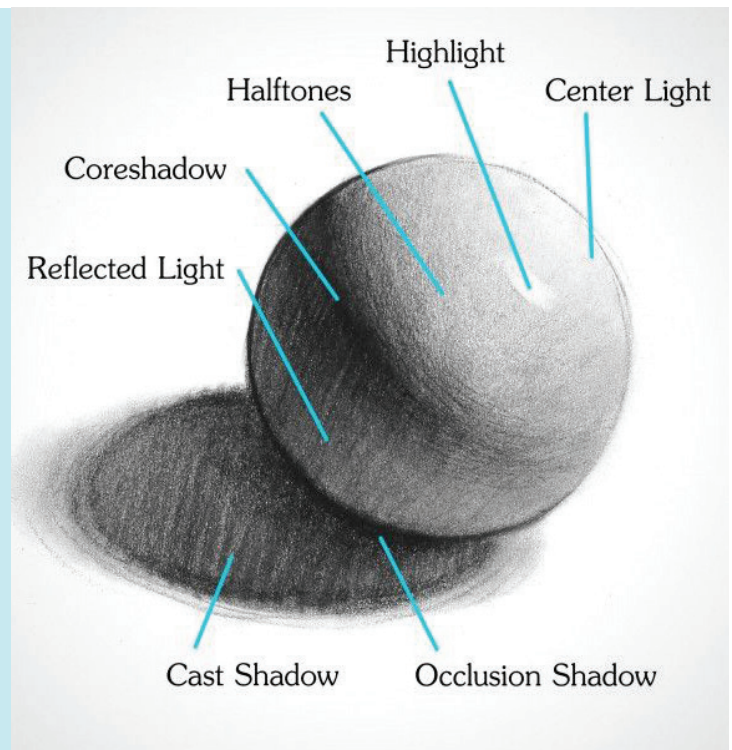
To understand the behavior of light and shadow on a form, it will be helpful to understand these terms and concepts:

LIGHT

- **Direct light** refers to any area on the form that directly receives light from the light source.
- **Center Light** is the bright area that faces the light.
- **Highlight** is the bright reflection that occurs where the light directly hits the form; it will appear at the edge or crest of the surface of the form in direct light.
- **Halftones** are the gradual transition from the light to the core shadow.
- **Reflected light**, or bounced light, is light on the dark side of the form that has been reflected back onto the form by adjacent surfaces.

SHADOW

- **Cast shadow** is the area on adjacent surfaces where direct light is blocked by the form. The cast shadow always extends from the side that is away from the light source.
- **Core shadow** is the darkest area on the form. It appears as a parallel line or plane to the light source. Core shadow is also known as the terminator.
- **Occlusion shadows** occur where the main shadow meets the cast shadow and are usually very dark. The cast shadow will lighten as it gets further from the object and receives more ambient and reflected light.



Activity

Young photographers will use a digital camera or smart device to capture and edit photographs and create a portfolio of nature images inspired by the work of Ansel Adams.

During this project, students will practice using light and shadows to create their images while also exploring techniques of photo composition, perspective, and framing.

Materials

Digital camera or smart device (such as an android phone or iphone, ipad, or tablet).



Step 1: Brainstorm.

Ansel Adams was a famous nature photographer. Let's go outside and take pictures of nature, too! You can take photos in your home and yard, neighborhood, playground or local park, and other places, too. Think about the pictures you want to take and what objects you may want to include in your artwork.

Step 2: Look at your environment.

What time of day is it? Is it sunny or cloudy? Did it just rain? What do you see: tall trees, flowers, shrubs, houses, buildings, telephone poles, sidewalks, grass, animals and/or insects? Which objects are bright because they catch the light? Which objects are dark because they are in shadow? Using natural light and shadows will help the tone and visual weight of your photograph.

Step 3: Choose your perspective.

What do you see when you look in different directions? Are you viewing the subject of your photo from above, below, or at eye level? Are you close to or far away from your subject? How does the angle or distance change the way you see the image in the camera?

Step 4: Frame your subject.

How you choose to place the subject in the frame of your photograph can help demonstrate the distance, or depth, from you as the photographer to what is being seen by the viewer. Experiment by putting your subject in the background, middle ground, or foreground of your image to see how the photograph changes.

Step 5: Look from different points of view.

Are you framing and capturing a close up of a flower in full bloom or the entire flower from where the stem reaches the ground to the tip of the petals? Perhaps you're taking photos of how the cracks in the sidewalk meet, or the stump of a tree. Look for shapes, folds and shadows. Look, and look again, taking multiple images of one subject and/or space from various angles to understand it in a new way. Be dynamic! There is no right or wrong.

Step 6: Share

Ask an adult to share your photos with us on social media at [#NEUtoDoKids!](#)





"There are always two people in every picture:
the photographer and the viewer."

— Ansel Adams

Ansel Adams (February 20, 1902 – April 22, 1984) was an American landscape photographer known for his black and white photography of the Western United States. His style favored sharp focus and the use of the full tonal range of a photograph. Adams was also a life-long advocate for environmental conservation and his photography was testament to his advocacy.

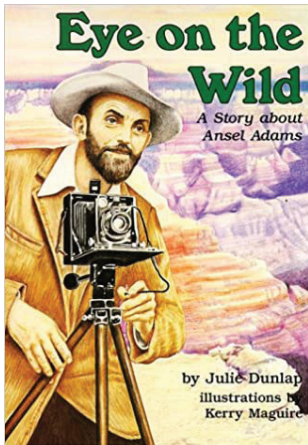
Adams was the only child of Charles Hitchcock Adams and Olive Bray. He was born in San Francisco, California. At the age of fourteen, Adams was given his first camera during a trip to Yosemite National Park.

At seventeen, Adams became a member of the Sierra Club, a conservation group dedicated to protecting the natural environments of the earth. He was later contracted with the United States Department of the Interior to capture photographs of national parks. For his work and his persistent advocacy, which helped expand the National Park system, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1980.

Though Adams vast body of works included color photography and depictions of people, he was most known for his large scale captures of sweeping monotone landscapes and close-up stills of nature.



Ansel Adams, *Evening, McDonald Lake, Glacier National Park, Montana*, Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785–2006, Series: Ansel Adams Photographs of National Parks and Monuments, 1941–1942, ID: 519861. National Archives at College Park. This image is in the public domain.



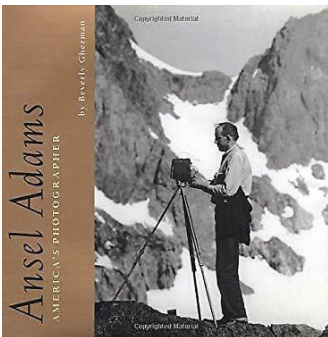
Eye on the Wild: A Story about Ansel Adams

by Julie Dunlap (Author), Kerry Maguire (Illustrator)

This book recounts the life and career of nature photographer Ansel Adams, whose work for the Sierra Club helped to increase public interest in wilderness preservation.

Reading level : 9 - 12 years | Grade Level: 4-6

[Available on Amazon](#)



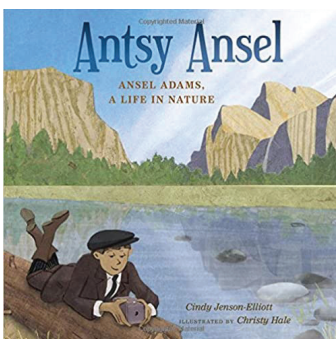
Ansel Adams : America's photographer; a biography for young people

by Beverly Gherman

The renowned—and revered—photographer would have been 118 years old in 2020. This biography takes young readers through Ansel Adams' rich life: from the earthquake that broke his nose to the valley that shaped his world, revealing the humorous, artistic, and thoughtful personality behind his legendary work.

Reading level : 9 - 13 years | Grade Level: 4 - 7

[Available on Amazon](#)



Antsy Ansel: Ansel Adams, a Life in Nature

by Cindy Jenson-Elliott (Author), Christy Hale (Illustrator)

As a child, Ansel Adams just couldn't sit still. He felt trapped indoors and never walked anywhere—he ran. Even when he sat, his feet danced. But in nature, Ansel felt right at home. He fell in love with the gusting gales of the Golden Gate, the quiet whisper of Lobos Creek, the icy white of Yosemite Valley, and countless other remarkable natural sights. From his early days in San Francisco to the height of his glory nationwide, Antsy Ansel chronicles a restless boy's path to becoming an iconic nature photographer.

Age Range: 5 - 9 years | Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

[Available on Amazon](#)