



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Photography

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Photography

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.


- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Consider the extent to which the candidate's response:
 - answers the specifics of the question
 - demonstrates knowledge and understanding of photography.
- (d) In Section 2 full marks are available whether responses are provided in continuous prose, linked statements or a series of developed points.
- (e) Do not award marks for mere descriptive comment. To gain marks, candidates must develop and justify their points. Only award marks for a valid response to the question asked. For example, in response to questions that ask candidates to:
 - **identify** – they must give the name required (for example a specific camera control, technique, effect)
 - **explain** – they must apply their knowledge and understanding of light and image formation, camera controls, image-making techniques and their effects to relate **cause** and **effect** and/or make relationships between things clear
 - **discuss** – they must apply their knowledge and understanding of image-making techniques, and their effects, to communicate ideas and information about the photographer's technical and creative decisions; they must draw valid conclusions and give explanations supported by **justification**.
- (f) To gain full marks, candidates must respond to all aspects of the question.
- (g) Do not award marks for repetition of points that the candidate has not developed further in any way.

Marking instructions for each question

SECTION 1 – MULTIPLE CHOICE

If a candidate has selected more than one option in response to a question, do not award a mark.

Do not award a mark if it is unclear which option the candidate has selected.

| Question | | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|--|---|----------|---------------------|
| 1. | | White balance | 1 | |
| 2. | | Over-exposed | 1 | |
| 3. | | Pixels per inch | 1 | |
| 4. | |  | 1 | |
| 5. | | 5 | 1 | |
| 6. | | The ISO has been adjusted from ISO 100 to ISO 400 | 1 | |
| 7. | | Aperture | 1 | |
| 8. | | Daylight | 1 | |
| 9. | | Increased contrast | 1 | |
| 10. | | Focal length | 1 | |

SECTION 2 – ANALYSIS

| Question | | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|-----|--|----------|---|
| 11. | (a) | <p>Aperture A large aperture has been selected as the items on the table in the background are out of focus.</p> <p>A small aperture has been used to reduce the amount of light entering the lens as it is a bright, sunny day outside the diner.</p> <p>Exposure Control The photographer lowered the exposure setting on their phone to compensate for the bright light coming in through the window.</p> <p>White balance A sunny white balance setting has been used to cancel the warm tones of the sunlight coming in through the diner window.</p> <p>ISO A low ISO setting has been used as the sunlight hitting the table is strong. The shadows under the table are solid and free from digital noise.</p> <p>Shutter Speed A fast shutter speed has been used to compensate for the wide aperture selected. A shallow depth of field is seen in the out of focus condiments on the table in the background.</p> | 2 | <p>Award 1 mark for the correct identification of a specific camera control. The specific setting of the camera control does not need to be stated.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for a correct explanation of that camera control.</p> <p>The column on the left outlines examples of what would gain a mark.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, candidates must refer to the image in question.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, each point must be relevant to the image in question.</p> <p>Any other valid explanation relating to the use of an appropriate camera control.</p> |

| Question | | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|-----|--|----------|---|
| | (b) | <p>A standard lens has been used to avoid distortion on the window frame.</p> <p>A standard lens has been used to crop out the surrounding scene, focusing on this one booth.</p> <p>A neutral density filter has been used to balance the exposure and allow the text on the table to be legible.</p> <p>A neutral density filter has been used to as it lowers the exposure, allowing the photographer to select a wider aperture. This ensures the focus remains on the table in the foreground.</p> | 2 | <p>Award a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for the correct explanation of each provided piece of equipment.</p> <p>The column on the left outlines examples of what would gain a mark.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, candidates must refer to the image in question.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, each point must be relevant to the image in question.</p> <p>Any other valid explanations relating to the use of a standard lens and neutral density filter.</p> |
| | (c) | <p>Pattern The repetition of the text seen on the table and chair creates a busy atmosphere.</p> <p>The lines of letters across the seat create a pattern that breaks up the solid block of orange colour.</p> <p>Colour The warm colour of the food contrasts with the white plates, making the food stand out.</p> <p>Shape The circular shape of the plates on the table are emphasised by their strong cast shadow.</p> <p>Tone The dark tone beneath the table contrasts with the white tabletop, making it stand out.</p> <p>Line The diagonal edges of the table lead the viewer's eye towards the window.</p> | 3 | <p>Award 1 mark for each correct identification and explanation of a visual element, up to a maximum of 3 marks.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, candidates must refer to the image in question.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, each point must be relevant to the image in question.</p> <p>The column on the left outlines examples of what would gain a mark.</p> <p>Any other valid explanations relating to visual elements.</p> |

| Question | | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|-----|--|----------|--|
| | (d) | <p>The shadow of the words on the back of the seat and table symbolises the conversations that have previously taken place.</p> <p>The bright light streaming in through the diner window symbolises happiness and that eating there will bring you joy.</p> <p>The food left on the plates symbolises that the people had to leave in a hurry after a quick meal.</p> <p>Most of the food on the plates has been eaten, symbolising that the people have enjoyed their meal.</p> <p>The food left on the plates symbolises the scepticism that the establishment only serves the best, as written on the window.</p> <p>The remaining food on the plates symbolises a throw away society, where food is in abundance.</p> <p>The photographer has used the finished meal to symbolise that all good things come to an end.</p> | 3 | <p>Award 1 mark for each correct explanation of how the photographer has used symbolism to communicate a message, up to a maximum of 3 marks.</p> <p>The column on the left outlines examples of what would gain a mark.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, candidates must refer to the image in question.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, each point must be relevant to the image in question.</p> <p>Any other valid explanations relating to how the photographer has used symbolism to communicate a message.</p> |

| Question | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|---|----------|---|
| 12. | <p>A small aperture/high f-number has been used to create the wide depth of field. This allows for the viewer to see all faces clearly in the crowd.</p> <p>A fast shutter speed has been used to freeze the pose of the people holding up their phone. This captures a moment when everyone is doing the same thing.</p> <p>The photographer could have used a high ISO number due to the use of a fast shutter speed and small aperture. This has balanced the exposure allowing the viewer to see detail in the dark lamppost.</p> <p>A standard lens has been used in the image to replicate the human field of vision. This allows the viewer to feel as though they are a part of the crowd.</p> <p>The photographer has converted the image to black and white in post-production. Removing the distracting colours reinforces the man looking at the photographer as the focal point.</p> <p>The man in the black jacket is the main point of interest. The rest of the crowd are looking out of the frame, making the viewer question why he is not.</p> <p>The photographer has created a point of interest by capturing the only person looking at him. This helps the viewer to establish a connection with someone in this busy scene.</p> <p>The dark shape of the lamppost on the right and the shadow to the left of the image frame the scene. This makes the viewer focus on the crowd.</p> | 10 | <p>Award 1 mark for each justified point discussing the photographer's technical and creative factors, up to a maximum of 10 marks.</p> <p>Responses must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of image-making techniques and their effects.</p> <p>The column on the left outlines examples of points which would gain marks.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, candidates must refer to the image in question.</p> <p>In order to gain a mark, each point must be relevant to the image in question.</p> <p>Any other valid justified points discussing the photographer's technical and creative decisions.</p> |

| Question | Expected response | Max mark | Additional guidance |
|----------|---|----------|---------------------|
| | <p>The photographer has taken the photograph from a standing viewpoint, allowing him to photograph over the seated people and show how far down the street the crowd goes.</p> <p>The photographer's choice of viewpoint leads him to capture the crowd of people, rather than what is going on out of shot. This makes the viewer question what they are looking at.</p> <p>The traditional black and white style contrasts with the modern mobile technology in the image. This creates an interesting juxtaposition within the scene.</p> <p>Many of the people within the scene are watching the event through their mobile device, rather than live. This highlights how people today do not live in the moment.</p> <p>The repetition of faces/mobile phones lead the viewer's eye from the foreground into the background. This creates depth within the scene.</p> <p>The image has been taken in landscape orientation. This fills the scene with the crowd rather than the buildings above them, emphasising them as the subject matter.</p> <p>The man in the foreground is wearing dark clothing, which contrasts with the other people. This draws the viewer's attention to him, creating a point of interest.</p> | | |

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]