Day 1 of 1
Lesson Plan Title:

Creating Photographs in the Style of the Fourth Grade Project

This lesson teaches students how to take photographs. We recommend that you teach the lesson on one day and then have students take their final photos for the project on a second day. You will likely need an hour for the photo exploration and 30 minutes for the final picture taking. Once this lesson and the interview lessons are complete, students will be ready to put together the project in your classroom. There are ideas at the end of the lesson for how to do this.

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that …
- Light affects how a photograph looks
- In order to emphasize the foreground, a mostly plain background works best.

Essential Questions

- What makes for a clear, focused portrait photograph?

Objectives

Students will be able to …
- Take photographs in the style of Judy Gelles' Fourth Grade Project
- Explain how the lighting and background of a picture affects a photograph

Materials/Preparation

- Cameras of some kind
- Photographs from the Fourth Grade Project included in this lesson
  - Photographs from the Fourth Grade Project
  - Behind the Scenes Photos
- A way to project or see the photographs
- If your school has no plain backgrounds (blank outdoor walls), a sheet may be needed to make a plain background for taking pictures
- Think about how to share these pictures for printing or displaying
- Think about how to mark up/write on these pictures. See instructions at the end of the lesson.

Assessment Evidence

- Observation/discussion as students take photographs and reflect on them
- Assessment Rubric

Learning Plan

Introduction

- "We have been studying about Judy Gelles' Fourth Grade Project. Today we are going to be taking our own pictures in the style of the Fourth Grade Project. How many of you have taken lots of pictures? Have you noticed that sometimes the photos come out the way you would like them to and other times they don't? There are many different factors that go into taking a quality photograph and photographers have different elements and techniques that they think about when they take photographs. Today we are going to be thinking about how light and background affect the quality of a photograph."

- "First, we are going to take a look at some of Judy's pictures. Then, we'll explore with cameras. We'll get together outside to discuss what works, thinking especially about background and light. In the end, we'll take some portraits of our own like Judy Gelles." (This lesson can also be done inside, but you may need to use a sheet as a background if there are no blank walls or bulletin boards available to use as a background.)

- "I said the word portrait. Does anyone know what that word means?" (a painting, drawing, or photograph of a person). "Right, let's take a look at some of Judy's portraits now." _Look at Photographs of the Fourth Grade Project._

- "What did you notice about Judy's photographs?" (_If students aren't coming up with much:_ How many students are in each photograph? Which direction is the student facing? What is the focus of the photograph?)

- "What are the students standing against? Why do you think Judy has the students standing against a wall? That wall is called the background. Why do you think Judy photographed people against mostly plain backgrounds?" (So the person is the clear focus of the photograph. We don't want the background to be too busy, so the viewer can focus on the person and the written words.)

- "We have some special behind the scenes photos that show us some of the backgrounds Judy chooses and how the backgrounds look once Judy has taken the photograph. She spends hours looking for the perfect background. If she doesn't find one, she creates a background by moving things around." Show students the last two sets of images.

Investigation

- _Assign partners and instruct children on how to handle and use the cameras._

- Lead the group outside or to an indoor space where they can roam around. Go over guidelines for picture taking. You might want to let the children explore with cameras by taking any pictures they want for a few minutes. _Specify where children are allowed to be when taking photographs._ Then, call everyone back.

Exploring Background

- "So now we are going to explore different backgrounds. We are looking for a background that will allow the subject of the photo—you!—to stand out. You can try out multiple backgrounds … maybe a door, a bush, a playground … I want you to figure out which background helps you focus on the person in the photograph."

- _As you walk around, check in with students about background. Look at their pictures._ You might ask: Which one is your favorite picture? What makes that picture better? What do you notice about the background?

- _When students have had a suitable amount of time to explore, call them back in to discuss their findings._

- "What kinds of backgrounds did you find that helped the viewer focus on the person in the picture? Why did this help us to focus on the person?"

- _See what the class comes up with … but you may lead them to think about using a mostly plain background. You may have to ask students to think back to Judy's portraits_—What was in the background of Judy's Fourth Grade Project pictures?

- "The background should not be too busy. That means there shouldn't be much in the background that will catch the viewer's attention. We want whoever is looking at the picture to focus on the person, not the stuff in the background. Remember this kind of picture is called a portrait. The purpose is to show the person."

Learning Plan (Continued)

Investigation (Continued)

- "Now let's think of how what we are wearing affects the picture." If your students wear a uniform, help them to see that a background that is different from their uniform allows the subject of the photo to stand out (ie: light shirt/dark background or vice versa). If your students do not wear uniforms, help them to think about what color shirt works best with a given background.
- As a class, you should come up with a list of backgrounds that might work.

Exploring Light

- The next thing we need to think about is light. Have you ever taken a picture and it ended up too dark? Or maybe someone was taking a picture of you and you couldn't open your eyes because the sun was too bright? This all happens because of the lighting of the photo. We're going to go off to explore once again. I want you to go back to the backgrounds you think work best from our list and try to take a photo at each spot."
- If you are condensing the photo taking into one day, ask your students to take photos of one another from behind so that the whole person is in the photograph. Have students think about the pose they want to strike.
- Check in with students to see what they notice about light. The best light will be in the shade or, if necessary, inside.

Conclusion

Head back into the classroom once all the photos have been taken.

- "How did it feel to explore with the camera?"
- "Which backgrounds worked best? What kind of light was there?"
- If your students' schedule is flexible you might bring students to photograph at a different time of day. If your class meets at a fixed time every day, then you should choose a spot in the shade or a background inside. Lead the class in a discussion to agree on one background or allow each student to choose his/her own background.

- Explain that the next time students will have the chance to photograph a partner from behind in front of the chosen background. Students can choose a unique pose for the photo. Students will then add the text from the interviews to create their own Fourth Grade Project images.
  (See below for some options and instructions.)

Reflection

- What do you need to know about light when taking a portrait? Which background did you choose and why?

Ideas for putting the project together:

- Simple options:
  - Write the text on the photos with a sharpie.
  - Write the text beneath the photo with a computer or on paper.
- Some computer options:
  - Write on a picture on your iPhone or iPad.
  - How to access the Markup editor:
    1. Launch Photos from your home screen.
    2. Tap the Photos tab in the lower left corner of the screen.
    3. Select the photo you would to edit.
    4. Tap the Edit button (looks like a series of horizontal sliders) in the bottom toolbar.
    5. Tap the More (…) button.
    6. Tap Markup.
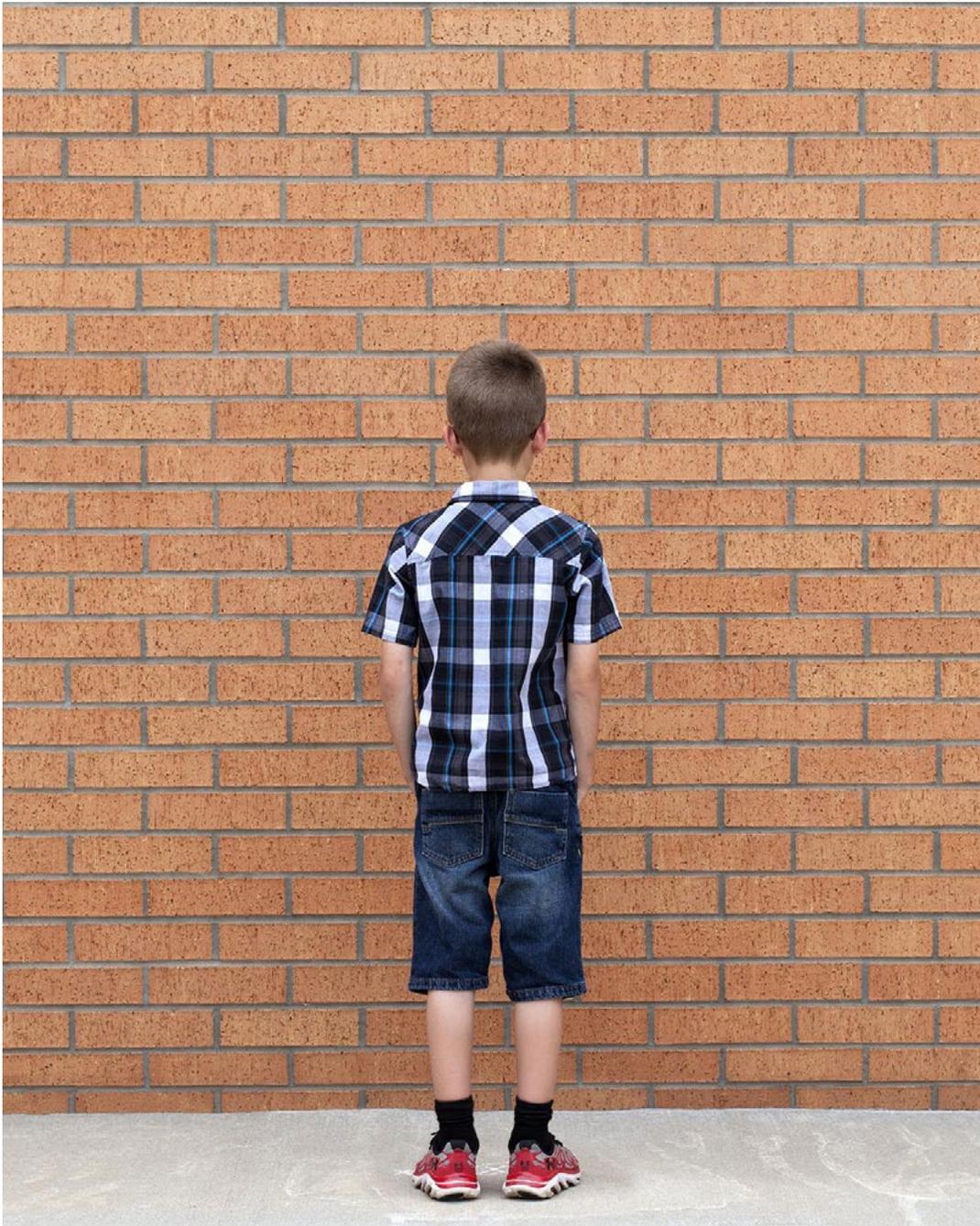
  - Write on a picture in Word.
    Insert or Paste a New Graphic:
    1. Use the Insert or Paste command to place the graphic into the document.
    2. Click your graphics image to select it.
    3. On the Format menu, click Picture.
    4. Click the Layout tab.
       Under Wrapping style, click Behind text, and then click OK.

Photography Lesson Assessment Rubric

Rubric:

- 3—Proficient
- 2—Developing
- 1—Basic

Student Name	Student explains that a simple background allows a subject to stand out	Student explains that pictures in the shade and/or inside provide optimal light

USA, Pennsylvania: "Big House"

USA, Arkansas: "A Test"

China: "Visit Shanghai"

St. Lucia

Italy