

How to Use Light when Photographing People

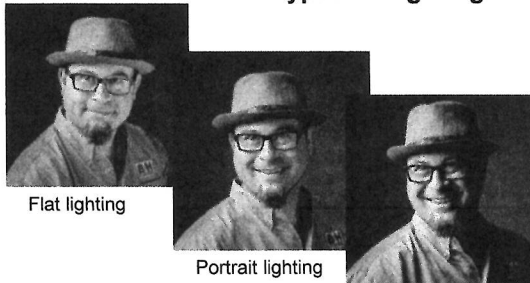
by Clem Wehner



Flat lighting



Types of Lighting



Flat lighting

Portrait lighting

Dramatic lighting

Perfect Portrait lighting Ratio



On-camera pop-up flash – FLAT!



Perfect Portrait lighting ratio!



by Carol Dwyer

Perfect Portrait lighting ratio!



Definitions

MAIN LIGHT -- primary light that illuminates the subject and causes shadows.

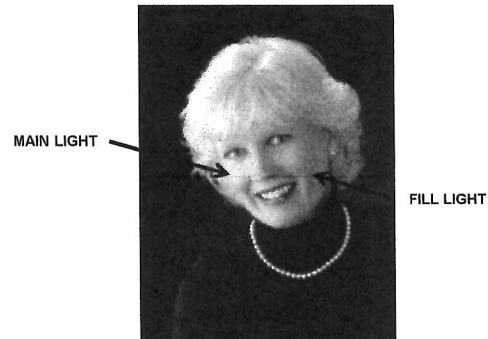
FILL LIGHT -- secondary light that lights the shadow areas, usually dimmer than the main light.

RATIO – brightness of one side of the subject compared to the other.

Dramatic Lighting



Perfect Portrait lighting ratio!

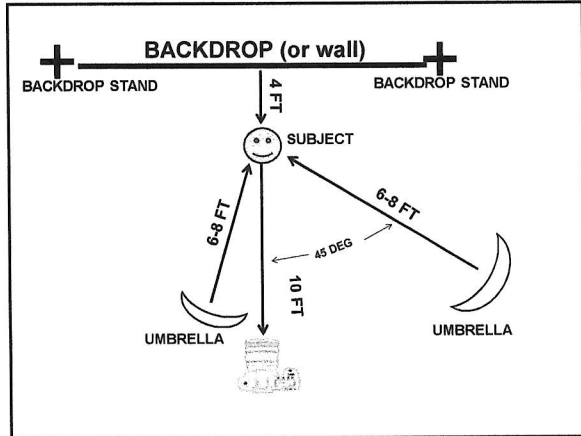


SIX STEPS TO PERFECT PORTRAIT LIGHTING



FIVE STEPS TO PERFECT PORTRAIT LIGHTING

1. Position the subject facing straight ahead.
2. Position the fill light directly in front of the subjects nose or slightly off to the side. Position it much higher than the subject's head.
3. Position the main light (key light) opposite side from the fill light, 6-8 feet away, 45 degrees off, and slightly higher than subject's head.



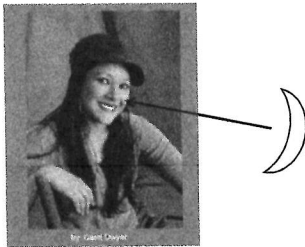
6. Set camera for the proper exposure:

a. With strobe lights: Camera MUST be in Manual Exposure mode.

1. Set camera shutter speed to 1/60th.
2. Set camera aperture (f/stop) to get good exposure.

b. Note: with flood lights (non-strobe), auto exposure will work

4. Adjust the main light brightness to about f/11 as measured at the subject.



Portraits in Natural Light

5. Adjust the fill light for the desired "lighting ratio".

Adjust the brightness until the fill side is half as bright as the main light side. (1 f/stop dimmer)



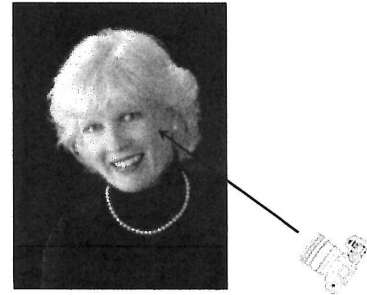
Light from a door or window



Always be aware of the light direction on your subject !

Repeat:

Always be aware
of the direction of the light
on your subject!



Shooting Angle



Shoot into the shadow side of the face

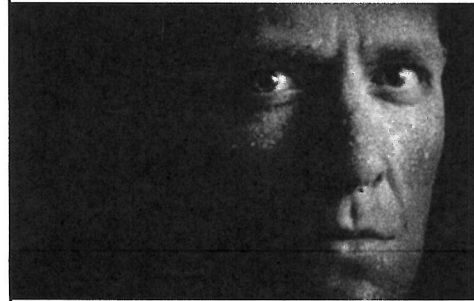


THIS



Lighting more than one person

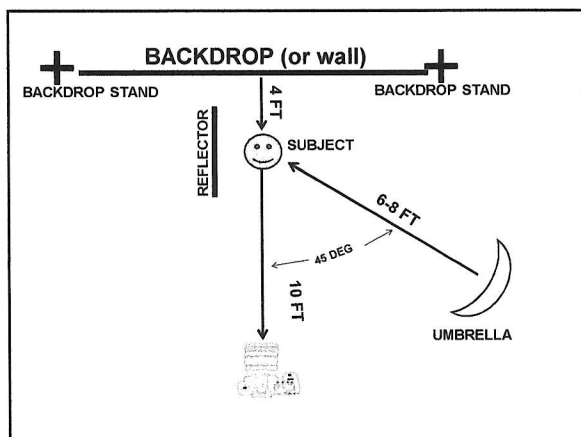
- 1 or 2 people- use portrait ratio
- Groups- use flat lighting
(to avoid shadows)



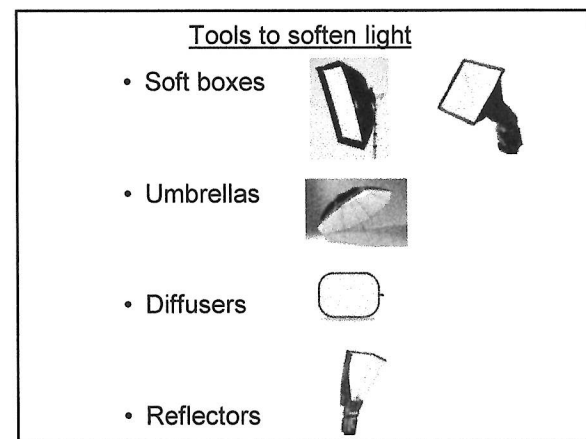
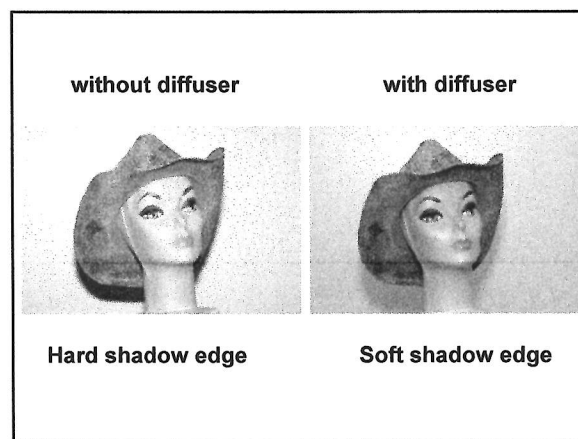
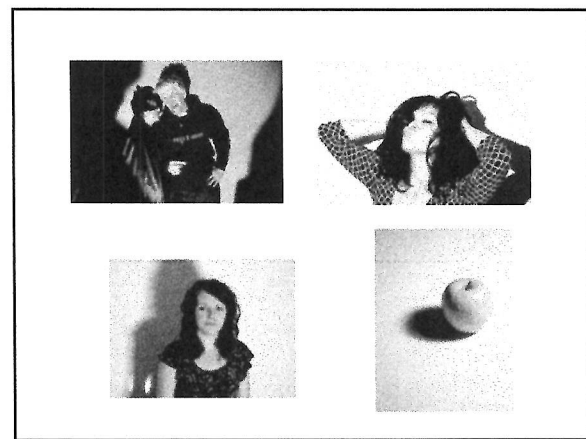
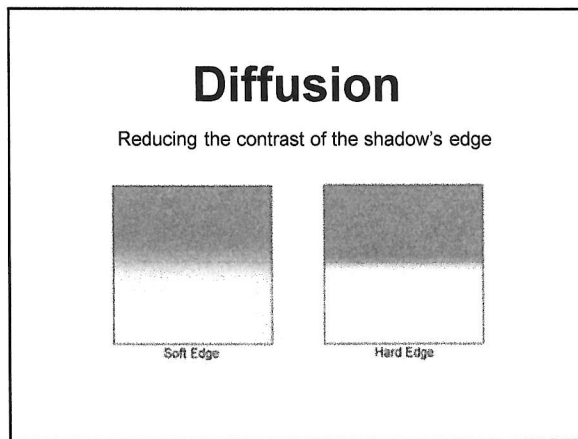
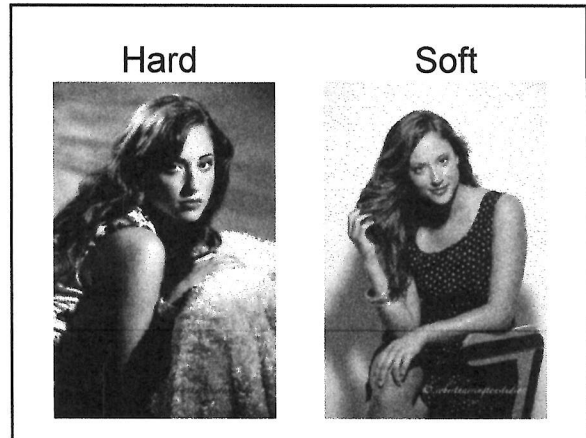
Dramatic lighting



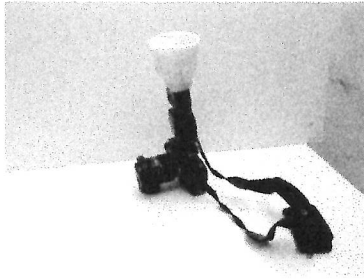
Portraits with one studio light



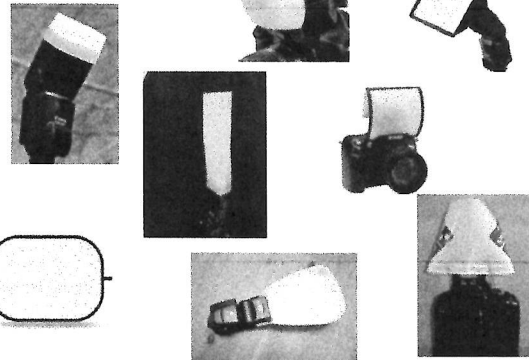
Modifying light



FLASH DIFFUSER – LIGHTSPHERE
(by Gary Fong)



Diffusers



POP-UP FLASH DIFFUSER
(by Gary Fong)

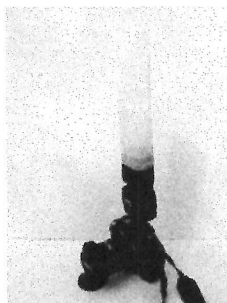


POP-UP DIFFUSER

Diffusers in a pinch

- Plastic cup
- Paper towel
- Toilet paper
- Thin white cloth
- Handkerchief
- Thin packing foam

FLASH DIFFUSER - PACKING FOAM



FOAM AS DIFFUSER ON EXTERNAL FLASH

WITHOUT FOAM DIFFUSER



GEAR



WITH FOAM DIFFUSER




NO GEAR

Using Diffusers with Sunlight


Use diffuser to solve
Raccoon Eyes




PROBLEM:
HARSH LIGHT- HARD SHADOWS



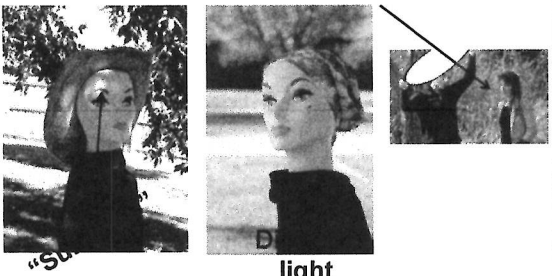
Use diffuser to "soften" the light
and reduce glare



SOLUTION: Use diffuser



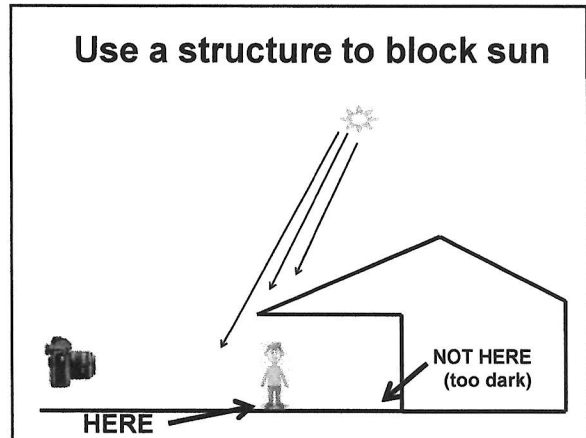
Sun may light subject unevenly



PROBLEM: SQUINTING




Sunlight too bright



USE DIFFUSER TO REDUCE GLARE ON FACE

Exposing Outdoor Scenes

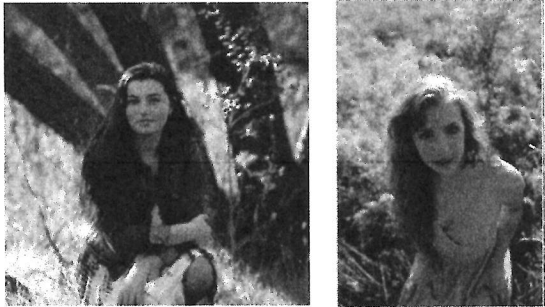
Use a tree to block sun



HERE

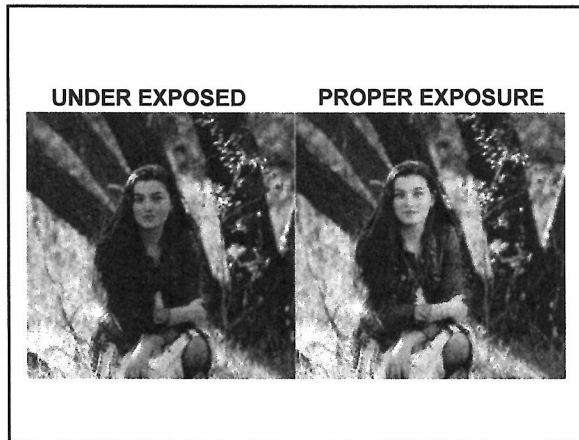
NOT HERE (too dark)

PROBLEM:
Bright Background & Dark Subject




UNDER EXPOSED

UNDER EXPOSED



Solution:
Balance the lighting of the subject and the background




1. Expose for the background
2. Use reflector (or flash) to brighten the subject

UNDER EXPOSED

The Problem

BRIGHT LIGHT



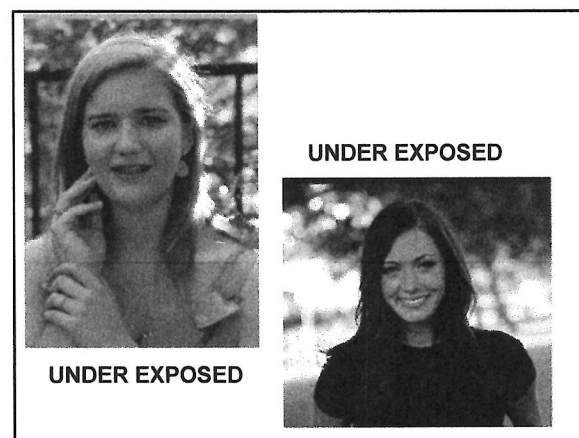
DIM LIGHT

UNDER EXPOSED

Repeat:


If the subject is in the shade with a sunlit background

You WILL need fill light




Use reflector to brighten subject to the same brightness as the background

UNDER EXPOSED **PROPER EXPOSURE**



reflector

**RESULT:
properly exposed background
& properly exposed subject**



PROPER EXPOSURE

UNDER EXPOSED **PROPER EXPOSURE**




UNDER EXPOSED **PROPER EXPOSURE**




No Reflector With Reflector

UNDER EXPOSED **PROPER EXPOSURE**




UNDER EXPOSED **PROPER EXPOSURE**



BUT, DON'T USE TOO MUCH FILL

Don't make subject BRIGHTER than background



(will cause subject to look overexposed)

USING ON-CAMERA FLASH

- External flash
- Pop-up flash

Changing the Direction of Light

(using a reflector)

DON'T GET TOO CLOSE WHEN USING FLASH (Especially if NOT using a diffuser)

FROM 4 FEET



GLARE

FROM 8 FEET- zoomed in



NO GLARE

Use reflector to fill in shadows



USE A DIFFUSER WITH FLASH

WITHOUT DIFFUSER



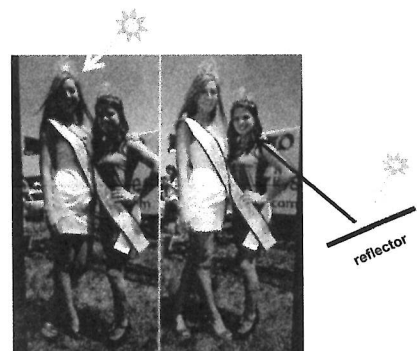
GLARE

WITH DIFFUSER

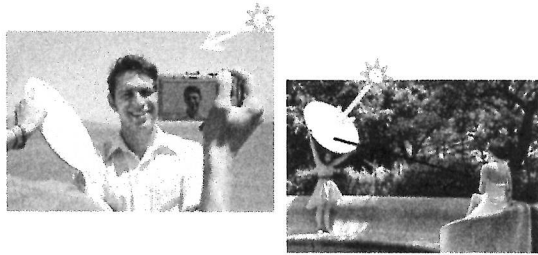


NO GLARE

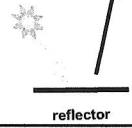
To fill in dark areas



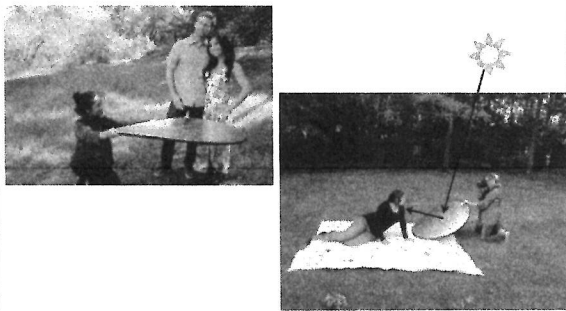
To fill in dark areas



As a FILL LIGHT When background is too bright



Reflector to lighten dark areas



A building as a reflector



UNEVEN LIGHTING: USE REFLECTOR FOR "FILL" LIGHT



ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS

- FOAM BOARD-
- FABRIC-
- ALUMINUM FOIL
- AUTO WINDOW SHADES
- 4 X 8 FOOT FOAM SHEETS
- MIRRORS
- NATURAL OBJECTS
- OTHER EQUIPMENT

SUMMARY REMINDERS

1. Always be aware of the light direction on your subject
2. Try to avoid flat lighting
3. Use diffuser to “soften” the light to avoid hard shadows
4. Watch for dark subjects against bright background
5. Use reflector as a fill light
6. Use flash outdoors as a fill light