

Composition Checklist

7 Steps to Successful Photos

- ✓ Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- ✓ Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ✓ Center head within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ✓ Make sure eye level is between 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ✓ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- ✓ Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ✓ Encourage subject to have a natural expression

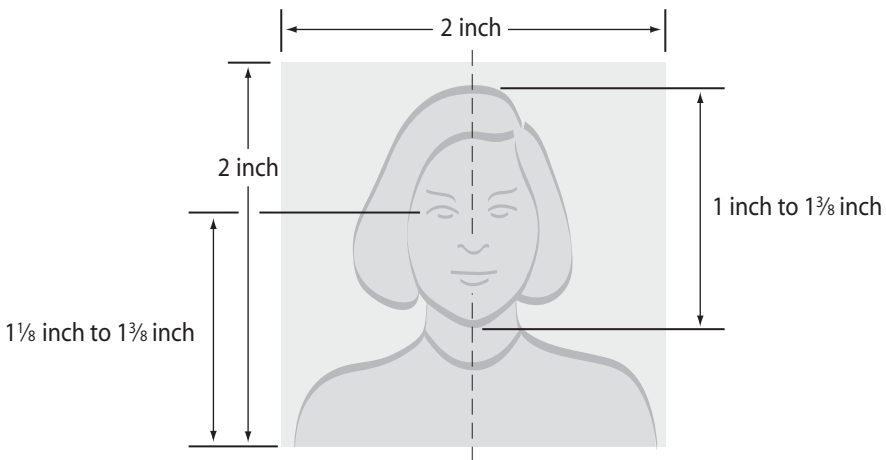


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos



Brightness, Contrast, & Color

- Brightness and contrast should be adjusted to present the subject and background accurately
- Photos without proper contrast or color may obscure unique facial features
- Color should reproduce natural skin tones
- Fluorescent or other lighting with unbalanced color may cause unwanted color cast in the photo
- Appropriate filters can eliminate improper color balance

Photo Too Dark



Correct Brightness



Contrast Too High



Correct Contrast



Improper Color



Natural Color



Head Position & Background

- Head should be positioned directly facing the camera
- Photo should capture from slightly above top of hair to middle of chest
- Eyes should be open and looking at the camera
- Eyeglasses should be worn if normally used by the subject
- Glare on eyeglasses can usually be avoided with a slight upward or downward tilt of the head
- Background should be plain white or off-white
- Include headpieces if worn daily for religious purposes; they should not obscure or cast shadows on the eyes or any other part of the face

Head Not Facing Camera



Head Facing Camera



Glare on Glasses



No Glare on Glasses



Background Not Plain



Plain Background



Exposure & Lighting

- Over- or under-exposure may render the photo unusable
- Three-point balanced lighting is strongly recommended (see Figure 1)
- Facial features should be clearly evident in the photo
- Lighting should be adjusted to avoid shadows on the face or background
- Diffuse sources of light, such as umbrella lights, are preferable to point sources

Over Exposed



Correctly Exposed



Shadows on Background



Background Uniformly Illuminated



Shadows on Face



Face Uniformly Illuminated



Resolution & Printing Quality

- High-resolution photography and printing are strongly recommended
- Both conventional and digital photography are acceptable, and conventional or digital printing methods may be used
- Resulting print should exhibit a continuous tone quality regardless of the print method used (dye sublimation, ink jet, laser, etc.)
- Digitally printed photos should be produced without discernible pixels or dot patterns
- Fine facial features should be discernible
- The entire face should be in focus

Low Quality: Discernible Pixels



High Quality: Non-Discernible Pixels



Low Quality: Visible Coarse Dot Pattern



High Quality: No Visible Dot Pattern



Poorly Focused



Properly Focused

