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# YOUNG REPORTERS

## FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**Youth-Led Environmental Journalism**

*Guide to Photographing like an Environmental Journalist*



[www.youngreporters.ca](http://www.youngreporters.ca)

# YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

## Youth-Led Environmental Journalism



**Young Reporters**  
*for the environment*

**YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT** is an international project from the *Foundation for Environmental Education*. In Canada it is coordinated by *Environmental Defence*.

### ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

We are Canada's most effective environmental action organization. We challenge, and inspire change in government, business and people to ensure a greener, healthier and prosperous life for all.

### FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (FEE) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization aiming to promote sustainable development through environmental education (formal school education, training of staff and general awareness raising). FEE is mainly active through our five environmental education programs: *Blue Flag*, *Eco-Schools*, *Young Reporters for the Environment*, *Learning about Forests* and *Green Key*.



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## Hey, Young Reporters!

If you're reading this guide it's because you care about your environment. You understand that photography illuminates difficult subjects and creates an emotional reaction and you are interested in learning how to use it to get people interested in important environmental issues in their communities.

You also might know that by submitting a photo to **Canada's Next Green Journalist** you have the chance to have your photo featured on **www.youngreporters.ca**, win cool prizes, and use your photo to gain valuable attention on a pressing issue.

In this guide, you will discover everything you need to know to become an effective *Young Reporter for the Environment*.

Thanks to photographer and naturalist *Jen Howard*, this guide is full of tips for taking great photos. By the time you're finished you will have an excellent piece that will educate people about a significant environmental issue in your community.

Before you jump in, check out the next page for a brief overview about everything you need to know to submit your piece, and then you are good to go!

**With students from all across Canada, we can't wait to see everyone's photos. So what are you waiting for?**

### **YOUNG REPORTERS TEAM**

yre@environmentaldefence.ca

## Editor's Guidelines

Part of the fun of **Canada's Next Green Journalist** is the chance to have your article featured on [www.youngreporters.ca](http://www.youngreporters.ca). In order to be eligible, there are just a few quick things you'll need to keep in mind:

1. *Stories should investigate an environmental issue and propose possible solutions:*
  - **climate change**
  - **coastlines**
  - **energy**
  - **water**
  - **agriculture**
  - **cities**
  - **waste**
  - **biodiversity**
2. *Make sure you include **local** content. We're interested in how this topic affects your community!*
3. *Your photo should have a title and caption of **no more than 150 words**.*
4. *Submit one photo OR a photo essay of up to twelve photos.*

**THAT'S IT! Now let the clicking begin.**

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## Top Tips for Photography

If you're interested in bold imagery and are a firm believer that 'a picture is worth 1000 words' then this guide is for you. Becoming an effective photojournalist will take a little practice, but the process will also be fun and leave you with a great photo plus superb skills.



**Jennifer Howard** is a photographer and naturalist. She has been in the woods and taking great shots for years. From rattlesnakes to turtles, magnificent birds to buck deer, she has captured some amazing images. In this guide, she has put together five steps for taking great photos. Use this book for a quick overview of how to take great shots, or check out [www.youngreporters.ca](http://www.youngreporters.ca) if you want more photography advice.

### Jen's Tips for Photographing in Natural Spaces:

**Leave the area just as you found it.** If you rolled over a log be sure to gently roll it back – it could be a home to salamanders or other creatures.

**Be sure not to disturb anything and observe with your eyes and lens only.**

**Go slow and be careful – it's not worth sustaining an injury for a shot.**

**Come prepared.** Bringing a few basic books to identify what critters you've found will help you understand the number of creatures in the area better and how to find them.



## Step #1: Look and Analyze

One of the best ways to tell what kind of photos you want to take is to start by looking at others' work. Choose different sources like newspapers, magazines and outdoor journals. Pick a few photos that really speak to you and spend some time analyzing what makes them so memorable. Try answering the questions in the 'Top Tips' section to get you thinking about how you can transfer some of the qualities to your own shots.



## Jen's Top Tips:

*Ask yourself the following questions while you're looking at a variety of photos...*

***What draws me to a photo?***

***How do the shots of landscapes, animals and people differ in their impact?***

***What is the subject of the photo (person, place, thing, etc.)?***

***What story does the photo seem to tell?***

FOR MORE TIPS FROM JEN,  
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## Step #2: Storytelling

It's important to remember that photojournalism is different from other kinds of photography as its foremost purpose is to tell a story. Sometimes you will be able to say everything the article needs to with just one photo, and other times it will simply illustrate aspects of the story.

In **Canada's Next Green Journalist**, you are asked to take a photo that reflects on one of the following subjects, but with a local focus.

Doing a little research on how these issues impact your community will help you to figure out what photos might help draw attention to these subjects.

## Jen's Top Tips:

**Never Interfere.** *As a journalist you want to capture a real event, not create one. Stick to what is actually occurring.*

**Do Some Digging.** *Know what you are taking a photo of and any other facts that will help you better tell your story.*

**Be Proactive.** *Don't wait for the perfect photo to present itself - be proactive and figure out what events, issues and opportunities are coming up in your area.*

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## Step #3: Lights, Camera, Action!

Lighting is one of the key aspects of great photographs, though there are various ways to get a great effect. Knowing what kind of light you are dealing with will help you take better photographs.

Generally speaking, you want to shoot with the sun behind you, but there are a few other general tips on lighting.

### Jen's Top Tips:

**Strong light** that blazes directly and strongly on your whole subject will bring out bold colouring.

**Indirect light** will add a more luminous glow for a softer look.

**Side lighting** is trickier, as it can be dramatic in some shots but in other cases it creates extreme contrasts that don't turn out well in the final product.

Too much of a good thing. **Overhead light** can sometimes cast hard shadows, so know how much light is too much.

**The important thing is that you see for yourself the various effects that your light source can have on your image, so try experimenting with different kinds and see for yourself!**

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## Step #4: Layout

We tend to want to place our subject, whether a pet, person or tree, in the centre of our shot. But there is a basic layout trick that artists have used for centuries to help make a painting or photo more interesting. It's called the rule of thirds and it's a simple rule to help you think about how placing your subject off centre can create a more dynamic shot.

*Imagine a tic-tac-toe board across an image so that it's divided into nine segments:*



Placing your subject at any point of intersection between the lines can help tell a story of what is happening in the photo more than a centered image. It brings your picture to life instead of looking too posed. Use this idea to try placing your subject at different points in the same shot and see how it changes the feel or story of the photo.

## Jen's Top Tips:

***Make sure you have an idea of what you're trying to focus on - a mountain, house, person, animal, etc. Pick a central subject for your photo, and try placing it at different points of the frame for a different effect.***

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## Step #5: Up Close and Personal

Sometimes you have to change your approach to get the image you want. Changing your perspective can alter the impact of the photo, and one of the simplest methods for making a more compelling photograph is to get a closer look.

Whether you literally get closer or just zoom in, this can change the feel of the photograph entirely. If you're taking photos of kids or animals this might mean you need to get on your knees to meet them at eye level and really capture their facial expression.



## Jen's Top Tips:

### ***Sink to someone else's level.***

*Getting down at a lower angle can sometimes help you better capture your subject.*

### ***Try two different perspectives.***

*If you're not exactly sure what you're trying to say, try taking a close up and far away shot and see which tells the story you're aiming for.*

***Fill the space.*** *Try filling your whole picture with the subject to create an impactful shot.*

***Perspective.*** *Sometimes we need to see things from a different perspective. Try moving to a different side, height or angle to get a different feel in each shot.*

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## Submitting Your Piece

By the time you have finished this book, hopefully you will have tried out all the tips and tricks and created a photo you want to submit to **Canada's Next Green Journalist**. You now only have to submit it for a chance to win amazing prizes. It's easy!

Log on to [www.youngreporters.ca](http://www.youngreporters.ca). Go to the "Enter Canada's Next Green Journalist" section and fill in the requested information - this will make you eligible for Canadian prizes and to have your piece on the YRE Canada website.

Winners of Canada's Next Green Journalist will automatically be considered for the international competition.

For more information visit the website, or email: [yre@environmentaldefence.ca](mailto:yre@environmentaldefence.ca)

Thanks for participating in **YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!** Check out the website for more ideas to stay involved with environmental issues in your area.

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## **Choose Your Subject**

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**AGRICULTURE**

**COASTLINES**

**CITIES**

**ENERGY**

**WASTE**

**WATER**

**BIODIVERSITY**

