

Grad Challenge topic: Photography

Sample research questions:

- How does portraiture differ from other kinds of photography?
- What elements should be considered when taking a photographic portrait?
- How do the styles of well-known portrait photographers differ from each other?

Summary Currency Relevance Authority Accuracy Purpose Connect/Reflect
Fera, Rae Ann. "Annie Leibovitz On Getting The Shot—And The Future Of Photography." *FastCoCreate*, Fast Company, 28 June 2013, www.fastcocreate.com/1683295/annie-leibovitz-on-getting-the-shot-and-the-future-of-photography.

Annie Leibovitz is a photographer famous for her portraits. This is an interview with her in which she “shares some insight on her process.” Under subheadings that indicate the interviewer’s questions, Leibovitz gives her perspective on the line between journalism and art, art vs science of being a photographer, the role of instinct, the creative process, and how to “get the shot.” This interview, published three years ago, centers on her thoughts on big-picture topics. As a result, the information can still be considered current. In her discussion of her own style, I got information that helps to answer all of my research questions. As someone very well-respected in the field, Leibovitz's opinions on these issues are valuable and reliable. She *is* the authority. Most of the content is not fact, it is her opinion. The article’s purpose is to give non-experts wisdom from a recognized leader in the field. Because she touched upon each of the research questions, this article was very helpful for me to read. It gave me leads to further resources (including Leibovitz’s own book *At Work* in which she talks about how she does what she does) and a lot to think about for my project.

"Portraiture and Representation." *The Museum of Contemporary Photography*, Columbia College Chicago, 2012, www.mocp.org/pdf/education/Framing-portraiture_Final.pdf.

Beginning with a definition of portraiture, this curriculum guide outlines important components of portraits and then discusses manipulation of those components illustrated with examples from famous photographers. It also includes a glossary of technical terms, some suggested activities for those interested in making portraits, and guiding questions to help people examine portraits. Published four years ago, this remains pertinent. Each of my questions is covered in the material provided in this guide, so it is certainly relevant to my research. The Museum of Contemporary Photography published the content and, as they are known as the leading photographic museum in the Midwest, I feel confident in the information they provide. Many of the details they include have been provided by the artists themselves; other details are self-evident (a series of artist’s photographs is done with “tight framing”). Because the artists included are all modern, verifying the information was straightforward - I read interviews with them and examined their websites. The museum is a college art museum with a teaching mission. As a result,

they regularly publish materials to help teachers make use of their resources. This curriculum guide is an example of such materials. Not only did the content directly tie into my research questions, but I also learned more about the field. I discovered relevant concepts and the language to talk about them.

Wolff, Justin P. "Meaning at the Crossroads: The Portrait in Photography." *Bowdoin Digital Commons*, Bowdoin College, 1994, digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=art-museum-exhibition-catalogs.

"Meaning at the Crossroads: The Portrait in Photography" examines portrait photography from its start (including both portraiture done in daguerreotype portrait studios and with the Talbotype process) through the latter part of the 20th century. Specific examples of portraits taken by international photographers over 150 years illustrate the changes in equipment, technique, politics, and philosophy that are discussed in the article. Although this article is from 1994, the information given is historical and provides context from which I can examine current portraits. The author's consideration of portraiture evolution exposes elements photographers can manipulate to create an individual style. An introduction by the director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art details the educational and professional background of the author. His experience as the museum's curator of photography and as a teaching assistant at the extremely selective college in its art history department give me confidence that he is qualified to write about this topic. Numerous citations from scholarly sources support the author's statements. In addition, I used other reputable sources (such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Musée d'Orsay) to verify pieces of important information and found them to be accurate. The article was written to accompany an exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. The sophisticated language and the use of technical vocabulary indicates that it was written with an educated audience in mind. Scholars and those with a solid background in photography will be the people most interested in the information presented here. For my purposes, this article addressed two of my research questions. I learned about elements that combine, and which can be controlled by a photographer, to create photographic portraits. I also learned about distinguishing characteristics of well-known portrait photographers. This source was very helpful in my overall understanding of the topic of portraiture.