

Total time:
2 - 4 hours



Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Points:

- Choosing proper B&W subjects
- Identifying tone value in a scene
- Composing with light, shadow, shape, and texture
- Proper exposure

GETTING STARTED IN BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY



Black & white photography requires two skills to get started. The first is learning to 'see' a great black and white subject. The second is converting the color file to black & white (if you're not shooting film).

KEY LESSON: Black & white photography is reliant on tone, as there are no color contrasts. Look for subject with strong light and dark values. It's also helpful to seek subjects with texture and strong shapes. When converting a digital color file to B&W - try to use a method that converts each color channel separately.

EQUIPMENT

Camera

Any camera

Lens + Lens hood

Any lens

Post-processing software

Mobile or desktop

Black & white viewing filter

Optional but highly recommended

Camera functions are less important here. Use the settings that you are comfortable with.

SAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS



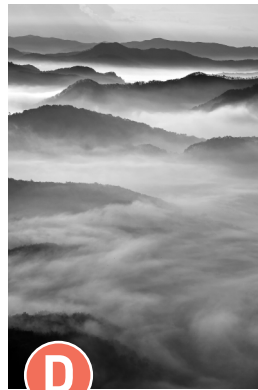
A



B



C



D



E



ACTION ASSIGNMENT!

1- Study the sample photographs:

- 1- The best subjects for B&W photography have a bright white, a deep black, and a full range of tone in-between. An inexpensive B&W viewing filter will teach you to see in 'tone' versus color.
 - 2- Great subjects for B&W photography will often display strong shapes and texture.
 - 3- Vastly different 'colors' can convert to 'very similar' tones. When converting to B&W try to separate the tonal values of different color channels.
 - 4- If the 'color value' of a scene isn't particularly interesting- look to B&W as an alternative - if the scene displays separated tone values, texture, and/or strong shadows.
 - 5- Learning to judge contrast is an important part of B&W photography. A higher contrast photograph, such as the hands, creates a different mood than a soft contrast image of the same subject.
- 2- Great black & white subjects are everywhere. Look for strong light and shadow. It's also helpful if the lighting highlights texture. Judge the subject looking for tone and ignoring color value. I.e. blue and red may produce the same tone. However, a deep dark blue will have a different tone than a bright light red.
 - 3- Begin by looking for subjects that meet the criteria discussed above. Setup your camera.
 - 4- Post-process the color files into B&W images. Experiment with converting the different color channels separately.

HOW DID YOU DO?

- Does your image display good tonal range?
- Do you have strong light and shadow?
- Did you make use of texture?
- Is your contrast appropriate to the subject?