

Photo Essay Directions

A **photo essay** is a set of photographs selected to tell a story or make the viewer feel a certain emotion. Photo essays may contain no text. In this case, the photographs must speak for themselves. On the other hand, the photographs may have captions or brief notes to explain their meaning.

Photo essays can be designed to be viewed in a particular order. They can also be unsequenced. The viewer can then decide how to examine the photographs and accompanying text.

Directions: In your small group, create a photo essay about the effects of the 3.11 disasters in Japan—the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown. Following these steps will help you create a coherent photo essay:

1. Review the information you have collected. Look for big ideas about the effects of the disasters that emerge from the evidence. Choose one big idea that the members of your group think is important. It might relate to one particular type of effect, such as emotional or environmental effects. Or it might concern how a specific group, such as children, was affected by the disasters. You can focus on local or global effects—just make sure you have a coherent idea!
2. Create a thesis statement that clearly states your big idea.
3. Create the body of your photo essay. Write four or five points that you want to make to prove your thesis statement. Select photos that will illustrate each of these points. Organize your points and the photos into an essay. If you want viewers to look at the photos in a certain order, make that clear. For example, you might number the photos or use arrows to show the “path.” You may also use quotes from the sources you examined.
4. As you work, think about the photos you picked, why you picked them, why they fit in a particular order in supporting your thesis. Will someone looking at your photo essay understand how the photos relate to your thesis?
5. Create a concluding statement for your essay.
6. Make sure your photo essay meets the criteria on the **Photo Essay Checklist**.

Photo Essay Checklist

Every photo essay should:
<input type="checkbox"/> Include a clear thesis statement presenting a big idea about the effects of Japan's 3.11 tragedies. (2 points)
<input type="checkbox"/> Present four or five statements that support the thesis. (2 points)
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a photo illustrating each supporting statement. (2 points)
<input type="checkbox"/> Include a concluding statement that is not simply a restating of the thesis. (2 points)
<input type="checkbox"/> Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation and be visually appealing. (2 points)