

# THE COMPOSITION OF A PHOTOGRAPH

An activity inspired by *James Gallagher as George Washington, 1992*  
by David Graham



## A C T I V I T Y S H E E T

### ACTIVITY SHEET: Middle/High School

Taking a photograph is a selection process because the photographer has to make **choices**. He or she must think about the **subject**, what is most important, and how he or she will photograph the subject. For artistic effect, photographers also strive to achieve interesting compositions with **light** and **shade, shape, texture, scale, and line**.

The **viewfinder** is the small window on the outside of the camera. A photographer looks through the viewfinder to **compose** the picture. When he or she decides on the limits and boundaries of the scene, he or she creates the **frame**.

Use David Graham's photograph to answer the following questions. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

Did Graham arrange the picture (pose it) or was it taken as the events happened (candid shot)? How do you know this? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think is happening outside the frame? \_\_\_\_\_

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What might have been the conversation between the subject(s) and the David Graham? \_\_\_\_\_

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Where was David Graham positioned when the picture was taken? \_\_\_\_\_

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EXPLORE  
THROUGH  
THE ART  
DOOR



JAMES A.  
MICHENER  
ART  
MUSEUM

Consider the **composition** of the photograph. How did Graham use light and shade, vertical and horizontal lines? Where did Graham place the center of interest? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Activity #2: Explore the Work of David Graham

Visit the website of David Graham at: [www.davidgrahamphotography.com/](http://www.davidgrahamphotography.com/). Select two portraits by Graham to compare and contrast with the work, *James Gallagher as George Washington*, 1992. When looking at the photographs together, discuss topics such as: subject matter, composition, light, color, and perspective. Write down the titles of your selections below.

Photograph #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Photograph #2: \_\_\_\_\_

The National Standards in the Visual Arts addressed in this activity are: **Content Standard 2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions; **Content Standard 3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas; **Content Standard 5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others; The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standards addressed in this activity are: **9.1** Production, Performance and Exhibition; **9.2** Historical and Cultural Contexts; **9.3** Critical Response;