Tips for taking great photos

1. Composition: The visual structure of your photograph guides your eyes through the image.
a. **Look** in your lens. What you see there will be what you get. So compose carefully.
b. **Get in close!** Don't take a picture from far away. The points of interest should fill the screen.
c. Don't leave a lot of 'dead' space around the edges of the frame: top, bottom or sides.
d. Instead of arranging people or items in the center of your photograph, place them slightly off center. This makes the most visually interesting photos.
e. Take 4 or 5 photos at any given time, changing angles, moving in and out, being sure people don't have their eyes closed. **Select the best one**. Professionals take dozens of photos of every shot.

2. Lighting: Photography is the study of light. Good light means a great photo.
a. Pay attention to the light in a room or outside. If the light in a room looks green, your photo will look green. If it is dark in the room or outside, your photo will be dark – unless you are allowing flash. If folks are squinting into the sun, they will be squinting in your photo!
b. DO NOT take a photo while you, the photographer, are facing directly into the sun or in front of a window during the day. Your subjects will be in shadow.

3. Angles & Clutter
a. Instead of snapping a picture from wherever you happen to be, look for different ways to take that picture. Crouch down, kneel, stand on your toes or a chair, move to the side, find a better angle for that picture. Whatever looks good through your lens, and creates an interesting perspective.
b. Before snapping, **check the corners of your picture for distractions**. Stop and look to see if you have a random hand or object or other distraction in the frame. Move stuff or move your camera.

4. Posing and group shots
a. Don't take pictures in front of a brick or blank wall. It's BORING. Pose people in front of something interesting.
b. Make sure you have everyone's attention before you shoot a posed image.
c. Take a few shots just in case someone is blinking.

5. Candid shots
a. The most interesting pictures are where you capture a moment or when the scene **tells a story.**
b. Don't always pose people, but **don't take pictures where you can't see any faces** at all, or you are getting mostly the back of people's heads. Move closer to the action. You'll tell a better story.

6. Resolution: Most people these days take photos with their phone, but when they 'send' the photos in a text, the photos are compressed so when they are downloaded and used in a publication, they will be grainy.
- Email photos and select 'actual size' even if you have to send only 2 or 3 photos in each email.