

Tips for Graduation Photography

By Patrick Kriner

This time of the year many of us turn our thoughts to graduations. Whether it's a family member or friend, we need to make the best of this milestone in someone's life and capture the event with our cameras. It doesn't matter if you are using a film or digital camera the way to get great graduation photos is pretty simple.

First, check your camera and see that it is in good working order. Take a moment to clean then lens with a quality lens cleaning cloth and lens cleaning fluid. Look deep into your closet and bring out the instruction manual for your camera and read up on any special features that might help you create some great pictures.

Next, make sure you have fresh batteries. If you have rechargeable batteries always remember to recharge them the night before the graduation so that you have all the power you need for that special day in the life of your graduate. A second battery or set of batteries might help if you find that you are going to take a lot of photographs throughout the day. Don't get left out with a great camera and no way to turn it on because the batteries have lost their power.

Finally, buy your film a day or so ahead of time to be sure you have enough. Check your memory cards if you have a digital camera to see that you have enough room on them for the pictures you are about to take. Reformat the media cards the night before to make sure you are ready for graduation day. Digital cameras are great because you can take a quick picture of your sleeping dog or cat to check and see that everything is working properly.

Now that the preparations are complete and the big graduation day has arrived, remember these simple tips to get the best pictures for this very special family and friend's event. During the ceremony, try to get as close to the stage as you can. Sometimes it is a struggle to get in close so arrive early to get a good spot. Ask permission from someone at the school to see if you can get up close to the stage to get a great photo of your graduate. Fill the frame with your subject so that all of the extra "stuff" in the background is kept to a minimum. Use your telephoto lens or zoom lens on your digital camera to get close enough to capture the essence of this special event. Only use your flash if you can get close enough for it to help you. Check your camera's operation manual so that you know how far your flash will reach.

After the ceremony, try to get some candid photos while the graduates are moving around with their friends. Some of these quick and un-posed photos are better at capturing the mood of the day. When posing the graduate for family photos after the graduation, make sure that the sun is off to the side and not directly behind you or your subject. Many family photos are ruined because of people squinting to keep the sun out of their eyes so be watchful of where you put the sun. Check the background before you snap that picture.

Look for any distractions like trees or light poles sticking out behind your subject's heads. A quick spot check around the edges of the photograph can make a difference between a great photo and one that is disappointing.

And finally, remember to get into those pictures yourself! Have a friend or family member take the next shot with you posing with the graduate. Don't get left out because you are too busy taking everyone else's photos. Share this special day with your graduate and let them remember that you were there to share in their excitement.

Don't forget that pictures can be made into special graduation day "thank you" cards. Castle Photo offers many styles of photo greeting cards to meet your needs. Just check out our card section here on line and make your selection for graduation announcements and Thank You cards.

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