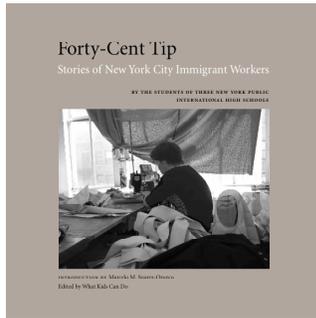




**DOCUMENTING STORIES  
OF IMMIGRATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

A Manual for Teachers and Students

**Copyright © 2008 What Kids Can Do, Inc.  
[www.whatkidscando.org](http://www.whatkidscando.org)**



Forty-Cent Tip  
Photo:  
COURTESY OF STUDENT/ Columbia

Let me tell you about the screen of people standing in the hall when I help the girl that get her. Then, "Eh, eh, eh, come close table number one!" Oh, the look in their eyes! It gets me mad. In my country, I was a better musician. But here I just a worker who has no status. One day my name is Carlos, another day Oscar taking on other people's identities. Because in the government I don't exist. Like the worker in this city every three months I change. The underdevelopment—so what? I still get food on my table.

In a dreamy process, my mind goes to the different places at the wrong time. When I'm at work, my mind is back in Colombia. There I have to clean tables and take care of people. In Colombia, I helped around and around at people for how they took care of them. Back in Colombia, I tried to work without being there. I tried to work and work on place. It's funny if you think about it, you don't know how good you had if you see you everything.

I came to this country to make more money. I remember when my mother used to tell me, "In the U.S. you can find a better career." In the only place where everybody is equal in the promised land, which I think I love you, but that was the biggest lie anybody ever told me. I have been here three years, and I still don't see the promised land. There, you get respect for what you do about the hard work of an immigrant, and people making fun of your English. You can never get respect if you come from another country. For a person who has graduated from university, it's hard to think you will be working at a restaurant in New York City.

They get me wrong, but I'll do what I can. I don't see the other workers that don't see them. They're the biggest success story. On the old guy that always sits at table three, who wants his plate to look like that as if it wasn't empty. Then, he looks at the other worker, and a small smile. He says, "You can't get it, and he looks on the table every track. You do the work, to see how much I get for a tip. But it's a job. At least I have food and a very small house with one room. In Florida, Miami, but there's always of coming here to a better life. It's good. Not so better."



# BOOKS

## Immigrants' Stories: The Lives of Low-Wage Immigrants Told By High School Students

*Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York City Immigrant Workers*  
By Students at Three NYC Public International High Schools  
Next Generation Press, 2006  
30 black-and-white photographs, 72 pp.

By Stephen Wolgast

ONE OF THE YEAR'S BOOKS that touches on the effects of immigration to the United States is a collection of photographs and interviews of foreigners working low-wage jobs. The men and women came to the U.S. hopefully, sometimes legally, and most of them end up living under the radar of the rest of us. The photographers visit them in their cramped, dirty, and sometimes dangerous workplaces, and let them tell their stories alongside their portraits.

The topic is in line with one of the biggest domestic debates taking place this summer. So it's not surprising that a book on such a hot topic is coming out now.

What is surprising is who the authors are. They're 34 high school students in New York City who explored the unseen warehouses, backrooms, and restaurant kitchens of their neighborhoods. Using curiosity as their credentials, the teenagers—who are recent immigrants and are still learning English—took tape recorders and digital cameras to document the lives of their neighbors, friends, and even family members.

The tales they heard were at once hopeful and frustrated determined and disillusioned. The workers they interviewed hold mostly low-wage jobs, but there's also a dentist from South America who practices illegally because, he says, getting licensed would cost him \$100,000 in education fees.

A man from the Czech Republic who has been here for seven years worked in construction when he arrived in the U.S., but he had to buy his own tools and on some days his bosses

simply wouldn't pay him for his work. "I could never complain to anyone," he says, "because even now I know only about five words in English." A friend told him about a job removing asbestos, which pays \$38 an hour. He took it. (*"Breathing My Own Death,"* p. 20, above.)

"I can't say that I hate my job," he says, and acknowledges that his new career is far from ideal. "I have to wear a special mask every minute that I work with asbestos—at least that's the law, but my company doesn't follow it."

The students attend one of three small public high schools in Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan that enroll only recent immigrants. Their training in photography and interviewing—that is, journalism—came from their teachers or volunteers. Considering that this is their first try at journalism, it's easy to look past the technical stumbles and realize the omnipresent challenges outsiders face.

At a time when bloggers want to be considered journalists for posting their rants and raves, it's encouraging to see high schoolers treading the streets, finding stories, and telling them. It makes a person think that if teenagers spent less time trading music downloads and more time comforting the afflicted, newspaper circulations could stop their decline.

But that's hoping for a lot. In any case, the stories of these low-wage immigrants are engrossing. Are they working the jobs that Americans don't want? Are they a threat to our security? There's one way to find out: find the immigrants in our communities, talk to them, and tell their stories.

## **CONTENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

p. 4

### **INTERVIEW BASICS**

pp. 5 – 8

### **TURNING INTERVIEWS INTO FIRST-PERSON ESSAYS**

pp. 9 – 12

### **TAKING GOOD PHOTOGRAPHS**

pp. 13 – 17

### **BOOKS AND RESOURCES**

p. 18



## INTRODUCTION



*Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York City Immigrant Workers* originated as a high school writing assignment in a classroom of immigrant students with a committed and imaginative teacher. With modest funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, What Kids Can Do expanded the project to include two more schools, and later Next Generation Press published the book, selecting the best of the pieces students created.

Here, we document the process used for that classroom project, with hopes that other teachers in other classrooms will unleash the potential of students to document stories of immigration in their own communities.

As students listen closely to the dreams and the realities of actual immigrants, they will be putting a pressing social, political, and economic issue into a human context. As they shape their interviews into first-person narratives, they will hone their reading and writing skills. As they take photographs of their interview subjects in context, they will gain new skills in new media.

If you have immigrant students in your classroom, this project taps their unique strengths, offers important learning opportunities, and gives them a key journalistic advantage. Because they have fluency in their home language and personal connections with other immigrants, they can speak with people to whom other students would not have access. As they translate their interviews, they also gain English language skills. Finally, the project increases their status as contributors of knowledge to their new community.

Any project that involves interviewing immigrants depends on the trust of the interviewee. In cases where subjects may be placed at risk by sharing their stories, both student and teacher have a journalistic obligation to keep the subject's identity confidential. Identifying interviewees not by name, but rather by occupation and country of origin, sometimes reassures a subject who otherwise would refuse an interview. Alternatively, one can withhold the interview from any publication or exhibition. We address this question further in the section on releases, below.

Once your class completes their first-person essays and photographs, bringing your project into print can be as simple as a visit to a local copy shop, and as powerful as any published book. WKCD presents here the tools we used to coach students through the process, and hope you will find them helpful. When your project is complete, we hope you will send it our way!

What Kids Can Do, Inc.  
[info@whatkidscando.org](mailto:info@whatkidscando.org)  
[www.whatkidscando.org](http://www.whatkidscando.org)

Next Generation Press  
[info@nextgenerationpress.org](mailto:info@nextgenerationpress.org)  
[www.nextgenerationpress.org](http://www.nextgenerationpress.org)

## ORGANIZING YOUR INTERVIEW



### Who will you interview?

***Look for people you already know.***

Parents or other relatives, friends, or people from your neighborhood may have immigration stories to share. If you have trouble thinking of someone, ask other people for their ideas.

***Team up with one or two other students to visit one adult.***

The interview might actually go better if more than one student is involved. Afterward, your transcribing can also be easier with one student typing and the other doing playback. And it might be easier to get a good photo if one person can be taking pictures while the other talks with the adult.

### Gather the facts you need

Name of adult to be interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of adult to be interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Address where the interview will be held: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time when interview will take place: \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock

Student interviewer(s) and photographer(s):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Who will conduct the interview? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will take the photograph? \_\_\_\_\_

### Know your interview procedures

- Show up on time at the place you agreed to meet.
- Start by asking the interview subject to fill out and sign the release form (see below).
- Turn on the tape recorder and make sure that it is working.
- Record the interview from start to finish.
- Take the photograph of the person you are interviewing.
- Label the tape cassette with the name of the interview subject and the date.
- Return the release form, the camera, and the tape recorder and cassette to the group.

## Get permission from your interview subject

If you plan to publish the interview in print or on the Internet, you will need written permission from the person whose name, words, or image you use. If interview subjects do not want their names or pictures made public, you can offer to do several things to respect their privacy:

- You can use their first name only.
- You can use a different first name (noting in the text that the name has been changed for this publication).
- You can decide to eliminate all names, and identify people just by their occupation and their country of origin.
- Your photograph can be taken in such a way that they are not recognizable (back to the camera).
- You can take a photo of their work situation without them in it.
- You can show them the picture and words you want to use before publication, for their final approval.

If your interview subject does not have these concerns, ask him or her to sign a general release, such as this one:

### PHOTOGRAPH AND TEXT RELEASE

I hereby agree to be interviewed and photographed in connection with a student project (the "Work"), sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_, in all forms and media, including print and electronically, for purposes of trade, promotion and advertising, and in connection with licensed uses of the Work in any and all languages throughout the world.

Please sign and date the copies of this agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Come up with good interview questions

A good interview comes from asking questions that do not invite yes or no answers!

To prepare for your interview with an immigrant, think first about a time that *you* had to go into a new place where you didn't know what to expect (a new school? a party with strangers?).

- What did you hope it would be like?
- What was different once you got into the situation?
- What did you have to learn to do, in order to manage in that situation?

Are there connections between what *you* experienced and what *your interview subject* might have experienced as an immigrant to a new country? Those connections will help you come up with your own good questions. Write them down here, and take them with you to the interview.

---

---

---

---

Some other possible questions you might want to ask:

- What were you like when you were my age? What was your life like, in the place where you lived at that time?
- When you were my age, did you imagine that someday you would come to this country? What made you decide to come here?
- Can you tell me more about the work you do?
- How did you start doing that work, and why?
- Tell me about your "best moment" as an immigrant—a time when you felt like your journey to a new country was worth it.
- Tell me about a time when you encountered an obstacle while coming to this country. What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a time when you really learned something about your new country.
- Does anything surprise you about the people in your new country?
- What hopes or dreams do you now have about your future? Have those dreams changed since you first came to this country?

## Vary the style of your questions

When making up interview questions, also think about style. There are as many styles of questions as there are personalities of people. Try to include some of all of the kinds of questions below, for a thorough interview.

**Open-ended:** Short, simple, open-ended questions have many possible answers, and are a good backbone for an interview. Instead of, "Did you have a hard childhood because of poverty?" ask, "What was your childhood like?" "Did you have enough to eat?" "Tell me about the house you grew up in."

**Specific:** Specific questions examine historical details. For example, "How many times did this happen exactly?" "When and where were you born?" "When did you first get interested in computers?" Use specific questions to establish the framework of facts.

**Sensory:** Sensory questions bring an interview to life. "What did the hurricane sound like?" "How did the city smell?" "Was it hot or cold?"

**Meaning-seeking:** Meaning-seeking questions are best asked after some trust has been built throughout the interview. They reveal feelings, insights and unique personal viewpoints. Examples are: "What did you draw on in your spirit to survive the loss of your parents?" "Looking back, what would you have done differently?" "If you had all the money in the world, what would you do with it?"

**Elaboration and clarification:** These little questions go a long way. "Can you tell me more about that?" and "Is there anything else you would like to add?" invite more detail and information. At the conclusion of an interview, encourage the speaker to tell you anything they may feel was left out.

## TURNING INTERVIEWS INTO FIRST-PERSON ESSAYS



Interviews are a wonderful tool for documenting history and social or cultural issues, and also a great way to learn about people’s lives. These tips will help you turn a spoken interview into a clear piece of writing that will hold the interest of an outside reader.

As your first step, you will transcribe the interview, writing out everything the person said, exactly as they said it. If the interview took place in a different language, you should translate it into English at this time.

Once you have that transcript, you are ready to begin editing it into a first-person essay in the voice of the speaker. You become a kind of “co-author” with the person you interviewed. The words are theirs, but you choose what parts to use and in what order to arrange them. You present their story to a reader. This is an honor and a challenge.

### **Before you start**

Before you begin editing the interview, know the length of the final essay you will produce from it. A good length is 500 words, or about two double-spaced pages.

If you are doing this work on the computer, be sure to save two files: the “unedited transcript” and the transcript that you are editing into an essay. You will need to go back often to check the original words.

Editing your interview transcript into a completed essay takes time, and it should go in several stages.

### **Deciding on your focus**

Because it is a conversation, every interview has many more words than you will use in the final essay. When looking at a long transcript, many people find it hard to choose the important parts.

For this reason, it helps to know your goal. Do you want your essay to focus on a certain theme, like “work” or “childrearing” or “war”? Or do you want to create a portrait of the person as a whole? Once you make this decision, you can begin to determine what to save and what to cut. Ask yourself:

- What is unique about this person?
- How does this person see the world?
- What does this person know that others do not?
- What details reveal this person’s time period, place, or community?
- What specific personal details does this person share?

Think about what you really want the reader to know about your narrator. By getting this clear, you can present a strong picture of who the narrator is.

## What's important to keep?

- Start with the printed transcript of the complete interview. Read it several times. As you read, use a highlighter to mark statements that you might want to include.
- Mark the passages where you can best feel the speaker's energy—joy, sadness, worry, fear, anything that brings the person to life on the page.
- Look for moments of description and observation. When you can hear, see, smell, touch, or taste what the narrator is talking about, that's a good sign that it should go in the essay.
- Look for statements of meaning—passages where the narrator tells why something matters to him or her. These will also help your reader care, so they can make your essay stronger.

## What you should cut

Much of what people say in an interview is not "essay material." For example,

- Take out "filler words" like "um," "ah," and "you know."
- Take out unimportant comments. (Ask yourself, "Does this give readers something they need to know in order to 'get' this person?")

Sometimes, a speaker will talk about the same subject—food, for example—in different parts of an interview. First, group these passages together. If they say the thing in different words, keep only the part you like better. When in doubt, cut it out!

## Organize the narrative

Interviews let people remember and make sense of their experience out loud. For this reason, your narrator may talk in roundabout ways, and touch on many different topics. As you edit the interview transcript, look for a balance between creating organization and keeping a natural flow in the narrator's speech.

You may move the pieces of the interview around to find an order that makes sense to the person reading. But you also want your reader to experience the narrator's thought patterns. The order in which someone shares feelings can show something interesting about how the person sees the world.

Look for a strong beginning—something that makes you want to keep reading, to find out more. A student interviewing a car-wash owner started the narrative like this:

*Not again! It's raining for the third time this week; I'll have to take the day off. The water steals my job; tips vanish in the air. Everyone who owns a car goes on rainy days so the water can do its work for free. They do not see that I need to wash their car to survive.*

Look for an ending that leaves the reader with something to think about. For example, in the car-wash essay:

*How I miss the sunny days in the Dominican Republic. That is the place I would rather be, instead of here at the car wash, where I keep on praying, "Please, God, don't cry today, let me work the whole day."*

### **Stay true to the speaker's voice**

Everyone talks in a style that belongs to that person. Your readers will want to "hear" the natural voice of the narrator.

Do not change the speaker's words in order to make them "better" or "more descriptive" or "good grammar." If your narrator speaks in slang or a dialect, don't change their words to standard English.

However, you may leave out unnecessary words, to make a passage shorter or clearer. You can indicate where you cut words by typing three dots ( . . . ), which is called an ellipsis. For example, in this interview with a survivor of Hurricane Katrina:

*This is a place that is unlike any place in the world. There's dancing everyday in the street . . . . Right now, if I just take this cane and derby I got, and I start singing a beat, people will follow me and just go down the street. You can't do that nowhere else. I will never leave New Orleans. I will die here.*

You may also need to insert words, to make clear the speaker's meaning. Put brackets around any words you have added. For example, in the previous example, you could do this:

*This [the New Orleans French Quarter] is a place that is unlike any place in the world.*

### **When the speaker uses several languages**

You may interview someone who speaks several languages—and that is an important part of who they are. Statements made in a native language might have the most impact if you present them in that language. In that case, write the foreign language in italics. Then, translate for the reader. Put the translated words in brackets.

In the example below, Paul Phillips, Jr., describes his father, a self-trained veterinarian and descendant of slaves. His father could communicate in both German and English. Paul describes an interaction in both languages:

*A husband of the household, unknowingly to his wife, called my father for a tooth extraction of their pet dog. The dog screamed, causing the lady to come to the door. Upon finding out what was going on, she said, "Ich murdu auch den Schwartz den dasz thun wasg weisg." ["I don't think this black man knows what he's doing."] Not looking up from his work and to the surprise of both, my father calmly replied, "Ich weisg." ["I do."] That lady was really surprised!*

If you are interviewing someone in his or her native language, and the final product will be in English, you will need to translate the whole interview into English. If some words have meanings that would be lost in translation, you can still choose to keep them in the original language.

### **Explain the context**

You may need to add a note before or after the essay, so that the reader understands things that the speaker has not directly addressed. For example, a brief introduction or endnote could explain the relationship between the speaker and the person who conducted the interview. Or it could tell why and where the interview took place.

For example, sentences like this could go in italics before or after the essay:

*Sari Alborni interviewed her mother Carmela Alborni about emigrating to America in 2006. They spoke in their home in San Francisco.*

### **Read the essay aloud**

When you have made your interview text into a shorter narrative essay, print it out and read it aloud (either to yourself or to another person). As you do, you will notice places that do not sound natural, or places where you can cut unnecessary words. Your ear will tell you things that your eye will not catch.

After you make the changes, read the piece aloud again. Keep repeating the process until you have an essay that captures both these key elements:

- The focus you wanted
- The essence of the person who is speaking.

### **Check your piece with the interviewee**

Once you have the essay finished, show it to the person who was interviewed. Make sure that your work has not somehow changed the meaning or tone of what that person intended to say. Together, you can make the final changes, so the essay stays true to the speaker, and at the same time is short and clear enough to engage the reader.

Don't forget to make a clean printed copy of the final piece to give to the interview subject. Together, you will have created something of great value—both for the speaker and for all the readers your essay will reach.

## TAKING GOOD PHOTOGRAPHS



How do you begin to take good photos? The first thing to remember is this: The photographer, not the camera, takes great photos. Second, remember that you master photography by doing it—experimenting and learning by trial and error.

The following tips should get you started. Some will have more meaning after you've gone out, shot a bunch of pictures, and analyzed the results.

### **Get your camera ready**

#### *Learn about the moving parts*

Find and practice operating your camera's shutter, zoom, and LCD monitor/display screen. Learn what each of the mode settings on the dial next to the shutter is best used for. Learn how to review pictures you've taken, and how to erase a picture.

#### *Check the memory capacity*

It's terrible to be in the middle of taking pictures and then run out of memory space. Always have enough memory capacity in your digital camera. A 512 MB card is a good bet.

And always upload photos as soon as you've taken them. Then erase the images from the camera so that the memory card has space for new photos.

#### *Set the mode dial to "AUTO"*

Let the camera do most of the thinking for you. Put it on "AUTO" so that it will automatically adjust the focus and lighting.

#### *Turn off your camera's "date function"*

Photos that appear with the date in the corner are unusable when creating a professional-looking slideshow or exhibit.

#### *Set your camera for high resolution and low compression*

A big reason for packing a big memory card is so that you can shoot at your camera's highest resolution and lowest compression, both of which take up memory space. Why? Because these two factors—resolution and compression—determine how your photos will look when printed or blown up on a computer screen. A photo taken at a low resolution—640 x 480 ppi (pixels per inch)—will look fuzzy when enlarged beyond 4 by 6 inches. Compression works the other way. If compression is set too high, image quality goes down.

All digital cameras allow you to set resolution and compression levels. It sounds complicated, but here are suggested settings. If your photos will be published in a book or displayed in an exhibit, you must set the resolution to 2048 X 1536!

<u>Use of Images</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Compression</u>
Internet, email	640 x 480	Standard, high compression
4" x 6" print	1632 x 1224	Standard, high compression
5" x 7" print	2048 x 1536	Fine, low compression
8" x 10" print or larger	2816 x 2112	Fine, low compression

### *Learn to control the flash*

When you set the mode dial on "AUTO," the camera's internal flash automatically goes off when you are taking pictures inside or under low light conditions. Sometimes, the flash is necessary. Often, it is not—this is one area where the camera's thinking isn't right on. Pictures taken with a flash tend to have a cool (blue-ish) rather than a warm tone. And sometimes the white light from the flash shows up in the picture, something you don't want.

When you are taking pictures inside, you need to take the extra step of **turning off the automatic flash every time your camera comes on.** (Unfortunately, whenever your camera shuts off, it will automatically go back to the "flash on" setting, so you'll need to turn it off again.)

How to turn off the automatic flash: Press the icon that looks like a lightning bolt. Then press it again. On the LCD screen, the lightning bolt icon should show up with a line through it. This tells you the flash is off.

## **Shooting basics**

### *Hold the camera steady*

If the camera moves while you are taking a picture, you will get a blurry image. The only thing that should move when taking a picture is your finger on the shutter. The more you can steady your arms, the sharper your pictures will be. When holding the camera, also be sure that you don't have a finger in front of the lens or the flash.

### *Hold the camera level*

If you forget to hold the camera level, your pictures will come out sloping to one side or another—cock-eyed. Look for the horizontal lines in the scene you are photographing (like the horizon!) and use them as guides.

### *Set the focus*

If you get the focus right, you will get a sharp image. Rely on your camera's automatic focus. Press the shutter button halfway down and wait a second for the camera to adjust the focus automatically. Then continue to press the shutter down fully. If you press halfway down, then let the shutter come back up and then press down fully, you will lose the focus you set.

### *Understand the zoom lens*

It is tempting to over-use your camera's zoom lens. It lets you get close to a subject without feeling like you are putting the camera in the person's face. It can also help to create a focal point in a large landscape or to take pictures of people naturally going about their routine without their knowing you are photographing them. But there is a trade-off. The more you

zoom into a subject, the more the resulting image is affected by “camera shake.” And when the camera shakes, photos come out blurred.

Unfortunately, your digital camera’s “picture preview” mode, with its lack of detail, may not show that the photographs you took were blurred. You may only find out after you copy the pictures to your computer.

### *Shoot more*

With digital cameras, there is no added cost to taking more photographs. Shoot more, not less. When you take multiple shots of the same subject, you increase the likelihood that one of the pictures will be a winner.

## **Photo Composition**

### *Move in close*

It’s always good to move in closer to your subject. Most scenes will benefit from your taking several steps forward. The goal is to fill the picture area with the subject you are photographing. That way, you reveal details, like the expression on a face. As tempting as it is to use your camera’s zoom to get close, the image quality is much better when you use the “sneaker” technique—walking up to your subject. As noted earlier, “zooming” can result in blurry images, especially when the light conditions are low or the subject is moving. The best choice may be a compromise: Get as physically close to your subject as you can, then use the zoom lens a bit (but not all the way) to inch in closer.

### *Anticipate the moment*

With digital cameras, there’s a delay of several seconds from when you press the shutter button and when it takes the picture. If you are shooting anything active, make sure you press the shutter button down before your subject is at the position you’re trying to capture. You may need to take many pictures to make up for the delay factor.

### *Look your subject in the eye*

When taking a picture of someone, hold the camera at the person’s eye level to unleash the power of a gaze or smile. Your subject need not always stare at the camera. All by itself, the eye-level angle will create a personal feeling that pulls you into the picture.

### *Take some vertical pictures*

Most people take horizontal pictures. But there are times when what you are photographing will come out better if you rotate the camera and take a vertical shot. This way you can capture the length of what you are shooting. You will probably have to take a few steps back when shooting vertically, so that you don’t cut off the top or bottom of what you are photographing.

### *Trust your instincts*

In the end, trust your own instincts when it comes to composing your photos. As you frame the shot, move the camera and explore the scene. When you find an angle or composition that feels good to you, take the picture immediately. Then get several more shots.

### *Analyze your work*

Look at the pictures you have taken and ask some questions. Did the image turn out as you planned? Do you like the composition? Could you have closed in more on the subject? Would the picture have come out better if you had turned the camera vertically?

## **Lighting**

### *Always consider your lighting*

Next to the subject, the most important part of every picture is the lighting. It affects the appearance of everything you photograph. On an older face, for example, bright sunlight from the side will emphasize the wrinkles, while the soft light of a cloudy day will soften them. Don't like the light on your subject? Then move yourself, or your subject.

### *Rely on available light as much as possible*

Learn how to turn off your camera's automatic flash—and turn it off. Use the flash only when the lighting is poor and you have no choice but to rely on your on-camera flash. If you are not sure whether the picture requires the flash, experiment. Take a shot without the flash and look at it on the LCD monitor. Then take one with the flash. See which looks better.

### *Avoid red-eye*

Do your subjects have red eyes? This is common when taking pictures with the flash on. If you notice this problem, make the feature "flash—remove red eye" is on.

### *Know the range of your flash*

If you do use the flash, make sure you aren't taking the picture beyond the flash's range. Pictures taken beyond the maximum flash range will be too dark. For many cameras, the maximum flash range is less than fifteen feet—about five steps away.

### *Turn around to avoid the sun*

When taking outdoor photos, position subjects so that the sun is behind you. If the sun is directly in your field of view, your subjects may look overexposed and washed-out. With the sun behind you, enough light reaches the subject to show a wide variety of color without washing out features like skin tones.

### *Don't shoot subjects or objects in front of a window.*

If you are taking a picture indoors and the subject is close to a window, the person or object may turn out too dark. The camera's automatic light meter will lock onto the light coming in from the window, leaving your subject underexposed and mostly black—the opposite of the washed-out white look of overexposed pictures.

## More tips on taking photos of people

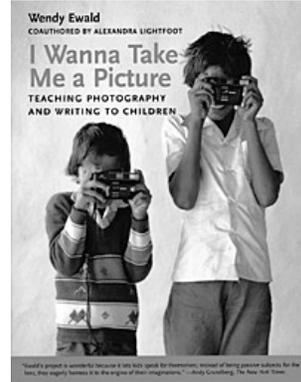
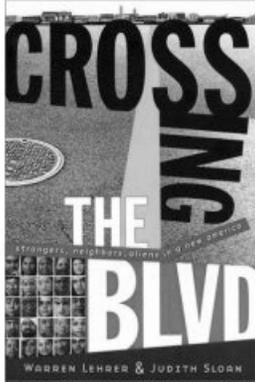
Portrait photography is an art of its own. Getting close up, natural-looking photos of people challenges the best photographers. Often, the lighting isn't good, the person's expression is wrong, or they look too posed.

This helps:

- Snap as many pictures as you can of the person.
- Be sure to get some close ups, taken from different angles (not all head on, like mug shots).
- Ask your subject to move around and pose in front of different backgrounds. When picking a background, pay attention to what it contains. Be sure it doesn't include distracting objects, like wires and soda bottles.
- Try to get some pictures of your subject in a setting that "fits" them—for example, at work, if they have a job, or doing something they love (or hate) to do. Remember, though, that you will still need to be pretty close up to the person—you want him/her to be in the foreground, not the background.
- Don't take pictures of your subject directly in front of or near a window. The light coming in from the window will throw off the camera's automatic exposure, and the person will come out too dark in the photo.
- Ask the person to go about their business. Try to make yourself inconspicuous, then snap away.



**Photos courtesy of students at Casco Bay High School, Portland, ME**  
"The Human Face of Human Rights"



## BOOKS AND RESOURCES

*Crossing the BLVD: Strangers, Neighbors, Aliens in a New America*, by Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan (W.W. Norton & Company, 2003)

*Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York City Immigrant Workers*, by the students of three New York public international high schools, edited by What Kids Can Do (Next Generation Press, 2006).

*India in a Time of Globalization: Photo Essays by Indian Youth*, a project of Adobe Youth Voices and What Kids Can Do, edited by Barbara Cervone (Next Generation Press, 2008).

*In Our Village: Kambi ya Simba Through the Eyes of Its Youth*, by the students of Awet Secondary School in Tanzania, East Africa and What Kids Can Do, edited by Barbara Cervone (Next Generation Press, 2006).

*I Wanna Take Me A Picture: Teaching Photography and Writing to Children*, by Wendy Ewald and Alexandra Lightfoot (Beacon Press, 2002).

*Pass It On: Interviews by Youth with Mentors That Matter*, by the students of What Kids Can Do, Inc., edited by Kathleen Cushman (Next Generation Press, 2007).

*Shout Out: A Kids' Guide to Recording Stories*, by Katie Davis, downloadable from Transom.org, a project of Atlantic Public Media; contact info@transom.org.

*Teen Reporter Handbook: How to Make Your Own Radio Diary*, by Joe Richman, Radio Diaries, Inc., Producer of Teenage Diaries Series, National Public Radio. Downloadable from [www.radiodiaries.org](http://www.radiodiaries.org).