

SPS Judges Quick Reference Guide

Attribute	A “Seven”	An “Eight”	A “Nine”	A “Ten”
Strength of Composition	Composition is weak or has flaws, such as improper framing, cluttered foreground or background, lack of balance or an unclear center of interest.	Composition is good. It might have a flaw, but it does not detract significantly from the image. Subject is clear, but interest level is just average.	Composition is very good. The image’s well-arranged subjects and complementary elements create a strong visual impact and high interest, without compositional flaws.	Composition is exceptional. Balance of subjects and supporting elements (patterns, shapes, color, etc.) combine to create a very strong impact.
Technical Qualities	The image has one clear technical flaw or a few small ones, like lack of focus on main subject, improper depth of field, exposure, horizon imbalance, rendition of color or white balance.	The image might have a minor technical flaw, but it does not detract significantly from the image.	The image has no technical flaws; sharpness, white balance, and color are handled well.	The image demonstrates a high/unique level of photographic techniques and methodology, improving image quality and impact.
Management of Light	Image is overexposed or underexposed. Harsh light not addressed adequately or contrast not handled as well as it could be.	The light was handled adequately. The intended subjects of the image are properly lit and exposed.	The light was handled well. Lighting within the image enhances the intended subject, details, and theme.	The light was exceptional and handled extremely well and creatively used to bring out details and enhance the overall mood of the image.
Overall	Needs Improvement or Below Average. These images have at least one clear weakness that is hard to overlook.	Satisfactory or Average. These are good images with no glaring weaknesses, but they do not have the impact or creativity of the better images.	Excellent or Above Average. These images have strong impact, effectively using light and composition to support the image intent without weaknesses.	Outstanding, one of the very best. These images generate emotional impact using light, perspective, composition, with no technical weaknesses.

Scoring Guidelines: In a typical month with 100 pictures, one might expect to see an array of scores like this:

	Sevens 15 to 20	Eights 40 to 45	Nines 25 to 30	Tens 10
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SPS Exhibition Categories

Digital Categories	Keys
Nature	Adjustments must appear natural; Human elements to be avoided; no domestic animals or flowers, no zoo animals, animals enclosed or restricted in movement. Editing must preserve the nature story and truth of the scene when captured.
General	Moderate restrictions. Minor cloning to <u>remove</u> distracting elements is O.K. HDR is permitted to represent the actual conditions. No <u>adding</u> elements (i.e. a sky) from an unrelated picture or editing software.
Artistic	Least restrictions. Most anything goes, except all elements must be from your own photos or your own post processing. No downloading of any material. Images should show uniqueness, creativity and imagination, not just skill with editing. No image should be eliminated from exhibition simply because it looks realistic, provided it shows originality of concept.
Black & White	Similar to General regarding cloning and content editing. However, we accept conversion techniques that provide various creative looks. In the extreme, they should be entered in Artistic. Inclusion of a color that is not on the gray scale is not permitted.
Challenge	Similar to Artistic. Presentation of the assigned theme is very important.
Fits SPS Category	In image that fails to meet the basics of a category (i.e. Nature or Black & White) should be given a seven.
Fits SPS Challenge	Points should be deducted from a Challenge image that does not fully meet the monthly topic (deduct one, two or three points) depending on the severity of the miss.