
Class 5 – Digital Cameras
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What to Look for When Buying a Digital Camera

Resolution – Resolution determines the quality of the picture the camera takes. Typically this is indicated in megapixels. Right now 5 megapixels is the most common but the greater the megapixel the higher quality the picture. The higher quality the picture the bigger memory card you need.

Size/Weight – Pay attention to the size and weight of the camera. You can find powerful cameras in very small sizes if you do a lot of traveling. But if you plan on taking some professional photos then you may be better off getting one of the larger professional grade cameras.

Zoom – Zoom is sometimes a point of confusion when purchasing a digital camera because there are two types of zoom. Digital and Optical. Digital Zoom can be used after the picture is taken and Optical zoom is used before and while the picture is being taken. The higher the optical zoom, the more you can zoom in while taking pictures. Just be careful, the more you zoom in the more difficult it is to take clear pictures.

Storage – Some cameras come with a large amount of built in storage. Others come with a small amount of built in storage and with the ability to plug in an SD, CompactFlash, or SmartMedia expansion memory card.

Batteries – Digital cameras that use AA's usually run out pretty fast. You will definitely want a digital camera with rechargeable batteries or you will want to get some rechargeable AA's.

Movies – A newer feature of digital still picture cameras is the ability to take movie clips. This can be fun but will definitely fill up the memory card fast.

Menu's – If you have the option to use a camera before purchasing it, make sure to do so. Some of them have easier menus to navigate than others. Many camera stores have the cameras on display so you can try them out. Take advantage of this.



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Transferring Pictures to your Computer

There is a common misconception that you have to have special software installed to transfer pictures from your camera to your computer. This is no longer true with Windows XP and Vista. In XP/Vista the camera is detected automatically.

Step 1: Just take a picture or two

Step 2: Plug the camera into the computer using the USB connection

Step 3: Turn the camera on, sometime you have to turn the camera to a special mode.

Step 4: Windows will detect the digital camera and will allow you to choose the 'Scanner and Camera Wizard' this wizard automates copying the pictures to your computer. You will go through a few questions regarding which pictures you want to copy, what you want to call them, and where you want to save them.

After completing the wizard, your pictures are typically saved in the 'My Pictures' folder.

Manipulating your Pictures

Once the pictures are copied to your computer you will want to manipulate them. You may want to crop, print, or email them.

There are a few different software packages that make this pretty easy. Kodak Easyshare is one of the most popular but Google's Picassa software is becoming very popular.

Picassa is a free download and it will manage all of the pictures on your computer. With one single click you can change pictures to black and white, you can remove red eye, change the size of the picture, print the picture, and even e-mail pictures.

If you have a Kodak camera you will probably want to try the Kodak Easyshare software. If you don't have a Kodak camera then you will enjoy Picassa. It can be downloaded from <http://picasa.google.com/>

If you have any question on the material above or if you have suggestions for next months class please contact me

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