

VISUAL OR PERFORMING ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

↑ CAREER LAUNCHER

Photojournalist

“Millions of people in the United States read newspapers, magazines, and online stories each day. That means a lot of people may read my stories and see my pictures.”



- **Education needed:** Bachelor's degree in English, journalism, communications, political science, or related field
- **Salary range:** \$17,000 – \$62,500 annually
- **Related jobs:** Forensic photographer, newspaper reporter, scientific photographer, television reporter

➤ What I do every day

Newspapers, news agencies, and magazines hire me to create picture stories for their publications. I take pictures of important news events. Then I interview the people involved and research past records to collect facts. Sometimes I write the stories to go with the pictures. Writing stories and taking pictures quickly and accurately is important because newspapers and magazines always want to get an exclusive or be the first to report an event. I use digital photography and electronic communication to transmit the stories and pictures from my location to the newsroom.

➤ The best part of my job

This job is exciting! I'm sent wherever news is happening. That could be anywhere in the world. I'm often in the center of the action, whether it's in a war zone or at a royal wedding.

➤ The worst part of my job

Even though I enjoy traveling, the living conditions in news hot spots can be very dangerous. I've had a few close calls where I was afraid I would be injured or even shot.

➤ What I need to know and be able to do

This job requires talent as both a writer and photographer. People who do my work have to react quickly to capture newsworthy events on film. They must be able to compose and arrange unique pictures. They need patience and the ability to put people at ease. Photojournalists should be willing to spend long hours traveling to news locations, often on short notice.

➤ How I prepared to be a photojournalist

I earned my bachelor's degree in journalism. In college, I took pictures for the stories I submitted to the student newspaper and sold some of my pictures to small neighborhood newspapers. I keep a portfolio, which is a collection of my best work, to show to prospective employers.

➤ How I could have prepared better

Being sent to a foreign country means I have to know about political unrest, the monetary system, and the local geography. I also must know enough foreign language to get by. I wish I had taken political science and geography courses.

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**CAREER
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English
Skill Check

► Skill Check 1

Photojournalists must obtain permission to take photographs of places that are not open to the public. To gain approval to use the photograph, photojournalists must be friendly and professional with the people in charge. They need to provide specific information about how the photograph will be used and be able to answer all questions.

As a photojournalist, you want to take photographs and write a story about the beautiful gardens of a wealthy woman in your town. Four introductions you could use in a telephone call to the woman are given below. Place an “X” beside the introduction that is most likely to obtain approval to photograph the garden. Explain why the other introductions are less effective.

- _____ 1. “Hello, would this be Mrs. Masters? My name is _____, and I’m a photojournalist. I have an assignment from *Great Places* magazine to photograph and write a story about a beautiful garden for an article on northern gardens. Yours is the most beautiful garden I know. May I make an appointment to meet with you?”

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Photojournalist

English
Skill Check

(continued)

_____ 2. “Hi, I’m _____. *Great Places* magazine is doing an article on southern gardens. You may have seen their series on U.S. gardens, and finally they’re looking at northern gardens! So I wondered when I could come out and take a look at your garden to see whether it would photograph well. Yours is one of the gardens on the list they sent me.”

_____ 3. Hello, Mrs. Masters? My name is _____, and I’d like to come out and photograph your garden for an assignment I’m doing for *Great Places* magazine, I’m sure you know the magazine. I’d need about two hours. How about Sunday?

_____ 4. Hi, this is _____. This is Mrs. Masters, right? Great! Listen, *Great Places* called me and your garden is a possibility for an article on northern gardens. I bet you’re not surprised, am I right? Look, this will only take about two hours—I’m the photojournalist they’ve assigned to this thing. What day’s good for you?

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**English
Skill Check**

► Skill Check 2

As a photojournalist for a local newspaper, you usually have time to ask only a few questions about each story you cover. For your story, you always need to identify the main people in your photographs. In addition, you must describe what is happening in the photo and where the photo was taken.

Today your assignment is to cover a fire at 122 Rose Street. Read about the fire, and write four questions you would ask. To whom would you address each question? Start with the most important question you would ask. Remember you have very little time.

Description of Scene

A woman in a bathrobe is standing by one of the fire trucks. Her face and hands have blisters on them. She is crying and holding a screaming baby. An emergency medical technician is trying to persuade her to go to the hospital. You snap a photo of the three people.

Question	Asked of Whom?
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

VISUAL OR PERFORMING ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

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Photojournalist

Technology
Skill Check

► Skill Check 1

As a beginning photojournalist, you study newspaper photographs every day to learn what successful photojournalists in your field are doing. In addition to your local paper, you check *The New York Times* newspaper on the Internet. Follow the steps below to explore *The New York Times* website. If you do not have Internet access, locate a newspaper article in a library.

- Log on to the Internet.
- Go to www.nytimes.com.
- Look for photographs.
- Choose an interesting photo that tells a story.
- Describe the photo, then write two features that make the photo interesting

Description of the photo: _____

Feature 1: _____

Feature 2: _____

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**CAREER
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Photojournalist

Technology Skill Check

► Skill Check 2

Your editor gives you an assignment and instructs: “Come back with an interesting photo. I don’t want a picture of someone just standing around looking at the camera.”

Your assignment is to cover a story about a “clean-up-the-environment” event sponsored by the local government. School children will be dismissed from school to participate. Describe the picture you will take. Explain what angles you will shoot from and how close you should be.
