

# A Photographic Expedition

## Activity set 7

### Activities

- Discussion
- Research
- Outdoor photography
- Photography display or exhibition

### Goals

- To enhance student appreciation for the skills and challenges involved in taking photographs outdoors by involving students in the experience
- To demonstrate the importance of artistic intent and setting goals in the composition and taking of photographs
- To experience the challenges and gratification of displaying creative works

### Levels

- Elementary
- Intermediate
- Senior

### Curriculum connections

- Visual arts
- Language arts
- Social studies

### Materials

- Image set G
- Information sheet: B3. Patience and persistence
- Cameras, borrowed or brought from home, shared amongst students
- Film
- Paper, pencils
- Display materials such as coloured background paper
- Research material as available (see Resource list for some suggestions)

### Background

- Shortly after he arrived in Banff in 1903, Byron Harmon set himself a goal that became his life's work: photographing every major peak and glacier in the Rocky and Selkirk Mountains in as many different moods and seasons as possible. His photographs of the Canadian mountains became famous worldwide.
- Mountains were Harmon's environment, his "backyard"
- Harmon organized and accompanied numerous expeditions. A major one was a 1924 expedition to the Columbia Icefield for the purposes of exploration and discovery, adventure, and documenting the area

- Rugged terrain and unpredictable weather created some very challenging conditions in which Harmon photographed.

### **ACTIVITIES - ELEMENTARY**

1. Discuss what elements in your own “backyard” might be worth exploring (eg. park, forest, shopping centre, schoolyard)
2. Organize and undertake a class “expedition” to this area.
  - a) Arrange to borrow cameras and share them amongst students. Have students individually set and write down a goal for five photographs they plan to make. Do they want to tell a story? Make beautiful pictures?
  - b) On your expedition, remind students to stick to their goal and look carefully for the particular details they want in their photographs to help get their ideas across. Explain that good photography depends on lighting, and it often takes patience to get the light you want, especially outdoors.
2. Review and display your work
  - a) Once films are processed upon return, have the class review the photographs created. Individual photographers share their photographs and the goals they set.
  - b) Have the class create a display for the classroom, the school or the community. Have students produce titles and labels for their photographs. Invite parents, teachers and the community to an exhibition opening.

### **ACTIVITIES - INTERMEDIATE / SENIOR**

1. Have students research the 1924 Columbia Icefield expedition using Image Set G and published resources on the Columbia Icefield (Alberta, Canada). See Resource list. Discuss the following questions:
  - a) What was the mode of travel for this expedition and what particular challenges did it present? What equipment and supplies would the expedition have required?
  - b) Imagine what it would be like to be a member of the expedition. What would you learn? What would the main challenges? The main rewards? How comfortable would you have been?
2. Organize and undertake a class “expedition”:
  - a) What elements in your own “backyard” might be worth exploring (eg. parks, forests, hillsides, river valleys, lakes, mountain peaks, urban landscapes)

- b) Plan a hike into the area your group has selected. Arrange to borrow cameras and share them amongst students.
  - c) Have students individually set and write down goals for the photographs they plan to make. Do they want to capture the day's light? Tell a story? Create beautiful images? Or, capture the essence of the place they are going?
  - d) On your expedition, remind students to stick to their goals and pay attention to light and composition to help get their ideas across. Stress that good photography depends on lighting, and it often takes patience to get the light you want, especially outdoors.
3. Review and exhibit your work
- a) Once films are processed upon return, have the class review the photographs created. Individual photographers share their images and intended goals and receive feedback from other students. Discuss the body of “expedition” work as a whole.
  - b) Have the class create an exhibition for the classroom, the school or the community. Have students produce titles and labels for their work. Each label could include a brief explanation of the goal for that image. Invite parents, teachers and the community to an exhibition opening.