

# Summer Photo Reflections

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## Summer Photo Reflection Assignment:

Choose 3-5 photos that you feel capture an essential moment of your summer and write a caption for each one. I've included 8 photos of my summer last year as examples. Notice how they vary in length and in purpose. Below are some ideas of kinds of captions you can write:

1. A short poetic description of the moment (see slide 5)
2. A reflection about yourself. (See slide 4)
3. A description of moment *and* a reflection of why that particular moment is meaningful to you. (See slide 7)
4. A tribute to people who are important to you in your life (See slide 9, 10)
5. A short story about the moment (see slide 14)
6. A love letter to a certain activity that you love and the reasons why you love it so much (see slide 12)

### TIPS:

Try to avoid just writing "This is me at the lake." Instead, zoom in on the moment and write so I feel like I'm there with you!

Make sure the photo matches the caption

There is no sentence minimum or maximum

If you get stuck, include sensory details- What did you taste? Smell? Hear? Feel? See?

Bring photos and captions on the first day of school! Have fun!



This has been the summer to top all summers of lakes and rivers. Grateful for the reflections, the stillness, the ripple circles when rocks are thrown, the smack of a stone on its first skip, the waterfalls, the rushing white, the fish that leap out and into the air, the bats that swoop at dusk, the splashing and the toe-dipping, the underwater wriggling, and the joy of jumping in, my little girl impulse taking over as I pinch my nose closed.

A reflection about yourself that realized in that moment



My spirit animal is half marmot and half goat. A marmgoat? Half lying around and sunning on granite slabs and half trotting up them with reckless abandon. This is my idea of heaven.



A short poetic description of the moment

Glamping river magic mornings. When you wake up and it's too early, but too beautiful to close your eyes again and miss watching the gentle sunlight tendrils creep onto your bed.



A description of moment *and* a reflection of why that particular moment is meaningful to you.

I told Zadie if she stayed in the path to the golden sunset, she could make a wish. Afterwards, she told me "I wished for what I always wish for- the world to be made out of candy. But, guess what, Tita. It NEVER comes true!" She crossed her arms, lowered her eyebrows, stuck out her bottom lip. Then, turned and gazed at the sparkles in the water, which softened her immediately. "Maybe it will this time. You never know! This water feels extra magic."

I am, more often than not, left speechless, humbled, and the wiser after spending time with this niece of mine. She slows me down. She patiently guides me towards the things that are truly important: imagination, perseverance, treats, believing, and magic!



A tribute to a place that's important  
in your life and the reasons why.

I've been coming here to this beach on Lake Michigan every summer (give or take a few) since I was a baby. My grandparents spoiled me rotten. They always had a double pack of double-mint gum in their car, and Poppop would let me have two at a time! Grandma would dump spoonfuls of sugar onto my shredded wheat when my dad wasn't looking. There was always Squirt in the fridge, Sun chips in the drawer, and once I learn how to write, I realized that whatever I jotted onto the list grandma kept in a seagull clothespin on the counter would magically appear midday when Poppop got back from his daily grocery shopping in town.

Oh, the spoils! But it wasn't just the food, of course it was the attention. It was the rule of yes. That grandparents have to say yes to whatever you asked of them. And so for 2 to 5 weeks every summer, with Poppop, I : boogie boarded on cold stormy days, I went on a treasure hunt that he had spent all morning preparing at my request. He bounced me on his knee and spend me in the spinning chair. He made me BLTs for lunch, whistling Gershwin as he fried the bacon. With grandma, I baked. Rum cake, shortcake, cookies, biscuits, cobblers. . We walked the beach searching for Petoskey stones. We would take turns following the others footprints and she would buy me a new back-to-school outfit at JCPenney's.

Both my grandparents have now passed. Their ashes are spread here in these dunes, but their legacy of yes lives on in my own parents as grandparents. This year, my niece, Zadie came to the cottage for ten days on her own with my parents (Poppop and Mima) and me (Tita). And we said yes a lot. Sand castles, water splashing fights, races, burying, jump-roping, juice, entering her fantasy play, writing down her stories, painting on the deck, baking cookies. . . The luxury of having the time and the energy to say yes in a way that parents can't.

And, when we gather on the deck to see the sunset, we can't see the sun itself, but we know it's still there. Poppop and grandma, you are here. We can't see you, but you are here every time we say yes.

A tribute to people who are important to you in your life

Well, fancy that! It's national best girlfriends day on the same day that I happen to emerge from three gloriously summer days glamping on the Scott river with this soul sister woman. We: shared a magical outdoor sleeping deck together, each read a full book, explored various raft and rock lounging positions, ate the most delicious three dinners of my life courtesy of her equally talented mother Paula, including this "cabin cake", did yoga on the deck in the morning, sipped iced tea at dusk on the boat, and applied all the sunscreen to each other's backs.

She turned thirty three. Happiest of birthdays to you Zoe, my dear and brilliant and generous friend. May you continue to grace the world with your delectable baked goods, kitchen cosmetics, thoughtful words, sage advice, rolling chuckle, and beaming joyful smile. I'm grateful for you and miss you all the days you're in Spain.





A love letter to a certain activity that you love and the reasons why you love it so much

The list of reasons why I love backpacking is long, but up there near the top is the concept of ritual and rhythm. Every trip begins with mapping out a route, meal planning, snack planning (if you're me- equally important), the certain bag I always use for my toiletries, the calculated packing of the backpack- weight distribution and accessibility noble factors, the drive there with fresh socks and faces. The beginning.

Then comes the chatter on the trail, settling into a pace, the moment when you finally stop exclaiming how beautiful everything is at each turn in the trail because it doesn't need to be said. It's understood. The tinge of soreness when you lift your pack back on after a break, the loaf of salami for lunch. The search for the perfect campsite, the muscle memory of putting up the tent, setting up camp.

There is the ritual of the roles that people in the group fall into- water girl, fire maker, dish cleaner. . . There's the one who wakes up first every morning and the one who goes to bed last. There is the one who will jump off the rock into a river pool, the one who will do it after seeing that it is indeed deep enough, and the one that will watch with glee, but has no need to try. There is the one who looks at the map at each fork in the road and the one who wants nothing to do with squinting at squiggly topo lines (me) and just wants to be told where to put one foot in front of the other.

Last days are for barking soreness, elaborate fantasies about first meals back, and an overwhelming feeling of strength, accomplishment, and peace. Every backpacking trip I've ever been on follows this ritual like clockwork. Last step is a week of mild depression when I open my eyes in the morning and see the four corners of my room and not the vast sky. . . And endless flipping through photos and quiet smile reminiscing.



A short story about the moment and reflection about what it means

This was a very long hike. It hailed a bit and rained and the clouds threatened from all directions, heavy, black, cottonball puffs. But there were also 360 views of mountains and snow patches that Erna would slide down for fun, wagging her tail with such force, she would leave indentations of her glee. Everywhere I looked stole my breath.

When we stopped for lunch, I realized I didn't have my phone. I had dropped it along the trail. And in the case was also my credit card and driver's license. I was supposed to fly out the next day and wouldn't be able to board my flight. I immediately started going to the worst case scenario, assuming it was gone for good and panicking and cursing myself for not zipping up my pocket. I had stopped to take a picture of a flower a couple miles back, so we started to retrace our steps (back up the mountain☐) and I was near tears.

Then all of a sudden, Emily gets a text: "I found this phone." A runner had picked it up! At the end of the hike, we ended up far from the car and we hitchhiked back. A woman picked us up and said she lives three hours away and just drove up to see the mountains for a minute, and then had to turn around and drive straight back. We got back to our campsite and the runner delivered my phone. Then there was a double rainbow at sunset and we ate tómales around the campfire.

All this to say...tomorrow is the first day of school and the journey from August to June feels just like this hike. I know it's going to dazzle me with its views- its views of creativity, of wit, of curiosity- and I also know (and have learned over the years to expect, heck, to embrace!) that things will not go exactly as I plan. There will be hail and rain and pure panic. My body will ache. I will have moments of hating myself, moments of pure pride and moments of complete awe that leave the corners of my eyes damp and every other moment in between. And at the end of it all, we will have made it through the wiser, the more compassionate and always, side by side. Here's to the journey ahead! May we climb to great heights. May we fall. May we help each other back up. Class of 2021,