

Ideas for using Digital Cameras in the Classroom

These ideas can be modified for your specific grade level & student/teacher abilities. The BEST way to get the most out of ideas such as these is to let students do as much hands on as they are able. With good modelling by the teacher, repetitive instruction on the do's & don'ts of handling cameras, and encouraging observations by the teacher, even Foundation Level students should be able to take their own pictures to use in their projects!

One important note: Check with your school's policy before posting ANY pictures of students on paper or on the internet.

1. Take photos to illustrate a favourite story or poem. Put the photos and words together in a book.
2. When studying numbers, take the number assigned to you and make pictures of that amount of objects in your photos. (For example, if you are assigned the number "4", take pictures of 4 books, 4 chairs, 4 students, etc.)
3. Scan in examples of your students' work and insert them into a PowerPoint. Set the presentation to loop and display it at Parents' Night or Open House.
4. Make a photographic family tree. Take photographs of your family members. Crop the faces and create the document in Microsoft Word or Microsoft PowerPoint using the correct organisational chart.
5. Take pictures of each child's' eyes only. Have children try to match up their classmates by only their eyes. It demonstrates how distinctive and unique we really are.
6. Choose 3 random pictures and then incorporate them into their story.
7. Write an alternate explanation or use for an object (i.e. use a fork to comb)
8. Record step-by-step plants growing, frogs – growing, butterflies – growing ...for science reports on life cycles.
9. Document the growth of a school project: planting & growing of a class garden, any school construction project, the tree outside your classroom window throughout the seasons, etc.
10. Take a series of pictures (1st step, 2nd step, etc) showing how to do something (how to add numbers, how to conduct a science experiment, how to use a piece of equipment etc.).
11. Form a club of children to create and maintain a seasonal library for use in poems, stories or seasonal flyers.
12. When studying colours, walk around the classroom, school, or outside and take pictures of a certain colour. Insert the pictures into a PowerPoint booklet called, for example, "Things That Are Blue".
13. Study shapes. Assign pairs of students to go on a walk through the school to find examples of geometric shapes (circles, triangles, parallel lines, obtuse angles, etc).
14. When studying rhyming words, have students take pictures of objects that rhyme. Place the pictures in a Rhyming Book.
15. Make a classification book in which the students include pictures of objects that are alike. E.g. "Things That Are Hot", "Things That Are Cold", "Natural Objects vs. Objects Made By Humans", "Common Plants" "Things That are Heavy" etc.
16. Make a "Body Parts" book. Take pictures of head, arms, shoulders, legs, knees, trunk, toes, fingers, etc.

17. Study the growth and structure of crystals and capture their development through digital photos. Students will have a permanent record of these delicate formations at various stages.
18. When children go on an historical visit, all dressed up in costume, take sepia photographs for wonderful, realistic, old looking photographs which can be used in report or newspaper writing after the event.
19. Have pupils dress up as "what they want to be when they grow up" to illustrate career reports.
20. Take photographs of your locality – make post cards, electronic or otherwise to share with a partner school in a 'Contrasting locality' study.
21. Take pictures of students in September, January, & May to watch them grow. This is best done outside in full light, with students lined up against a wall and with another object in the photo or a mark made on the wall so that difference in sizes through the year can be easily seen. Discuss how they have/n't changed
22. When doing self portraits work from a digital image instead of a mirror (it is easier to match up colours etc)
23. Make passports, library cards, driving licences, swipe cards or school membership type of cards for a variety of situations or play.
24. Take pictures of objects and use them as labels to aid children learning the names for them.
25. Do a weather study in photographic images instead of symbols.
26. Choose a favourite composer, politician, sports, pop or film star, change for the child's face and do an 'interview' with the star! Incorporate the pictures and interview in a presentation.
27. Make a Transition Book. Take photographs of the class & school they will be moving onto. Make a presentation/Talking Book for the children to access to prepare them for transfer at the end of the year. Especially useful for some SEN children. You can also produce an "About Me" introduction book to inform the new school about their new student.
28. Take digital images of children with their D&T models – for their record / profile/evidence.
29. Make a photo library of huge works of art – collages etc which have to be dismantled when they are changed.
30. Make a personalised school greeting or Christmas card with the prettiest view of your school.
31. Take photos demonstrating a particular physical education or dance exercise. Post it to a PowerPoint presentation before beginning the activity with the students. Walk them through the activity using the pictures in the presentation to describe position, posture and movement.
32. Create a "Day in the Life" photo time capsule of your class. Take photographs every half hour during the school day. Write descriptions of what was happening during each photograph. Mount into a booklet or publish using Microsoft PowerPoint.
33. Have students create an electronic time capsule to describe our world and our culture at the present time. Students should write to justify why they made the choices they did to put in the capsule. After they are saved on disks, hold a discussion about how technology has changed and will continue to change our world.
34. Take photographs of new intake reception/foundation children, cut out the image and stick it above their peg, lunchbox place or on their drawer – solve the name reading problem.
35. Take pictures through a cookery session to make a recipe book – including the 'How to do it' pictures

36. Take photographs of a coffee morning, Spring Fayre, Teddy Bear's Picnic, a Craft show – or any other school event so that the images make a bank which can be used in future newsletters.
37. Create a virtual tour of your classroom. Have each student select an area to photograph and describe to create one page in a slideshow. Expand to create "tours" of your school and/or community.
38. Put images of school life; sports days, plays, special assemblies and similar on the school web page.
39. Create a "School Rules" or "Class Rules" book complete with illustrations of acceptable behaviours (with your students posing "caught" in appropriate activities).
40. Take an image of each other – make 'Wanted' posters.
41. Have students interview each other, take pictures of each other, and print off the interview and pictures -make a weekly newsletter
42. Make a 'Star for the week' or 'student of the month' sign, award or certificate.
43. Make a diary of special school events – important visitors, building programmes, presentations etc.
44. Take pictures around town of easily recognisable signs (the McDonald's arches, Traffic Signs, etc). Assemble into a book titled "I Can Read". Great to inspire confidence in young readers.
45. Make really close up studies of flowers and their parts for revision.
46. Include the pictures as illustrations in multi-media presentations.
47. Make net pen-friends with another school (attach the images to an email to swap files).
48. Collect images showing the river's journey – re-create the journey around the room – better still in a presentation program as a 'Virtual River Journey'.
49. Have to disconnect cables to move your computer? Take several pictures of where the cables go so it's easier to reassemble. Do the same with bulletin boards that really worked for you.
50. Collect images on visits to the zoo, wildlife parks, place of scientific interest, places of historical/geographical interest or a church and make a 'Virtual Tour'. Or use the images taken on the visit as a debriefing tool.
51. Take lots of pictures when your class is on a field trip. Back in the classroom, each student can choose 1 picture to label with a short description of what was happening or why this was important.
52. Assign a new "Class Photographer" each week. This student should have easy access to the digital camera. The assignment: to capture at least 1 photo of "learning in action" to be used in that week's newsletter. Of course, s/he would also be responsible for 1-2 sentences describing what's happening in the photo.
53. Take pictures of students with their families during Open Day. Make sure you label, so you will recognise parents at conferences later in the year.
54. Make an arty collage with faces distorted into odd shapes and swirls by using graphics software.
55. Record a series of student pictures as they act out a story they've read or that another student has written. Use as illustrations for the story or as a means for telling what happened first, etc.

56. Insert photos of each student into a word document (size them small enough so your whole class fits on one page). Label each picture with the student's name. Helpful for substitute teachers, parent helpers, support staff and non-readers.
57. Import student photos into Kid Pix or similar programme. Use the Eraser Tool to erase the background. Use the Drawing tools to create pictures of the student in their Halloween costume, as their favourite Fairy Tale character, as Santa Claus ("What I would give to the World as a Present"), etc.
58. Make place mats for a special lunch.
59. Take a class picture and print on special iron-on paper for Class T shirts. Great to wear on Field Trips etc.
60. Give students a portion of a digital picture and have them guess what the picture is of.
61. A scavenger hunt. Give students a list of items to look for in the classroom or in the school. They must take pictures of the things they found during their scavenger hunt to prove they found them all.
62. Take pictures of various staff members and teachers. Create a slide show or digital handbook to give new students.
63. Load pictures of various 'famous' sites around the world: Eiffel Tower, Wall of China, Buckingham Palace, Castle at Disney World, etc. Take a photo of the children, one at a time and then have them import them to the site. Depending on how well they cut around themselves, it looks like they are actually there.
64. Write a how to essay describing how to do something. Take pictures of each step to include in the essay when published.
65. Have young children choose a letter. Then, go on a walk around the classroom, school or in the neighbourhood. When the child finds something that begins with that letter, take a picture of the child with that object. Use the pictures to create a class alphabet chart.
66. Create a book about local history

The main advice for using digital cameras is don't be afraid of the equipment be creative and encourage your students to offer input. The more you learn, the more you will want to learn about digital photography.

Students **MUST** be taught proper handling and safety rules when using the camera. Do training with students one-on-one to ensure that they understand how to handle the camera.

When younger students "pass" the required training and demonstrate knowledge of the careful handling rules, take their picture with the camera, and issue an "Official Photographer" pass with their picture on the front and the safety use rules printed on the back as a reminder. Whenever a student is to use the camera, he or she should show you the pass (just like a photographer for a newspaper or other press).

Keep in mind the law and rules on privacy when publishing photographs. Some students do not have permission to be photographed. Be aware of your school's policy regarding pictures and publication of pictures. Check with your principal before publishing any student picture, whether on paper or online.