
YOUR SENIOR PORTRAIT



About your Senior Portrait

Despite the plethora of images taken of us each day by friends, family members and ourselves, there are several landmark times in our lives where we ceremoniously invest in professional imagery- like our first baby picture, our wedding book, and our high school senior portrait.

A senior portrait is a picture that will forever reference your image in a collection with others who shared your high school experience.

A senior portrait *shoot* is one that generates that senior portrait but also one that can capture even more than the one image that will occupy the yearbook space- it's a opportunity to create a piece of art that captures your personality as well as your appearance.

The Standard Senior Shoot

A standard senior portrait is usually a “head shot”, a head and shoulder image with a plain or out of focus background that features a relaxed, usually smiling face. The image is professionally retouched to remove blemishes and create an image with good color, composition, and balance.



Historically, senior portraits were shot in-studio with a plain or lightly textured background. These were usually formal images printed in color or black and white.

Contemporary senior portraits are often outdoor shots that are less formal and convey a relaxed, familiar feeling. They are almost always printed in color.





Beyond Standard

A trend toward a more “photojournalistic” style began in wedding photography and has spread to all types of photographic services. While the standard portrait is a yearbook-oriented shot that records what you look like, a creative shot is an expressive, informational and inspired shot that captures who you are. What separates these images from standard portraits is that your identity is shared through clothing, makeup, props, unique locations, activities and other unique elements that define you as a person. Athletes, musicians, actors, artists- these unique and often very creative personalities find ways to express themselves through their creative image. These pictures are created in addition to the standard senior portrait- they augment the standard shoot to provide an image that

often won't appear in the yearbook but will be displayed on their social media sites, hung on the walls of their home and shared as framed prints and wallets with loved ones who want more than a standard headshot.



Choosing a Photographer

If you're in a public school, understand that there is no such thing as an "official school photographer"- it's illegal for public schools to specify a vendor or to allow for the solicitation of business for a photography company. Despite this, many "big-box" studios obtain email addresses of incoming seniors and solicit business, even to the point of audaciously assigning portrait sittings without you inquiring or requesting one. These sittings are often very inexpensive, charging as little as \$45 for a shoot, but never providing the heavily inflated "package costs" that must be purchased in the future, often costing over \$600.



To choose a photographer, begin by acknowledging your freedom to choose one of your choice. Search for local photographers online, talk to friends who were happy with both their shoot and products, and look through your school's recent yearbooks to see the style of images that you like.

Next, consider the portrait type- do you want studio shots, outdoor shots, location shots or creative shots (or some of each) as part of you senior shoot. Some photographers do not have a studio and shoot only outdoors- others are studio-exclusive and will not travel to a location for outdoor or creative shots. Be sure that your photographer can provide the images that you are seeking.

Finally, compare prices, remembering that prices reflect not only the sitting fee but any prints or print "packages" that you are required to purchase.

Photographers who refuse to publish or share their price lists are often hiding their true costs behind a low sitting fee, applying huge markups to their mandatory print package sales.

Once you've chosen your photographer, contact the studio to book a date- most senior portraits are shot during the summer since school schedules become very busy in the fall and it can be hard to find opportunities to shoot. If your afternoons are free during the school season (you're not involved on a sports team or busy activity), the fall can be a great time to shoot. Keep your eye on the submission date that your yearbook advisor has set- and verify with your photographer whether they will be submitting the photo or if you are responsible for delivering an image to your advisor.

The Day of Your Shoot

Clothing- Wear clothing that is both comfortable and reflects your personal style. While there is no absolute right or wrong in clothing choice, some things are often less desirable:

- Sunglasses- hide your eyes and expression- use them for effects only
- Logos/Artwork- the image is about you, so unless you have a very strong product or artistic affiliation, don't let the clothing pull attention from your face
- "Busy" Designs- if the material has a "busy" appearance, it will be seen as distracting



Hair and Makeup-

Don't

overdo it!

Remember that your yearbook image should look like you- an extravagant hair style might be great for prom, but yearbook images should reflect a more natural appearance

- A humid summer day can be tough on hair- be sure to condition or consider not washing it on the day of a shoot if it looks good (and be prepared to use some hair spray)
- Makeup should be used for one of two reasons: to naturally enhance your look (in which case it should be almost unnoticeable) or to create a specific look
- Don't attempt to hide blemishes or other small imperfections with makeup- retouching

will eliminate those more naturally than makeup

- Professional makeup artists are recommended if images are for modeling portfolios or actor headshots



Glasses- Look natural!

- If you wear glasses most of the time, that's the look that people expect and there are ways to eliminate glare
- You can always do images with and without them, so bring them to the shoot and decide which you like best later



Proofs and Prints

Ask your photographer about the proofing and selecting phases of your portrait- how many of the images that are taken will you see, how many can you have retouched, what (if any) minimum amount must be spent on prints and what “packages” are available. Ask too about the turnaround time of both proofs and prints and verify that the photographer will deliver the appropriate medium to your yearbook advisor.



One Person, Many Looks

Consider all the looks that can reflect who you are- a senior photo shoot can be an exciting and creative way of not simply recording your images, but expressing yourself in the process!



About WEPS Photo

Located on Locust Street in Danvers, WEPS offers studio, onsite outdoor, location, and creative senior portrait shoots. Pricing for services and products is published online (www.wepsPhoto.com) with no hidden fee structures or mandatory purchases. Proofs are generally posted online within 24 hours of the shoot and retouching is often completed within 48 hours after receiving an order. WEPS delivers digital images to yearbook advisors to their required specifications well within the time allotment as long as the client offers sufficient time for the request.

Please visit WEPS Photo at www.wepsPhoto.com or email wepsPhoto@gmail.com for information or appointments.