

# Your Camera

A Hands-On Class  
Presented by Stu Gershon  
October 2008

No one can teach you everything there is to know about your camera EXCEPT YOU! YOU must make an effort to READ your Owner's Manual and learn how to navigate through the Menu System. This class is designed to help you find the important items and change the settings to make the use of the camera easy and efficient!

POWER is used to turn the Camera ON and OFF.

SHUTTER RELEASE – usually the large button on the top-right of the camera. This is the button you press when you want to take a picture. Usually, there is a “pre-focus” position when you press the button half-way down and you might hear a “beep” to signify that the lens is focused!

RECORD (shooting) and PLAYBACK (View) – most cameras have a switch to toggle between Shooting (taking the pictures) and Playback (viewing the pictures).

ZOOM – is used to make the lens move in closer to the subject (Telephoto) and move back from the subject (Wide angle). Most cameras have a ring around the Shutter Release Button which usually moves to the Right or Left. Look for the letter “T” for Telephoto and “W” for Wide Angle. If there is no ring around the Shutter Button, then there probably is a slide switch where your thumb rests. Again, look for the “T” and the “W”

MENU – all cameras have some form of Menu to change setting. The usual way to navigate through the menu is with a “joystick” or control button that (usually) can move in four directions – Up, Down, Right and Left.

FLASH – Most cameras have some sort of Flash Control. The universal symbol for the Flash is a “Lightning Bolt”. This may either be a separate button OR an item within the Menu System. Usually there are three modes in the Flash Control: – Auto – which is usually the “default” setting and operates the Flash unit when it is needed; “On” which causes the Flash to be on all the time (Forced or Fill Flash); and “Off” which means the Flash unit

is turned Off and will not work (like when you are in a Museum and Flash Photography is prohibited). There probably is a forth mode – “Red Eye Reduction” Which makes the Flash fire twice in a short burst so that the subject’s eye will “open up” and, therefore, prevent “Red-Eye”. I recommend turning this “OFF”!

DISPLAY – Most cameras will have some control to manage the “Display” – the LCD screen on the back of the camera. If you camera also has an “Optical Viewfinder” – the little hole in the back to aim the camera, then you would want to find a way to turn the Display “Off” as much as possible to conserve your batteries. If you don’t have an Optical Viewfinder, than you should find the control that limits the amount of time the LCD Screen is on, also to preserve your batteries.

RESOLUTION – The Size and Quality of the image file. The larger the size and the better the quality, the better your photograph will look. You can take smaller photo images to be economical, but your photos will not be as good! Bigger is Better!

MODE – In most cases, keep the Camera in the “Auto” or “P” Program MODE for simplest operation. You might also have “M” for Manual where you control all of the setting, “A” may stand for Aperture Priority, “S” or “T” may stand for Shutter Priority and there may be various specialized “Scene” modes for special occasions.

ISO – controls Film Speed – what we used to call “ASA”!

AE – Automatic Exposure Lock - Check your Owner’s Manual! This is an important tool that lets you “lock” the exposure on a certain object in your picture and THEN compose the picture. This is very handy is you’re shooting a “light” scene – like a beach or a glacier – and there is an important dark object in the picture that you want to show detail of. It’s also true for the reverse situation – a “dark” scene with a light image – like a house in the woods. Virtually every camera has this featrure, but there is no standard to control it. PLEASE CHECK YOUR OWNER’S MANUAL!

FORMAT – To remove everything from the Memory Card and make it "new" again!

You may send the presenter questions via email at: [stugershon@gmail.com](mailto:stugershon@gmail.com).