

Digital Photography Partial List of Words and Definitions

Burst	some cameras allow you to record several images in rapid succession with one press of the shutter button. Great for capturing certain kinds of motion like your child playing baseball.
AF or MF	auto focus or manual focus
aperture/ shutter	shutter and aperture go hand in hand. The aperture is the hole that opens to allow light to enter a camera. The shutter is opened and closed mechanically when the button is pressed. The aperture can be different sizes that allows more or less light to enter the camera. The size of the opening and the length of time it is open can be mechanically set by the photographer or a camera can be set on "auto" and the camera will decide how big and how long the shutter stays open for the light conditions it detects. Time in seconds or 10th of seconds governs the length of time the shutter is open, while the size of the aperture hole is referred to as the "f stop".
aspect ratio	The proportions of a photographic image. If you are enlarging a photograph you want the "aspect ratio" to stay the same. A 4 x 6 photo, enlarged by 200% will be 8 x 12. If the "aspect ratio" is not the same you might get a distorted image of say 8 x 8.
Bytes	bytes are units of digital information. In Computerspeak bytes are thought of collectively into larger numerals like kilobytes, megabytes and gigabytes. Kilobyte is 1000 bytes and abbreviated by KB. Megabyte is a million bytes, and abbreviated by MG, and gigabyte is a billion bytes and abbreviated by GB.
Card Reader	This is a device that has a USB connector on one end and a slot, or numerous slots that will hold a memory card, or memory chip from your camera. Typically it is faster to transfer your camera images with a card reader instead of the cable that came with your camera.
file extensions	all computer files have a 3 letter abbreviation after the dot. Some photo files are extensions are: jpg, bmp, tiff, pcx, png, etc.
f-stop	refers to the size of the aperture. The higher the number the smaller the opening, so in very bright light you want to close the aperture to a smaller size. f22 was the standard top number on most film cameras. Now we can go much higher.
ISO	In the days of film the speed of the film was expressed as ISO 100, 200, 400, 800 etc. The higher the number the more sensitive to light, but also it would produce "graininess" that some photographers didn't like. In <i>Digitalspeak</i> that is called "noise"
LCD Monitor	LCD stands for "liquid crystal display" and refers to the screen on your camera.
megapixel	Millions of pixels. You can print a very acceptable 8 x 10 print with 3 megapixels....sometimes larger. One of today's 10 megapixel cameras will produce a 38 x 50 inch print at 72dpi (low resolution) or a 18 x 24 inch normal print, or a 9 x 12 high resolution print of about 300dpi.
Memory Card	Digital cameras store photographs on cards, or removable chips. Your camera came with one, but you may want a bigger one to store more photographs. The size is expressed in bytes. More bytes and gigabytes allows the card to store larger photographs and more of them.
mode	A term that refers to some preset conditions in your camera settings. For example, some cameras have "scenery mode" or "museum mode" which will change the various camera settings to accommodate the conditions you are in.
Pictbridge	A universal connector that allows the camera to directly connect to a printer. Some printers contain elementary photo editing capability.
pixels	stands for picture element. Digital photographs are made up of many tiny little squares, each one is a particular color. Pixels become relatively important in certain kinds of editing and enlarging of digital photographs. Cameras are rated by how many millions of pixels they are capable of capturing. See "megapixel"
raw	A camera file format that has not been altered by the camera as it is in jpg or tiff images. Raw is used most often by professional photographers and people who like to do their own tweaking of the camera image. Most low-end cameras don't offer raw settings.
resolution	of all the computer concepts resolution is one of the most complex to "get". Cameras, computer monitors and printers use different resolution standards. Basically resolution refers to the size of the pixel, how many pixels make up the image, and how many pixels it will take to show the photograph on a monitor, printer, or camera.
tripod	a three legged stand that allows the camera to be very firm and steady.
View Finder	some digital cameras allow you to look through a view finder, like a film camera. This is great for working outside in bright sunlight where the LCD display is often faded out.
white balance	adjust camera for various lighting conditions such as incandescent light, shade, fluorescent lights, etc.