

What's in a Lens?

A quick guide to interchangeable photography lenses

“Kit Lens”

- Comes standard with camera
- Zoom is roughly 18-70 mm
- Aperture is variable, so the more you zoom, the less depth of field you can control

Possible upgrade: A lens with the same zoom range BUT fixed aperture. This will allow you to control depth of field even when utilizing the zoom.

Telephoto zoom lens

- “Telephoto” means any lens with zoom greater than 100 mm
- Most are roughly 70-300 mm
- Good for sporting events & “getting close” to a skittish subject (like an animal)

Note: Cheaper zoom lens (~\$500) have variable apertures, which give you the same problem as a standard kit lens. However, to upgrade to a fixed aperture and therefore control depth of field, it costs big bucks (roughly \$2000).

Prime lens

- Fixed focal points (no zoom)
- Common length is 50 mm
- Require more movement & planning from photographer, BUT better photos
- Great for portraits and other photos where you want to control depth of field

Wide angle lens

- Allows a photographer to zoom out further than where they are standing WITHOUT moving backwards.
- Generally offer 10-24 mm range
- Good for landscapes, photographing large crowds, and architecture

Note: Wide angle lenses tend to distort the image by making nearby objects appear very large and far away objects appear much smaller

Macro lens

- Similar to Prime because it doesn't zoom
- Common length is 35, 50, or 55
- Allows photographer to focus on extreme close-up details
- Good for close-ups in nature & portraits

Specialty lenses

Fish-Eye Lens:

A wide-angle lens that doesn't correct geometric distortion

Tilt/Shift Lens:

Front part of the lens shifts up/down/left/right to adjust and fix errors in perspective.

Lensbaby Lens:

Mounted on a rotating bellows, so you can move the lens and pick the center of focus or blur one part of the image