

Landscape & Travel Photography — Workbook

This workbook runs parallel to the Landscape & Travel Photography course. Each section corresponds to one course module and contains exercises, worksheets, and checklists that move you from understanding to action. Complete these activities in the field and at your editing desk — the goal is a repeatable system you own, not notes you file away.

Light, Exposure, and Reading Natural Scenes

Calibrate your exposure instincts and build a personal reference for how your specific camera performs in the key outdoor lighting conditions.

Exercise: One-Location, Four-Light-Condition Shoot

Choose a single landscape location within 30 minutes of where you live — a park, a waterfront, a field. Visit it at four different times and photograph the same primary subject (a tree, a rock, a bench) under each condition using the exposure starting points from Module 1. Compare the four sets on your computer immediately after the last session.

- What was your starting ISO/aperture/shutter for each condition, and how many stops of compensation did you end up dialling in?

- Where did the histogram clip in each condition, and how did you correct it?

- Which lighting condition produced the most dynamic range challenge on your specific sensor, and why?

- Which single image from the four sessions surprised you most, and what does that tell you about your instincts?

Worksheet: Camera Sensor Exposure Profile

Test your specific camera body to build a personal reference card for ISO performance and ETTR range. Shoot a static grey-card scene at ISO 100, 400, 800, 1600, 3200, and 6400 at identical exposure, then evaluate shadow noise and highlight recovery in Lightroom.

Camera body model

Sensor size (full-frame / APS-C / MFT)

Usable ISO ceiling (where shadow noise becomes unacceptable to you)

ETTR headroom — stops of highlights recoverable in your raw processor

Banding ISO (if any — the ISO where your sensor shows fixed-pattern noise)

Preferred default ISO for golden hour

Preferred default ISO for blue hour on tripod

Preferred default ISO for overcast midday handheld

Checklist: Field Exposure Checklist — Pre-Shoot

- Check camera is set to RAW (not JPEG) before leaving home
- Confirm histogram display is enabled on the review screen
- Set highlight alert (blinkies) on for review playback
- Load PhotoPills or TPE and confirm golden-hour time for today
- Charge batteries and format cards in-camera (not on computer)
- Enable electronic level or attach hot-shoe bubble level
- Set white balance to Daylight or Kelvin (not Auto) for consistent raw baseline
- Confirm lens corrections are enabled in-camera or set to apply at import

Composition Mastery for Natural Scenes

Turn the five core composition frameworks into muscle memory by applying each deliberately in a structured field session, then critically reviewing the results.

Exercise: Five Compositions, One Scene

Find a landscape scene with a clear subject (a tree, a body of water, a rock formation). Photograph it five times, each time applying one specific composition technique as the primary tool. Do NOT move between techniques until you have at least three frames of each. Review immediately on your laptop using a full-screen slideshow.

- Which technique required the most physical movement to execute — and how far did you move from your starting position?
- Which composition felt the most unnatural or counterintuitive, and why do you think that is?
- Were there any techniques that clearly did not suit this specific scene, and what does that tell you about matching technique to subject?
- Pick your single strongest frame from the session. What makes it work compositionally?

Worksheet: Composition Technique Decision Log

After your next five landscape shoots, complete one row of this log for your best image from each shoot. Over time this log will reveal your natural tendencies and identify the techniques you under-use.

Shoot date and location

Subject / primary element

Focal length used

Composition technique used as the primary framework

Foreground element (describe or write none)

Horizon position (upper / centre / lower third)

Perspective height (ground / knee / standing / elevated)

What you would change if you could reshoot this image

Checklist: On-Location Composition Review Checklist

- Walk the full location perimeter before setting up the tripod
- Identify the single most important element in the scene and name it out loud
- Shoot one test frame and check the histogram before committing to composition
- Verify the horizon is level (use electronic level or check a straight edge)
- Check all four frame edges for distracting intrusions — poles, branches, bright spots
- Look for a foreground element within 1 metre of the camera position
- Try at least two radically different perspectives (ground level + standing, or wide + telephoto) before settling
- Check that any leading line enters from a corner, not from a midpoint of an edge

Travel Planning and Field Logistics

Build your pre-trip research habit and complete the key logistical documents for your next travel photography destination before you book flights.

Exercise: Full Pre-Trip Research Drill

Pick any destination you have not visited (real or aspirational). Using only the digital scouting tools listed in Module 3, complete a full pre-trip location research session as if the trip leaves in 30 days. Spend no more than 3 hours. Your output should be a ranked location list, a 7-day weather window estimate, and a golden-hour time table for the first and last day of your imaginary trip.

- How many viable shooting locations did you identify, and how did the priority matrix ranking compare to your initial gut-feeling shortlist?

- What was the most useful piece of information you found that you would not have known without digital scouting?

- What information could you not find digitally and would need to source on arrival or from local photographers?

- What is the single biggest logistical risk for this trip (access, weather window, permit requirements, crowd levels) and how would you mitigate it?

Worksheet: Travel Photography Trip Planning Sheet

Complete this sheet for every travel photography trip. File it with the trip folder in Lightroom so it is always retrievable alongside the images.

Destination name and country

Trip dates (departure and return)

Primary shooting goals (list up to 3 specific images or subjects)

A-list locations (up to 5, with GPS coordinates)

B-list locations (up to 5, with GPS coordinates)

Golden-hour times for first and last day

Blue-hour times for first and last day

Gear list (body, lenses, tripod, filters, accessories)

Card and battery count

Backup strategy (field SSD model, cloud service)

Emergency contact and float plan recipient name

Permit or access requirements (if any)

Local photography community or guide contact

Checklist: 24-Hour Pre-Departure Gear and Safety Checklist

- Charge all batteries and confirm each shows full capacity
- Format all cards in-camera and confirm total card capacity exceeds expected shoot volume by 3x
- Test that field SSD is readable and backup software is installed on laptop
- Download offline maps for the destination in Gaia GPS or Maps.me
- Check weather forecast on Windy.com and Meteoblue for the first three shoot days
- Confirm golden-hour and blue-hour times in PhotoPills for arrival date
- Pack rain sleeve or camera cover regardless of forecast
- Send float plan to emergency contact (itinerary, accommodation, phone number)
- Photograph all gear for insurance documentation before packing
- Confirm all lens filter sizes and that you have the correct filter adaptor rings

Field-to-Edit Workflow and Exporting Finished Images

Apply a consistent import-cull-edit-export pipeline to a real set of images and produce your first finished travel photography portfolio gallery.

Exercise: Full Workflow Run-Through on a Real Trip Folder

Take any existing folder of 200+ travel or landscape images (a recent trip or a backlog) and run it through the complete three-pass culling system and the eight-step Lightroom edit sequence. Time each phase with a stopwatch. Your goal is a finished set of 10 selects, edited to portfolio quality, exported at web resolution.

- How long did each of the three culling passes take per 100 images, and what slowed you down most in pass 2?

- Which step in the eight-step Lightroom sequence had the biggest single impact on your images — and which step did you previously skip?

- What is your current end-to-end editing time per image (from raw to export-ready), and what is your target time?

- Looking at your 10 final selects together: is there a consistent technical or compositional weakness that appears across multiple images? Name it specifically.

Worksheet: Portfolio Self-Assessment Sheet

Complete this assessment for each image in your current portfolio or finished travel set. Score each criterion 1–5. Use the scores to identify patterns in your strongest and weakest images.

Image filename or title

Location and date captured

Composition technique used (primary)

Light condition (golden / blue / overcast / midday)

Exposure quality score (1–5): 1=clipping or flat, 5=full tonal range with intent

Composition score (1–5): 1=centred snapshot, 5=multi-technique, deliberate

Technical sharpness score (1–5): 1=soft/blurred, 5=tack sharp on subject

Emotional impact score (1–5): 1=forgettable, 5=would stop a scroll

Edit quality score (1–5): 1=default settings, 5=intentional colour and tonal treatment

Include in portfolio? (Yes / No / Maybe)

Checklist: Post-Trip Workflow Completion Checklist

- All cards imported and verified against source (file count matches)
- Field SSD confirmed as backup 2 and readable
- Cloud upload complete (Lightroom sync, Backblaze, or equivalent)
- Three-pass cull complete — rejects flagged and deleted from disk
- Picks rated 1–5 stars with at least 5 images at 3+ stars
- All 3+ star images processed through the eight-step Lightroom sequence
- Selects exported at web resolution to a dedicated _Selects folder
- At least one image shared (Instagram, portfolio site, or photography community) within 7 days of return
- Trip planning sheet filed in the Lightroom trip folder
- Any gear failures, broken items, or supply shortages noted for next trip kit revision

Exercise: Build a 15-Image Travel Portfolio Gallery

Select exactly 15 images from your landscape and travel archives — your absolute best work across different destinations, conditions, and techniques. Sequence them using the portfolio sequencing principles from Module 4, Lesson 3. Display them in a temporary portfolio using Google Photos shared album, Squarespace free trial, or a simple PDF exported from Lightroom. Ask one other photographer (in-person or in an online community like r/LandscapePhotography) for direct feedback on which image is weakest and why.

- What criteria did you use to include each image — and did any images survive that you now think you included out of sentimentality rather than quality?

- How did you sequence the 15 images and what emotional arc were you trying to create from first to last?

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- What feedback did you receive on the weakest image, and do you agree with the assessment?
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- What single type of image (location, condition, subject) is most conspicuously absent from your portfolio, and what does that gap tell you about where to point your next trip?
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Your Action Plan

1. This week: complete the one-location four-light-condition shoot (Module 1 exercise) using only the exposure starting points from the course — no Auto mode
2. This week: build your camera sensor exposure profile worksheet for your specific body at ISO 100 through 6400
3. Within 2 weeks: complete the five-compositions-one-scene field exercise and review all frames on a computer within 24 hours of shooting
4. Within 2 weeks: start the composition technique decision log and complete 5 rows from 5 different shoots
5. Within 1 month: run the full pre-trip research drill on a real or aspirational destination and produce a ranked location list with a golden-hour timetable
6. Before your next trip: complete the travel photography trip planning sheet and send your float plan to an emergency contact
7. Within 1 month: run the full workflow (import, cull, edit, export) on a real 200+ image folder using the eight-step Lightroom sequence
8. Within 6 weeks: build a 15-image portfolio gallery and share it with one other photographer for feedback
9. Ongoing: after every shoot, complete the on-location composition review checklist retrospectively — what did you miss in the field?
10. Every 3 months: re-run the portfolio self-assessment sheet on your entire gallery and cut any image that scores below 3 in emotional impact

