

Speed light project

Learning outcome:

- To understand how a portable photographic strobe works
- To manipulate the camera to be able to best use the strobe

I would like you to take a series of shots where you use a speed light to balance the light that is coming from behind your subject. Please follow the instructions to finish this project.

I would like you to have your subject in the foreground, with very little behind the subject to reflect light off. Ideally, you will be shooting on an overcast day, or with your subject in shadow.



1. Set your camera to “M” manual mode. ISO 200 or 400.
2. At this point, you need to decide if you will have the flash attached to the camera, or if you will be shooting through an umbrella, and triggering the flash remotely with the Nikon Creative lighting system
3. Meter for the background using the center weighted meter setting on your camera.
4. Turn on the Nikon speed light and hold down the “ZOOM” and “-” buttons to engage the “CSM” mode.
5. Scroll through the menu using the “+” key and make sure everything is turned on using the “MODE” key.
6. Quickly press the “ON/OFF” button to display the following:



You have now set the speed light up correctly to fire remotely from the camera.

Mount the speed light correctly on a stand. Use the Manfrotto speed light adaptor and make sure that the umbrella you are shooting into, or through, is tilted up slightly.

Do not over-tighten the screw that holds the umbrella in place!

You will now need to set up your camera to fire the speed light.

1. On the back of your D80, D300, or D7000 (or any other Nikon with “Commander Mode”) select “Menu”
2. Now scroll down to the “CUSTOM MENU SETTING”
3. Find either the “Built-in flash” setting, or “Bracketing/flash”. Press the d-pad to the right, and select “Commander Mode” (You may have to enter “Flash control for built in flash”)
4. Press the d-pad to the right, and it should display the following screen:



5. Make sure that you have selected “Channel 3” and that group A is set to TTL (Through-The-Lens) Metering.
6. **IMPORTANT!** You must now press “OK” to apply these settings! Failure to do so will leave the flash in the last mode it was used in!
7. Pop up the built in flash on your camera, and focus on your subject’s eye. Make sure that your light meter is reading for correct, or too little light.
8. Adjust your shutter speed to get the correct amount of light and fire some test shots.
9. If the speed light “beeps”, it means that it cannot put out enough light to properly expose for your subject. You will need to either open your lens wider (smaller f-stop number) or increase your ISO.

I will have you hand in the assigned number of photos in a folder with your name on it. This will be dropped into the correct folder in my teacher drop-box.

I will be looking for the following when marking:

- Creative use of the shutter to isolate the subject from the background
- Image properly focused on subject’s eyes
- Subject situated in front of appropriate background

- Subject is not cropped awkwardly; crop above knees and elbows as a general rule
- Subject is “engaged” in the session
- No awkward shapes in the background, growing out of your subjects head

Remember: shutter controls ambient light, aperture controls light from flash, and ISO affects BOTH!