

Terms

Catchlight:

This is where you can see the reflection of the light in the eyes of your subject. Catch light gives life to your subject and naturally brightens the eyes.

Key light:

The main or "key" lighting source. Your key light is the strongest light source and defines the lighting look or style you desire.

Fill Light:

An auxiliary lighting source. Your fill light gives less power than your key light and used to further sculpt the lighting look you desire.

Hair Light:

An auxiliary light used to add dimensionality to your subject by highlighting their hair. This helps define the shape of the head and keeps the photo from feeling "flat."

Reflector:

A white, silver or gold material that helps reflect light on to your subject. Useful for fill light and light sculpting.

Lighting Styles

Split

- the face is split, one side being lighter and the other in shadow
- light source is left or right of subject at 90 degree angle or slightly more
- dramatic lighting pattern
- the eye on the shadow side of the face picks up light in the eye only

Loupe

- shadow down the nose to the mouth, rounded shadow under nose
- slight shadowing on the cheeks

Rembrandt

- triangle of light beneath the eye on the cheek
- shadow on nose and cheek (from Loupe) touch thereby creating the triangle
- the eye on the shadowed side of the face has light in it and catch light

Photography and Film

Portrait Lighting Styles and Terms

- light from one direction creates shadow from nose on opposite cheek
- subject must turn slightly away from light
- light source must be above the top of their head

Paramount, Butterfly or Glamour:

- key light is above and directly behind the camera
- butterfly shaped shadow is created beneath the nose
- creates shadows under the cheek- makes the cheekbones appear more defined and higher
- creates shadows under the chin- minimizes undefined chins or necks
- historically feminine or softening lighting style

Profile or Rim Lighting:

- subject is at a 90 degree angle from the camera
- key lighting is behind the subject to illuminate the profile

Short

- subject turned slightly away from center
- the shorter side of the face which is closest to the camera is in shadow
- the broader side of the face which is farthest from the camera is lit
- shadowed side of face closer to the camera towards the foreground
- used for making faces appear more slender
- here light sculpts the face, adding more dimension

Broad

- subject turned slightly away from center
- the broader side of the face which is closest to the camera is lit
- the other side of the face is in shadow
- broadens slim/narrow faces to appear fuller
- shadowed side of the face is away from the camera toward the background

Here is an [article on the Sekonic website](#) by Photographer Bill Hurter that describes some of the above lighting set-ups with light diagrams.