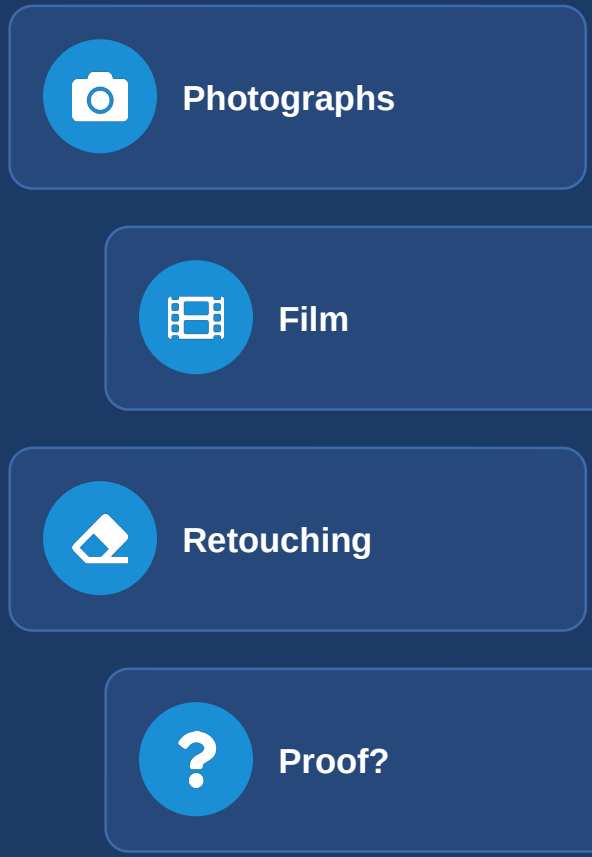
NBE3U Behind the Image, Lesson 4

Posed and Retouched

Photographs and films that staged the past



Today's goals

We are learning…

- How photographs and films use conventions to shape meaning.
- To identify the perspective and purpose behind staged images.

I can…

- Name the choices a photographer or filmmaker makes.
- Explain how staging changes the message of an image.
- Identify the purpose behind a staged image.
- Explain the implied message of an image.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–8 min	**Hook**	Discuss
8–20 min	**Choices**	Note
20–50 min	**Three cases**	Analyse in groups
50–65 min	**Implied messages**	Discuss
65–75 min	**Reflect**	Write

Warm-up



If you see a photograph of something, is that proof it happened the way it looks?

Sentence starters

“A photo proves…”

“A photo can't prove…”

“It depends on who…”

How it works

- Pairs: 3 minutes.

Big idea

A photograph looks like proof. But a photographer chooses the costume, the pose, the caption and what gets erased. Edward Curtis removed a clock from a plate; the Department of Indian Affairs printed “before and after” portraits of a schoolboy; Robert Flaherty staged an Inuit hunt for Nanook of the North. Each made a story look like a fact.

The image-maker's toolkit

Costume and props

What people wear and hold.

Pose and setting

How and where they stand.

Crop and retouch

What is in, and what is erased.

Caption or title

What words tell us to see.

Staging and editing

What is rehearsed or cut.

Audience

Who will buy or see it.

Case 1: the missing clock

Edward Curtis's 1910 photograph “In a Piegan Lodge” showed a small clock between two men. In the version he published later, the clock had been removed from the plate.

Ask: Why would a photographer erase a clock? What does a clock say about time, and about who belongs to the present?

Case 2: “before” and “after”

In its 1896 annual report, the Department of Indian Affairs printed two photographs of Thomas Moore, a boy at the Regina Indian Industrial School: one in his own clothes, one in a uniform with short hair.

These were real photographs of a real child, used to sell the schools to the public. Look with respect.

Case 3: Nanook of the North



Robert Flaherty's 1922 film, made in northern Quebec, presented the life of an Inuk hunter he called “Nanook.” His name was Allakariallak, and he usually hunted with a gun.

Flaherty staged older hunting methods, cut open an igloo for light, and scripted a scene where “Nanook” is puzzled by a gramophone.

Analyse the cases

On page 2, groups of three (one case each, then share):

1. What was staged or changed?
2. Which conventions carry the meaning?
3. What is the implied message?
4. Whose perspective, and who is left out?

One message, three images

Image	Implied message
The missing clock	Indigenous people belong to the past, not the present.
The schoolboy	Assimilation is progress, and it works.
Nanook	Inuit are “primitive,” cheerful and untouched by modern life.

Each message served an audience somewhere else.

Then and now

Images made about people

- Outsider chooses costume and pose.
- Caption written for buyers.
- Subject's name often lost.

Images made by people

- The subject or community chooses.
- Names, Nations and context included.
- Made for their own purposes, too.

In Unit 6 we meet Inuit filmmakers who answered Nanook with their own films.

Check yourself

Be honest. This helps you choose what to work on next.

Success criteria	Not yet	Almost	Got it
I can name the choices a photographer or filmmaker makes.			
I can explain how staging changes the message of an image.			
I can identify the purpose behind a staged image.			
I can explain the implied message of an image.			

Exit ticket

1. One choice an image-maker can make, and its effect.

2. The implied message of one case.

3. Is any image neutral?

Next class: Who Owns a Name?

Teacher reveal

Posed and retouched: key points

Curtis's clock: Removing a clock removed modern life, so the men look “timeless,” as if Indigenous people belonged only to the past.

Thomas Moore: Short hair, a uniform and a staged pose in the “after” image were meant to prove the schools “worked”: propaganda for assimilation.

Nanook: Allakariallak used a gun; the film shows a harpoon. The igloo was cut open for light. The film sells a “primitive” Arctic to southern audiences.

Conventions: Costume, props, pose, lighting, cropping, retouching, captions and editing all carry meaning.

Common purpose: Each image made an outsider's story look like a fact, and hid the people's own perspective.