

# Getting started with the EOS 800D

Especially written for **Canon EOS** users

A simple, modern and non technical approach to learn how to use your Canon EOS 800D camera to take great images



Written by Nina Bailey

## About this book

This book is designed for photographers for whom the EOS 800D is their first model in the Digital EOS range, and is designed to gradually get you using and understanding all the basic settings on your camera. The companion volume *Mastering your EOS 800D* follows on and looks at the more advanced features that the camera has.

This book is split into two distinct sections, the first part, getting started, looks at all the key features you need to use to shoot with the camera, but sticks to the easier to use Basic modes, where little photographic understanding is needed. Even within the Basic modes there are some overrides available on this model and I will look at how these can be used to correct errors the camera may make or to produce more creative images.

The second part, moving on, looks at the creative modes, where you have more control over how the camera is taking the image, but where a more in-depth understanding of the photographic settings is needed. I will look at the settings in depth in this section and explain what the various settings do to the images that you take.

In the second part of the book I take a look at a few of the basic overrides that the camera offers and how they can be used to produce better images. I will also take a look at some of the standard settings that can be left on their defaults whilst you get to grips with the other settings that you need to understand.

Throughout the book I have included a few practical assignments that will allow you to go out and put into practice what the book is explaining.

I hope the book enables you to get some great images with your EOS 800D.

**Written, designed and images by**

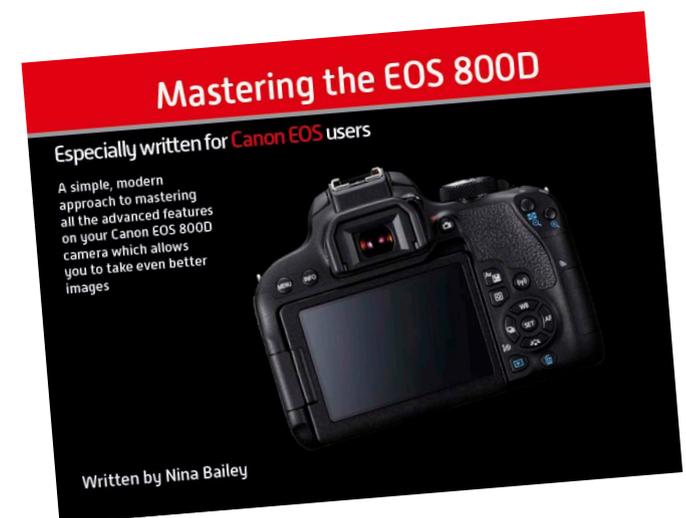
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PREVIEW  
EDITION





Some of the test images shot on the EOS 800D whilst producing these books on the EOS 800D showing the great images that can be achieved. These images are straight out of the camera, shot as a JPEG file and have had no postproduction done to them.



Nina started in the retail photographic market then moved to where she had a successful nine years looking after training, exhibitions and marketing both in the UK and also within Europe. This gave Nina an unrivalled knowledge of not only the Canon EOS system but also how to develop and enhance the skills of photographers of all ability levels.

Nina started her own business in 1999, concentrating on training for amateur photographers. She is also at the forefront in developing and producing the new Online EOS Training Academy. As well as developing the online training academy and direct training of photographers, Nina is a prolific professional photographer producing images not only for the EOS Training Academy but for a variety of outside organisations. In 2014 Nina started producing her own range of ebooks to bring photography training to an ever wider audience.

Nina started taking images when she was very young and is still a very keen photographer both professionally and personally. Nina loves travel, landscape and wildlife photography and still shoots commercially within the travel photography market. Nina also occasionally leads photographic trips, the last one being to Madagascar.

<b>Part 1 - Getting started</b>	<b>6</b>		
Getting started with the 800D	7		
New Guided options on the EOS 800D	8		
Understanding the terms used in photography	11		
What ISO means and controls	12		
What shutter speeds mean and control	13		
What the aperture does and controls	14		
What the lenses you use controls	15		
Lens jargon and terminology	16		
Explanation of sensor size	19		
Which is the best sensor size for photography	20		
<b>Basic camera layout</b>	<b>21</b>		
Top plate	22		
Rear of camera	24		
Touch controls	26		
Viewfinder information	27		
Ways of viewing when shooting	28		
<b>The menu system</b>	<b>29</b>		
About the camera's menu system	30		
Image quality and file formats	32		
Shoot 1 menu other options	34		
The set up menus	35		
The set up menu 2	36		
The set up menu 3	38		
<b>Basic set up for shooting</b>	<b>39</b>		
Basic shooting operation	40		
Auto plus or green square mode	41		
Flash off mode	42		
Displays and overrides in Auto+ and flash off mode	43		
Assignment- Start shooting	44		
Creative auto mode	45		
Background blur options	46		
Setting ambience based shots	47		
Shoot by ambience settings	48		
SCN or PIC modes	50		
PIC mode usage - Portrait	52		
		Brightness control	
		PIC mode usage - Landscape	
		PIC mode usage - Close up	
		PIC mode usage - Sport	
		SCN - Scene modes	
		Scene mode usage - Night portrait	58
		Scene mode usage - Handheld night scene mode	59
		Scene mode usage - HDR backlight control	60
		Scene mode usage - Kids	61
		Scene mode usage - Groups	62
		Scene mode usage - Food	63
		Scene mode usage - Candlelight	64
		Assignment	65
		Creative filters mode	66
		Assignment	70
		<b>Playback options</b>	<b>71</b>
		Playback options and controls	72
		Playback options	74
		Creative filter options	75
		Resize options	78
		Cropping options	79
		Playback options	80
		Slideshow options	81
		How to see the settings the image was taken at	82
		Assignment - Use the playback options	83
		Summary	84
		<b>Part 2 - Moving on</b>	<b>85</b>
		Next steps - the creative modes	86
		Guided modes and the simplification they offer	87
		Next steps - the creative modes	88
		Understanding the creative modes	89
		Default settings on program mode	90
		The focusing controls	92
		Focus lock	93
		AF-On button	94
		Basic focusing set up - static subjects	95

# Contents

PREVIEW  
EDITION

Basic focusing set up - moving subjects	96	About the other settings	
P - Program mode	97	File formats	
When to use program mode	99	The difference using the right software makes	144
Program shift	100	RAW versus JPEG shooting	144
Setting the ISO	101	File formats - JPEG	145
Assignment - getting used to program mode	102	Post production and JPEG images	147
Moving on from program mode	103	Quick adjustments to JPEG images	148
<b>Understanding the settings we use</b>	<b>104</b>	RAW vs JPEG - which is best	149
About the settings we use in photography	105	White balance - correcting colours	150
ISO - what it sets and how to use it	106	Picture style - reducing postproduction	152
About the high ISO settings	108	New - Fine detail picture style	154
Exposure settings - shutter speeds and their usage	109	<b>Exploring lenses</b>	<b>155</b>
All about slow shutter speeds	110	The part lenses play with photography	156
Special effects with slow shutter speeds	112	Focal length	157
General shutter speeds	113	Standard lenses	158
Keeping the camera steady	114	Wide angle lenses	159
Using high shutter speeds	115	Telephoto lenses	160
Apertures - what they are and how to use them	116	Special technologies	161
Apertures - the range found on lenses	118	L series lenses	162
What do the aperture numbers mean	119	<b>What makes a successful image</b>	<b>163</b>
How subject distances affects aperture usage	120	What makes a successful image	164
The effect of lenses on your images	124	Take at the right time	165
What is an exposure	125	Where are you shooting	166
Exposure settings - putting the settings together	126	Lighting direction	167
<b>Using the other exposure modes</b>	<b>128</b>	Side lighting	168
Understanding when to use TV mode	129	Backlighting	169
How to use TV mode	130	When backlighting works	170
Understanding when to use AV mode	131	Assignment - Looking at light	171
How to use AV mode	132	<b>Photographic thought process</b>	<b>172</b>
Technique - how to lose the bars	133	The thought process in photography	173
Assignment - getting used to TV and AV modes	134	What are we taking	174
M - Manual mode	135	What is the light doing to the shot	176
Manual mode and Live View	137	What is happening to the background	177
Mode summary	138	Experience counts	178
Assignment - look at the EXIF data on your images	139	Following on from what you have learnt so far...	179
<b>Other camera settings</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>Other products and services</b>	<b>180</b>

PREVIEW  
EDITION



# Part 1 - Getting started

## Getting started with the EOS 800D

PREVIEW  
EDITION

The EOS 800D is a great EOS model to use to learn photography. It has a range of modes that will allow you to shoot most subjects with the settings remaining under the camera's control. This gives you chance to become familiar with your lenses and what they do, and understanding the lighting that will give you the best images, before you need to start understanding some of the settings used within photography.

Some of the fully automated modes, give you some control over how the image is going to look and this is an excellent way to start to understand what photography with a digital EOS is all about, which is creativity. This is the ability to control how the finished image looks, something that many compacts and phone cameras give you little control over at the time of shooting.

Photography has always had a steep learning curve, and in this modern digital age this has become steeper, as there are now far more controls on the camera. This is why I have tried to break the book into sections that allow you to get some great results and build your confidence before tackling the areas that are by nature more technically challenging.

I always try and teach photography in a very modern way, starting off by taking images using the basic modes and building confidence that you can get great images without needing to take control of everything on the camera. Then as time progresses and you start to shoot more challenging areas, it becomes time to start to use the camera on modes with more controls, where more understanding is needed.



Far too often I come across photographers that are the verge of giving up photography as they have been told to shoot manually because a photographer, whose techniques are well out of date, has told them that its the only way to shoot.

It's far from the truth as most of the images you will see in this book are shot on one of the camera's automatic or semi automatic modes. A handful will be shot manually as in those situations it may be the only way to get consistent results, but those

occasions are few and far between. I originally learnt on a fully manual camera, but today choose not to shoot that way, as most of the time the camera makes the same decisions as I would and usually a lot quicker.

The automation on the camera works incredibly well, providing you understand what it is doing. The art is using the right mode at the right time, the key to using the camera, is to understand it fully, and simply pick the right setting at the right time.

# New Guided options on the EOS 800D

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The EOS 800D has some features designed to make its operation easier to the newcomer to photography.

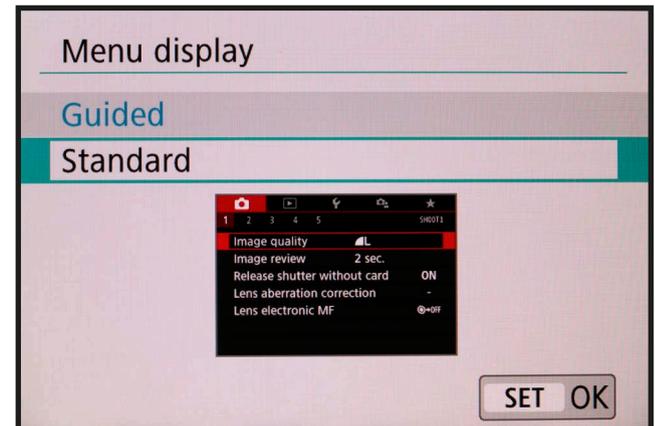
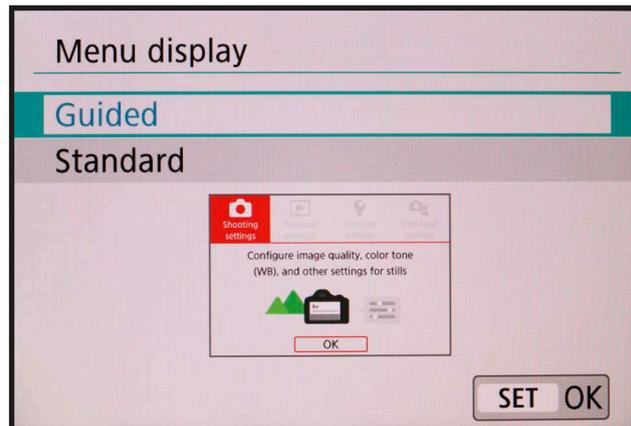
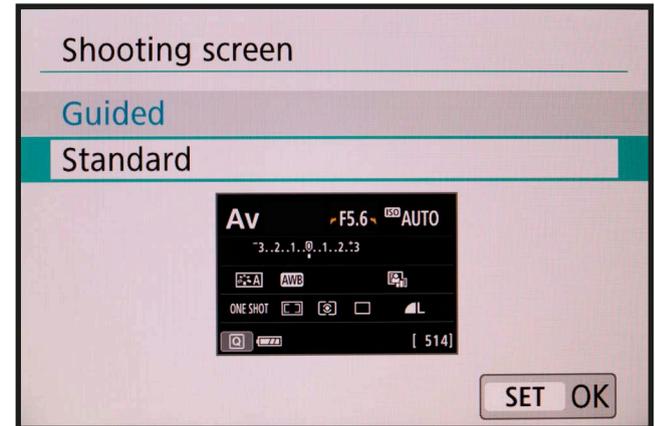
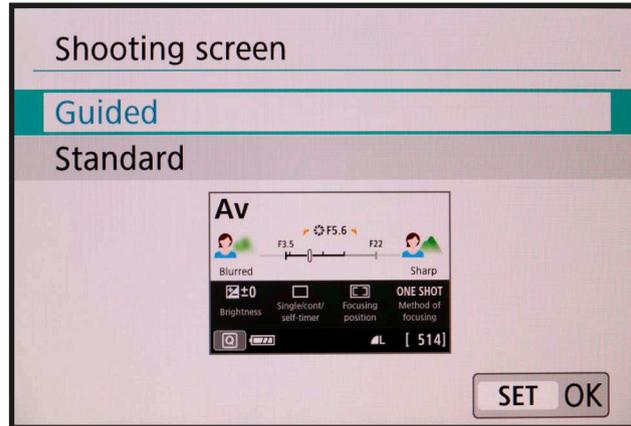
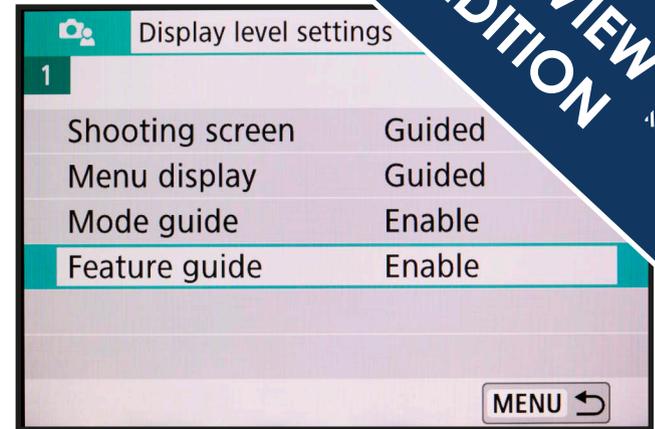
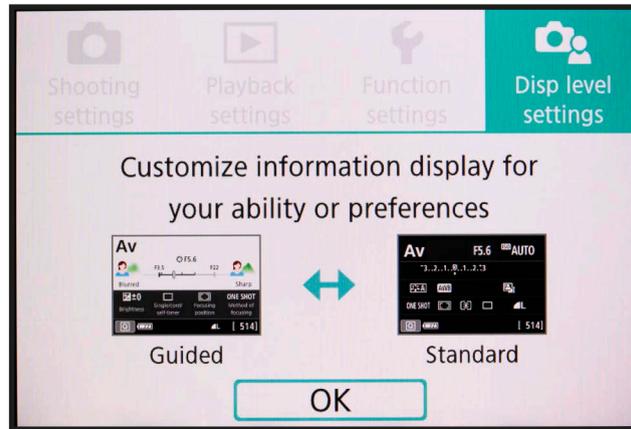
The EOS 800D as supplied in the box will have the Shooting screen and Menu display defaulted to the guided settings. Plus the Mode guide and the Feature guide will be enabled. This makes the camera much more user friendly to use, and prevents common errors occurring when shooting. In this book I will assume that these settings are left on their defaults. If you move onto the Mastering the EOS 800D I will show you how to turn them off and how to take more control over your camera.

The Shooting screen changes what can be quite a confusing Quick screen shown centre right to a guided more friendly option, shown centre left which has less features that need to be set and guidance for when you are setting them.

The menu display makes the menu simpler to understand and reduces the number of options that you need to think about. The guided option is shown bottom left and the standard option bottom right.

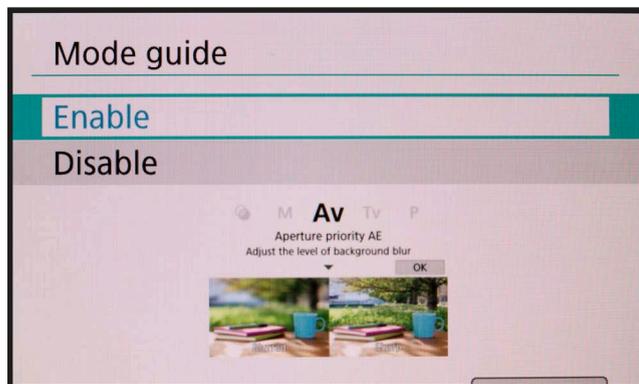
The mode guide will display brief descriptions of the mode at the time you turn the mode dial on the top of the camera.

The feature guide will bring up a box that tells you briefly what the feature that is highlighted within the menu system does. It is worth leaving these on whilst learning the camera as they will give you helpful tips whilst out and about shooting.



# New Guided options on the EOS 800D

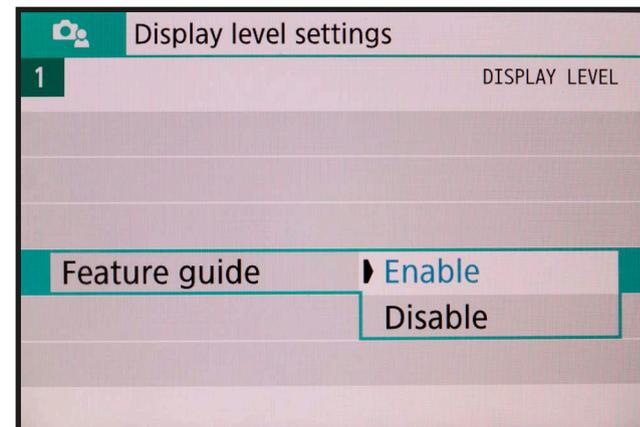
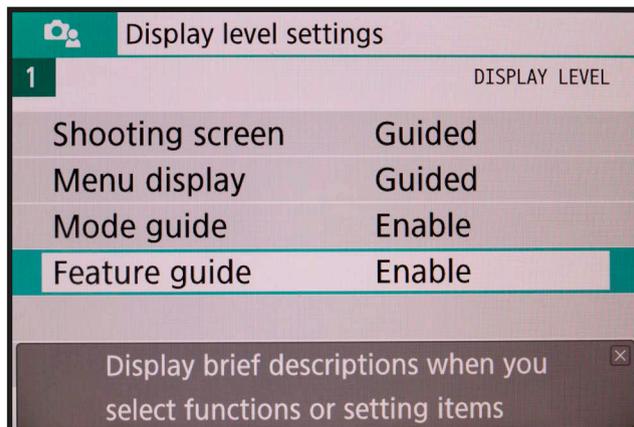
PREVIEW EDITION



To see these options, press the menu button on the rear of the camera, highlighted in the camera image to the right. Once the menu appears press the Q button, several times until the last menu tab is highlighted as above. To navigate down the menu you use the function buttons on the rear of the camera to highlight the shooting screen and then press the set button and chose the enable option.

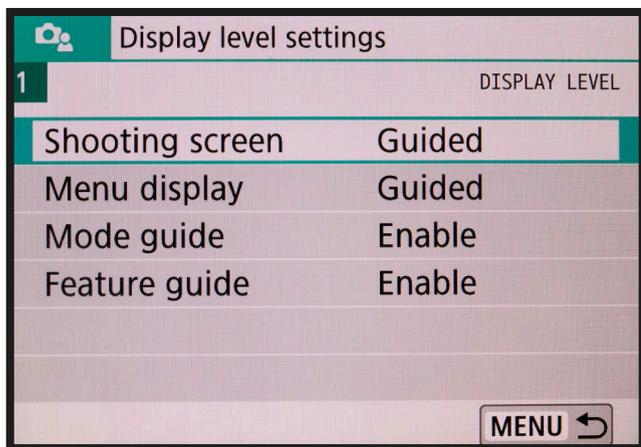
Then use the same controls to navigate down to the Menu display, press the set button again and then select the enable option and then press the set button and the screen will change to one like shown on the setting screen. The touch controls can also be used to navigate within the menus.

The guided menus are always white backgrounds, whilst the non guided ones are always black backgrounds.



## New Guided options on the EOS 800D

PREVIEW EDITION



If you have left your camera on its defaults your menu screen will look like the one above. To return to the normal camera screen simply press the shutter button part way and it will take you back to the normal shooting operation. The screen will look like the image below if your mode dial is set to the Auto+ Setting.



This model comes with touch controls and it is by far the easiest way to operate the camera. The screen on the rear of the camera is defaulted to come on and show when the camera is awake. If it goes to

sleep, you simply wake it up by a half pressure on the shutter button. It goes to sleep to prevent you having to keep turning it on and off when you are out and about using the camera.



If you touch the shutter button and the camera does not wake up and show the information on the back of the camera, it is possible that the display has inadvertently got switched to the level display. Next to the menu button is the INFO button, each time this is pressed it will change the display on the back of the camera. It can cycle through two options. Display on, level display and then back to the display on. This is easy to press by accident and get onto the wrong display.

To set things on the rear of the camera, you wake the controls in one of two ways, one is to press the Q button on the rear of the camera. This will make the settings active and the normal navigation controls will be active. Alternatively in the bottom left hand side of the screen there is a Q displayed, this is always

active for the touch controls and a half pressure on the shutter button and the whole screen will be active again.

The screens that I have looked at assume you will be using the camera's optical viewfinder to look through and take your images. This is the best way to work and the most stable way to hold and use the camera. If you want to use the Live View screen on the rear of the camera you have to turn it on with the button immediately to the right of the optical viewfinder.



Whilst in Live View you can access options to set by pressing the Q button to bring them up. However, slightly more options may appear than on the guided screen as the guided option is not fully utilised on the Live View System.

The Live View display can be useful to gauge the effect of some of the options available to you as it will display the preview as the image is going to be taken.

## Understanding the terms used in photography

PREVIEW  
EDITION

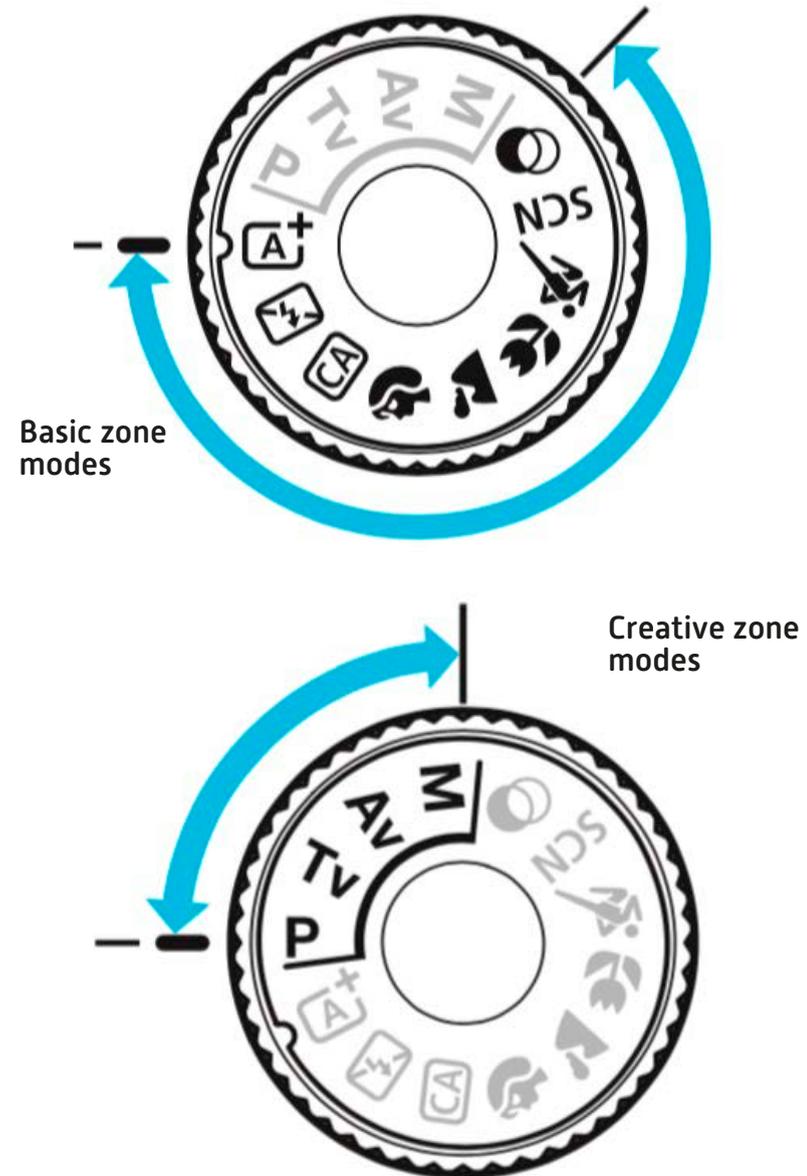
It is impossible in photography to discuss any part of modes on the camera without using a few terms, which many might consider to be technical jargon.

So I am going to explain in a simple way what the key terms mean and basically how they are affecting the image we shoot. I will look in more depth at these later in the book in the section *Moving on*, as once you start to utilise the creative modes you need a more in-depth understanding of how to use them.

In this first part of the book it is only necessary to have a basic grasp of what they are controlling and accept the fact that the camera will be setting all of them for you. Be assured that the camera actually does a very good job of choosing the settings, but what is interesting in these more basic modes is to actually look at what the camera is choosing and learn from it, the settings that are needed in various conditions.

The camera's exposure mode dial is actually split into two halves as well. The dial top right shows the Basic Zone modes which are designed to make the camera as simple to operate as possible, yet still allow a good range of subjects to be tackled. There are lots of safety features present when these modes are in use to prevent you making errors that will affect the images that you are taking.

The bottom right hand dial shows the more advanced Creative Zone modes, which I will be looking at in the second part of the book.



## What ISO means and controls

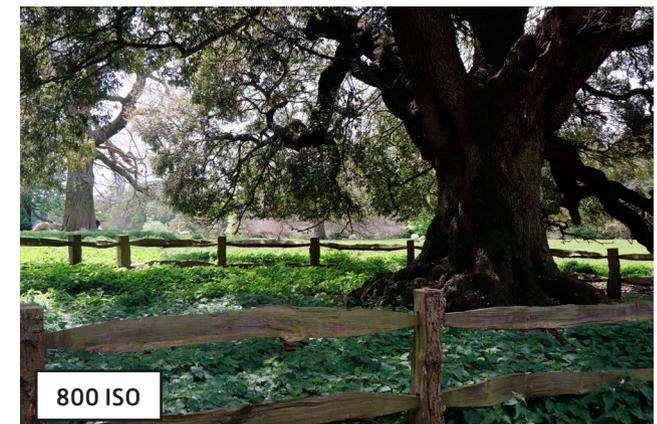
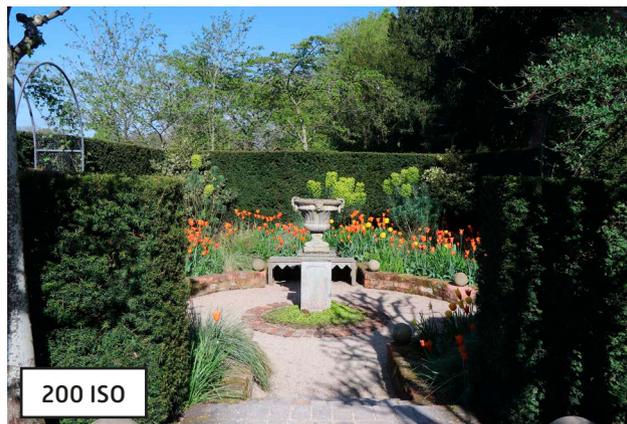
### ISO - Changes the sensitivity of the imaging sensor to light

ISO stands for International Standards Organisation, a meaningless term. If you were born before the 1970s then you may have come across this setting under a different name. In the UK it was commonly called ASA (American Standards Association) and in Germany and many of the eastern block countries it was called DIN (Deutsche Industrial Norms).

The only standard used today is ISO, the difference is that today it is produced on the imaging sensor electronically, and therefore can be varied frame by frame whereas on film it was set by how the film was manufactured and so the film had a specific ISO speed.

The ISO allows you to shoot in a very wide range of lighting conditions. The ISO range on the 800D in the automatic settings goes from 100 ISO up to 6400 ISO as a default. In bright light you will find the camera choosing the lower settings 100-400 ISO and as the light levels get lower then the camera will choose higher settings.

As the ISO goes higher there is a small drop on quality for each increment that it goes up. From 100-1600 there is no really visible effect on the image. Above this the image can start to look slightly grainy if you zoom into it but the printed quality will still be very good. However, the quality at the high ISO settings far exceeds anything that was possible with film and so even the very highest settings can be used to give great images. The images to the right were taken with the camera choosing the ISO to use for the light levels they were taken in.



PREVIEW  
EDITION

## What shutter speeds mean and controls

**Shutter speed - changes how long the light enters the camera for**

The shutter speed is one of two key controls that affect the brightness of the image that you take, better known as the exposure.

The shutter speed has settings from 30 whole seconds up to 1/4000th, though on the fully automatic modes these extremes are seldom used.

The shutter speed has two things that it is used for within photography, the key one is for preventing camera shake occurring. The camera will always try and achieve a shutter speed that will prevent camera shake occurring in the Basic zone modes, the only exception being the Night portrait mode where the use of a tripod is always recommended.

The shutter speed becomes important in action photography where taking the shutter speed up to its higher settings will freeze action, which is what is being done automatically if you use the sports or kids mode on the camera.

On the Basic zone modes, the camera will think about handholding for you automatically which will prevent most camera shake occurring. Most of the time it does this by increasing the ISO setting it is using, but it can also turn on the built in flash to provide light in the very lowest of lighting conditions.

If in the sports mode, the camera will set a shutter speed that will freeze the action but you cannot actually set a specific shutter speed. For that you need to be in the creative zone modes which I will look at later on.



PREVIEW  
EDITION

## What the aperture does and controls

### Aperture - The opening in the lens that controls how much light enters

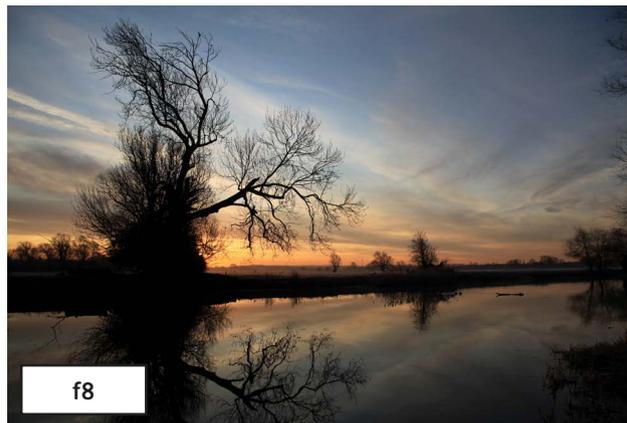
The aperture is the second of the two key controls for how bright the image is, or exposure as it is correctly known.

The aperture is basically the opening in the lens. It's the hardest of the controls to understand due to the numbers that are used to describe it. The larger the opening, the nearer to 0 the number will be. The aperture range you have available depends on the lenses you have. Most zoom lenses have a range of apertures from f4, which lets in the most light, with settings including f5.6, f8, f11, f16 down to f22 which lets in the least light.

The camera tends to keep the aperture towards the wider settings of f5.6 or f8. If you shoot a lot of landscapes in the Landscape mode in bright light you may see it go to the narrower settings than this.

The aperture also has a modifying effect on something called depth of field. I will look at this in more detail later, but this is how much is sharp in the images that you take. That said the thing that will have the biggest effect on things such as getting good background blur, will be the lens you choose to shoot with and not the aperture which is being used.

Out of the three main controls, ISO, shutter speed and aperture, the aperture is the least important setting to worry about, especially when starting out in photography. There is a relationship between the three settings that I will look at later, for the time being the camera will look after that for you.



PREVIEW  
EDITION

## What the lenses you use controls

It's commonly said that the D-SLR or Digital Single Lens Reflex camera, of which the EOS 800D is a great example, will take much better images than the compact models in the market. Although this is true, what is often not explained is why this is the case. The thing that sets cameras such as the EOS 800D apart is the range of lenses that they can be used with it.

The camera is often supplied with a fairly basic kit lens, the EF-S 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 IS STM lens is by far the most frequently seen model. This can give great results, but will be limited in the type of images that it will produce great shots of. This is because it has a relatively limited zoom range. Interestingly if compared to many of the compact models on the market the zoom range is actually shorter than many of them. There is a EF-S 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS STM or a EF-S 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS USM lens available but these are sadly seldom recommended with the models such as the 800D at the time of purchase due to its larger size and greater cost.

There is a reality that needs to be faced with this type of camera, which is the outfit will not fit in a pocket like a compact. The outfit will be bulkier and heavier to carry. However, the quality of the images achievable will be better and a much wider range of images can be taken due to the greater lens choice that you have.

A good second lens to start off with is the EF-S 55-250mm f4-5.6 IS STM lens, which gives a much better range to shoot with and will allow a much wider range of subjects to be successfully tackled. This lens is a manageable size and combines well with the standard kit lens.



PREVIEW  
EDITION

## Lens jargon and terminology

I am trying to avoid as much jargon as possible in this book, however, lenses are described in a very specific way and so I am going to look at what all the description on the lens actually means in simple terms.

The most important thing that describes a lens is its focal length. This is a number that is shown on the lens and it has mm after it. If there are two numbers, then the lens is a zoom lens and in the example shown on the right has a range starting at 18mm and going up to 55mm.

Zoom lenses are the most commonly seen in use today as they are very convenient to use and prevent having to change lens too frequently.

If there is only one number shown then it is a fixed focal length or prime lens, which does not zoom, as in the example below. In this case the lens is a 50mm lens. There are advantages to the fixed focal length lenses.



They generally let in more light and are often lighter than the equivalent prime lenses. They offer higher quality. However, the downside is you need more of them, which makes them larger and heavier to carry around.

For most amateur photographers starting out, the lenses of choice will be a zoom lens for the greater convenience of use and also to allow you to change the framing of the shot.

The lenses I mention on the last page an 18-55mm and a 55-250mm lens will work well for most newcomers to photography and allow you to gain experience without spending a fortune on lenses.

As you understand more about photography, many photographers start to specialise and this can lead to wanting more specialist lenses and in some instances more specialised cameras. It is wise not to spend too much on your lens outfit until you start to understand the lenses in more depth and can make a more informed choice as a result of that understanding in what you need for the subjects that you shoot.

I have a very wide range of lenses, but never take all of the lenses with me at one time, I tend to choose the equipment that I am using for the subjects that I am going to shoot.

PREVIEW  
EDITION

# Lens jargon and terminology

PREVIEW EDITION

The focal length of the lens tells us the type of lens that it is and the effect that it will have on the image. Lenses can be broken down into three basic groups

**Wide angle:** These get more into the picture than we naturally see with the eye but they also make things look further away and smaller and so we would not use these for wildlife or most action photography. Focal lengths from 35mm down to 10mm would be considered to be a wide angle focal length.

**Standard:** These are lenses that give the same width and appearance as we see naturally with the human eye. However, as they do not make the subject look closer they are good for travel and landscape photography. Lenses from 36mm up to 55mm are generally considered to be a standard focal length.

**Telephoto:** These are the lenses that are used for wildlife, action and sports photography as well as many other things. They capture a narrower area than we naturally see with the eye and make the subject appear to be a lot closer to us. Telephoto lenses technically start at 56mm but it is not until 200mm and longer that they start to make a big difference to your images. **Telephoto lenses** can be split into two groups. The normal telephoto lenses have focal lengths from 56mm and go up to 300mm.

You then have the **Ultra telephoto lenses**, these range from 400mm up to 800mm in the current range. The word ultra also seems to mean expensive as there are none of these lenses that will be found under a thousand pounds and many will be much more than that.



The images above are taken from the same spot but with the lens focal length being changed between each shot. As the focal length gets higher you can see a smaller part being captured. The 50mm image shows the scene as it looked to the eye.

# Lens jargon and terminology

PREVIEW EDITION

This shows you if the lens is an EF or EF-S type. This will tell you what the compatibility of the lens is.  
EF actually stands for Electronic Focus.  
EF-S stands for Electronic Focus - Short back focus which is the way that they are making the lenses smaller.

This tells you the focal length of the lens. This lens goes from 18mm which is wide angle up to 135mm which is telephoto and in between those two extremes covers the standard focal lengths as well. These days it is quite common for a lens to cover a range of focal length types in the one lens to make it more versatile.

This is the aperture range, however, when you are at the widest aperture that the lens features. This lens has the widest aperture and so will be f3.5 on the 18mm end of the lens and will vary down to f5.6 when the lens is at its 135mm position. This is a common feature on the more affordable lenses. Most affordable telephoto lenses will have an aperture of f5.6 when zoomed in. I will explain more about the aperture in a later article shortly.

The IS indicates that the lens features Image Stabilisation which helps you to hold the lens steady making it easier to track subjects and can prevent camera shake occurring when shooting in lower light levels. This is an important feature to have as it can significantly increase the number of good images that you get.

STM is the type of Motor that is fitted into the lens. STM stand for Stepping Motor which is a fast and very quiet motor. USM is even faster and totally silent in use. If there is no motor type then the lens uses the standard micro motor type which does produce a noise when working.

This indicates the filter size that the lens takes.



## Explanation of sensor size

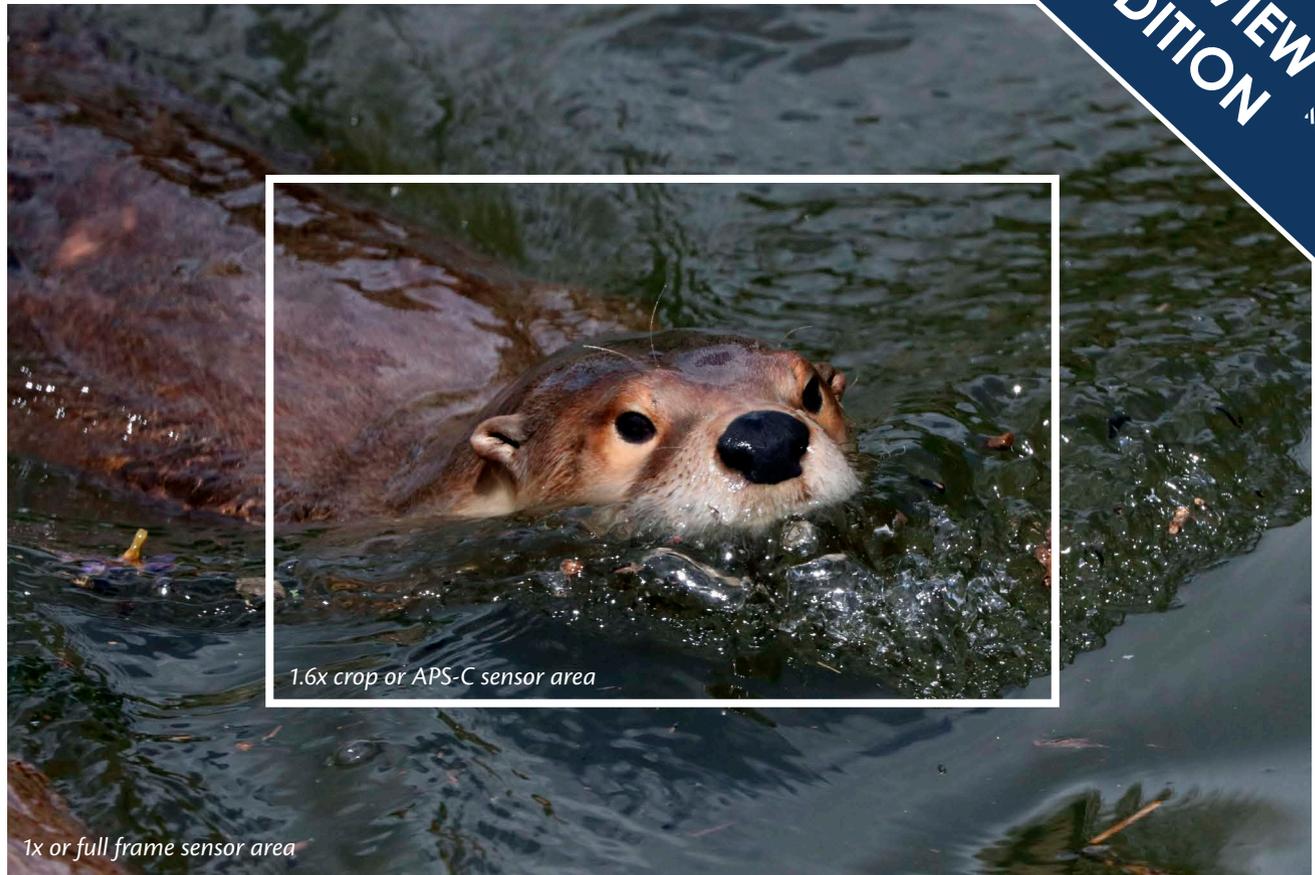
Within the EOS range there are now two types of sensor that can be found in the cameras. The sensor is effectively doing the same job, capturing the image as the film used to. The EOS 800D using the smaller of the two sizes, the 1.6x crop or APS-C sensors as it is sometimes called. This has lots of advantages when starting out in photography as it makes the camera and the lenses for it, smaller, lighter and more affordable.

When digital cameras first appeared they initially only used the smaller sensor. This is approximately 22mm x 15mm in size. The 1.6x is often referred to as a magnification factor, which is incorrect, rather the image is cropped by a factor of 1.6x when compared to the image given by the full frame sensor.

The other size of imaging sensor is the full frame or 1.0x sensors as they are generally referred to are the same size as a frame of film. This is 24mm x 36mm. The models that have these are mostly at the more expensive end of the range and are generally preferred by professional photographers. They are also much larger and heavier as a result of having the larger sensor.

The image to the top right shows the difference that is made by simply changing the camera body on the same lens on the area that is being captured. The area captured is smaller, effectively “cropping” the area that is being captured by the camera.

This is a big advantage if shooting action and wildlife as you can use much more affordable lenses and still fill the frame.



The easiest way to tell which model is which is to look at the camera's lens mount. If there is a white square and a red dot marked for alignment of the lenses it is a APS-C or 1.6x crop model. If there is only a red dot, then it is a full frame or 1x model.

The image to the right shows the mount of a camera featuring a APS-C or 1.6x crop sensor, the fact that there is a red dot and a white square shows it takes the EF-S lenses and therefore is a 1.6x crop sensor model.



PREVIEW  
EDITION

## Which is the best sensor size for photography?

PREVIEW  
EDITION

The APS-C or 1.6x crop sensor models offer a lot of advantages for the amateur who shoots wildlife and action photography. They fill the frame much easier and so you do not need such long lenses, which keeps the cost of the outfit you need down.

Another benefit of the APS-C or 1.6x crop sensor models is that they are smaller and lighter and designed to take the more compact range of EF-S lenses. They do give the crop factor all through the lens range and so you will need lenses much wider than we used to use in the days of film to cope with landscape and travel images. However, this is not the drawback that it used to be thanks to the ever growing range of Canon EF-S lenses.

You may well be wondering why people buy 1.0x or full frame cameras. I actually have both and choose the one that works best for the type of photography I am doing at the time. The APS-C or 1.6x sensors models, such as the EOS 800D are great for people to get going with, being easy to use and set up and smaller and lighter to carry, especially when used with the EF-S series of lenses which are designed exclusively for them.

People who have done photography for many years, tend to prefer the full frame or 1.0x models as the lenses give the same image area as they were used to with film. The full frame models having a larger sensor also have a better low light capability. However, when you start to look at the subjects tackled by these photographers you often find that they are the areas that suit the full frame models better such as landscape, travel, portrait and interior photography.



*This was taken on a 400mm lens on a APS-C or 1.6x crop sensor model. To get the same framing with a full frame or 1.0x models I would have needed a 640mm lens which would have cost many times as much.*

For most amateur photographers the smaller sensor models such as the 800D will give them the most flexible choice of body and certainly work well for most general areas of photography, .

It can be important, especially if working to a tight budget to chose the body carefully as there is a one way compatibility of the lenses. The EF-S range of lenses are exclusive to the APS-C or 1.6x sensor models, so if you buy a range of these and decide to change to a full frame model you will need to change

all your lenses as well.

The general EF range of lenses can fit any of the EOS D-SLR bodies but are significantly larger, heavier and more costly to buy, but if you eventually plan to end up with a full frame model they can be a worthwhile investment. Although the L series lenses are better quality, this does not show up as much on these models and the focal ranges do not suit these models as much as the more affordable lighter weight lenses.

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