



# CALLIGRAPHY & LETTERING ARTS SOCIETY

## Photographing Calligraphy Tips - A Brief Guide

- Ensure good even lighting: if outside, choose a bright day but without glare; if inside, ensure you are near a window (open if possible). Take care there are no shadows. Better still use two light sources positioned at a 45 degree angle one on either side.
- Probably the best way to get it right is to photograph the piece from vertically above.
- Always photograph your work unframed and not behind glass.
- Put the piece on a neutral background usually white or black.
- Make sure that the camera lens is clean.
- Make sure your digital camera or smartphone camera is on a reasonably high setting (too low gives a poor quality image). If the resulting JPEG is too large to send in email, please use We Transfer.
- Ensure the lens is pointed towards the centre of the piece and is perfectly parallel to avoid distortion. It's worth using the grid feature on your camera if it has one, to ensure this. On a smartphone, turn this on in Settings.
- Avoid using the zoom on your camera as this reduces the pixels in the final image.
- As far as possible fill the frame with the piece, leaving just a little of the background all round.
- Do not use flash, ever.
- Consider using a tripod to ensure no camera shake.
- Note: Photographing gold or embossing needs extra care to get the lighting right. Side light from lamps may be an essential help.
- Take several photographs and select the best one and discard the rest.
- If you are going to use an image editing software programme, make a copy of your original.
- Most modern phones have editing software included – it is worth exploring what your phone does. There are also lots of editing programmes available for a computer, such as Adobe Photoshop if you have it, or the app already built in to Windows 10 and 11. On Windows, you can find its Photos app by clicking the Start button on your screen, choose Photos and away you go.
- Save your edited photograph and give it an amended name from the original and save it as a JPEG.

Detailed guidance by Geoff Morgan is provided at the back of the CLAS Advanced National Diploma.

*Text © Bob Alldred 2025 for CLAS*