

VIGNETTING

In photography and optics, **vignetting** refers to a reduction in image brightness in the image periphery compared to the image center.

It is often used as a portrait technique to fade out the edges of the photo and leave an oval in the center. Variations can include hard or soft edges. Vignetting can also be an unwanted effect if too many filters are put on a lens, especially with wide angle lenses, because the filter will show up as a “shadow” in the corners of the picture.

There are three basic techniques to create an intentional vignette.

1. Place an object in front of the lens with a hole cut in the center.
2. Use a “mask” with a hole in the center in a darkroom to block light around the edges during exposure of the print on an enlarger.
3. Manipulate a digital image in PhotoShop or some other photoediting software.

On-camera techniques:

Place an object with a hole cut in the center (a mask) in front of the lens. Shoot with the lens wide open to reduce depth of field (large lens opening/small f stop number) so that the mask will be out of focus. Try different hole shapes. Try opaque objects such as cardboard or translucent objects such as saran wrap. You can hold it in front of the lens, tape it to the lens, or use a filter holder. Cokin makes vignette filters to go with their holders. Note that a vignette filter or mask made for a film camera lens may not work when used with a digital camera because the small size of the digital sensor does not use the outside edge of the lens. In this case, you need to use a vignette filter with a smaller lens opening.



HARD EDGE VIGNETTE



SOFT EDGE VIGNETTE



**UNINTENSIONAL
CORNER VIGNETTE**