

# Focusing in Difficult Scenarios

by Kris Butler

Want to get clear, focused photos more often? You can by being aware of some of the most difficult focusing scenarios and adjusting your technique. Here's what to look out for and what to do about it:

**1. Low Contrast:** A lack of contrast can confuse your camera because depth is more difficult to determine in low contrast settings. In the example below, the sky is low in contrast and the plane is not only similar in color, but also occupies only part of the focal area.



The trick in this case is to zoom in as much as possible or move closer to your subject and fill the focal area when shooting with a low contrast background. For other low contrast scenes you may have to switch to manual focus to get things just right.

Another focusing challenge in this example is that the plane is also a moving target that requires using panning techniques. (See the article on [panning techniques](#) in Apogee Photo Magazine.)

**2. Overlapping Objects:** Objects that area, as in this example, which is properly focusing problems because your camera wrong thing. In this case, remember to the shutter-release button down halfway things are in focus. If they aren't, you will perspective on the subject to get a clear focus mode.



are overlapping in the focal focused, can also lead to may end up focusing on the pre-focus carefully by pressing and checking that the correct need to change your view or switch to manual



**3. Bright Lights, Backgrounds and Glare:** The example below shows how bright lights can interfere with proper focusing. The same is true for overall bright backgrounds or any setting with strong glare. For a case like this, you could zoom in to remove the bright light. As with overlapping objects, another solution here is to focus on the subject from another point without the bright background and then return to your chosen spot while keeping the same distance. Again, another solution may be to switch to manual focus mode for precise control.

**4. Low Light:** Settings with low ambient light are also important to watch out for and give particular treatment to as regards focusing. This is especially the case if you are going to be using longer shutter settings in which blur from movement can be a problem. In this example, there is a combination of difficult focusing situations. First, it is a low light setting, and second there is a bright spot from the fire. The soft focus here doesn't really detract too much from the overall feeling and appeal, but a crisp focus would be better.

**Summary:** The first step to getting your pictures in focus when faced with difficult scenarios is always to realize you're in one and then adjust. Keeping these tips in mind will be a great start. Good luck!

