Sunny 16: daylight starting points

Set shutter time near 1 / ISO • estimate first, then check the meter and highlights.

Light on the subject	Aperture	ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400
Bright sun; distinct shadows	f/16	1/125	1/250	1/500
Hazy sun; soft shadows	f/11	1/125	1/250	1/500
Bright overcast; little shadow	f/8	1/125	1/250	1/500
Heavy overcast / open shade	f/5.6	1/125	1/250	1/500

Equivalent settings at ISO 100: f/16 at 1/125 s ≈ f/11 at 1/250 s ≈ f/8 at 1/500 s

Video example: f/16 at 1/100 s → f/2.8 at 1/50 s adds about 6 stops.
Use about 6 stops of ND (ND 1.8 / 64×), then verify exposure.
At 24 fps, a 180° shutter is 1/48 s; 1/50 s is a nearby setting.

Not a measured light guarantee. Shade, backlight, haze, altitude and subject tone vary.
Do not confuse this exposure estimate with the handholding reciprocal-shutter guideline.

Use the chart

1. Judge the light falling on the subject, not the brightness of the sky.
2. Choose a listed ISO and a nearby available shutter setting.
3. Start with the aperture in the corresponding light row.
4. Check important highlights, subject motion and depth of field.
5. Adjust for the actual scene; record your final settings.

Approximate full-stop values; 1/125 s is 1/3 stop faster than 1/100 s.

Original teaching chart. Not a camera test. Reviewed October 30, 2026.
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