



CritiquePrep

Quick-Start Guide

Score your competition photo the way the judges will —
and know exactly how to make it stronger before you enter.

Web app & Lightroom Classic plug-in · Version 0.7 · 2026

What CritiquePrep does

CritiquePrep is an AI-powered second opinion for competitive photographers. You pick the competition you're entering, add your photo, and it gives you a full critique — an overall score on that competition's real scale, a plain-language verdict, a breakdown of strengths and weaknesses, and specific, competition-legal editing steps to raise your score. It reads your image but **never changes your original file**.

It comes in two forms that share the same judging:

- **The web app** — runs on your computer, tablet, or phone; can be added to your home screen like any app.
- **The Lightroom Classic plug-in** — critiques *and* ranks photos right inside your catalog.

Step 1 — Choose an AI and add your key

CritiquePrep uses your own AI account to do the judging, so you're always in control and costs stay tiny (usually a few cents per photo). Pick any one of four providers and paste in that provider's key once — it's remembered on your device:

- **Gemini (Google)** — has a free tier; easiest place to start.
- **Claude (Anthropic), OpenAI (GPT), and Grok (xAI)** — add billing credit, then create a key.

Each provider needs its own key

A Gemini key won't work for OpenAI, and so on. In the app, tap the "Get a key" link next to the provider to open the right page. If OpenAI or Grok "power up" but return nothing, the account simply needs funds added.

Step 2 — Critique one photo

- Choose your **competition** and **division/category**.
- Add your photograph (drag it in, or tap to choose).
- Give it a title if you like, then **Submit to the judge**.
- In moments you get your score, verdict, criterion breakdown, a thumbnail of the judged photo, and your edit recommendations.

Understanding your score

Each competition is scored on its own real scale, so your number means what it would mean to that competition's judges:

Competition	How it's scored
PSA	Total out of 27 (three judges, 3–9 points each).

Florida Camera Club Council (FCCC)	1 to 20, tri-judge average (shown with decimals).
The Villages Photography Club	1 to 9 (with decimals).
National Wildlife (NWF)	Juried, no official number — a 1–10 competitiveness estimate.
Journal of Wildlife Photography	Juried elimination — a 1–10 estimate plus a likely skill tier.
General camera club	A standard 1 to 10.

Below the overall score you'll see a six-part breakdown (impact, composition, technical quality, and more) to show where the photo is strong and where it can improve.

The edit recommendations (the best part)

Instead of vague advice, CritiquePrep tells you the exact moves to make in Lightroom — the **panel, the slider, roughly how much, and in what order**. For example:

Example recommendation

"Basic / Light: Shadows +25, Whites +10, Texture +8." Follow it slider by slider.

These suggestions are tailored to your photo's actual weaknesses, and they stay **within your competition's rules** — for nature and wildlife divisions it will never tell you to add, remove, or move elements, only allowed tonal and local adjustments. It also flags anything that could break the rules. You make the edits yourself; CritiquePrep never touches your file.

Rank a batch — pick your best entries

When you have several good photos and aren't sure which to enter, switch to **Rank a batch** (web app), or in Lightroom select several photos and choose **Rank Selected Photos**:

- Add up to **10 photos** (remove any with the ×, or clear them all).
- Tap **Rank my batch**. CritiquePrep compares them against each other and ranks them strongest to weakest for your competition.
- Your **top few are highlighted**, each with a one-line reason, so you know where to spend your energy.
- Tap **Full critique** on any photo to send it straight into a complete critique.
- **Print, Download**, or revisit past rankings from the saved list at the bottom.

Saving, printing & installing

- Every critique and ranking can be **printed, saved as a PDF, or downloaded** as a file.
- Your critiques and rankings are also kept in **history** on your device for later review.

- **Add to your home screen:** open the app in your browser, then use Share → “Add to Home Screen.” The CritiquePrep icon appears and it opens like an app.

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