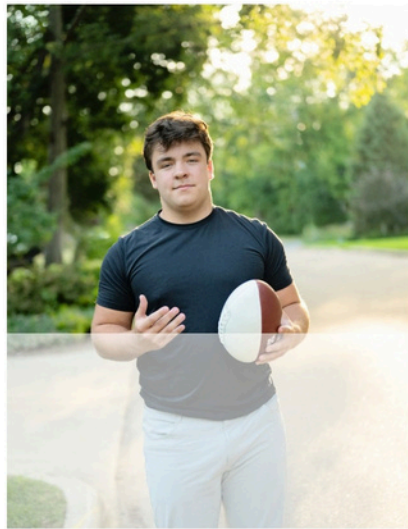




EB

ELISSA BEAN
PHOTOGRAPHY

SENIOR EXPERIENCE



HEY THERE!

Your senior year deserves to be captured!

Let's just start off by saying: I know senior portraits may not be the thing you are MOST excited about in your senior year. I totally get it: being in front of the camera can be intimidating and feel a little bit like a chore or a box you have to check to make your momma or your parents happy. But, I'm going to ask a huge favor...just trust me that we're going to have fun. Seriously!

The BIGGEST thing I hear from my senior guys (and ALL of my clients) is that they're so thankful I make the process quick, easy and painless. You have worked SO hard for so many years to get to this point and you are SO close to graduation...you DESERVE to be celebrated and have amazing photos to look back on 10, 20, 30 even 50 years from now!

I have been photographing senior portraits for over 20 years. My goal is to make your experience fun, make your shoot feel like YOU and give you images that you are excited to share with your friends and family. So, please read through this guide to learn everything you could possibly need to know about your senior portrait experience...and let's brainstorm some fun ways to make your shoot unique and get you excited!

Want to photograph somewhere epic? Include your car, your dog, your family? Let's make it happen! I want this shoot to be something you're excited for, not something you're dreading...so let's work together to make it amazing!

See you soon!

Elissa

TO MOM AND DAD...

Thank you for trusting me!

I know you had a LOT of options for senior portrait photographers...so I just wanted to take a moment to say thank you for choosing me to capture your son's senior year. I know how proud you must be and how bittersweet it is to know that he has worked SO hard for this moment for so long...and it's finally here! I hope that the images we capture will be a celebration of everything he has accomplished + will continue to accomplish over the next few years!

While I know that *most* of my senior guys aren't super excited about their senior portraits...my goal is to make it as FUN and as personal as possible. If you are the one reading over this guide, I just ask that you let your son know the important pieces! I try to make every senior experience as easy and streamlined as possible...so I hope this guide answers any and all of your questions to help you prepare and get EXCITED about this experience!

If you have any questions arise leading up to our shoot together, please don't hesitate to reach out and ask! And, if you have any creative ideas that come to mind or sentimental moments/locations/memories that you'd like featured during his session...I am all ears!

I can't wait to create some wonderful memories for you to cherish for years to come!

See you SOON!!!

Elissa



In case we haven't met yet...

I'M ELISSA

In case we haven't met yet...

My love for photography started early—on the Edina High School yearbook staff (Windigo way back then) and later at Gonzaga University, where I majored in photojournalism. Photography took me to Florence for art school and around the world on Semester at Sea, shaping how

I see people, light, and story.

After working at The Spokesman-Review, I started Little Bean Photography in 2001. Not long after, I became a mom—and everything shifted. I understood just how quickly these years move, and how much they deserve to be remembered well.

Now, after raising three kids of my own (with my youngest graduating in 2026), these years feel especially close to home. I see it from both sides—the excitement for them, and the quiet ache for you. My work is rooted not just in photography, but in design—creating artwork that lives in your home and becomes part of your everyday life long after they've headed off to school.

Now that you know a little more about me, let's dive into the good stuff.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Now that you are booked and things are officially official - let's talk through the entire senior experience, step-by-step! Your senior experience starts NOW, and I want you to know what's around every corner as you begin to prep for your shoot day!

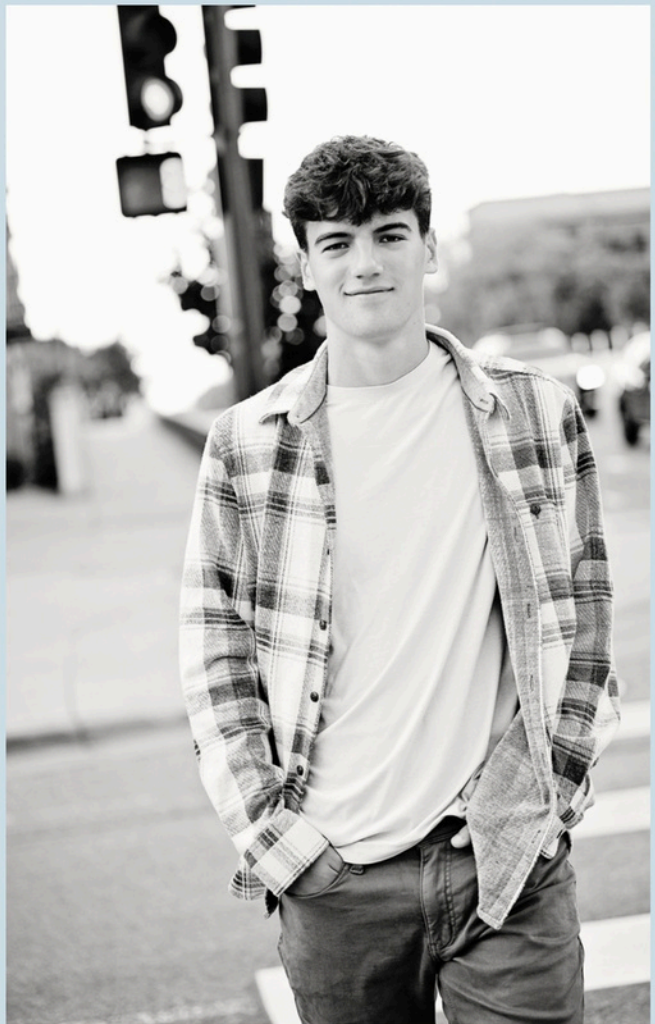


1. The Prep Guide + Planning Appointment

Alongside this guide, we are going to plan a quick appointment together to get to know each and plan your session so it is authentically you and you can let me know any worries, inspiration or questions you might have about your senior photo session.

2. The Week Before

As we get closer to the day of your shoot, you can expect to hear from me with our meeting time, location and final check-in! I photograph senior portraits at "golden hour" - either 2 hours before sunset or the 2 hours after sunrise. This time of day has the most amazing, glowing light, cooler temperatures and less crowds at popular locations. Because of this, I like to wait until we are 1-2 weeks from your shoot date to lock in an exact meeting time based on the time of the sunset. If there are clouds or rain storms in the forecast, this also allows me to plan around the weather to ensure we get the best lighting possible! So, if we planned for around 6pm...it may end up that 5:30pm or 6:30pm is actually the best time to meet. That is super normal!



3. THE SHOOT DAY!

This section of the style guide could be its own book in itself! SO many fun things to talk about on the day of your shoot! Let's dive into what to expect each minute of your senior session! If you booked a mini session, your shoot will only be about 20 minutes. If you booked a full shoot, you can expect it to take closer to 1-1.5 hours.

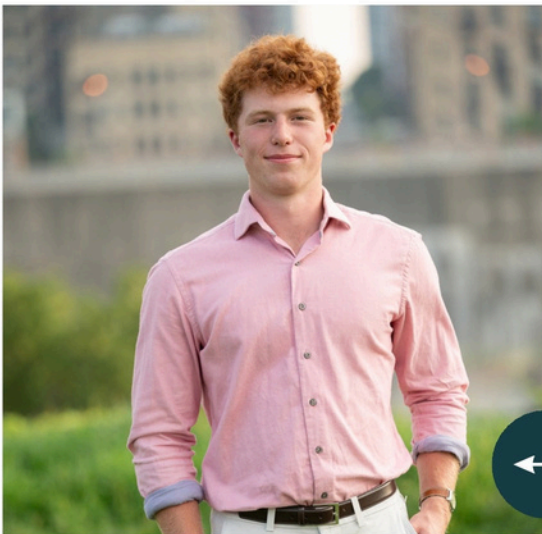
The Importance of Being on Time

First things first: being on time for your shoot is VITAL. And I don't just say that because of my time...I say that because we are on the SUN'S time. Since we plan your shoot around the ideal time for golden lighting...being late means that you lose that time off of your shoot. Even being 15 minutes late means that we've lost 15 minutes of light. Once the sun goes down...we can't shoot anymore! So, try to plan to be 15-30 minutes early for your session. That way, even if you hit traffic or a delay...it doesn't eat into your shooting time! If you are more than 30 minutes late for your session, we will have to reschedule for my soonest available date (which is typically 2-3 months out).



The First 15 Minutes

When you arrive at your shoot, the first thing we are going to do is look through your outfits together! We will run through them together on the day-of to map out exactly where we will photograph each outfit and when you will change. This helps us to go in with a game plan and decide which outfit will look best in which location.





Changing Outfits + Locations

I frequently get asked where my seniors will change outfits on their shoot day...and the answer is almost always in your car! Typically, the locations that we shoot don't have public bathrooms...which isn't ideal. But, you can take a break in your car for some heat or air conditioning in between each outfit! If you'd prefer to have a bathroom to change, just let me know ahead of time and I will be sure to select locations that have this option.



Posing + Shooting



The BIGGEST and most important thing that I want you to know about your shoot day is this: I am going to tell you what to do the ENTIRE time! You do NOT need to have any posing or modeling experience. I've actually never photographed a real model in my entire 10+ years of being a photographer! Part of your investment in your senior portraits is my experience and ability to pose you and make you look (and feel!) your absolute best. So, there's no reason to be nervous at all! I will guide you through every single pose and I promise the BIGGEST compliment I get from seniors is that I make it so easy. It's going to be a blast!

After we look through your outfits together, we will start shooting! We typically spend 15-20 minutes photographing each outfit before changing and moving to the next spot. I try to always save the BEST outfit for last...so keep that in mind when planning your faves!

WHO TO BRING:

Another frequently asked question is “who do I bring with me!?”

And this has a two-part answer!

Part 1: I request that at least one parent or guardian joins us for your senior session. But, whether they join us for the entire shoot or wait in the car is totally up to you. The most important thing to think about is what will make you feel the most COMFORTABLE in front of the camera. If you tend to be more shy and will feel awkward having your mom or dad watching the entire time... we can ask them to wait in the car. If you LOVE having them with you and want everyone to follow us as we shoot...let's do it! I just ask that we are still able to keep your images as the top priority with minimal distractions. Bringing a large group of friends can sometimes mean that you get distracted while in front of the camera...and that can mean you don't get as many images or time is taken away from shooting. So, I recommend only bringing 1-2 people along... this ensures it won't take away from your focus as we shoot!



Part 2: Deciding who you want to be PHOTOGRAPHED with! One of my favorite additions to any senior session is your favorite people. If you want to have your best friend(s), significant other, parents, pet or anyone else join in your photos...they are more than welcome! I just request that they meet us in the beginning 15-20 minutes of your shoot. This way, we can make YOU the focus for the majority of the session with minimal distractions...and still capture photos with your favorite people as the perfect beginning! More on this later in the guide!

LOCATIONS

Are they a big deal?

Aside from choosing outfits (which we are diving into next, don't worry!) - choosing your LOCATIONS is a huge part of what will determine the overall style and aesthetic of your images. It also takes a little bit of logistical planning to map out where we will shoot and the travel time between locations if you booked a full session. Overall, there are a few things to keep in mind when picking where to shoot:

It's actually not the location that matters most...it's the LIGHT!

YEP. This is hard to understand if you aren't a photographer, but hear me out: if you have the most amazing location in mind with tons of cool views and backgrounds...but it's in the DIRECT sunlight all day long...it's actually not an ideal place to shoot. It would be better to have the session in a random field on the side of the highway with gorgeous back-light coming through the trees...because the LIGHT is what makes the biggest difference in the whole world! Trust me on this one!!

Try to think of an overall “feel” or “vibe” for your shoot...and let this guide your location choices!

While the location of your shoot totally matters...it may not matter quite as much as you think. The majority of the images in your final gallery will be close-up images...meaning you can't see a whole lot of the background. What you CAN see is the colors, light and overall “feel” of the location. For example, if you want a neutral, light feeling gallery to match your home decor when you print your photos...we literally only need one white wall to achieve that! If you want lake, beach-y vibes...we don't need to photograph every image on an empty beach. We can do some in the water, some on the docks, some with boats nearby...you get the idea! The point is: don't get so caught-up and stressed over one specific location. Choose a “vibe” that you want...and I can help you pick spots that will make that happen!



I have one request: pretty please TRUST me on this part!

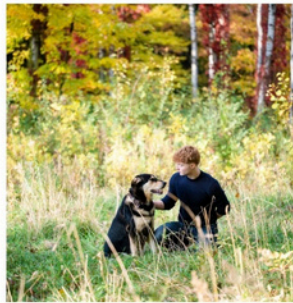
When I tell you that some of my most AMAZING images have been created in the weirdest locations...I mean it! I've had images published in magazines that were taken on the side of a strip mall. I've asked my seniors to crawl into random bushes and sit in crazy positions to get the right angle. I've even had clients walk out on scary rocks in the middle of the ocean for an epic shot! And, they all got some of the BEST work I've ever created because they TRUSTED me as their photographer. I may have an idea or location suggestion that sounds crazy...but it's because I have 10+ years of experience finding the lighting and composition that will create stellar images. Even if it sounds insane! So, my biggest request is that you trust me even if I sound crazy...I promise you'll always be glad you did!!

LOCATION OPTIONS

These are examples of common location types or "vibes" that my seniors want for their shoot. If you booked a full session instead of a mini, we can achieve a wide variety of looks in a short time. This section of the guide will give you examples, visuals and inspiration for common styles...then you can tell me your favorites in detail on your questionnaire!

Rural + Rustic

Think open fields, barns, wooden accents + tall, overgrown grass.



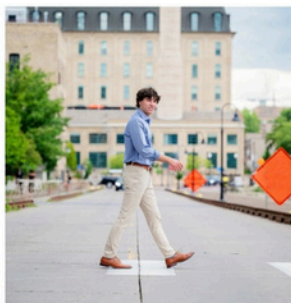
Outdoorsy + Simple

Think super simple backgrounds: textured buildings + greenery + water



Urban + Downtown

Think a little more city-vibes with lots of texture + architecture





WHAT TO WEAR

This part can be SUPER overwhelming - I know! So, let's break it down to be really easy.

Typically, for my guys I recommend only 1-2 outfits for a mini session or 3-4 for a full session. But, most opt for a mini! To get the MOST variety possible, I recommend doing one casual look (shorts and a collared shirt, for example) and one more formal (a blazer + bow tie). You can also opt to have one of those outfits be a sports uniform or college tee - or throw those on at the end for a few quick shots! The next few pages are some general tips to help guide your choices.



1. BE COMFORTABLE + BE YOURSELF

The NUMBER ONE, most important thing to remember when planning your outfits: if it's not comfortable to wear in real life, it won't make you feel confident on camera! If you aren't someone who likes to dress up or ever wear a suit jacket...I don't recommend doing it now. In order to make the pictures look MOST like you...they should be a slightly elevated version of an outfit you would normally wear. Don't try to push yourself too far outside your comfort zone! A suit can be a great option for LinkedIn profile pictures and professional head shots...but it's not a necessity!

2. CONSIDER USING COLOR

On camera, solid black + white can make skin tones look washed out and a little unflattering. When choosing outfits for your senior session, try to choose colors that make a statement and that compliment your hair + skin tones! Primary colors like royal blue and yellow photograph beautifully, as well as jewel tones (like a lot of the blues that you see in this guide!)

3. HAVE SOME VARIETY

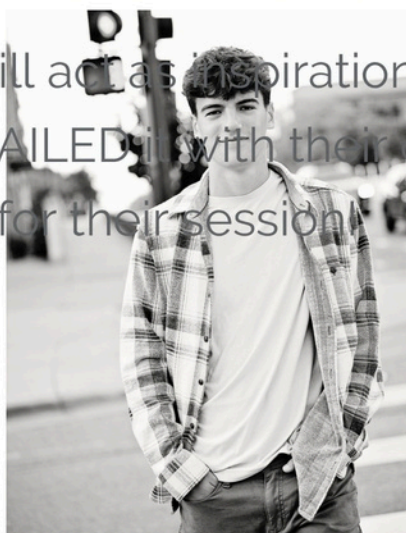
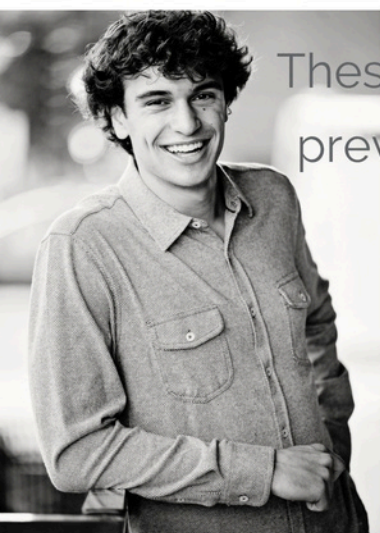
Like I mentioned above, you want to feel and look like yourself...but you don't want all of your photos to look the same. So, even if you don't dress up and don't want pictures in a jacket or suit...try to think of at least two outfit options to bring along with you. Even if it's just a change of your shirt!

4. EMPTY YOUR POCKETS!

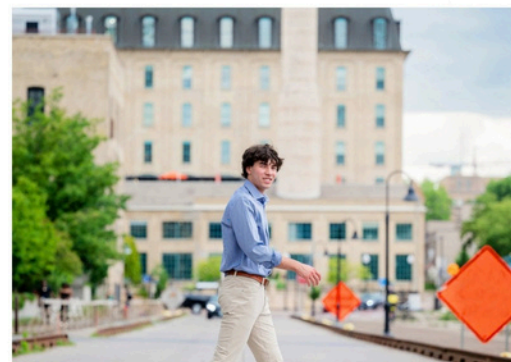
I will do my best to remind you of this on the day of our shoot, too...but don't keep anything in your pockets during photos! Your phone, keys, wallet, etc. will all show up in your pictures as a random square in your pocket...and we don't want that!

5. ACCESSORIZING ISN'T JUST FOR THE LADIES

Consider bringing along a watch or two, a belt, cuff links if you are wearing a jacket, a hat if you are wearing your sports gear...think outside the box a bit! Bringing along additional pieces like this allows us to get a lot of variety in your photos in a short time, and make them feel more like YOU!

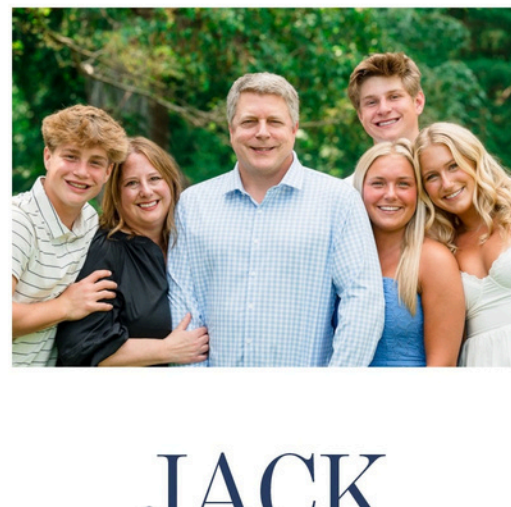


These next few pages will act as inspiration from previous seniors who NAILED it with their outfit choices + styling for their session!



NATE

Nate booked a Silver session in downtown Minneapolis, and I LOVE how much variety we were able to get in a super short time! He brought a button-down and a casual shirt as his 2 main outfits, then brought his high school jerseys for some extra fun. It worked perfectly!

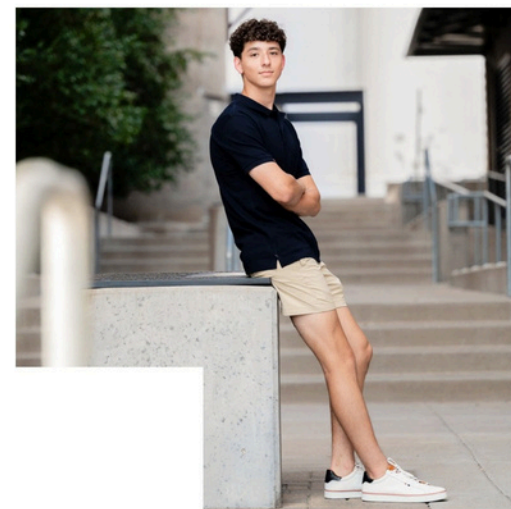


JACK

Jack is a lifelong Little Bean with his twin sisters and younger brother. I've been photographing him since he was born!

All of his clothing choices were casual and completely him. And I love that he included his family in his shoot!

This was a Platinum session.



LUCA

Luca was the was a perfect example of having multiple outfits that created a ton of variety! Having a casual outfit (shorts + polo) plus a formal outfit (jacket + tie) makes for a GREAT combo. We can even take off the jacket and tie to create even more variety with just one look!

OTHER WAYS TO PREP:

Aside from your outfits, there are a few other quick things you can do to look your absolute BEST and be super prepared for your senior session!

1. Plan a haircut a few days (up to a week) beforehand!

This is something that is super easy to forget until it's too late! You likely don't want a haircut the day before or day-of, just in case it's a little short immediately after. Getting a haircut about a week in advance is typically the perfect amount of time for it to look natural + like YOU, but without it begin overgrown or too long!

2. Shave or manicure facial hair the morning of

Another important element! If you are someone who likes a clean shave, be sure to do this the MORNING OF your session. Not the day before...we'll see a little bit of shadow if you do it too far in advance. If you have a beard or any facial hair, just be sure to trim it up and manicure it the day-of, too!

3. Clean your nails

May sound silly...but it matters! Be sure to cut your nails and clean them up just a little bit before your shoot.

4. Moisturizer + chapstick

Listen, I'm not here to tell you that you need a 5-step skincare routine...but pretty please be sure your skin + lips are moisturized and not dry or flaky. This can be super hard to edit out and appear natural, and it's super easy to avoid!



PROPS & ACCESSORIES

Now that we have a better idea of the overall style for your session based on your outfits and locations...let's add in the personalized details! First, let me clarify: this part is **TOTALLY** optional! If you don't want to add any props or personalization to your shoot...you don't have to! All we need is **YOU** to make your shoot amazing. But, if you want to personalize your shoot even further and add in some fun "extras"...this section of the guide is going to help you!

Make it feel like YOU!

This is clearly a theme of this entire guide! The goal of adding in props or accessories is to make the shoot feel even more like **YOU**. Try to think creatively about the things that make you who you are. What are your hobbies? Favorite colors and styles? Extracurricular activities? Are you an athlete with medals and trophies that you want to highlight? Do you already know your plans for college and want to have celebratory images to share about your next steps? Let's do all the things!!!



Bow Ties + Watches + Cuff Links

One of the best parts about bringing extra options for props is that it gives us **VARIETY**. I already mentioned this once in this guide, but the little details matter! Think about ways you can add elements to your outfits that are sentimental or a little more attention to detail than your typical day-today. This will add a lot to your photos, I promise!

SPORTS + HOBBIES

One of the easiest + best ways to customize your senior experience is to add in some of your favorite things that you do every day! I've had seniors want to highlight the sport they play, their favorite foods, their love for reading, shopping or flying planes...I've done it ALL! Use this section of the guide to start brainstorming ways we can creatively incorporate what makes you YOU!

Athletics + Sports

If you play a sport that is a huge part of your high school career...we need to highlight it! You can bring along your uniform + equipment (soccer ball, lacrosse stick, etc.) for some really fun photos. You can also consider adding in any medals, trophies or letters you have to highlight

Cheer + Dance

Let me just start by saying these are BOTH also sports...but they deserve their own section! I was a cheerleader myself, and it is so fun to capture these photos. Bring along your uniform + poms or your dance shoes + we will get some really amazing action shots of you!

Hobbies + Artists

As a photographer and artist myself, I love finding creative ways to highlight your talent! If you paint, write, read or are a photographer yourself...let's show that off! We can find some really fun ways to highlight this, and I would love to have you bring along any pieces you are proud of to incorporate in your images!

Favorite Things

Incorporating your favorite things into your pictures can be really creative...and also really funny! Are you someone who can't live without your daily energy drink? Have a Chick-Fil-A obsession? Super proud your car or motorcycle? Let's brainstorm together to find some fun ways to highlight these things at your shoot!



CAP & GOWN PHOTOS

If you already have your cap and gown before your shoot (or want to order a cheap one on Amazon) - we can get cap & gown images at your session! Because I don't have an indoor studio space anymore, I typically am not able to provide the "official" yearbook image that your school may need...but we can get some more candid lifestyle images of you looking like a GRAD!!!

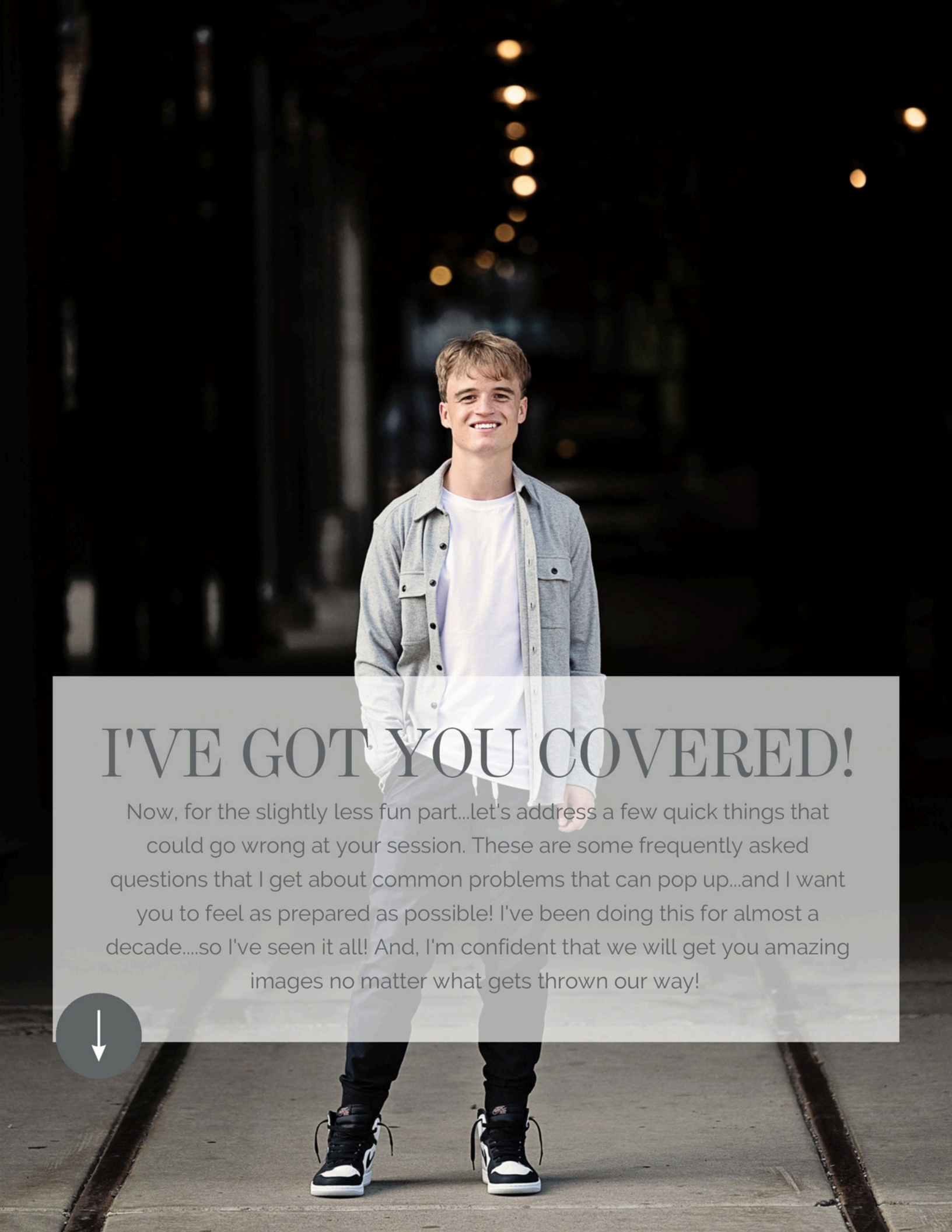
Pick the right outfit underneath!

Because the gowns typically look a little like a potato sack (let's be honest), I typically photograph my seniors with them un-zipped to be a bit more flattering! I recommend wearing a neutral colored dress shirt or a coordinating colored bowtie underneath - this looks really traditional and timeless underneath the gowns. I also recommend a neutral pair of shoes! We will get images with it both zipped and un-zipped, as well as with the cap and without - just so you have tons of options!

Bring your tassel + decorate your cap!

Don't forget to bring the tassel for the top of your cap (most highlight your graduating school year!) as well as any additional cords, awards or elements that you want to highlight! If you choose to decorate your cap, doing it before your shoot allows us to get cool detail photos of it!





I'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

Now, for the slightly less fun part...let's address a few quick things that could go wrong at your session. These are some frequently asked questions that I get about common problems that can pop up...and I want you to feel as prepared as possible! I've been doing this for almost a decade....so I've seen it all! And, I'm confident that we will get you amazing images no matter what gets thrown our way!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Here are some questions that I get often, and what to do if anything goes wrong leading up to your shoot date!

What happens if we have bad weather?!

This is by far the most asked question I get about things that could go wrong, which makes total sense...because bad weather happens all the time! If there is bad weather in the forecast for your shoot, rest assured that you have options and I am MORE than happy to reschedule! I typically wait until the morning of our session to make a final decision about weather because it changes so often.

If there is a 50% chance of rain or LESS: It is TOTALLY up to you whether you want to move forward with trying to shoot, or if you'd prefer to reschedule to another date. If we shoot and it DOES rain...we will have to finish the session despite the weather (we can't do two shoots if you decide to move forward but the weather doesn't cooperate). But, we can make some REALLY cute photos happen in the rain!!! However, if you have your heart set on glowing light and bright images...I'd recommend rescheduling to be safe.

If there is a 50% chance of rain or MORE: My professional recommendation in these scenarios is to reschedule. Even if it doesn't end up raining...it's always better to be safe than sorry, especially if you are really excited about bright, sunset light in your photos!

Wind: There has only been one time I've had to reschedule a session for bad wind...and it was CRAZINESS! Typically, we can shoot despite the wind if we are strategic with WHERE we shoot. But, if there are crazy gusts and you would prefer to move to a day when we know your hair won't have flyaways...we can make that happen!

Fog: Typically, fog is only an issue with sunrise shoots....but I've had it happen! If there is severely thick fog, it will impact your images because they will be cloudy and grey...which is not my typical shooting style that you booked me for.

Cloudy: I have a lot of seniors who get worried about cloudy days because they think their images won't be as bright and beautiful...but rest assured, that's not true!! Cloudy days are actually AMAZING for photographers...because it means there are no harsh shadows!! Unless it is a seriously grey day with heavy fog or severe storm clouds...cloudy days are our friend!! AND they aren't as hot!!

What if we do have to reschedule because of weather?

That is COMPLETELY okay! We will make the final call 24-48 hours before your session. Part of the reason I only take a few senior sessions per month is to leave room open for rescheduling if we need to. Typically, you won't have to wait longer than a week if we have to move your date!

My skin is breaking out like crazy...HELP!

We've ALL been there! Don't worry one bit. I am happy to remove any large blemishes in Photoshop - you won't even know it happened! Promise!

Where am I going to change my clothes?

I mentioned this briefly earlier in the guide...but it's a question I get a lot! Typically, my seniors choose to change their outfits in the car. A lot of the time, we are photographing at locations that do not offer public bathrooms, so it's the quickest option! I recommend trying to organize your outfits + accessories ahead of time to make this process super quick and easy. I also bring a pop up tent to do a street side presto change-o.





YOUR ORDERING APPOINTMENT

YAY! It takes me about 2 weeks to edit your senior images, then we will have THE BEST PART of this whole process....well, until I deliver your artwork. Make sure both of your parents are there and you have set aside an hour for us to choose your images and design your artwork at your home. Starting with a slideshow to view your amazing session, we will then go through each image and pick your must haves and your yearbook image.



#SENIORSUNDAY

Now for the fun part: sharing your images!

For each image you purchase, you will receive a social media file size version to share on social media and with family and friends!

I'd love it if you would tag me to help spread the word about how much fun we had at your session, too.

@elissabeanphotoseniors



PRINTING YOUR IMAGES

I truly believe so deeply in the power of printing your images and displaying them in your home. There is something so special about having a physical copy of these memories to cherish and pass down to other family someday. I have physical photo books of my engagement photos, anniversary pictures, family pictures, my own senior session from 2014...and I flip through them ALL the time! You took the time to invest so much money in your senior session...why not print the images and have a physical way to cherish them and share them?

As you know, I do not have any purchase minimums or requirements in terms of printing your images. They are yours to share and print from whenever you prefer!

But, there is the option to purchase professional-quality prints and products through your online gallery. This is the ONLY printing option that I personally and professionally recommend in terms of quality and durability. If you print somewhere else, I can NOT guarantee that the quality of the images will look the same as they do online, or that the products and prints themselves will be durable.

My honest suggestion is this: if you want to print your images larger than a 4x6...the professional printer through your online gallery is the best way to go.

In the next few pages, I am going to walk you through the "shop" portion of your senior gallery. This is where you can find prints, photo books, canvases, graduation cards and more directly through my professional printer!



Photo Books



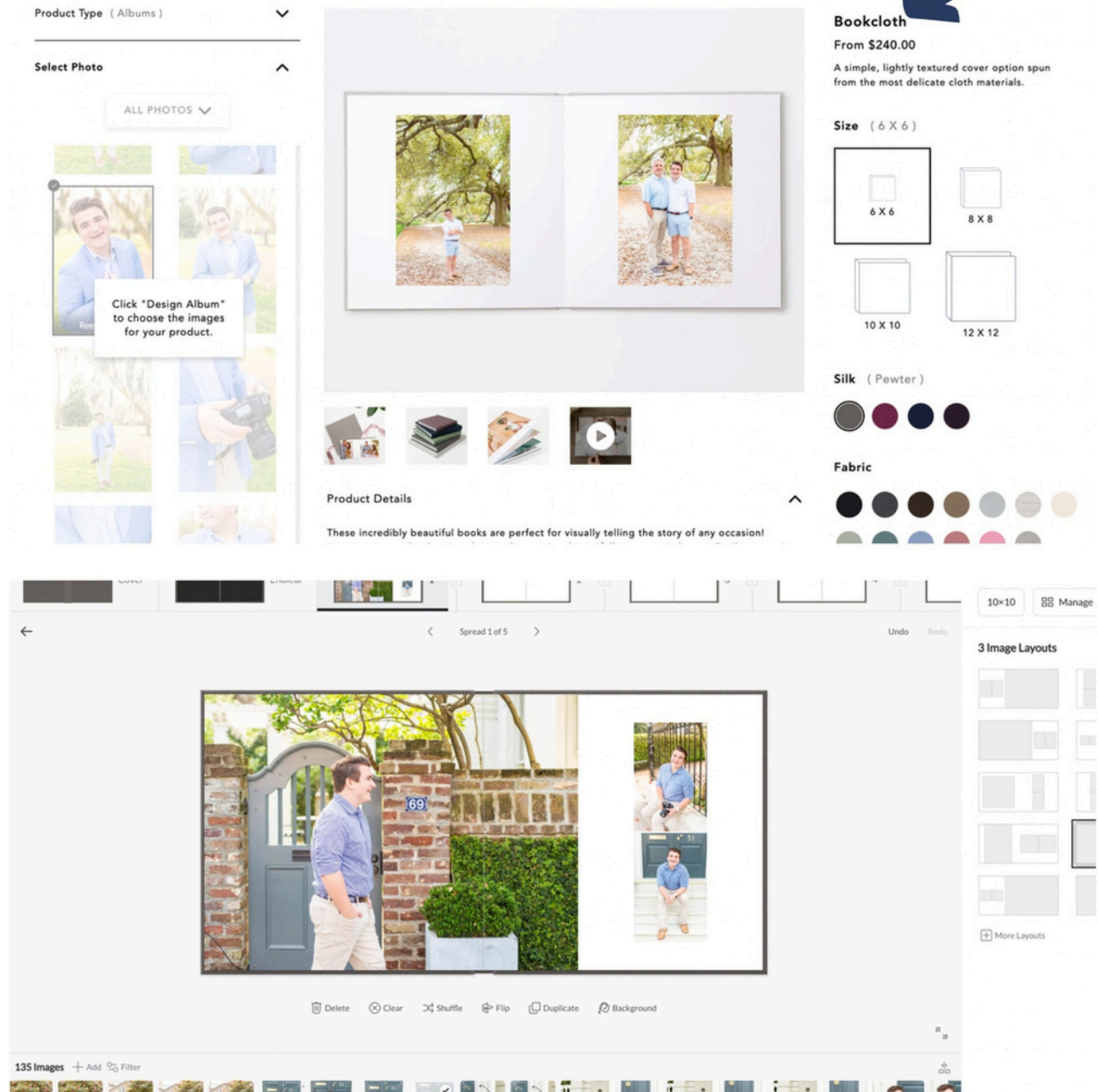
Wall Art



Grad Cards

ALBUMS + PHOTO BOOKS

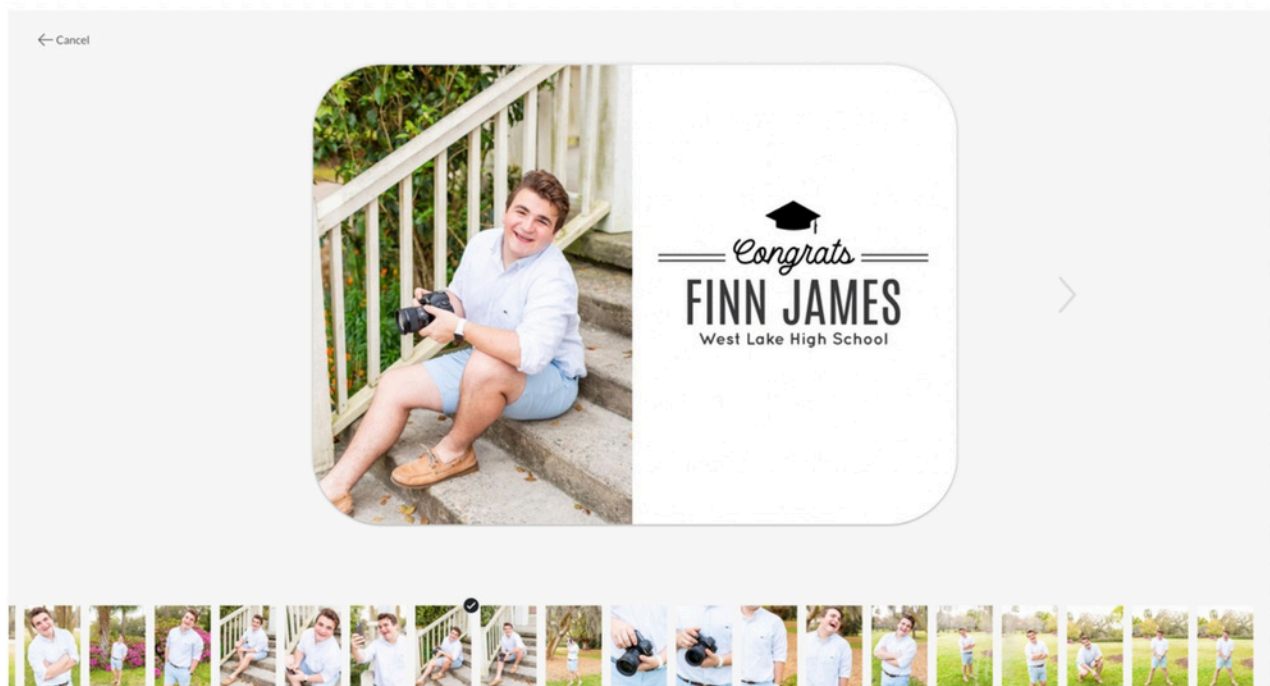
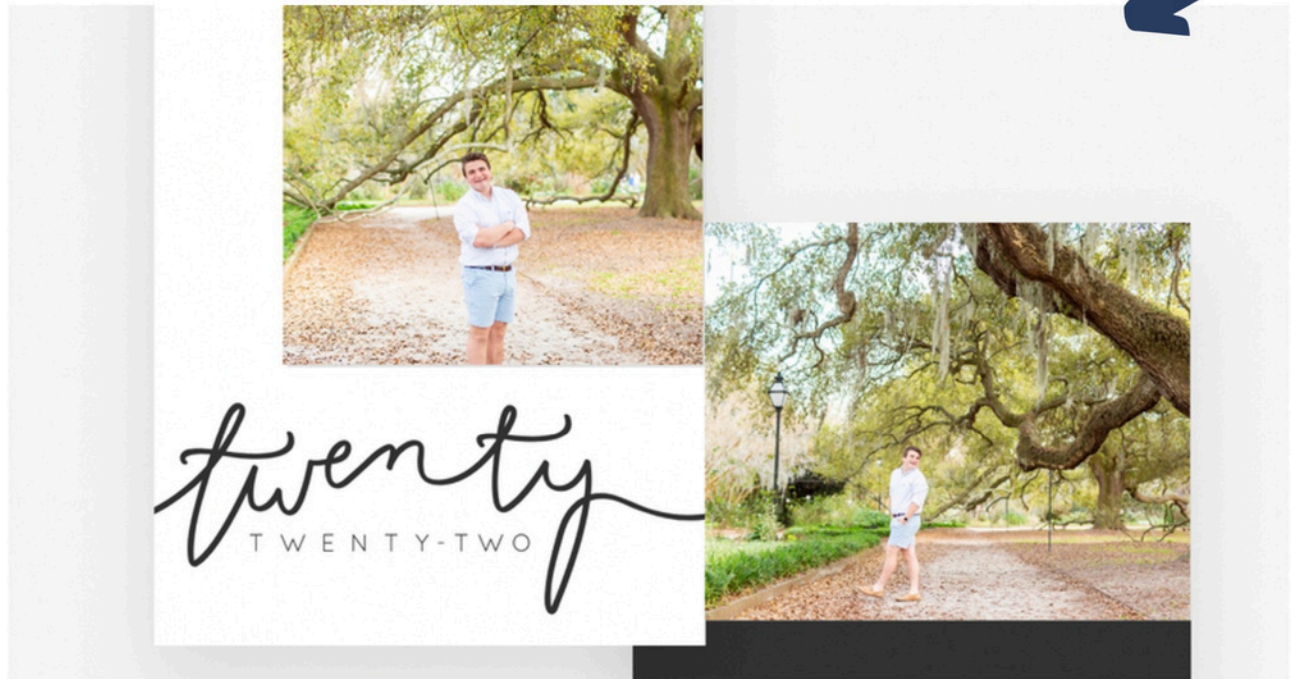
One of my personal favorite ways to print senior images is in an album or photo book. I have one for each of my kids and absolutely LOVE having it on our coffee table to show guests! Plus you can have them out on your grad party to have friends and family sign the end pages to make your album that much more of a keepsake.



These make AMAZING gifts for family members, too!

GRADUATION CARDS

Want a super fun way to announce your graduation or invite people to a grad party? These graduation cards are absolutely BEAUTIFUL and the professional print quality means your images will look incredible featured on each card! There are TONS of amazing design options for these!





I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

We are going to have the BEST time...I promise!
If you need me for anything before your session, you
can reach me at
elissa@elissabeanphotography.com.

See you soon!

