There are four main styles of lighting that we need to describe. The first is...

Broad Lighting. Broad lighting is when the main light is positioned in such a way that it illuminates the side of the face that is turned toward the camera. This technique is used mainly for corrective purposes. It will de-emphasize facial features and is used mostly to make thin, narrow faces appear wider.

Short Lighting. Is when the main light illuminates the side of the face that is turned away from the camera. This technique is used when the subject has an average oval face. Short lighting emphasizes facial contours more than broad lighting. This style can be adapted for a "strong" or "weak" look by using a weaker fill light. This narrow lighting (as it is sometimes called) is especially good for use in low-key portraiture. Because short lighting has a narrowing effect, it is great for use with subjects that have particularly round or plump faces.

Butterfly Lighting is achieved by positioning the main light directly in front of the subjects face and adjusting the height to create a shadow directly under, and in line with, the nose. This style is best suited for subjects with a normal oval face and is considered to be a glamour style of lighting best suited for women. It is not recommended for use with men because it has a tendency to highlight the ears – creating an undesirable effect.

The fourth style of lighting is **Rembrandt Lighting**. Rembrandt lighting is obtained by combining short lighting and butterfly lighting. The main light is positioned high and on the side of the face that is away from the camera. This technique produces an illuminated triangle on the cheek closest to the camera. The triangle will illuminate just under the eye and not below the nose.

The positioning of the main light is usually about 45 degrees from the camera-subject axis and should be slightly higher than the subject. A good method to determine proper placement of the main light is to look at the catch lights in the subject's eyes. The catch lights should be at either the one o'clock or eleven o'clock position. Depending on your subject, the height of the light may need to raised or lowered to get the catch lights in the eyes. This is fine.

Without catch lights the eyes look too dark and recessed; giving the eyes a lifeless look.

You normally place the fill light on the opposite side of the camera from the main light. The fill light also needs to be a much lower power unit than the main light. If you use too much fill you'll lose the effect of the lighting style. The purpose of the fill light is to add just enough light to soften the shadows created by the main light.

The fill light is used to control contrast. By increasing the power of the fill you reduce the contrast in the photo. By decreasing the amount of light from the fill, you will increase contrast. When setting the distance of your fill light watch how noticeable the shadow from the main light is. This will be your guide to how noticeable it will be in the final image. The fill light will almost always add a second lower pair of catch lights. This is usually undesirable because it gives the impression that the subject has a directionless stare. This second pair of catch lights should be retouched from the final photo. Also watch for reflections if your subject wears glasses. You may have to reposition the fill light slightly to eliminate eyeglass reflections.

Once the lights are in position, you can now play with the accessories we talked about in March to add the touch or feel that you are looking for. Bare light sources usually have a harsh effect and drown out details. Using umbrellas will soften the light and help maintain details. Barn doors or gobos can be used to control how much light, if any, is allowed to spill onto your background. An umbrella was used for this shot.

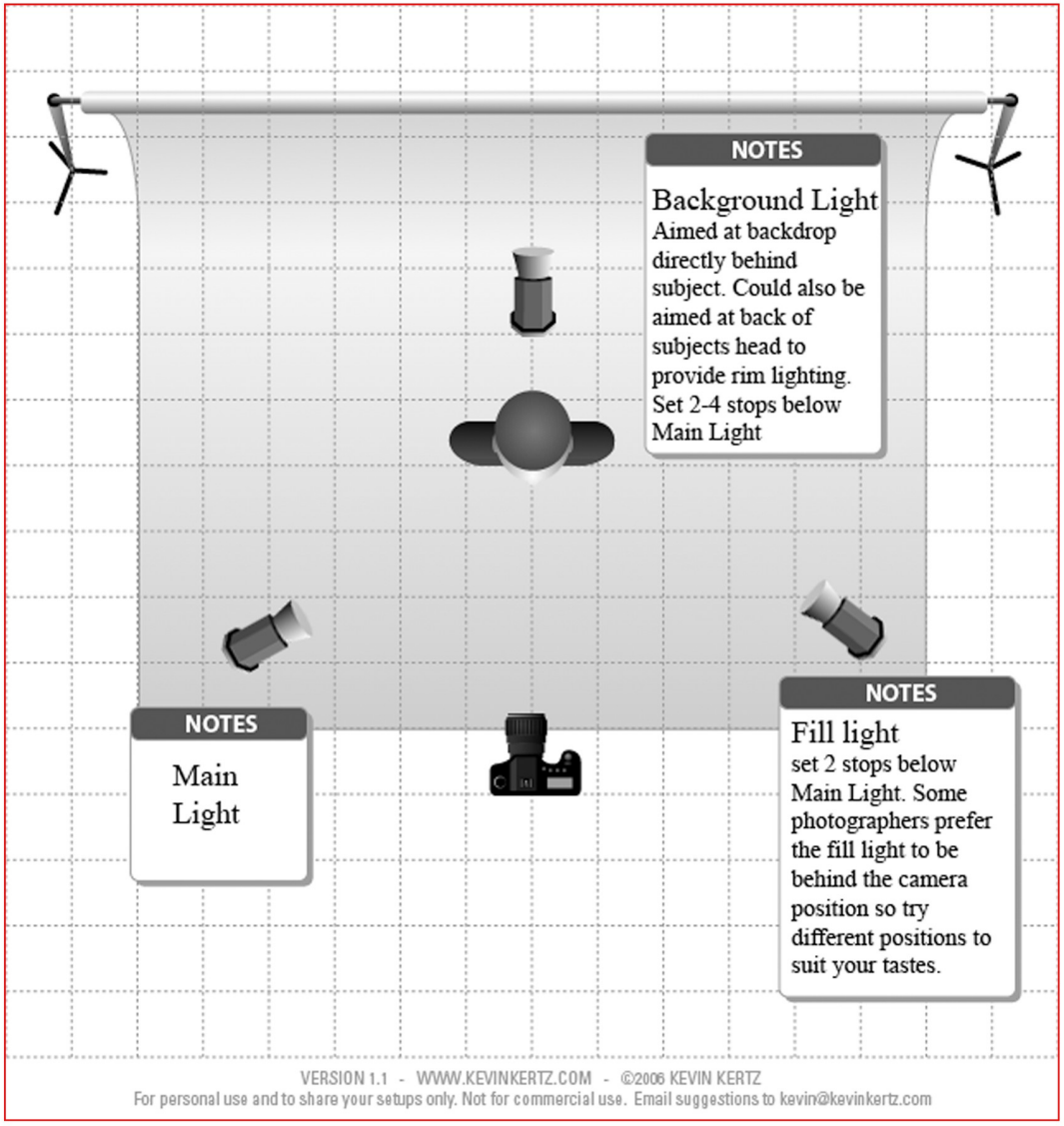
If you get daring enough to use a hair light cones and snoots will allow you to control the light so that it only illuminates the hair and doesn't spill onto the shoulders and face of your subject. The hair light is a lower power light that illuminates the subjects' hair providing separation from the background. This is especially important when photographing a subject with dark hair against a dark background. To properly place a hair light, you should bring the light forward enough to let the light spill onto the subjects face, then slowly move it back until the light disappears from the subjects skin.

Background lights can be used to illuminate the background, gaining more depth or separation in your image. This light is usually placed low to the ground on a small stand about half way between your subject and the background. A low power light is generally used. You can dramatically change the look of the shot by adding a gel to background light. Just remember when using gels you have to use a stronger light to compensate for the illumination being lost through the gel.

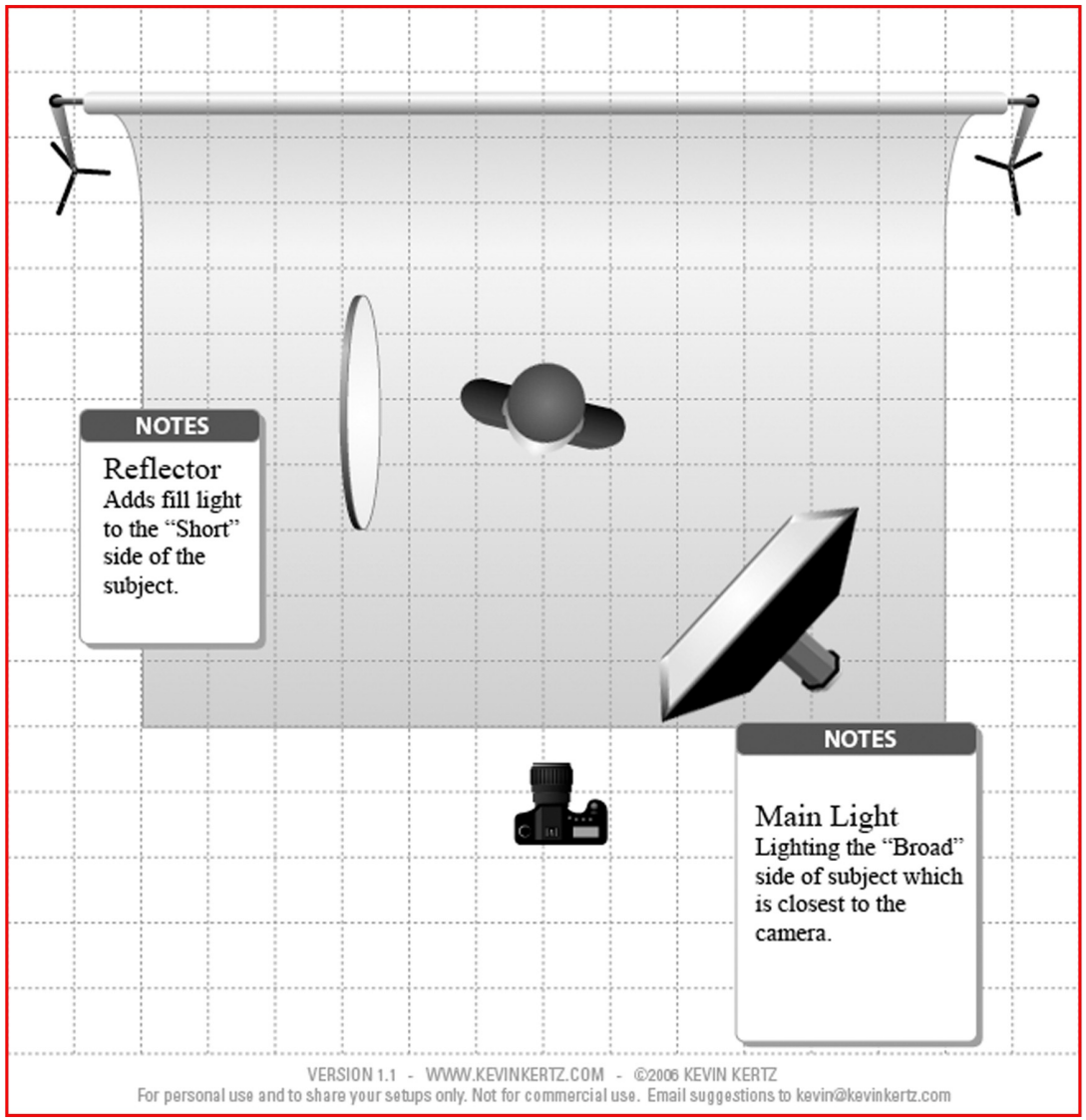
Once you have placed all your lights in their proper locations, added the needed accessories to them, and have gotten a general feel for the way the shot looks, you can use a reflector card to add a soft, supplemental light to areas that may still appear too dark. Some of these cards have a gold side that you can use to add a warm glow to the photograph. Others, like the one used in this shot, have a silver side to provide more neutral fill light.

The reflector cards do not need another light source, as they will reflect the light that is already there. To find the proper location for the card, just move it in and out from a spot to see the effect. It will be noticeable to the naked eye.

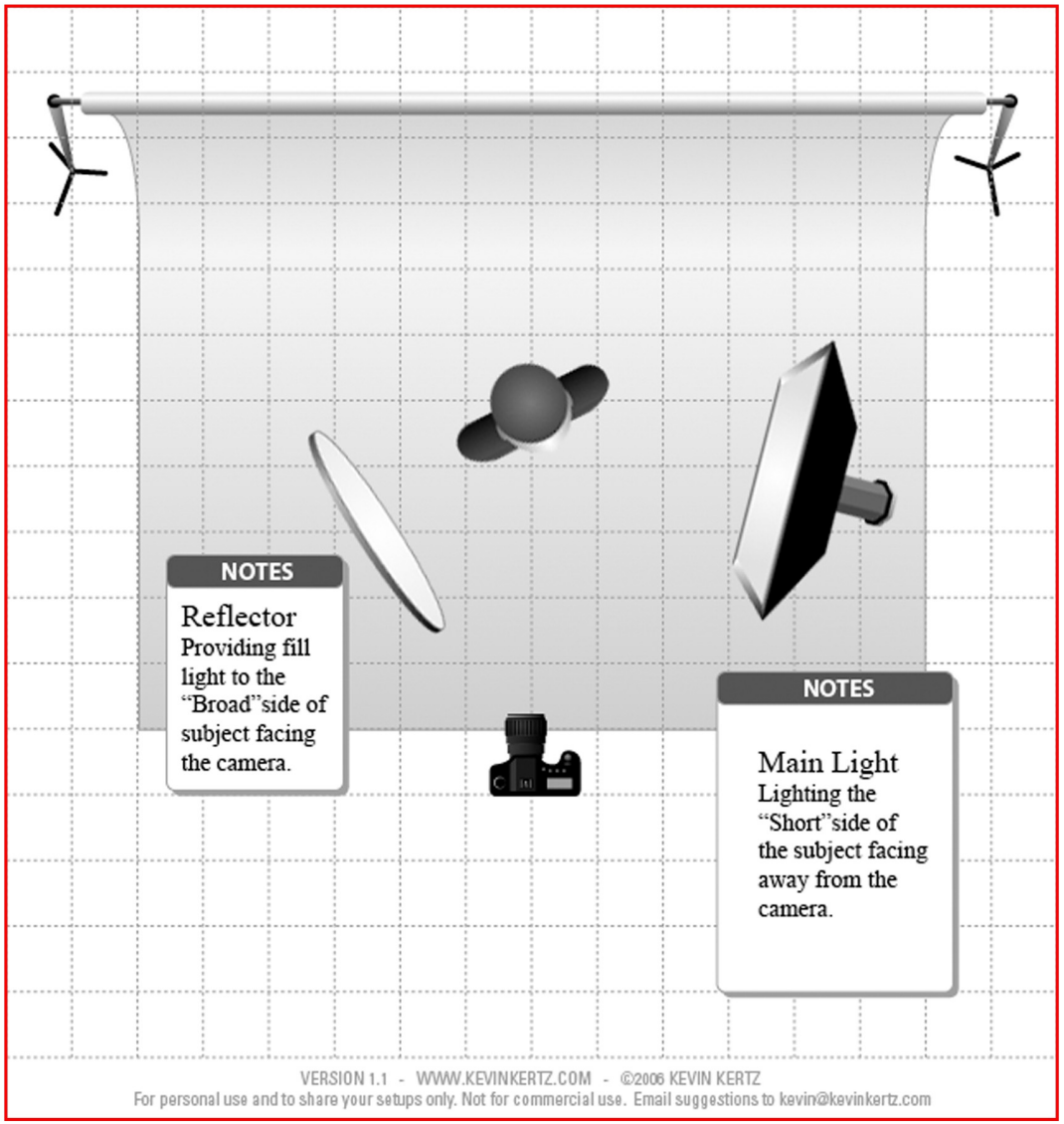
It is not necessary to use all of these accessories and techniques together. For the most part they can be mixed and matched to get whatever result you're after. Although it sounds complicated with a little practice light placement becomes second nature and you'll develop a setup that you're comfortable with. It's when you need an effect you can't get with your normal set-up that you'll need some of these additional lights and accessories.



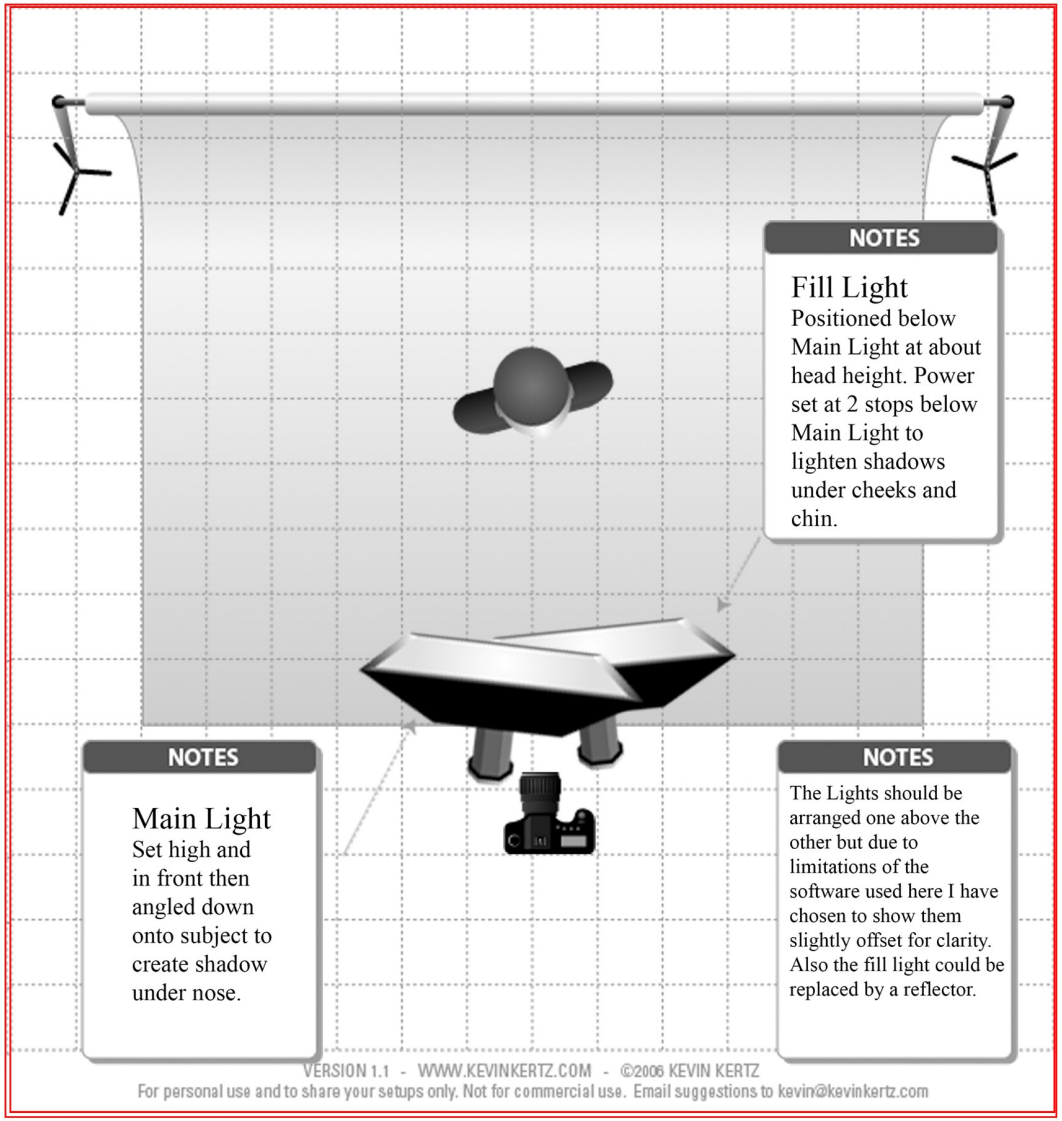
Basic 3 Point Lighting



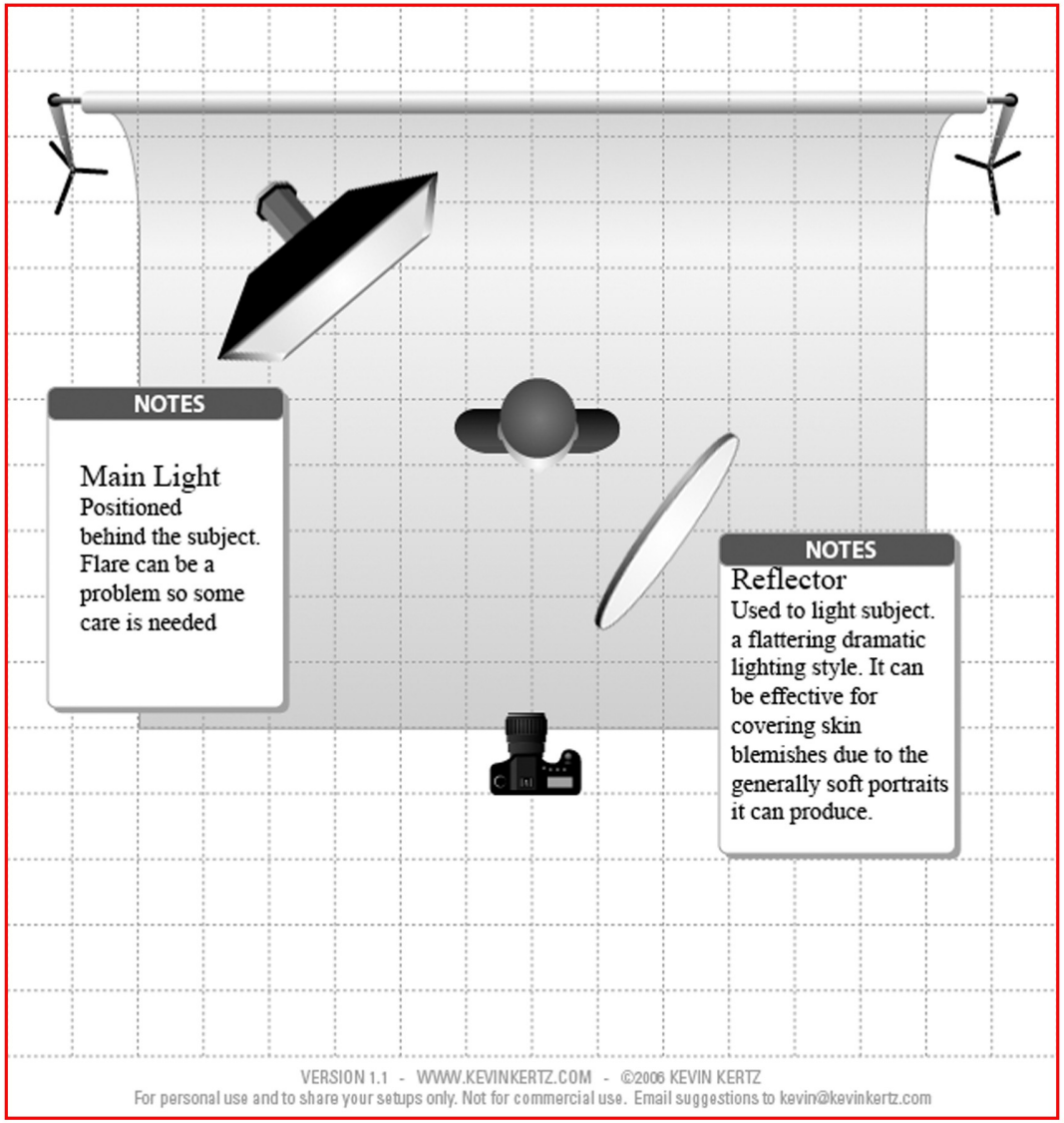
Broad Lighting



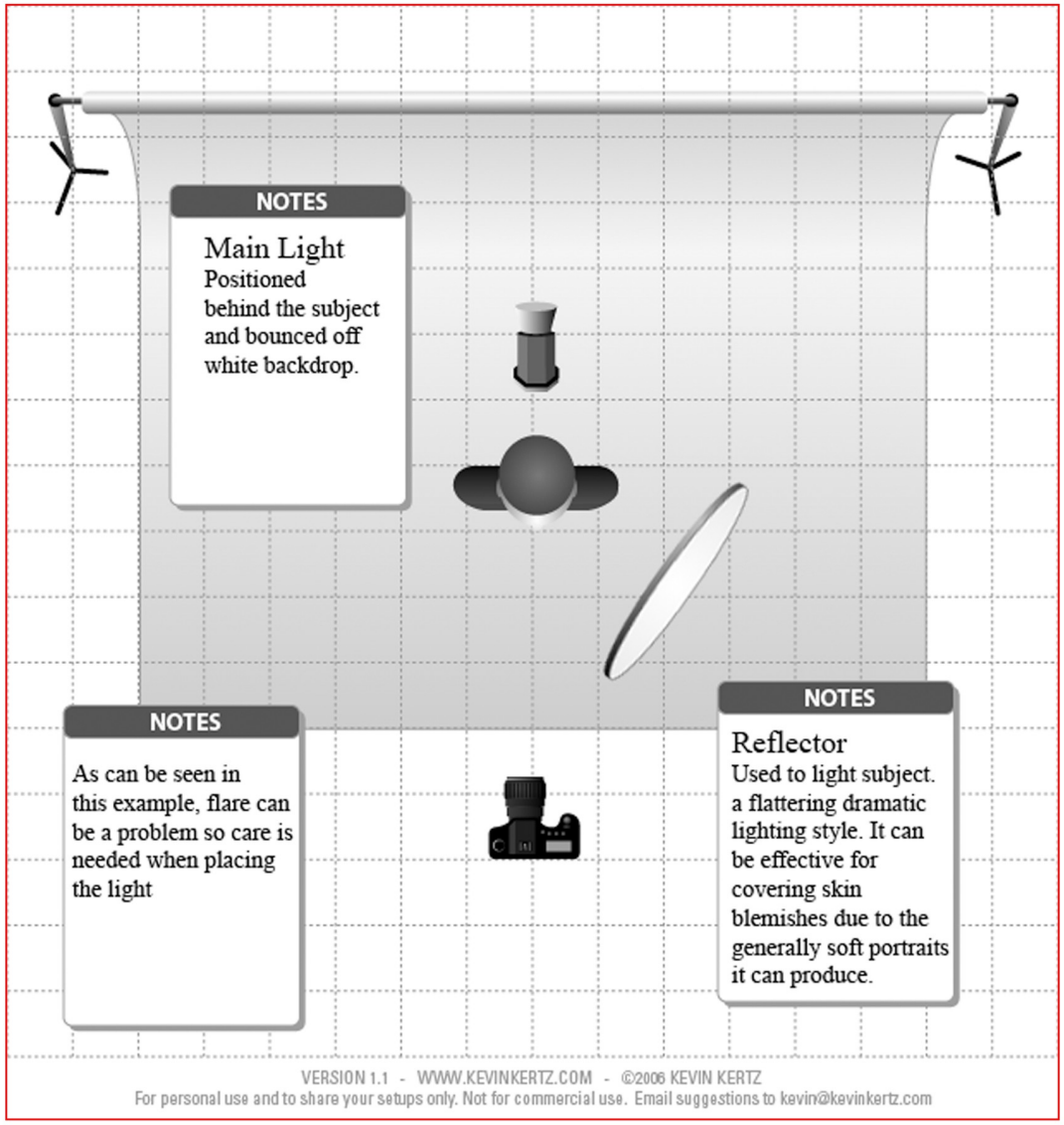
Short Lighting



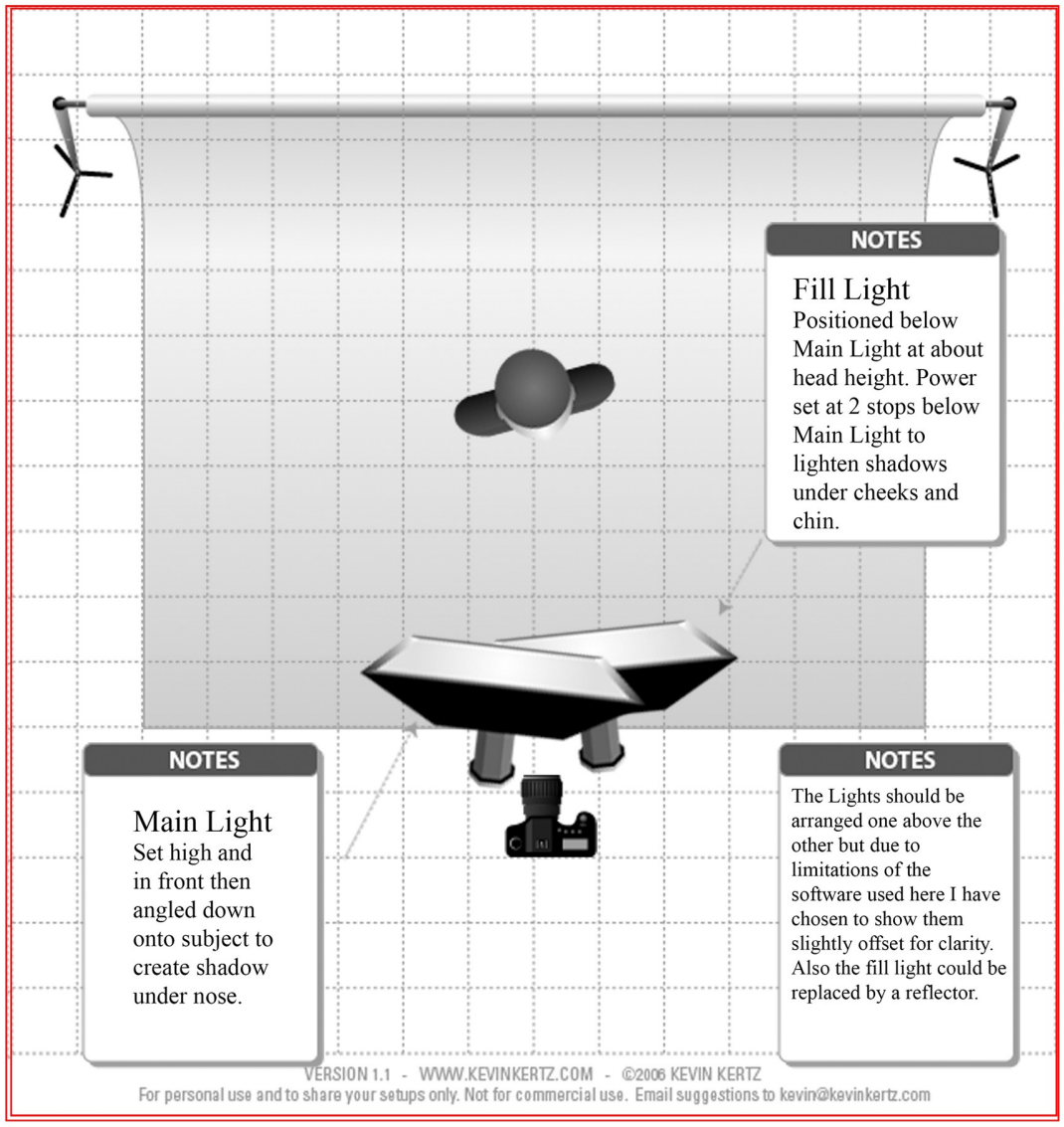
Paramount or Butterfly Lighting



Backlighting #1



Backlighting #2



Paramount or Butterfly Lighting