Born in 1949 in Waterbury, Connecticut, Annie Leibovitz enrolled in the San Francisco Art Institute where she studied Photography under Henri Cartier Bresson. Her subject matter are almost always portraits. Her style includes staged or studio shots rather than journalistic ones. She has managed to convince many famous people to pose in unusual locations, poses and costume.

In 1970 Leibovitz approached Jann Wenner, founding editor of ROLLING STONE, which he'd recently launched and was operating out of San Francisco. Impressed with her portfolio, Wenner gave Leibovitz her first assignment: shoot John Lennon. Leibovitz's black-and-white portrait of the shaggy-looking Beatle graced the cover of the January 21, 1971 issue. Two years later she was named ROLLING STONE chief photographer. Among her subjects from that period are Bob Dylan, Bob Marley, and Patti Smith.

Leibovitz also served as the official photographer for the Rolling Stones' 1975 world tour. While on the road with the band she produced her iconic black-and-white portraits of Keith Richards and Mick Jagger, shirtless and gritty. About this time she also hit the road with Hunter S. Thompson (author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*), with whom she embarked on a dangerous dalliance with Heroin. Perhaps this 'walk on the wild side' has influence her artistic approach. She admits though, that it was a destructive period and could ultimately been disastrous.

In 1981 ROLLING STONE sent Leibovitz to photograph John Lennon and Yoko Ono, who had recently released their album DOUBLE FANTASY. For the portrait Leibovitz imagined that the two would pose together nude. Lennon disrobed, but Ono refused to take off her pants. Leibovitz "was kinda disappointed," according to ROLLING STONE, and so she told Ono to leave her clothes on. "We took one Polaroid," said Leibovitz, "and the three of us knew it was profound right away." Having set up the shot and checked the composition using polaroid, the final shot would be made on film. The resulting portrait shows Lennon nude and curled around a fully clothed Ono. Several hours later, Lennon was shot dead in front of his apartment. The photograph ran on the cover of the ROLLING STONE Lennon commemorative issue. In 2005 the American Society of Magazine Editors named it the best magazine cover from the past 40 years.

In 1983, Leibovitz joined VANITY FAIR and was made the magazine's first contributing photographer. At VANITY FAIR she became known for her wildly lit, staged, and provocative portraits of celebrities. Most famous among them are Whoopi Goldberg submerged in a bath of milk and Demi Moore naked and holding her pregnant belly.
Leibovitz met writer and photographer Susan Sontag in 1989. Sontag told her, “You're good, but you could be better.” Though the two kept separate apartments, their relationship lasted until Sontag's death in late 2004.

Sontag's influence on Leibovitz was profound. In 1993 Leibovitz traveled to Sarajevo during the war in the Balkans. Among her work from that trip is SARAJEVO, FALLEN BICYCLE OF TEENAGE BOY JUST KILLED BY A SNIPER, a black-and-white photo of a bicycle collapsed on blood-smeared pavement.

1. Liebovitz went to University to study Photography in San Francisco during the 1970s. What was happening there at the time and how did this influence her work?

2. One of the lecturers she studied with was Cartier Bresson. How did his work influence her work over the next two decades? (i.e. look for similarities)

3. Describe Leibovitz's recent working practices and style. For instance, are her shots spontaneous or planned. What sort of lighting does she use? Backdrops? Costumes? Does she use film or digital camera?

4. The shoot she did with Bette Midler changed her approach to portraiture. How does her work now differ from 'traditional' portrait photography? Why are celebrities happy to pose for her in any way she asks?

5. The above photo portrays Whom? Why is he shot in this way?

6. Find a quote from an established Art Critic about her work. Do you agree?

7. Choose one of Leibovitz’s photographs, download and include in your report. Make sure you include the date and any technical information you can find.

8. Complete a visual analysis of the work. Mention colour, tone, focal point, subject matter (what statement is intended or conveyed about the sitter), composition (arrangement of shapes within the frame).