

Before the microscope was invented, people thought there was nothing smaller than the smallest things that could be viewed with the human eye. Then early microscope designers like Robert Hooke changed all that. Robert Hooke made a microscope out of two lenses placed at opposite ends of a long tube. The tube was attached to a stand, and an oil lamp provided light. Hooke also added a mirror to focus the light onto the object being examined. He used his microscope to magnify visible things like fleas. Hooke coined the term cell for describing biological organisms, the term being suggested by the resemblance of plant cells to monks' cells.

Today, most microscopes are called compound light microscopes, and use two lenses for greater magnification. The upper lens is called the ocular lens or **eyepiece**, and the lower lenses are called the **objective lens**. Most eyepiece lenses are 10x magnification. The magnification of each objective lens will be marked on the side of the objective. To determine the total magnification, multiply the eyepiece power (10x) times the magnification of the objective you are using.

$$\text{Total magnification} = \text{Eyepiece} \times \text{Objective}$$

When an image is formed, it is actually magnified twice. First, the image is formed at the bottom by the objective lens. Then the image is projected through a tube and magnified again by the eyepiece at the top. The image is always upside down and backwards, so what you see through a microscope shows up as the opposite of what you are doing. Any movement of the object also shows up in the opposite way. When you move an object to the right, it appears to move to the left, and when you move it up, its image moves down.

When setting up a microscope, be sure to carry the scope with two hands. Place one hand under the **base** and the other hand on the **arm**. Make sure that the microscope is away from the edge of the table and that the electrical cord is on the table so that it can't be accidentally caught and pull off the microscope. Uncover the microscope and turn on the light source

To use a microscope, you need to place a slide or a specimen on the **stage**. You should make sure that the slide on the specimen is sitting over the hole in the stage. Stage clips hold the slide in place on the stage. The mirror or **light source**, under the stage, will reflect the light source you are using to light up your specimen. For safety reasons, you should never use a microscope in direct sunlight. This could hurt your eyes. Locate the **diaphragm** directly under the stage. This may be a rotating wheel with different size holes or a lever that moves back and forth. While looking through the eyepiece of your microscope at your specimen, adjust the diaphragm to get the right amount of light coming through the microscope.

Always begin focusing a microscope on the lowest power and center what you are looking at. Then move to the next higher power and refocus and re-center. The eyepiece is at the top of the **body tube**. The objective lenses are located on a **revolving nosepiece** at the bottom of the body tube..

Place a microscope slide with your specimen on the stage under the **stage clips** to hold the slide in place. Look through the eyepiece to see the specimen. If your microscope has more than one objective lens, start with the low power objective to get the clearest and largest view of the specimen. To focus on low power, raise the stage all the way to the top using the **coarse adjustment knob** (larger). Look through the microscope at your specimen and turn the coarse adjustment knob until the image is clear. Remember that you always need to keep both eyes open while looking into the microscope, because this will help you to avoid a painful condition called eyestrain. After the image is clear on the lowest power, turn the nosepiece to the next highest power and focus the image using the **fine adjustment knob** (smaller). Once you are finished with your microscope, remove the slide, return the scope to low power, and turn off the light.