



History of the Microscope

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Introduction to Research with Early Microscopes

Note that all these pages have been reconstructed and the images have been updated by new scans from the originals.



(LEFT) Candles and oil-lamps: how the pioneers made their observations

When investigating the original experiments, it is important to understand the limits imposed by available equipment. In this example, an early achromatic microscope is used to image contemporaneous specimens using only a candle-flame as illuminant.

(RIGHT) Transverse section of maize under a simple microscope

This early experiment demonstrated the revealing images which a single lens can provide. Here, a hand-cut section of *Zea mais* is imaged through a biconvex lens. Examples were published in some early papers on the use of simple microscopes, listed in a bibliography.

You can now go to the following pages:

- [Extract from a major lecture](#)
- [The van Leeuwenhoek bibliography](#)
- [The clear images a single lens can create](#)
- [See the original Leeuwenhoek microscopes](#)
- [What the Leeuwenhoek microscope reveals](#)
- [Introduction to the Leeuwenhoek specimens](#)
- [How the Leeuwenhoek specimens were handled](#)
- [How the Leeuwenhoek microscope revealed blood cells](#)
- [Scanning electron microscope of Leeuwenhoek material](#)
- See also paper on [Leeuwenhoek as experimental biologist](#).

Many of these pages are each illustrated with colour images of the research in progress.