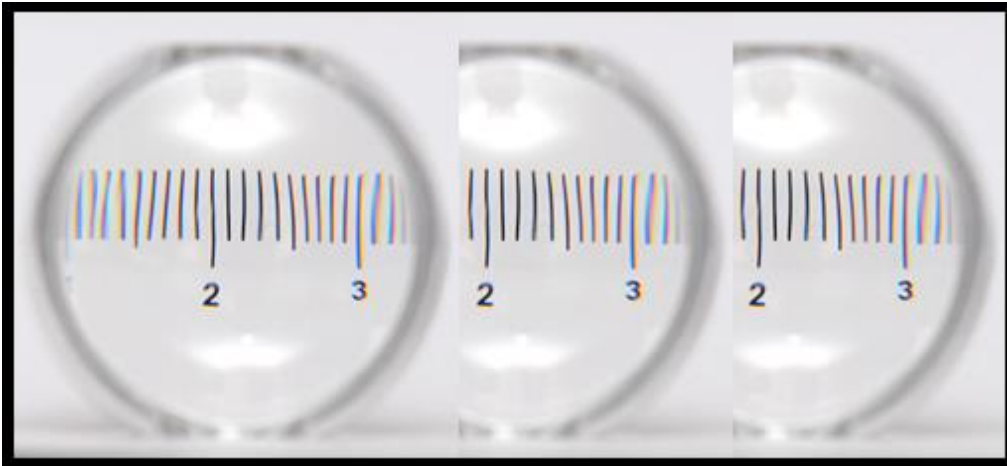




The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Object 43: Dome magnifier



What is it?

A dome magnifier is a hand-held device used to enlarge a flat object such as text, a map or a surgical specimen. It is a form of magnifying glass but instead of being held between the eye and the object being magnified, it is placed directly on the object. Dome magnifiers include a convex lens, now usually made of acrylic.

History

The magnifying properties of convex lenses have been known since Ancient Greece. One of the earliest magnifying devices was the 'reading stone', a hemispherical lens used to enlarge text. The first reading stones were developed in the eighth century and were made of glass, quartz or beryl. Reading stones were largely replaced by spectacles when these were invented in the thirteenth century.

Pathology

Dome magnifiers are used by histopathologists to accurately measure the size of specimens on a microscope slide. The magnifier is placed on top of the slide and the calibrations on the magnifier are used to determine the size of the specimen. The device is used most commonly for measuring specimens removed as part of a cancer screening programme, such as bowel polyps or breast cancers.

Find out more

Ask to see a dome magnifier in use if you visit a pathology department during an open day or tour. Find out what lab tours are taking place near you on the [RCPath website](#).