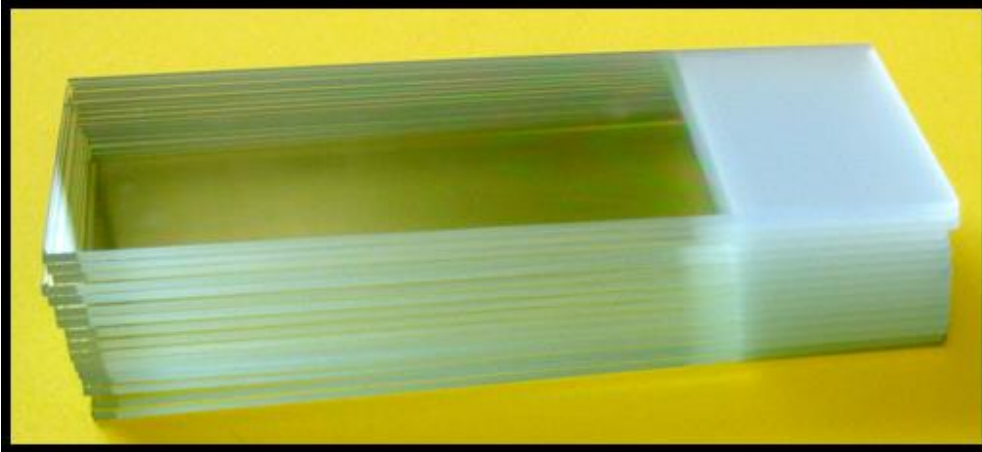




The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Object 46: Glass slide



What is it?

A microscope slide is a flat piece of glass measuring 75 x 25mm with a thickness of 1mm. Many slides have a frosted section at one end, on which patient details can be written to ensure that slides from different patients are not mixed up. Millions of glass slides are used in pathology laboratories every day.

History?

When Robert Hooke first described the cell in 1665 he viewed a thin slice of cork without any supporting medium or stain. By Victorian times scientists were using slices of ivory or bone to hold specimens for examination. The Royal Microscopical Society introduced standardised glass slides in the late nineteenth century, which have since been adopted worldwide.

Pathology

Almost anyone who uses a microscope has used glass slides. Histopathologists rely on glass slides to allow them to study tissue to diagnose disease. Haematologists and microbiologists also use glass slides to examine blood and microorganisms.

Standard sized glass slides are used worldwide. Slide storage systems, transport containers, scanners, microscope stages, automated staining and immunohistochemistry machines are all designed to hold standard glass slides.

Find out more

You can see glass slides being used in any pathology lab. Find out about pathology lab open days near you on the [RCPath website](#).