

## Microscopy for Children

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Is there's a child in your life? Are you thinking about giving a microscope this holiday season? DO IT! But please think carefully about what you buy. You're reading **Microscopy Today**, so you use some sort of microscope professionally; you may be tempted to give the youngster a lab-quality hand-me-down. DON'T! The complexities that you take for granted will only intimidate them. The youngest child will enjoy a magnifying glass. I still remember the pocket-flashlight-style microscope that I had when I was young; I took it everywhere. After that, the best "first" microscope is a monocular dissecting scope; you can consider a very basic compound microscope later, in the middle school years.

What will this cost? A 30x "flashlight" scope, \$15; a 20x monocular dissecting scope, \$70, or a 7.5-35x zoom version, \$100; a 3-objective compound with a nice LED illuminator, \$150. If you find higher prices, keep shopping. If you find lower prices, beware of plastic junk! You'll find a detailed explanation of these recommendations on MSA's Project MICRO web page (<http://www.msa.microscopy.com/ProjectMicro/>) under "Buying microscopes" and purchase suggestions under "Sources".



Books for the youngest child are scarce. MICRO's website bibliography has just a dozen in the "For the primary grades" category and not all of them are good purchases; read the reviews with care.

Although a child who gets a dissecting scope doesn't need detailed instruction on how to use it, lots of gift compound microscopes aren't used because the child doesn't know how to prepare interesting specimens. MICRO's booklist has several "how-to" titles that will help. It's hard to beat Oxlade & Stockley's **The World of the Microscope**, ISBN 0-7460-0289-0, published in '89. The same publisher offers **The Usborne Complete Book of the Microscope**, Internet-Linked ISBN 0-7945-1558-4 (2006). Its web links are maintained on the publisher's website; they're current and very good. It is now also available in Spanish (with a few Spanish URLs), as ISBN 978-07460-3901-4. And Levine and Johnstone have several good, nearly identical books; **Science Experiments with a Microscope**, ISBN 0-8069-8971-8, is the most recent. Please read the detailed reviews on the MICRO website and select one to package with the gift microscope. ■



\* If this cartoon means nothing to you, come to M&M-2008 in Albuquerque and all will be revealed.



Happy Holidays from **MICROSCOPY TODAY!**  
Ron and Dale Anderson, Largo, FL