# ARISTOTLE'S VAULT FORUM GUIDE

## **Grading United States Coins** EPISODE 3

#### **Tools of the Trade: Proper Setup**

### **NTRODUCTION**

This episode prepares future graders for the necessities of a coin grading environment. Specific focus is placed on magnification, lighting, and handling.

#### Magnification

- Don and Jim both use the Bausch and Lomb Hastings Triplet loupe. The three lenses makes it more dependable
- Three different magnifications are recommended, all based on your needs:
  - $\rightarrow$  7x for examining a coin in general
  - $\rightarrow$  10x for zooming in on a certain area
  - $\rightarrow$  20x for looking at a mint mark or fine detail
- When using a loupe, do not put the magnifier to your eye
  - $\rightarrow$  Find a comfortable distance between the magnifier and the coin, moving the coin to focus

#### Lighting

- Swing arm lamps are popular and easy to use
- Halogen or incandescent bulbs are recommended
  - $\rightarrow$  Avoid fluorescent or LED lighting
- Use a 75-100 watt bulb
- Make sure you only have one source of light
  - $\rightarrow$  Avoid overhead or window light

#### Handling

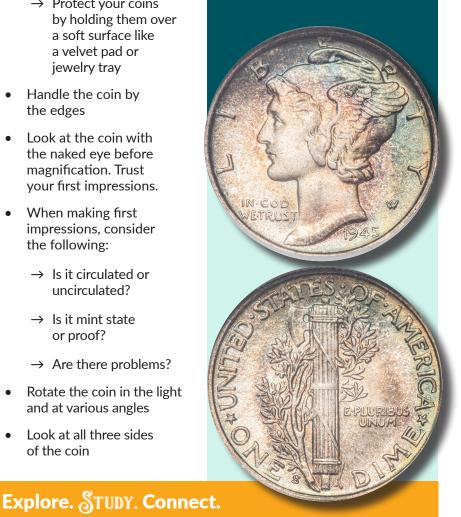
- When handling a coin, be careful not to drop it
  - $\rightarrow$  Protect your coins by holding them over a soft surface like a velvet pad or jewelry tray
- Handle the coin by the edges
- Look at the coin with the naked eye before magnification. Trust your first impressions.
- When making first impressions, consider the following:
  - $\rightarrow$  Is it circulated or uncirculated?
  - $\rightarrow$  Is it mint state or proof?
  - $\rightarrow$  Are there problems?
- Rotate the coin in the light and at various angles
- Look at all three sides of the coin

#### **COIN OF THE EPISODE**

#### **1945-S Mercury Dime**

- Nice eye appeal with Ö attractive toning
- Nice pastel color and clean
- Great luster

Graded as MS 66\* (The star designation indicates exceptional eye appeal)



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