



## Grading United States Coins EPISODE 3

### Tools of the Trade: Proper Setup

#### INTRODUCTION

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:
  - 7x for examining a coin in general
  - 10x for zooming in on a certain area
  - 20x for looking at a mint mark or fine detail
- When using a loupe, do not put the magnifier to your eye
  - 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
  - Avoid fluorescent or LED lighting
- Use a 75-100 watt bulb
- Make sure you only have one source of light
  - Avoid overhead or window light

#### Handling

- When handling a coin, be careful not to drop it
  - 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:
  - Is it circulated or uncirculated?
  - Is it mint state or proof?
  - 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 attractive toning
- Nice pastel color and clean
- Great luster

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



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