

# Microscopy AND Microanalysis

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Microscopy and Microanalysis website: [http://www.journals.cambridge.org/jid\\_MAM](http://www.journals.cambridge.org/jid_MAM)

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## HUMOR



### Dear Abbe

Dear Old Dude,

**We're, like, younger, cell phone savvy, microscopists and, like, we always text message to communicate in our lab. And so, like, is there any already used shortcuts for, like, you know, microscopy-type stuff?**

**Scope Ranger from Raleigh**

Dear SRR,

Amazingly enough, we had anagrams since I was a wee scientist still in knickers. Some of the more common ones still in use are RTFM (read the flamin' manual), IIA (is it aligned?), DYPII (did you plug it in?), FFP (friggin' fingerprint), DTT (don't touch that), NOIYF (not oil immersion you fool!), and my personal favorite WCIT (whose crap is this?). Of course long before text messaging, or even the telephone, microscopists communicated largely by telegram. Since one paid by the letter (up to 20 pfenning for vowels with an umlaut) we also used anagrams, some of which are archaic or passé by today's standards. Among these were GIHWIDO (Gott im Himmel wo ist das Okular), WWFD (What would Fresnel Do?) and HASML (Has anyone seen my Leiderhosen). Of course, for safety purposes, we mature scientists advise to never text message while scoping and/or drinking.

Dear Abbe,

**I have a lab filled with "handsy" co-workers. People are constantly borrowing my media, plates, pipettes, and other equipment without my permission. When I'm ready to work all my stuff is used up, broken, or missing. How can I stop this from happening in the future?**

**Hands Off in Hanover**

Dear Hands

You are obviously a discerning individual with good taste; otherwise you would have run whining to Ann Landers or Dr. Phil. As you have probably read in an earlier response from me, a good Lab Bat would be the ticket. However you appear to belong to the "conflict resolution" crowd. Conflict resolution, of course, is how close two individuals can get before they become embroiled in space issues. In a busy lab this occurs frequently and usually ends up with brightly-colored label tape laid down to define each worker's space. I've even seen spitting in culture dishes, lasers pointed at lab books for the evening – all sorts of unsavory and hygienically questionable practices. Unfortunately it also can devolve into the Touching War ("Dr. Smith! Bobby keeps touching my space!"). It can get pretty ugly with both sides poking each other and the PI having to give them time-outs in the walk-in freezer. I would advise taking the high road and bring in an experienced Lab Councilor. Otherwise you'll be scouring E-bay for a good, used Lab Bat.

*For answers to life's mysteries, please contact Herr Abbe's administrative assistant at [jshields@cb.uga.edu](mailto:jshields@cb.uga.edu).*

