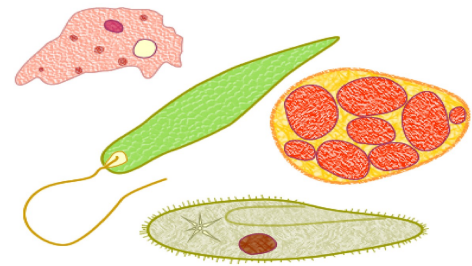


## Anthony van Leewenhoek

Anthony van Leewenhoek (say it “Lay-when-hook”)(1632-1723) was born on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1632. He was born in Delft, Holland where he spent most of his life. He was the first man to see creatures too small to see just with your eyes. He used a microscope to see them. He never wrote a book. Instead, he wrote letters about what he found. He called the tiny creatures “a-ni-mal-cu-les”.

In 1675 he looked at some rain water with his microscope. In it he saw living creatures “more than ten thousand times smaller than the water flea, which you can see alive and moving in water with the bare eye.”



He described the bodies of the creatures with care. They were made up of clear round “globules”. They had little horns. There were other animalcules too. They were oval and had tiny legs. Then there were smaller animalcules. They moved very quickly. Last of all there were very tiny creatures that twirled round. These were what we now call bacteria. Anthony van Leewenhoek was the first person ever to see them.



In Anthony van Leewenhoek's day scientists usually wrote to each other in Latin. Every well taught man understood Latin. It did not matter where a scientist came from. It did not matter what language he spoke at home. His ideas could be quickly passed on to others in Latin. Anthony van Leewenhoek had not learned Latin. He spoke only the Dutch of his home town. The Royal Society of London found out what wonderful things Anthony van Leewenhoek was discovering. They could not read his letters because they were in Dutch. A member of the society learned Dutch specially to read them. He translated them into English.

Anthony van Leewenhoek did not invent the microscope. But he made excellent lenses, which he ground himself by hand. He marvelled at the beauty of what he had discovered. He said that it showed God's glory just as the stars do.

Anthony van Leewenhoek was not good at drawing. He needed pictures of what he had seen. He wanted to send them with the letters he wrote to the Royal Society in London. So, he employed a draughtsman. A draughtsman is someone who can draw accurately. His job is to draw plans for machines or buildings. The draughtsman looked at the discoveries through the microscope and drew what he saw.

If you can look at some rainwater through a microscope you will see what Anthony van Leewenhoek saw. Don't forget to give God the glory just as Anthony van Leewenhoek did!

