

Script

Mikhail Lomonosov was a Russian polymath, scientist and writer, who made important contributions to literature, education, and science. Among his discoveries were the atmosphere of Venus and the Law of Mass Conservation in chemical reactions. His spheres of science were natural science, chemistry physics, mineralogy, history, art, philology, optical devices and others. Lomonosov was also a poet and influenced the formation of the modern Russian literary language.

Lomonosov was born in the village of Denisovka in Arkhangelsk Governorate, on an island not far from Kholmogory, in the far north of Russia. His father, Vasily Lomonosov, was a fisherman and ship owner who amassed a small fortune transporting goods from Arkhangelsk to Pustozhorsk, Solovki, Kola, and Lapland.

He remained at Denisovka until he was ten, when his father decided that he was old enough to participate in business ventures, and Lomonosov began accompanying Vasily on trading missions. Learning was young Lomonosov's passion, however, not business. In 1724, his father married for the third and final time. Lomonosov and his stepmother Irina had an acrimonious relationship. Unhappy at home and intent on obtaining a higher education, which Lomonosov could not receive in Denisovka, he was determined to leave the village.

In 1730, at nineteen, Lomonosov went to Moscow on foot, because he was determined to study. Lomonosov obtained admission into the Slavic Greek Latin Academy by falsely claiming to be a priest's son. That initial falsehood would nearly get him expelled from the academy a few years later when discovered. Lomonosov lived on three kopecks a day, eating only black bread and kvass, but he made rapid progress scholastically. In 1736, Lomonosov was awarded a scholarship to St. Petersburg Academy. He plunged into his studies and was rewarded a two-year grant to study abroad at the University of Marburg in Germany.

The University of Marburg was among Europe's most important universities in the mid-18th century due to the presence of the philosopher Christian Wolff, a

prominent figure of the German Enlightenment. Lomonosov became one of Wolff's personal students while at Marburg. This connection had been the most influential of Lomonosov's life. Between 1739 and 1740 he studied mineralogy, metallurgy, and mining at Bergrat Henckel's laboratories in Freiberg, Saxony; there he intensified his studies of German literature. Lomonosov quickly mastered the German language, and in addition to philosophy, seriously studied chemistry, discovered the works of 17th century Irish theologian and natural philosopher, Robert Boyle, and even began writing poetry.