

5A Abigale

## Antonie van Leeuwenhoek

### Childhood and Family

Antonie Phillips van Leeuwenhoek was born in Delft, Dutch Republic. His mother was Margaretha bel van de Berch, whose family were beer brewers. His father was Phillips Antonie van Leeuwenhoek. Sadly, Antonie's father died when he was five. Antonie's mother remarried and Antonie spent some time living with an uncle who was a lawyer. Antonie's step-father died when Antonie was sixteen.

### Education

Antonie's uncle helped him with basic literacy and numeracy, reinforcing the education he had learnt in local schools. As he also learned Dutch, he couldn't go to university because he needed to at least learn Latin to gain admission to university.

### Career

When Antonie was young, he worked as a draper. He founded his own shop in 1654 after learning trade in the famous trading city of the Dutch Republic. He sold cloth, button, ribbons and other accessories. He was a Dutch business man (trader) and scientist in the Golden Age of Dutch science and technology. He became interested in making lens and created a single-lensed microscope. Using his microscope, he did experiments and found microorganisms. He called them animalcules, which means "small animals" in Latin. This is one of his greatest findings.

## Achievements

Antonie is known for his pioneering work in microscopy and contributions towards establishments of microbiology scientific discipline. He is also known for his microscopy discovery of microorganisms (animalcules), and being the first acknowledged microscopist and microbiologist. Antonie influenced the Age of Reason, natural history, the history of biology and life science, the Scientific Revolution and medicine.

## Marriage

Antonie married with Barbara de Mey in 1653, when he was 21. They had five children, but only one survived through infancy. Her name is Maria van Leeuwenhoek. Barbara died in 1666., twelve year after their marriage. Antonie remarried with Cornelia Swalmius five years after Barbara died in 1671. However, they had no children together.

## Ending

Antonie died when he was 90 years old on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1723. He was buried in the Old Church in Delft. He died of the van Leeuwenhoek's disease. It was named after him because he told the Royal Society such a careful and detailed description of the medical condition. The van Leeuwenhoek's disease is a rare condition which causes involuntary twitching of muscles.