

Marie Curie, orig. Together they discovered the elements polonium (which Marie named after her native Poland) and radium, and they distinguished alpha, beta, and gamma radiation. Seeking the presence of radioactivity--recently discovered by Henri Becquerel in uranium--in other matter, she found it in thorium. For their work on radioactivity (a term she coined), the Curies shared the 1903 Nobel Prize for Physics with Becquerel. In 1911 she won a Nobel Prize for Chemistry for discovering polonium and isolating pure radium, becoming the first person to win two Nobel Prizes. She studied at the Sorbonne (from 1891).