

Mean Free Path vs Pressure and Altitude

By S.E. Van Bramer 1/18/98

Mean Free Path Equation:

$$\lambda = \frac{R \cdot T}{\sqrt{2} \cdot \pi d_a^2 \cdot L \cdot P}$$

Variables:

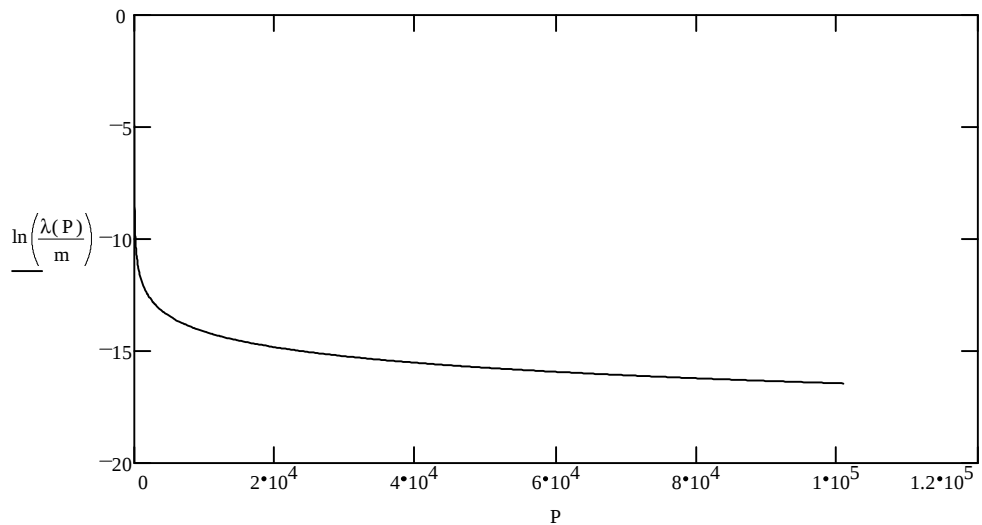
Gas Law Constant	$R := 8.314510 \cdot \text{joule} \cdot \text{K}^{-1} \cdot \text{mole}^{-1}$
Avagadro's Number	$L := 6.0221367 \cdot 10^{23} \cdot \text{mole}^{-1}$
Temperature	$T := 298 \cdot \text{K}$
Collisional Cross Section	$d_a := 3.57 \cdot 10^{-10} \cdot \text{m}$
Pressure	$P := 101325 \cdot \text{Pa}$

The Function

$$\lambda(P) := \frac{R \cdot T}{\sqrt{2} \cdot \pi \cdot d_a^2 \cdot L \cdot P} \quad \lambda(P) = 7.171 \cdot 10^{-8} \cdot \text{m}$$

Graph of Function

$P := 1 \cdot \text{Pa}, 10 \cdot \text{Pa}.. 101000 \cdot \text{Pa}$



Mean Free Path vs Altitude:

Equations:

$$P_{ht} = P_o \cdot e^{\frac{-M \cdot g \cdot ht}{R \cdot T_{sea}}} \quad \lambda = \frac{R \cdot T}{\sqrt{2} \cdot \pi d_a^2 \cdot L \cdot P} \quad \lambda = \frac{R \cdot T}{\sqrt{2} \cdot \pi d_a^2 \cdot L \cdot P_o \cdot e^{\frac{-M \cdot g \cdot ht}{R \cdot T_{sea}}}}$$

The variables:

The atmospheric pressure at sea level

$$P_o := 101325 \cdot \text{Pa}$$

The average molecular mass of the atmosphere:

$$M := 0.02897 \cdot \text{kg} \cdot \text{mole}^{-1}$$

The altitude of interest (given as a matrix)

$$ht := 0 \cdot \text{m}, 20 \cdot \text{m}.. 100 \cdot 10^3 \cdot \text{m}$$

The average temperature at seal level

$$T_{sea} := 288 \cdot \text{K}$$

The function:

$$\lambda(ht) := \frac{R \cdot T}{\sqrt{2} \cdot \pi d_a^2 \cdot L \cdot P_o \cdot e^{\frac{-M \cdot g \cdot ht}{R \cdot T_{sea}}}}$$

