

How did the Nobel Prize start?aa

Alfred Nobel

The Nobel Prizes were established by the will of Alfred Nobel, a Swedish inventor, engineer, and industrialist, best known for inventing dynamite. Alfred Nobel was born in 1833 and held over 350 patents in various fields.

The origin of the Nobel Prizes can be traced back to a mistaken obituary. In 1888, Alfred Nobel's brother Ludvig Nobel passed away, and a French newspaper mistakenly published an obituary for Alfred instead. The headline read "The Merchant of Death is Dead" and criticized him for amassing wealth from his inventions, particularly dynamite, which was used in warfare.

This incident deeply affected Alfred Nobel, causing him to reflect on his legacy. He expressed a desire to be remembered for positive contributions to humanity rather than for the destructive potential of his inventions.

In his will, drafted in 1895, Nobel left the majority of his fortune to establish the Nobel Prizes. The prizes were to be awarded annually to individuals and organizations that had made outstanding contributions to humanity in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Medicine or Physiology, Literature, and Peace.

The Nobel Prizes were first awarded in 1901, five years after Alfred Nobel's death, in accordance with his wishes. The Nobel Foundation was established to manage and administer the prizes. The prizes have since become some of the most prestigious and recognized awards in the world.

In 1968, the Sveriges Riksbank (Swedish National Bank) established the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, commonly referred to as the Nobel Prize in Economics, which is awarded alongside the original Nobel Prizes.

Alfred Nobel's decision to use his wealth to establish the Nobel Prizes reflects his desire to leave a lasting positive impact on humanity and is a testament to the potential for individuals to shape the world for the better.

The Nobel Prize, an emblem of global recognition for achievements in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace, originated from the last will of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. Nobel's profound interest in science, literature, and a more peaceful world led him to dedicate his vast fortune to the establishment of these prestigious awards, officially starting with the first Nobel Prize awarded in 1901. The Nobel assembly, along with various committees and institutions like the Norwegian Nobel Institute and the Nobel Foundation, administers these prizes, adhering to Nobel's vision and detailed stipulations.

Each year, the Nobel Prize award ceremony is a globally watched event, marking the culmination of outstanding contributions to humanity. The categories have expanded over time, with the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, commonly referred to as the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, introduced in 1969. This addition enriched the Nobel legacy, recognizing the importance of economic studies alongside Nobel's original categories.

The process to nominate and select Nobel laureates is meticulous and confidential, ensuring that only the most deserving individuals and organizations are awarded the prize. The Nobel Prize in Literature, for example, honors writers who have produced "in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction," as Nobel's will states, while the Peace Prize is awarded to "those who have done the most or best for peace."

