Alfred Nobel.

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Chemist

- **Born:** October 21, 1833
- **Birthplace:** Stockholm, Sweden
- **Died:** December 10, 1896
- **Place of death:** San Remo, Italy

Alfred Nobel is best known as the founder of the Nobel Prize. However, he was also the inventor of dynamite, and he owned many explosives companies.

Alfred Nobel See page for author [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Recreation of Alfred Nobel's 1895 laboratory in the Nobel museum at Björkborn, Karlskoga. By Tomas er (Own work) [CC-BY-SA-3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0) or GFDL

Nobel was born in 1833 in Stockholm, Sweden. His father, Immanuel Nobel, had established himself in Saint Petersburg, Russia, as a successful manufacturing engineer. He encouraged his son, Alfred, to travel extensively throughout Europe and the United States as part of his education.

Alfred Nobel began to study explosives in one of his father's companies in Saint Petersburg. He was particularly fascinated with nitroglycerine.

In 1867, he revolutionized the mining and civil engineering world by mixing nitroglycerine and kieselguhr (a porous clay). This resulted in the creation of the most famous explosive—dynamite. Dynamite was mainly used by the mining industries to blast rock as well for warfare.

A successful businessman, Nobel was both inventor and industrialist. In the course of his lifetime, he took out more than 350 patents.

These inventions covered a broad spectrum of areas. Artificial fibers, synthetic rubber, paints, sound reproduction, and artificial gems were just a few of his contributions.

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He had made a fortune from his explosives factories and investments in Russian oilfields. He was very generous with his wealth and often helped people in need and gave money to scientific organizations. Although successful, he was very modest and preferred to remain in the background. He never married and often suffered from chronic ill health.

In 1876, Nobel met Bertha (Kinsky) von Suttner, an Austrian pacifist (one who opposes war or violence). From his friendship with von Suttner, Nobel developed a strong desire for world peace. He died in Italy in 1896.

In his will, Nobel left nine million dollars to found the Nobel Prizes and requested that five prizes be given to individuals who worked for the good of humankind each year.

A prize was to be awarded in each of five different fields: physics, chemistry , medicine, literature, and peace. To this day, Nobel Prizes are still given to persons in each field of these five fields.

In his lifetime, Nobel was celebrated and recognized for his achievements, inventions, and great generosity.

Nobel's Inventions Include:

- dynamite
- blasting gelatin
- ballistite (smokeless blasting powder)

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By Phyllis Barkas Goldman

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