

Alfred Nobel, the great Swedish inventor and **industrialist**, was a man of many **contrasts**. He was the son of a **bankrupt**, but became a millionaire; a scientist with a love of **literature**, an industrialist who managed to remain an **idealist**. He made a fortune but lived a simple life, and although cheerful **in company**, he had a tendency to be sad **in private**. A lover of **mankind**, he never had a wife or family to love him; a **patriotic** son of his native land, he died alone on foreign soil. He invented a new **explosive, dynamite**, to improve the **peacetime industries** of **mining** and road building, but saw it used as a **weapon** of war to kill and injure his **fellow men**. During his useful life he often felt he was useless. "Alfred Nobel," he once wrote of himself, "ought to have been **put to death** by a kind doctor as soon as he entered life." World-famous for his works, he was never personally well-known, for **throughout** his life he avoided **publicity**. "I do not see," he once confessed, "that I have **deserved** any **fame** and I have no taste for it," but since his death, his name has brought fame and **glory** to others.

He was born in Stockholm on October 21, 1833 but moved to Russia with his parent in 1842, where his father, Immanuel, **evidently** made a strong position for himself in the engineering industry. Immanuel Nobel invented the land **mine** and made a lot of money from government orders for it during the Crimean war but went bankrupt soon after. Most of the family returned to Sweden in 1859, where Alfred rejoined them in 1863, beginning his own study of explosives in his father's **laboratory**. He had never been to school or university but had studied privately and by the time he was twenty he was a skillful chemist and excellent linguist, speaking Swedish, Russian, German, French and English. Like his father, Alfred Nobel was **imaginative** and **inventive**, but differed from him showing more financial sense. He was quick to see industrial **openings** for his scientific inventions and **invested** in over 80 companies in 20 different countries. **Indeed** his greatness **lay** in his outstanding ability to combine the qualities of an original scientist with those of a **forward-looking** industrialist.

But Nobel's main concern was never with making money or even with making scientific discoveries. Seldom happy, he was always searching for a meaning to life, and from his **youth** he had **taken** a serious **interest in** literature and philosophy. Perhaps because he could not find ordinary human love –he never married– he came to care deeply about the whole of mankind. He was always generous to the poor, "I'd rather take care of stomachs of **the living** than the glory of the dead in the form of stone **memorials**," he once said. His greatest wish, however, was to see an end to wars, and thus peace between nations, and he spent much time and money working for this **cause** until his death in Italy in 1896. His famous **will**, in which he left the **funds** from his **estate** to **award** prizes for outstanding work in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology, Medicine, Literature and Peace, is a permanent memorial to his interests and ideas. And so, the man who felt he should have died at birth is remembered and respected long after his death.

Industrialist (n.) = a person owning or engaged in the management of an industry
Contrast (n.) = a difference clearly seen, when unlike things are put together
Bankrupt (n.) = a person who is unable to pay his or her debts
Literature (n.) = written works of arts esp. fiction, drama and poetry
Idealist (n.) = sb who tries to live according to principles or perfect standards, esp. in a way that is not practical or possible
In company (exp.) = with other people
In private (exp.) = in a place or situation where other people cannot watch or listen
Mankind (n.) = all the people in the world
Patriotic (adj.) = having or showing great love for your country
Explosive (n.) = a substance that is likely or able to explode
Dynamite (n.) = a substance using for explosions, esp. for breaking rock into pieces
Peacetime (n.) = a period of time when a country is not at war
Industry (n.) = the people and activities involved in producing thing, or in providing a particular service
Mining (n.) = digging in the ground for things like coal or gold
Weapon (n.) = sth (as a gun, knife, or club) to fight with
One's fellow man/men (exp.) = other people in general
Put sb to death (exp.) = kill sb, esp. after an official decision
Throughout (prep.) = during all of particular period, from the beginning to the end
Publicity (n.) = being known to or seen by the public
Deserve (v.) = be worthy of; merit
Fame (n.) = the state of being known and talked about by many people
Glory (n.) = praise, respect and honor given to a person by others
Evident (adj.) = plain and clear to the eyes or mind; obvious
Mine (n.) = a type of bomb that is hidden under the ground or in the sea and that explodes when sb/sth touches it
Laboratory (n.) = a building or large room where people do scientific and medical experiments or research; lab
Linguist (n.) = a person skilled in foreign languages
Imaginative (adj.) = having or showing new and exciting ideas
Inventive (n.) = able to think of new, different, or interesting ideas
Opening (n.) = a favorable set of conditions (for); a good opportunity for sb
Invest (v.) = put money in to business to get more money back
Indeed (adv.) = it is even true (that); in fact
Lie (lay, lain) (v.) = (of ideas, qualities, problems, etc.) exist or be found
Forward-looking (adj.) = looking at the future in a positive way and happy to try new ideas and methods
Youth (n.) = the time of life when a person is young, esp. the time before a child becomes an adult
Take an interest in (exp.) = show you're interested in
Living, the (n.) = people who are still alive
Memorial (n.) = sth by which the memory of a person or an event is kept alive
Cause (n.) = a principle, aim, or movement that is strongly defended or supported
Will (n.) = a legal paper that says who will have one's money, house, etc. when one dies
Funds (n.) = a sum of money available for a special purpose
Estate (n.) = all the property that a person owns, esp. that which is left at death
Award (v.) = give a prize or money to sb