

# True or false: How well do you know Nobel Prizes?

5 October 2014, by Karl Ritter



This is the Nobel award which economist Milton Friedman will receive, is seen in this Dec. 10, 1976 file photo taken in Stockholm, Sweden. The economics award was not among the five awards that Alfred Nobel established in his will for medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace. It was created by the central bank of Sweden in 1968 in Nobel's honor. (AP Photo/File)

Nobel season is upon us. On Monday, the Nobel Prize judges will begin a series of daily announcements revealing this year's winners. To help avoid any embarrassing water-cooler faux pas, here's a true-or-false guide to the prizes created in 1895 by Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel—the world's most famous awards besides the Oscars.

## TRUE OR FALSE:

- You can only win a Nobel Prize once
- You can only be nominated in one Nobel category
- A Nobel prize cannot be revoked
- Four people can share a Nobel Prize
- Hitler was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize

- Winston Churchill won a Nobel Peace Prize
- Nobel Prizes can be given posthumously
- Over 94 percent of Nobel Laureates are men
- The economics prize is not an original Nobel
- All Nobel Prizes are presented in Stockholm

## ANSWERS:

### YOU CAN ONLY WIN A NOBEL PRIZE ONCE

False. There is no limit to how many Nobel Prizes you can win. American scientist John Bardeen won the physics award twice, in 1956 and 1972, while British biochemist Frederick Sanger got two chemistry awards, in 1958 and 1980.

### YOU CAN ONLY BE NOMINATED IN ONE NOBEL CATEGORY

False. Marie Curie of France won the physics prize in 1903 and the chemistry award in 1911. Linus Pauling, a scientist and peace activist, won the chemistry prize in 1954 and the Nobel Peace Prize eight years later.

### A NOBEL PRIZE CANNOT BE REVOKED

True. The Nobel statutes are clear on this: Once you've received a Nobel Prize, it's yours forever. Paragraph 10 states: "No appeals may be made against the decision of a prize-awarding body with regard to the award of a prize." So those online petitions calling for a particular prize to be withdrawn have no effect.

### FOUR PEOPLE CAN SHARE A NOBEL PRIZE

False. The Nobel statutes say the awards can be split among multiple winners but in no case "may a prize amount be divided between more than three persons."

## HITLER WAS NOMINATED FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

True. The Nazi dictator was nominated in 1939 by Swedish lawmaker E.G.C. Brandt for the prize, which is meant to promote "fraternity between nations" and global disarmament. Brandt later withdrew the nomination, saying it was meant as satire. This just shows that anyone can be nominated—it doesn't say anything about their chances of actually winning.

## WINSTON CHURCHILL WON THE PEACE PRIZE

False. The eloquent British conservative leader did win a Nobel Prize, but in the literature category, not peace. Churchill received the literature prize in 1953 "for his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values."

## NOBEL PRIZES CAN BE GIVEN POSTHUMOUSLY

False. Since 1974, only living people are considered by the prize committees. However, the Nobel Foundation made an exception in 2011 when it found out right after the medicine prize was announced that one of the winners, Ralph Steinman, had died just days earlier. They let the prize stand and Steinman's share of the prize money was given to his survivors.

## OVER 94 PERCENT OF NOBEL LAUREATES ARE MEN

True. Of the 847 individuals who have won a Nobel Prize, only 44, or 5 percent, were women. Fifteen women have won the peace prize, while only one—Elinor Ostrom in 2009—has won the economics award. Nobel judges say they don't consider gender when selecting winners and that the awards simply reflect the historical dominance of men in many fields of research.

## THE ECONOMICS AWARD IS NOT AN ORIGINAL NOBEL

True. The economics award was not among the five awards that Alfred Nobel established in his will

for medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace. It was created by the central bank of Sweden in 1968 in Nobel's honor. It is announced along with the other prizes, carries the same prize money of \$1.1 million, and is handed out at the annual Nobel ceremony in December. But it's technically not a Nobel Prize. The official title is The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

## ALL NOBEL AWARDS ARE PRESENTED IN STOCKHOLM

False. The peace [prize](#) is both announced and handed out in Oslo, the Norwegian capital, according to the wishes of Alfred Nobel. No one knows why he wanted it that way but during his lifetime Sweden and Norway were joined in a union.

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