

## Norwegian Nobel Committee

- Role:** Norwegian Nobel Committee member
- Location:** Oslo, Norway
- Time:** Present day
- Goal:** To award the Nobel Peace Prize to one of the nominees

Welcome to the annual meeting of the Norwegian Nobel Committee at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. You are a member of the NNC (Norwegian Nobel Committee). It is your responsibility to review the nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize and decide who will receive the Prize this year. **After reading the short biographies of the nominees, you and your group have to choose the winner for the Nobel Peace Prize.** Be sure to write down the reasons for your decision, and be prepared to justify your choice to the judges. What values did you use to judge the nominees? Why did you eliminate the other nominees? How did you arrive at a decision?

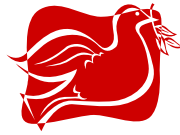
### **Steps to follow in your decision making process:**

15 minutes: Silently read over all information.

5 minutes: As a group, discuss the nominees.

10 minutes: Using the **Thinking Organizer** decide on the qualities that are most important to your group. Each person should offer his or her opinion, and the group should be prepared to agree on the nominee.

10 minutes: Decide who will receive the Nobel Prize and how you will present your conclusion to the judges. Be prepared to explain why your group decided on a specific person and why you eliminated the others. Your argument should include facts and examples from the biographies.



## Overview and Background Information

The Nobel Peace Prize is one of five Nobel Prizes created by the Swedish businessman and inventor Alfred Nobel. Alfred Nobel was the man who invented dynamite, which led to the death of millions of people. In 1901, he created the Nobel Prize in order to make up for what he believed to be his past evils. According to the will of Alfred Nobel, the peace prize should be awarded "*to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for the fraternity (goodwill) between the nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses (organizations).*" **In other words, it should be awarded to an individual who is committed to high ideals, encourages respect between nations, works for the reduction of the military or promotes peace.**

Although Mr. Nobel's will gave specific reasons why someone should be awarded the prize, some have said that the committee has used the Peace Prize as a political tool to send a message to the international community by awarding people who are not necessarily the most qualified. Another criticism is that more time should pass before awarding the prize for a person's achievement. This way, the committee can be sure that the person's contribution will be beneficial in the long-term.

Nominations for the prize may be made by a wide variety of people from all over the world. In some years the committee received as many as 199 nominations. The nominations are kept secret by the committee, and the people who made the nominations are also asked to keep their nominations a secret. The committee then reviews all the nominations and selects a winner. The winner of the prize is known as a Nobel Prize laureate (a person honored or awarded a prize for great achievements). The prize consists of a gold medal, a diploma and 1.6 million dollars.

Previous Nobel Peace Prize laureates include:

- ❖ 1964 Dr. Martin Luther King (USA) for campaigning for civil rights
- ❖ 1979 Mother Teresa (India) for poverty awareness
- ❖ 1987 Oscar Arias Sanchez (Costa Rica) for initiating peace negotiations in Central America
- ❖ 1989 The Dalai Lama for his dedication to world peace
- ❖ 1991 Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar) for her non-violent struggle for human rights
- ❖ 2002 Jimmy Carter (USA) for advancement of democracy
- ❖ 2004 Wangari Maathai (Kenya) for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace



## Thinking Organizer

As you read over the nominees' biographies, complete the following organizer. Consider the positive and negative points for each nominee and decide who should receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Remember the quote by Alfred Nobel stating the prize should be awarded "*to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for the fraternity (goodwill) between the nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses (organizations).*"

What are the positive and negative points regarding **JODY**?

**Positives**

**Negatives**

What are the positive and negative points regarding **NORMAN**?

**Positives**

**Negatives**

What are the positive and negative points regarding **BETTY**?

**Positives**

**Negatives**

What are the positive and negative points regarding **SHIRIN**?

**Positives**

**Negatives**

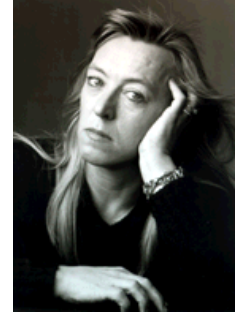
After completing your organizer, discuss your recommendation. Why did you choose this person and why did you eliminate the others?

**Name of Nobel Peace Prize Winner** \_\_\_\_\_

# JODY

## BACKGROUND

Jody was born in Putney, Vermont, and is a teacher and aid worker. Jody first trained as a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL), receiving a Bachelor's and Master's degree in teaching Spanish and ESL from the University of Vermont. She received a second Master's degree in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University. She taught ESL in Mexico, the United Kingdom, and Washington D.C. Jody decided she wanted to speak out for those who couldn't when her deaf brother was teased at school. Her first job in aid work was coordinator of the "Nicaragua-Honduras Education Project." Later, she became deputy director of a charity, "Medical Aid for El Salvador."



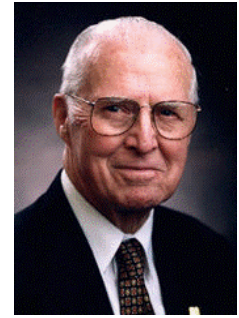
She first learned of the dangers of landmines (especially the unexploded landmines) while working in El Salvador. She met children who had lost arms or legs while playing with the brightly colored landmines they thought were toys. She discovered that at least 26,000 people are killed or injured by mines every year, many of them children. Through her experiences she was inspired to form her own non-governmental organization that is trying to ban landmines all over the world.

## NOMINATION

Jody founded the organization called the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). It is a group of non-governmental organizations with the goal of abolishing the production and use of anti-personnel landmines. ICBL brings together over 1,400 groups in over 90 countries who work locally, nationally, regionally and internationally to ban anti-personnel landmines. The organization achieved one goal when 122 nations signed the Ottawa Treaty banning these landmines.

The United States did not support the treaty, does not support Jody's nomination, and says her activism has damaged the relationship between countries. The U.S. also argues that landmines serve a specific purpose and protect the lives of American soldiers. Some people on the committee believe Jody's focus to be too narrow to deserve the prize. There are many weapons in the world that are deadlier than land mines. Today, Jody continues to serve the ICBL as a campaign ambassador and editor of the organization's landmine report.

# NORMAN



## BACKGROUND

Norman was born on a farm in Cresco, Iowa. He struggled in college, but eventually received several college degrees. Then, Norman earned his Ph.D. in plant pathology and genetics from the University of Minnesota. He worked as an agricultural researcher in Mexico, where he created high-yield, disease resistant varieties of wheat. Norman introduced his type of wheat and modern agricultural production techniques to Mexico, India and Pakistan. As a result, wheat production in Mexico nearly doubled and greatly improved its food supply. His techniques for high-yield wheat production are being used all over the world. Due to the increase in food production, many people say Norman saved over a billion people from starvation.

## NOMINATION

Norman is an agricultural scientist and a humanitarian (someone who works on making the lives of people better). He was nominated for the Peace Prize in recognition of his contributions to a peaceful world through increasing the food supply. Norman believes that using his methods and biotechnology will help decrease famine throughout the world.

He also created the World Food Prize that he awards annually. The World Food Prize is an international award recognizing the achievements of people who have pushed society forward by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. Environmentalists have criticized his work by listing the problems with his non-organic farming techniques, especially the dangerous use of large quantities of pesticides. In southern Africa, where many people are starving, government authorities have refused food aid from the United States because it contains genetically modified food (which is what Norman created). Also, as a result of his high-yield wheat, many agricultural workers have lost jobs.

# BETTY

## BACKGROUND

Betty has a large Roman Catholic family in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She attended Catholic school until the age of fourteen when her parents could not afford to pay the tuition. She went to work in Belfast at the young age of fourteen. For a brief time, she was a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a militant organization of Irish nationalists who have used terrorism and guerilla warfare in an effort to drive the British out of Northern Ireland. The British are mostly Protestant, while most of the people in Northern Ireland are Catholic.



One day, after witnessing a British soldier shot in front of her, she knelt and prayed beside him. Catholic neighbors criticized her for showing sympathy for “the enemy.” When Betty was 19, she saw three children and their mother die. An IRA fugitive was shot and killed by British soldiers, and then the car he was driving hit the mother and her children. Betty was walking nearby, heard the crash, and was the first on the scene. Within two days of the tragic event, she had obtained 6,000 signatures on a petition for peace and gained media attention. This was the beginning of her quest for peace.

## NOMINATION

Betty is a co-founder of the non-governmental worldwide organization called People for Peace. It is an organization dedicated to promoting peace and has played a part in helping move the Northern Irish people toward a peace process. She strongly believes the most effective way to end violence in the world today is not harsh actions, but through the re-education of the world’s youth. One of the declarations of the People for Peace states “We want for our children, as we want for ourselves, our lives at home, at work, and at play to be lives of joy and peace.” Betty lives in the Republic of Ireland with her two children.

Critics say she should not receive the Nobel Peace Prize because she was an active member of the IRA, an organization that used terrorist tactics. Some committee members also do not think she is a good candidate because her work is limited to Northern Ireland; but past winners of the Nobel Peace Prize have won because their work impacts the larger global community.

# SHIRIN

## BACKGROUND

Shirin was born in a town called Hamada in Iran. Despite the fact that Iran and other Islamic countries are dominated by men, Shirin graduated from Tehran University and was the first female judge in her country. She also served as president of the Tehran city court.

Married with two grown-up daughters, many people say she played a very important role in the reform of family laws in Iran by seeking changes in Iranian law. She has also come into conflict with the law in Iran on a personal level, and she was held in jail.



Shirin was forced to resign as a judge when Iranian religious officials insisted that Islam forbids women to be judges. Shirin went on to establish her own law practice, taking on many politically sensitive and unpopular cases. She says of her work: "Any person who pursues human rights in Iran must live with fear from birth to death, but I have learned to overcome my fear."

## NOMINATION

Shirin is a very good Iranian lawyer, human rights activist and is Iran's first Nobel Peace Prize nominee. She is an outspoken campaigner for democracy and greater rights for Iranian women and children. She established two non-governmental organizations in Iran - the Iranian Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child and the Center for the Defense of Human Rights. Her nominator states, "As a lawyer, judge, lecturer, writer and activist, she has spoken out clearly and strongly in her country, Iran, and far beyond." She wrote a law against the abuse of children, which was passed in Iran. She continues to work for human rights in Iran.

However, Shirin's work is limited to Iran and lacks the global impact often looked for in Nobel Peace Prize winners. Her nomination is thought by some observers to represent criticism of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. Iran has been viewed as an enemy of the U.S. after President Bush referred to Iran as being a part of the "axis of evil." No Muslim woman or Iranian has ever been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In Iran, conservatives and fundamentalists called her nomination a political act because she is an activist and a woman.