James Bryant Conant Biography

James Bryant Conant

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

James Bryant Conant Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

Biography

James Bryant Conant (1893-1978) was an American chemist, president of Harvard University, U.S. Ambassador and educational critic. He was an effective spokesman for the support of national policies by private and public scientific and educational institutions.

James Conant was born on March 26, 1893, in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Both his father's and his mother's families trace themselves back to 17th-century New England settlers. After graduating *magna cum laude* from Harvard College in 1914, Conant pursued graduate studies in organic chemistry and received his doctorate in 1916. During the next three years he served as instructor at Harvard, tried unsuccessfully to set up a private chemistry laboratory, and joined the Army's Chemical Warfare Service. Engaged in the secret production of poison gases, Conant advanced to the rank of major, belonging to the elite group of organic chemists who constituted the nucleus of a growing profession in universities, industry, foundations, and the armed forces.

Returning to Harvard, Conant was appointed assistant professor in 1919, associate professor in 1925, and professor in 1927. He served as chairman of the Division of Chemistry, as consultant to the Du Pont Company, and on the Board of Scientific Advisers of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. In 1933 he became president of Harvard University (until 1953). Following the policies of Harvard's recent presidents, Conant placed heavy emphasis on bringing talented students and faculty to Harvard. He devised interdisciplinary studies in American civilization and the history of science to improve the liberal education of the undergraduates. He sought to strengthen the graduate school of education by introducing the master of arts in teaching program.

In 1934 Conant joined the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. During World War II he directed the resources of Harvard in support of the war effort, and he himself became an adviser to the Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bomb. He was a member of the General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission from 1947 to 1952 and, after his retirement from Harvard in 1953, ambassador to West Germany from 1955 to 1957. Following that, from 1957 to 1959 he undertook a study of American secondary education for the Carnegie Foundation and thereafter served in various roles as educational consultant. He died on February 11, 1978 in Hanover, New Hampshire.