

Curiosity Guides The Human Genome John Quackenbush

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The DNA sequence that comprises the human genome—the genetic blueprint found in each of our cells—is undoubtedly the greatest code ever to be broken. Completed at the dawn of a new millennium, the feat electrified both the scientific community and the general public with its tantalizing promise of new and better treatments for countless diseases, including Alzheimer’s, cancer, diabetes, and Parkinson’s. Yet what is arguably the most important discovery of our time has also opened a Pandora’s box of questions about who we are as humans and how the unique information stored in our genomes can and might be used, making it all the more important for everyone to understand the new science of genomics. In the CURIOSITY GUIDE TO THE HUMAN GENOME, Dr. John Quackenbush, a renowned scientist and professor, conducts a fascinating tour of the history and science behind the Human Genome Project and the technologies that are revolutionizing the practice of medicine today. With a clear and engaging narrative style, he demystifies the fundamental principles of genetics and molecular biology, including the astounding ways in which genes function, alone or together with other genes and the environment, to either sustain life or trigger disease. In addition, Dr. Quackenbush goes beyond medicine to examine how DNA-sequencing technology is changing how we think of ourselves as a species by providing new insights about our earliest ancestors and reconfirming our inextricable link to all life on earth. Finally, he explores the legal and ethical questions surrounding such controversial topics as stem cell research, prenatal testing, forensics, and cloning, making this volume of the Curiosity Guides series an indispensable resource for navigating our brave new genomic world.

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The popular introduction to the genomic revolution for non-scientists—the revised and updated new edition Welcome to the Genome is an accessible, up-to-date introduction to genomics—the interdisciplinary field of biology focused on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of an organism’s complete set of DNA. Written for non-experts, this user-friendly book explains how genomes are sequenced and explores the discoveries and challenges of this revolutionary technology. Genomics is a mixture of many fields, including not only biology, engineering, computer science, and mathematics, but also social sciences and humanities. This unique guide addresses both the science of genomics and the ethical, moral, and social questions that rise from the technology. There have been many exciting developments in genomics since this book’s first publication. Accordingly, the second edition of Welcome to the Genome offers substantial new and updated content to reflect recent major advances in genome-level sequencing and analysis, and demonstrates the vast increase in biological knowledge over the past decade. New sections cover next-generation technologies such as Illumina and PacBio sequencing, while expanded chapters discuss controversial ethical and philosophical issues raised by genomic technology, such as direct-to-consumer genetic testing. An essential resource for understanding the still-evolving genomic revolution, this book: Introduces non-scientists to basic molecular principles and illustrates how they are shaping the genomic revolution in medicine, biology, and conservation biology Explores a wide range of topics within the field such as genetic diversity, genome structure, genetic cloning, forensic genetics, and more Includes full-color illustrations and topical examples Presents material in an accessible, user-friendly style, requiring no expertise in genomics Discusses past discoveries, current research, and future possibilities in the field Sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History, Welcome to the Genome: A User’s Guide to the Genetic Past, Present, and Future is a must-read book for anyone interested in the scientific foundation for understanding the development and evolutionary heritage of all life.

Race has provided the rationale and excuse for some of the worst atrocities in human history. Yet, according to many biologists, physical anthropologists, and geneticists, there is no valid scientific justification for the concept of race. To be more precise, although there is clearly some physical basis for the variations that underlie perceptions of race, clear boundaries among “ races ” remain highly elusive from a purely biological standpoint. Differences among human populations that people intuitively view as “ racial ” are not only superficial but are also of astonishingly recent origin. In this intriguing and highly accessible book, physical anthropologist Ian Tattersall and geneticist Rob DeSalle, both senior scholars from the American Museum of Natural History, explain what human races actually are—and are not—and place them within the wider perspective of natural diversity. They explain that the relative isolation of local populations of the newly evolved human species during the last Ice Age—when Homo sapiens was spreading across the world from an African point of origin—has now begun to reverse itself, as differentiated human populations come back into contact and interbreed. Indeed, the authors suggest that all of the variety seen outside of Africa seems to have both accumulated and started reintegrating within only the last 50,000 or 60,000 years—the blink of an eye, from an evolutionary perspective. The overarching message of Race? Debunking a Scientific Myth is that scientifically speaking, there is nothing special about racial variation within the human species. These distinctions result from the working of entirely mundane evolutionary processes, such as those encountered in other organisms.

It’s in Your DNA: From Discovery to Structure, Function and Role in Evolution, Cancer and Aging describes, in a clear, approachable manner, the progression of the experiments that eventually led to our current understanding of DNA. This fascinating work tells the whole story from the discovery of DNA and its structure, how it replicates, codes for proteins, and our current ability to analyze and manipulate it in genetic engineering to begin to understand the central role of DNA in evolution, cancer, and aging. While telling the scientific story of DNA, this captivating treatise is further enhanced by brief sketches of the colorful lives and personalities of the key scientists and pioneers of DNA research. Major discoveries by Meischer, Darwin, and Mendel and their impacts are discussed, including the merging of the disciplines of genetics, evolutionary biology, and nucleic acid biochemistry, giving rise to molecular genetics. After tracing development of the gene concept, critical experiments are described and a new biological paradigm, the hologenome concept of evolution, is introduced and described. The final two chapters of the work focus on DNA as it relates to cancer and gerontology. This book provides readers with much-needed knowledge to help advance their understanding of the subject and stimulate further research. It will appeal to researchers, students, and others with diverse backgrounds within or beyond the life sciences, including those in biochemistry, genetics/molecular genetics, evolutionary biology, epidemiology, oncology, gerontology, cell biology, microbiology, and anyone interested in these mechanisms in life. Highlights the importance of DNA research to science and medicine Explains in a simple but scientifically correct manner the key experiments and concepts that led to the current knowledge of what DNA is, how it works, and the increasing impact it has on our lives Emphasizes the observations and reasoning behind each novel idea and the critical experiments that were performed to test them

In 2000, President Bill Clinton signaled the completion of the Human Genome Project at a cost in excess of \$2 billion. A decade later, the price for any of us to order our own personal genome sequence—a comprehensive map of the 3 billion letters in our DNA—is rapidly and inevitably dropping to just \$1,000. Dozens of men and women—scientists, entrepreneurs, celebrities, and patients—have already been sequenced, pioneers in a bold new era of personalized genomic medicine. The \$1,000 genome has long been considered the tipping point that would open the floodgates to this revolution. Do you have gene variants associated with Alzheimer’s or diabetes, heart disease or cancer? Which drugs should you consider taking for various diseases, and at what dosage? In the years to come, doctors will likely be able to tackle all of these questions—and many more—by using a computer in their offices to call up your unique genome sequence, which will become as much a part of your medical record as your blood pressure.

This newly updated edition sheds light on the secrets of the sequence, highlighting the myriad ways in which genomics will impact human health for generations to come.

Inspired by an exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, explores microbes and their implications for modern science and medicine.

The #1 NEW YORK TIMES Bestseller The basis for the PBS Ken Burns Documentary The Gene: An Intimate History From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Emperor of All Maladies—a fascinating history of the gene and “ a magisterial account of how human minds have laboriously, ingeniously picked apart what makes us tick. ” (E!e), “Sid Mukherjee has the uncanny ability to bring together science, history, and the future in a way that is understandable and riveting, guiding us through both time and the mystery of life itself. ” —Ken Burns “ Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee dazzled readers with his Pulitzer Prize-winning The Emperor of All Maladies in 2010. That achievement was evidently just a warm-up for his virtuoso performance in The Gene: An Intimate History, in which he braids science, history, and memoir into an epic with all the range and biblical thunder of Paradise Lost. ” (The New York Times). In this biography Mukherjee brings to life the quest to understand human heredity and its surprising influence on our lives, personalities, identities, fates, and choices. “ Mukherjee expresses abstract intellectual ideas through emotional stories...[and] swaddles his medical rigor with rhapsodic tenderness, surprising vulnerability, and occasional flashes of pure poetry. ” (The Washington Post). Throughout, the story of Mukherjee ’ s own family—with its tragic and bewildering history of mental illness—reminds us of the questions that hang over our ability to translate the science of genetics from the laboratory to the real world. In riveting and dramatic prose, he describes the centuries of research and experimentation—from Aristotle and Pythagoras to Mendel and Darwin, from Boveri and Morgan to Crick, Watson and Franklin, all the way through the revolutionary twenty-first century innovators who mapped the human genome. “ A fascinating and often sobering history of how humans came to understand the roles of genes in making us who we are—and what our manipulation of those genes might mean for our future. ” (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel), The Gene is the revelatory and magisterial history of a scientific idea coming to life, the most crucial science of our time, intimately explained by a master. “ The Gene is a book we all should read. ” (USA TODAY).

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