



GLOBAL
EDITION



Essentials of Genetics

TENTH EDITION

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EVOLVING CONCEPT OF THE GENE



The Evolving Concept of the Gene is a unique feature, integrated into key chapters, which highlights how scientists' understanding of the gene has changed over time. By underscoring how the conceptualization of the gene has evolved, our goal is to help students appreciate the process of discovery that has led to an ever more sophisticated understanding of hereditary information.

CHAPTER 3 pg. 66 Based on the pioneering work of Gregor Mendel, the gene was viewed as a heritable unit factor that determines the expression of an observable trait, or phenotype. ■

CHAPTER 4 pg. 82 Based on the work of many geneticists following the rediscovery of Mendel's work in the very early part of the twentieth century, the chromosome theory of inheritance was put forward, which hypothesized that chromosomes are the carriers of genes and that meiosis is the physical basis of Mendel's postulates. In the ensuing 40 years, the concept of a gene evolved to reflect the idea that this hereditary unit can exist in multiple forms, or alleles, each of which can have an impact on the phenotype in different ways, leading to incomplete dominance, codominance, and even lethality. It became clear that the process of mutation was the source of new alleles. ■

CHAPTER 7 pg. 160 Based on the gene-mapping studies in *Drosophila* and many other organisms from the 1920s through the mid-1950s, geneticists regarded genes as hereditary units organized in a specific sequence along chromosomes, between which recombination could occur. Genes were thus viewed as indivisible "beads on a string." ■

CHAPTER 9 pg. 199 Based on the model of DNA put forward by Watson and Crick in 1953, the gene was viewed for the first time in molecular terms as a sequence of nucleotides in a DNA helix that encodes genetic information. ■

CHAPTER 18 pg. 383 Based on the work of the ENCODE project, we now know that DNA sequences that have previously been thought of as "junk DNA," because they do not encode proteins, are nonetheless often transcribed into what we call noncoding RNA (ncRNA). Since the function of some of these RNAs is now being determined, we must consider whether the concept of the gene should be expanded to include DNA sequences that encode ncRNAs. At this writing, there is no consensus, but it is important for you to be aware of these current findings as you develop your final interpretation of a gene. ■

CHAPTER 15 pg. 319 The groundbreaking work of Jacob, Monod, and Lwoff in the early 1960s, which established the operon model for the regulation of gene expression in bacteria, expanded the concept of the gene to include noncoding regulatory sequences that are present upstream (5') from the coding region. In bacterial operons, the transcription of several contiguous structural genes whose products are involved in the same biochemical pathway is regulated in a coordinated fashion. ■

CHAPTER 13 pg. 278 In the 1940s, a time when the molecular nature of the gene had yet to be defined, groundbreaking work of Beadle and Tatum provided the first experimental evidence concerning the product of genes, their "one-gene:one-enzyme" hypothesis. This idea received further support and was later modified to indicate that one gene specifies one polypeptide chain. ■

CHAPTER 12 pg. 260 The elucidation of the genetic code in the 1960s supported the concept that the gene is composed of a linear series of triplet nucleotides encoding the amino acid sequence of a protein. While this is indeed the case in bacteria and viruses, in 1977, it became apparent that in eukaryotes, the gene is divided into coding sequences, called exons, which are interrupted by noncoding sequences, called introns (intervening sequences), which must be spliced out during production of the mature mRNA. ■



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