
Contents

Introduction	ix
Chapter 1. Following Ariadne's Thread from Genetics to DNA	1
1.1. The birth of genetics	1
1.2. The foundations of a new science.	5
1.3. Gene, locus and genetic maps	7
1.4. Mutagenesis: first ideas on the material nature of the gene.	10
1.5. First ideas on gene products	13
1.6. The order of things and the elements of disorder.	14
1.7. Dissecting the invisible: allelism, cistron and the locus again	16
1.8. The DNA trail	19
1.9. Important ideas to remember	21
1.10. References.	21
Chapter 2. The Molecular Nature of Genes and Their Products	25
2.1. DNA and its replication	25
2.2. Permanence and alteration of DNA, mutations.	26
2.3. Protein synthesis and the central dogma of molecular biology.	28
2.4. The genetic code: how to read the genetic message	35
2.5. First paradigm of gene expression: the bacterial lactose operon.	40
2.6. Reverse transcription and retrogenes	43
2.7. Exons, introns and splicing: the first complexity of RNA life	44
2.8. Sequence editing: the second complexity of RNA life	51
2.9. RNA interference and epigenetics	52
2.10. Important ideas to remember.	56
2.11. References.	57

Chapter 3. Chromosomes and Reproduction	61
3.1. The “true” chromosomes	61
3.2. Sexual reproduction and alternating generations	63
3.3. Meiosis	65
3.4. Genetic determinism of sex	70
3.4.1. From gametes to sex	70
3.4.2. Sex determinism in animals	71
3.4.3. Sex determinism of brown algae	74
3.5. Clonal reproduction and its derivatives	75
3.6. The genetics of organelles	77
3.6.1. In unicellular eukaryotes	78
3.6.2. In humans and animals	78
3.6.3. In plants	79
3.7. Important ideas to remember	80
3.8. References	81
Chapter 4. From Genetic Engineering to Genomics	83
4.1. Restriction of DNA	83
4.2. Recombinant DNA and the birth of genetic engineering	85
4.3. Sequencing of biological macromolecules	87
4.4. The beginnings of genomics: the very first genome sequences	91
4.5. The trigger	92
4.6. The impact of the first real genomes	93
4.7. The human genome	96
4.8. New methods of genome sequencing and the current state of genomics	98
4.9. Important ideas to remember	100
4.10. References	101
Chapter 5. Uniqueness and Polymorphism of Genomes	103
5.1. The immensity of nucleic acid sequences	104
5.2. Components of genomes and their replication	105
5.3. A little perspective on the content of genomes	109
5.4. Traces of the past and driving forces for the future	112
5.5. Genes in genomes	117
5.6. Genes and genetic determinism	120
5.7. Natural populations: pan-, core-genomes and SNP	123
5.8. Population genomics	126
5.9. The genetics of genomes	127
5.10. Important ideas to remember	128
5.11. References	129

Chapter 6. Natural Dynamics and Directed Modifications of Genomes	131
6.1. The dynamics of genomes	131
6.2. Hereditary acquisitions	134
6.2.1. Transformation by DNA and horizontal gene transfer	134
6.2.2. Primary endosymbioses of eukaryotes	136
6.2.3. Viruses and transposable elements	137
6.3. Directed manipulations of genomes: principles and tools	139
6.4. Directed manipulations of genomes: applications	144
6.5. Important ideas to remember	146
6.6. References	147
Chapter 7. Of Genes and Humans	149
7.1. Ancient DNA and human history	150
7.2. Traces of the past in today's human genome	153
7.2.1. Adaptations to the world's regions	154
7.2.2. Adaptations to lifestyles	154
7.2.3. Adaptations to diseases	155
7.2.4. Maladaptation following past selections	156
7.2.5. Conclusion	157
7.3. Traces of past climates in the trees of our forests	157
7.4. The domestication of cultivated plants	159
7.4.1. Characteristics of domestication	160
7.4.2. The mutations that enabled domestication	162
7.5. Selection of livestock	163
7.6. Conclusion	167
7.7. Important ideas to remember	168
7.8. References	169
Chapter 8. Genetics and Human Health	173
8.1. "Mendelian" and multifactorial diseases, a continuum of complexity	174
8.2. Interpretation and use of DNA sequences	175
8.3. Autism	177
8.4. Gene therapy	178
8.5. The multiple genetic causes of cancers	181
8.6. Microbiota	184
8.7. Important ideas to remember	187
8.8. References	188
Chapter 9. Now and Tomorrow	191
9.1. A living world to be further explored	191
9.2. Genome synthesis	197

9.3. New lives	200
9.4. Important ideas to remember	203
9.5. References	203
Conclusion	207
Glossary	213
References	233
Index	235