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in biochemistry. A number of features make it flexible in approach: the first four introductory chapters could be covered very quickly as a review by an advanced audience, but they provide essential background for students with less experience in the biological sciences. In a similar vein, we have organized contextual and practical material (history, techniques, general cell biology background, and medical applications) into supplemental boxes. So that this book is useful to as wide a spectrum of students as possible, certain boxes represent a deeper analysis of a topic than will be needed for every course—labeled as “A closer look.” These insights can be bypassed for a more direct, compact course, but they are available to those instructors or students who wish to explore more deeply into the topic. An additional feature is our focus on references that cover cutting-edge techniques, like single-molecule methods, that allow true molecular insights. Every effort has been made to consult and refer to the most current work in every area.

With these devices, the text offers readable, essential coverage of the field. The book is organized as follows. We begin with two introductory chapters, first presenting the basic ideas and development of molecular biology and elements of genetics. There follow two more chapters detailing the substances under study: proteins and nucleic acids. These four chapters could be used for a brief review in an advanced course. The processes by which genetic information is expressed, regu-