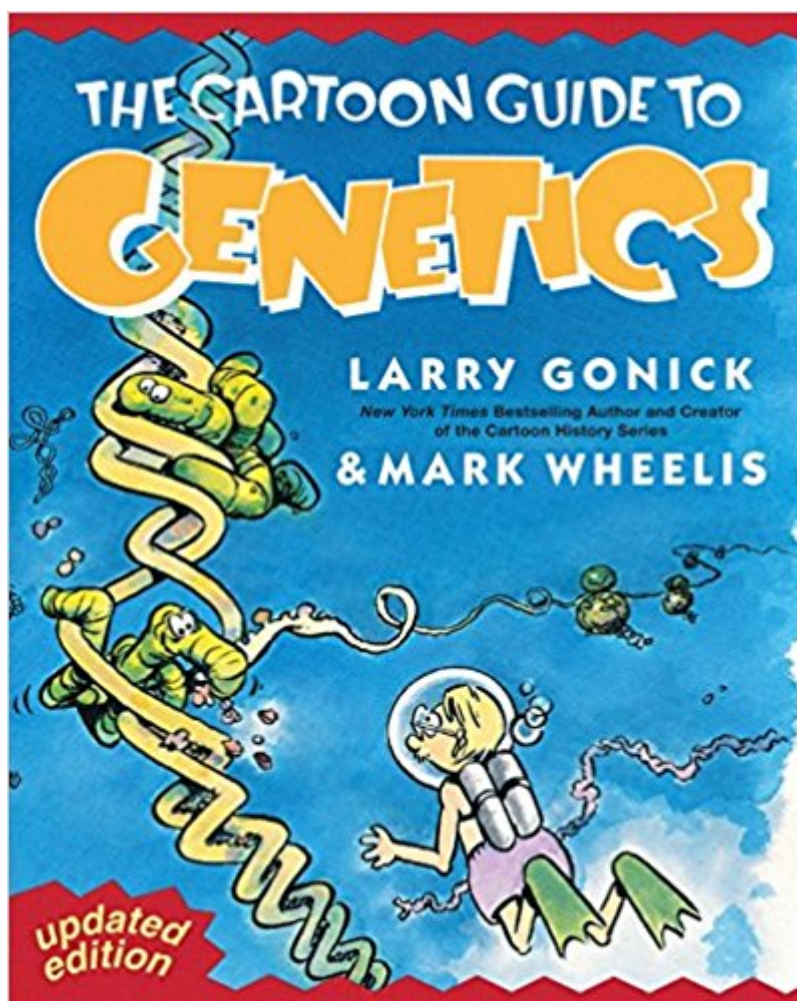


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# The Cartoon Guide To Genetics (Updated Edition)



## Synopsis

Have you ever asked yourself: Are spliced genes the same as mended Levis? Watson and Crick? Aren't they a team of British detectives? Plant sex? Can they do that? Is Genetic Mutation the name of one of those heavy metal bands? Asparagine? Which of the four food groups is that in? Then you need *The Cartoon Guide to Genetics* to explain the important concepts of classical and modern genetics. "It's not only educational, it's funny too!"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Having trouble deciphering your genetic code? Do dominant genes make you feel recessive? Let reigning nonfiction cartoonist Larry Gonick and microbiologist Mark Wheelis ease your way through Mendelian genetics, molecular biology, and the basics of genetic engineering. Gonick's drawings range from a moderately detailed look at ribosomes in action to loony pictures of dancing scientists, talking peas, and opinionated fruit flies. Matthew Meselson, co-discoverer of the "one gene-one protein" principle, says, "it puts textbooks to shame"--and he's right. --Mary Ellen Curtin

"If you can't learn Mendelian genetics from this text, I guess you never will."-- "New Scientist" "It puts textbooks to shame."-- Matthew Meselson, Professor of Biology, Harvard University

Another great overview/intro to a weighty subject by Mr. Gonick, who holds a degree in math from Harvard. I'm a substitute teacher, and use his books to give me a grounding in various subjects. I find many of the teachers I sub for are familiar with his book on their subject, and respect it. He has a

talent for explaining tough concepts in understandable ways.

"A picture is worth a thousand words". This book utilizes this idea to take you through from classical genetics to the current understanding of the field in a clear and precise, and sometimes funny, way. Although a casual reader with interest in the subject would love it, the subject matter is handled so comprehensively, that it could well serve as a good textbook on the subject.

This is a good book, but there are times when it could be a bit clearer. Sometimes the cartoon style gets in the way. Sometimes there's a sizable jump in thinking from section to section. Still, all in all, it's a good read for an introduction to the subject. I did like the Mendel treatment very much. A good story that's very illustrative of how the basics work. However, my main point in writing this review is that it could use a little updating. I have the "Updated" edition, which was written in 1991. It's 2005 and the references are way out of date. Check with to find out if the edition they are selling has a more recent set of references. Despite the age of the book, the material is pretty much independent of recent changes. Amino acids, proteins, Mendel, DNA are still the same today. Some reviewer mentioned that human gene count is out of date. 200,000 in the book vs 20-30K from recent data. OK, but the ideas are still the same. Nevertheless, a newer edition would be welcome. I would have given the book 4 stars, but the age took away one of the stars. It's now 2011, and I've occasion to come back to this book. The reason being I came across the Khan Academy of educational videos on the web, and available on YouTube. There is a complete set on genetics. Although, I've only watched two of the set, I'd definitely suggest the set as a good starting point for those who want to learn more about genetics. I think Khan himself adds more to the story that's missing here. I have no college training in biology, but in the 2 or 3 intro books I'm aware of on genetics, there seems to be a difference in how one approaches the modern part of genetics. Things have certainly changed since Cartoon was published.

I am a biomedical science student who just happened to never take any sort of molecular biology or genetics as an undergraduate, so I basically managed to limp through my advanced courses in said subjects. I wish I had a little resource like this, since it was presented in a quick, easy-to-read, and humorous manner. The concepts were essentially all basics that I do understand, by now; however, it was still valuable to receive a general sense of how the concepts evolved. The Cartoon Guide to Genetics plays out like a storybook of history, outlining how we came to understand certain molecular biological concepts. All in all, it took me about two hours of nonstop reading, if that (I was

engaged so much I didn't even notice the time), and I feel I received a bit of edification in the realm of genetics, especially so far as homologous recombination goes! If I had this book when I was taking my advanced course, I feel I could have properly engaged the material, since it builds a decent little foundation. I was a little disappointed not to have any mention about more complicated aspects of inheritance like non-Mendelian genetics. It's small kibble, though. I feel if you are an undergraduate taking your basic biology courses, then this book can only help you out. It was a fun little read that presented its material in a non-threatening way.

My wife works in Genetics and is constantly confusing me with all of the terminology. Bill Gates recommends the Cartoon Guide to Statistics and while looking at that I finally came across this and thought I'd give it a try. And I'm really glad that I did. The information is introduced relatively gradually, giving you enough time to figure out how things fit together, but it's so clearly explained that you move through the book in no time. You could probably read it in a day and come out knowing way more than you did at breakfast. I kind of blown away by how easily I've picked up so much information so quickly. Highly recommended.

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