

# Reference Books

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Editor

**Biotechnology: Changing Life through Science.** Ed. by K. Lerner and Brenda W. Lerner. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007. 3 vols. alkaline \$181 (ISBN 978-1-4144-0151-5).

This work is an introductory overview of current issues in biotechnology for a lay audience, particularly young students. The three volumes are arranged into the categories of medicine (health applications), agriculture (food, nature, and the environment), and industry (industrial uses). Each volume begins with the same historical timeline chart starting at 1947 and the same long glossary titled "Words to Know." The alphabetical index has extensive cross-references for all three volumes and also appears in each volume.

This work is intended to motivate students toward the study of science, to enhance their thinking skills, and to assist them in their ability to evaluate news and issues in biotechnology and ethics. For those purposes, the definitions of complex issues in genetics and advanced scientific principles have been simplified into everyday language, with an emphasis on real-world applications of biotechnology. There are numerous illustrations and photographs, all in color. The text is in large print and easy to read.

Entries average four to five pages in length. Each topical entry contains a highlighted blue box with an extra vignette of related subject trivia or a historical tidbit meant to pique the curiosity of the younger reader. For example, the topical entry for "Genetic Discrimination" includes a brief commentary on "China's Eugenics Law," and the entry for "Soap-Making" contains a factoid that "People in the late Middle Ages did not bathe with soap." Each entry then presents "Words to Know" for that specific topic; references to additional resources, including Internet sites; and related topics. Also included are biographies of prominent scientists in the field of biotechnology. As this work is intended for a younger audience, the single WorldCat record classifies this set for juveniles. However, this work does an excellent job of presenting a clear overview of current biotechnology for both the adolescent and the uninformed adult reader.

Biotechnology before the 1970s was primarily used in the food industry and can be dated back to the Mesopotamians brewing beer. Since the 1970s, the term has become more encompassing. The United Nations defines biotechnology as "covering applications of indigenous and/or scientific knowledge to the management of microorganisms, or of cells and tissues of higher organisms, so that these supply goods and services of use to human beings" ([www.biodiv.org/convention/convention.shtml](http://www.biodiv.org/convention/convention.shtml); Article 2. Use of Terms, 2006). At the time of this review, a search in WorldCat for biotechnology works retrieved 13,097 cataloging records. Of those, 74 were popular works cataloged for "biotechnology," and 103 were

popular works on "genetic engineering." Most of these related works are not intended for the lay audience. In addition, this area of research is evolving so quickly that publications even five years old are out of date.

Isolating some up-to-date, related works, Sharon Walker's *Biotechnology Demystified* (McGraw-Hill, 2007) is a self-teaching guide to basic concepts and fundamentals of all major topics of biotechnology, including the basics of molecular and cellular biology, DNA, reproductive cloning, experimental procedures, infectious diseases, drugs, and genetic disorders. At the end of the book you can take an exam and grade yourself. Eric S. Grace's *Biotechnology Unzipped: Promises and Realities* (rev. 2d ed., Joseph Henry Pr., 2006) is for the lay audience and contains overview chapters covering health, environmental concerns, biotech applications, and the latest studies and issues in biotechnology. Grace discusses ethical repercussions and public concerns to show the tradeoffs between the biotech industry and the public good. Michael Fumento's *B I O Evolution: How Biotechnology Is Changing Our World* (Encounter Books, 2003) fills in the gaps for a lay audience incapable of keeping up with the rapidly expanding areas of biotechnology. Fumento's work is criticized both for not being scientific enough and for not citing primary scientific literature. It also is criticized as being overly optimistic that biotechnology will solve the world's problems and ignoring the potential for disaster. Last, Aluizio Borem's *Understanding Biotechnology* (Prentice Hall, 2003) is the oldest publication discussed. Much like *Biotechnology: Changing Life through Science*, Borem presents the increasingly profound impact biotechnology is having on human health, agriculture, the environment, and society. It's an introductory work balanced between nonspecialists and professionals. Unfortunately, it uses technical language that the lay audience won't understand.

As an entry-level work, *Biotechnology: Changing Life through Science* is highly recommended for high school and public libraries. As long as it is understood that this work is intended for a non-science audience, this work could find a home in academic libraries for the non-science majors as well.—David M. Fagerstrom, Faculty Director, Science Library, University of Colorado, Boulder

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**Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II.** By Karl Jr. DeRouen and Uk Heo. Denver: ABC-CLIO, 2007. 2 vols. alkaline \$195 (ISBN 978-1-85109-919-1).

Written for the academic specialist and the general reader alike, *Civil Wars of the World* analyzes forty-one major intra-state conflicts that took place between 1946 and 2001 and that conform to the definition of civil war advanced by Yale political scientist Nicholas Sambanis in the December 2004 issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* ("What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition"). Arranged in alphabetical order from "Afghanistan (1978–1992)" to "Zimbabwe (1972–1979)," the analytical essays, averaging twenty pages, form the work's core section, "Civil Wars of the World."

## SOURCES

Each essay begins with a brief introduction followed by a description of the country's geography, economy, population, and political system leading up to the outbreak of civil war. Analysis of the civil war, or successive civil wars, as the case may be, focuses on the conflict's background and immediate cause; discussion of the parties involved; their aims, tactics, territorial pursuits, supporters and opponents; duration of the conflict; any attempts to mediate or manage the conflict; and the conflict's eventual outcome. Sobering details of body counts, internally displaced persons, and cross-border refugees make the human cost of each civil war all too clear.

Essays are signed, with the qualifications of the essayist given at the beginning of both volumes. Essays conclude with a chronology of the major events in the civil war, a list of any acronyms or abbreviations used in the essay, and a list of references. Many essays also include a glossary of terms, description of organizations, and definition of concepts. Maps, sidebars, and black-and-white photographs illustrate the encyclopedia.

A fifty-three-page "Regional Analysis" in volume one surveys "The Insurgents," "Geography and Tactics," "Causes of the Wars," "Outcomes," and "Conclusion" in Asian, European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, North African, and sub-Saharan African conflicts. This survey assists the reader to place the forty-one major civil wars forming the heart of *Civil Wars of the World* into geographic context.

*Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II* offers a uniquely specialized and qualified approach to the study of post-World War II intrastate conflict that is without equal both in its restrictive application of what constitutes a major conflict and in the ensuing depth of analysis that restriction affords each civil war so defined. By contrast, *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II* in four volumes, edited by James Ciment (2d ed., Sharpe Reference, 2007), has no such restriction and, consequently, includes in its pages intrastate conflicts (Haiti, for example) that do not qualify by the Sambanis definition as a civil war. The same is true of *World Conflicts and Confrontations*, the four-volume reference work (Salem Pr., 2000) edited by Charles F. Bahmueller for middle and high school students.

*Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II* is highly recommended for college and university libraries and for special libraries associated with political and military establishments. It also is available as an electronic book.—Sally Moffitt, *Bibliographer, History, Political Science, Philosophy, African-American Studies, Asian Studies, Judaic Studies, Latin American Studies, Women's Studies, Langsam Library, University of Cincinnati, Ohio*

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**Drugs and Sports.** By Fred C. Pampel. Library in a Book Set. New York: Facts On File, 2007. 288p. alkaline \$45 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6575-2).

Drugs and other performance enhancers have been used for hundreds of years by athletes, contributing to the downfall and even death of many fine athletes. This newest book in the

Library in a Book series is an excellent source for undergraduate research on this very popular topic in high schools and colleges. Providing an easy-to-read overview that emphasizes the seriousness of the problem in sports, this book details how doping has affected not only famous athletes, such as bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger, but also high school students looking to outperform their friends and rivals. Starting with an overview, then continuing with a chronology of important events, this source provides a wealth of information for students to draw from for a research paper on any sport. A glossary of terms, biographical listing, a fully annotated bibliography, and a complete index make it simple for the novice researcher to find information. Organizations and agencies are listed for further research, and helpful appendixes include such things as the Anabolic Steroid Act of 1990 and 2004 and a research report on anabolic steroids.

There are many books, such as Gail B. Stewart's *Drugs and Sports* (Greenhaven, 1998) and Elizabeth Ann Nelson's *Coping with Drugs and Sports* (Rosen Publ. Group, 1999), that are written with a young audience in mind, but Pampel's book is the best place to start on this topic. As with all books in the Library in a Book series, this addition will be useful in high school, public, and academic libraries.—Diane J. Turner, *Senior Instructor, Auraria Library, University of Colorado at Denver*

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**Encyclopedia of American Folklore.** By Linda S. Watts. Facts On File Library of American Literature Set. New York: Facts On File, 2007. 480p. alkaline \$65 (ISBN 0-8160-5699-4).

*Encyclopedia of American Folklore* is part of the Facts On File Library of American Literature series, which also includes American drama, short stories, and the Harlem Renaissance. This encyclopedia is a general treatment geared toward multiple audiences, including ninth- through twelfth-grade students and teachers, college students, librarians, folklorists, storytellers, and general readers.

American folklore is "transmitted traditional beliefs, myths, tales, language, practices and customs of the people of the United States whether that transmission takes place orally, observationally or through writing about such lore" (vii). Folklore is still clearly relevant for today and exists even if we do not specifically name it so. In her "Why Study Folklore?" introduction, the author wisely focuses on the tragic events on September 11, 2001. The makeshift memorials, recountings from survivors, and other representations are examples of modern folklore.

The emphasis in this work is on verbal (narrative) folklore. The main body of the book consists of alphabetically arranged entries. Entry length is naturally limited due to the general nature of the treatment and space considerations for a one-volume work. There are ample "see" references for synonyms and closely related concepts in the book itself. There is a generous back-of-the-book index. Other sections include "Starting Points for Researching American Folklore," which outlines steps for research by explaining question for-