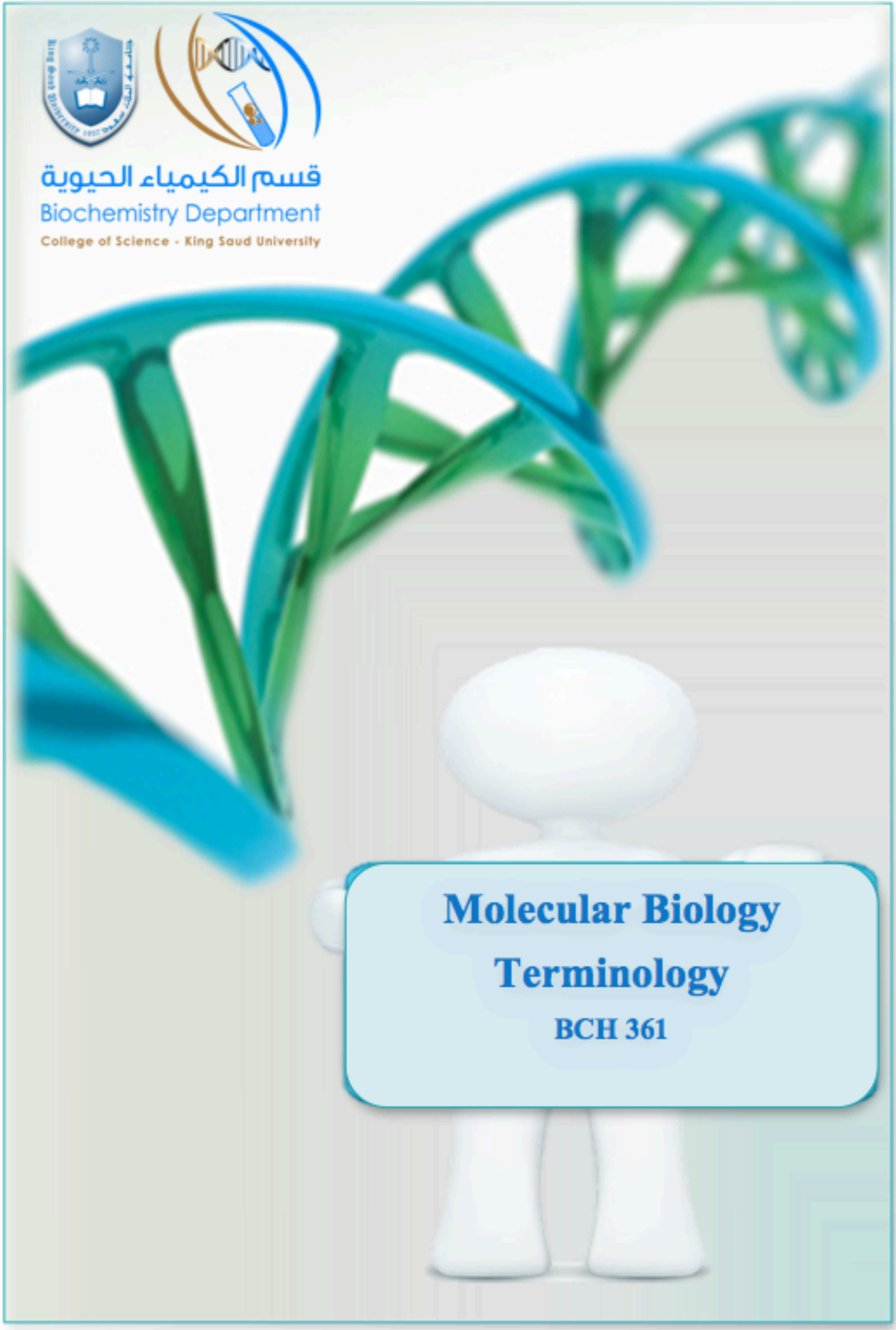
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Molecular Biology
Terminology
BCH 361

MOLECULER BIOLOGY TIMELINE

Gregor Mendel's (1865) Three Laws of Inheritance

Friedrich Miescher (1869) identified DNA & called it nuclein

Thomas H. Morgan (1910) discovered genes on chromosomes

Beadle & Tatum (1941) One gene-one enzyme

Avery, Mcleod & McCarty (1944)
DNA is genetic material

Edwin Chargaff (1950)
Found that C complements G and A complements T

Watson, Crick, Franklin &Wilkins (1953)
Structure of DNA

Brenner, Jacob & Meseleson (1961)
Discovery of mRNA

CONTINUE

1956 — Central Dogma; Crick & Gamov

1966 — Finished unraveling the code; Nirenberg & Khorana

1972 — Recombinant DNA made in vitro; P. Berg

1973 — DNA cloned on a plasmid; H. Boyer & S. Cohen

1973 — Discovery of reverse transcriptase; H. Temin

1977 — Rapid DNA sequencing; F. Sanger & W. Gilbert

1977 — Discovery of split genes; Sharp, Roberts et al.

1982 — Discovery of ribozymes; T. Cech & S. Altman

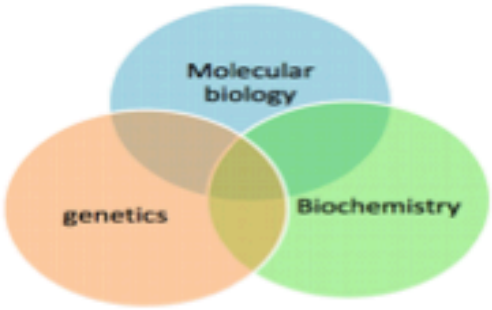
1986 — Creation of PCR; K. Mullis et al.

2001 — Human Genome Project; Venter, Collins and others

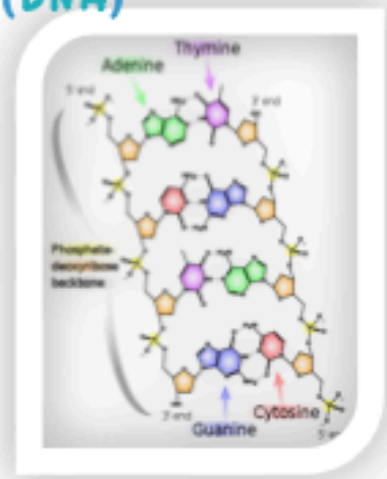
TERMINOLOGY

Molecular biology is the branch of biology that deals with the molecular basis of biological activity. It concerns itself with understanding the interactions between the different types of DNA, RNA and protein biosynthesis as well as learning how these interactions are regulated.

This field overlaps with other areas of biology, genetics and biochemistry.



DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID (DNA)



It is a nucleic acid containing the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms.

DNA consists of two long polymers of simple units called nucleotides, each composed of deoxyribose, phosphate group and a nitrogenous base (adenine, thymine, cytosine and guanine). Phosphodiester bonds link these successive nucleotides.

RIBONUCLEIC ACID (RNA)

Three varieties of RNA are easily identified in the mammalian cell. They are rRNA, mRNA and tRNA.

Most abundant is ribosomal RNA (rRNA), which occurs in two sizes, 28S and 18S together they form the basic core of the eukaryotic ribosome.

Messenger RNA (mRNA) is the RNA that carries information from DNA (transcription) to the ribosome, the sites of protein synthesis (translation) in the cell.

Transfer RNA (tRNA) is the form of RNA used to shuttle successive amino acids to the growing polypeptide chain. A tRNA molecule contains an anti-codon, a three-nucleotide sequence by which the tRNA molecule recognizes the codon contained in the mRNA template.

Genome

It is a large sequence of DNA that provides the complete set of hereditary information carried by the organism.

It includes chromosomal and organelle (mitochondrial and chloroplast) DNA.

Chromatin

Chromatin is the combination of DNA and proteins that make up the contents of the nucleus of a cell.

It is found in two varieties: **euchromatin** and **heterochromatin**. Originally, the two forms were distinguished cytologically by how intensely they stained .

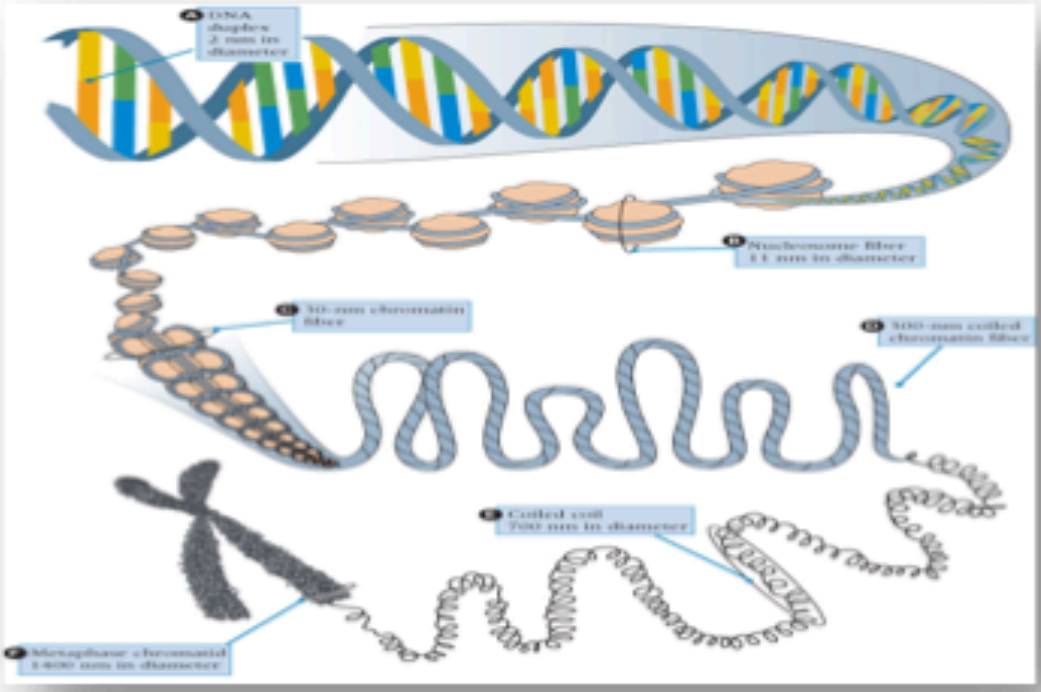
Euchromatin is less intense, while **heterochromatin** stains intensely, indicating tighter packing.

Chromosome

It is a discrete unit of the genome carrying many genes.

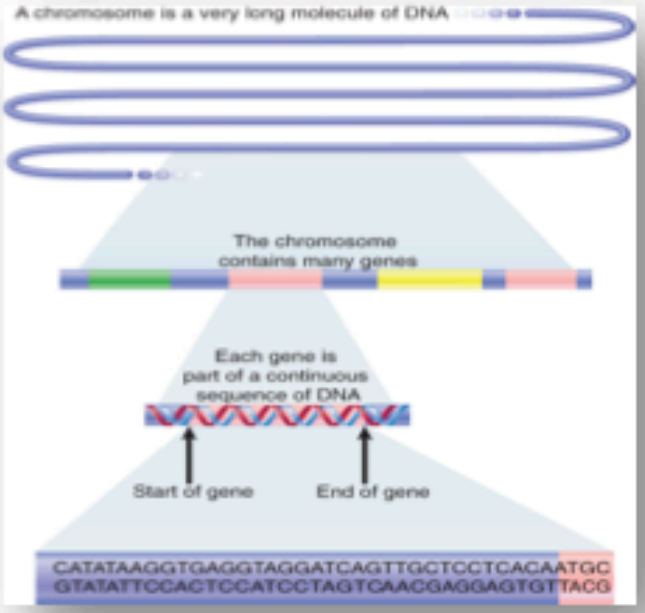
Telomere

A repeating structure found at the end of chromosomes, serving to prevent recombination with free-ended DNA. Telomeres of sufficient length are required to maintain genetic integrity, and they are maintained by telomerase.



Gene

It is the molecular unit of heredity of a living organism. Genes hold the information to build and maintain an organism's cells and pass genetic traits to offspring.



Locus

on a chromosome It is the location of agene.

Alleles

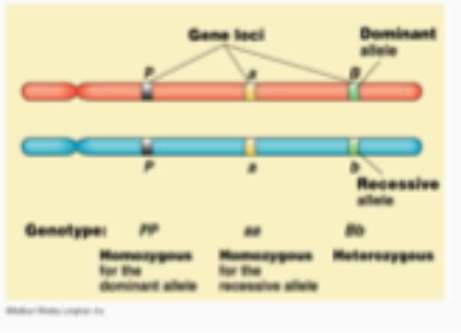
Are different forms or variants of a gene.

Homozygous

When a cell contain identical alleles of a gene

Heterozygous

When a cell contain two different alleles of a gene



Genotype

It is the genetic makeup of an organism.

Phenotype

It is the observable expression of the genotype.

Evolution

It is the change in the inherited characteristics of biological populations over successive generations.

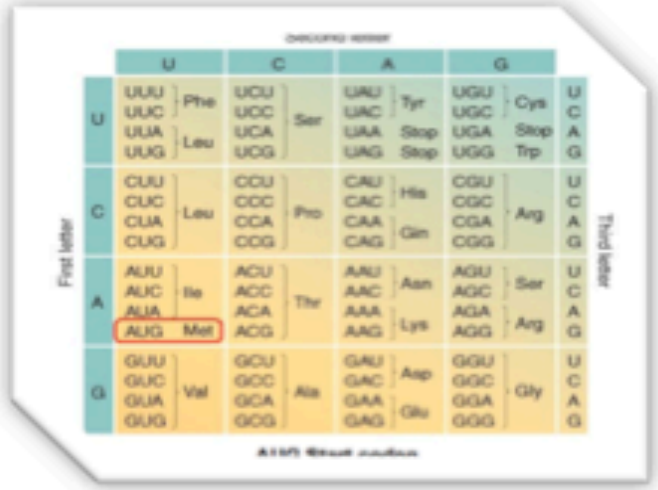
Transcription

Transcription is the act of generating a primary **RNA** molecule from the double-stranded **DNA** gene.
The enzyme **RNA** polymerase is the key feature of the system, which acts to generate the **RNA** copy of the gene in combination with a number of important proteins.

Codon

Three successive nucleotides on an **mRNA** that encode a specific amino acid in the polypeptide.

Sixty-one codons encode the 20 amino acids and three codons signal termination of polypeptide synthesis.



Downstream and Upstream

Downstream is the region towards the 3' end of the strand (**5' --> 3'**). While the **upstream** direction is (**3' --> 5'**)

Enhancer

It is a segment of **DNA** that lies either upstream, within, or downstream of a structural gene that serves to increase transcription initiation from that gene.

Silencer

These elements are very similar to enhancers except that they have the function of binding proteins and inhibiting transcription.

Promoter

A specific short sequence on DNA at which RNA polymerase attaches and initiates transcription at the beginning of the transcription unit.

Terminator

A specific short sequence on DNA at which RNA transcription ends (the end of the gene).

Transcription factor

A protein that can recognize the promoter region, especially a TATA box, and bind to it, then, RNA polymerase attach to it in order to start transcription.

Exons

These are the regions of the primary RNA transcript that, following splicing forms the mature mRNA species, which encodes polypeptide sequence.

Introns

These are the regions of the primary RNA transcript that are eliminated during splicing. Their precise function is uncertain. However, several transcriptional regulatory regions have been mapped to introns.

Splicing

It is a process that brings the exons together while introns are removed from the primary RNA transcript.

Polyadenylation

Following transcription of a gene, a specific signal near the 3' end of the primary transcript (AATAAA) signals that a polyadenine tail be added to the newly formed transcript.

It plays a role in stability of the mRNA and perhaps in its metabolism through the nuclear membrane to the ribosome.

Protein translation

This term is applied to the assembly of a polypeptide sequence from mRNA.

Initiation codon

The ATG triplet is used to begin polypeptide

Open Reading Frame (ORF)

The term given to any stretch of a chromosome that could encode a polypeptide sequence