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About Life

Concepts in Modern Biology

This book uses modern biological knowledge to tackle the question: "What distinguishes living organisms from the non-living world?" In the first few chapters, the authors draw on recent advances in cell and molecular biology to develop an account of the "living state" that applies to all organisms, but only to organisms. Subsequent chapters use this account to explore questions about evolution, the origin of life and the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Towards the end of the book the authors consider human evolution, intelligence and the extent to which our species can be regarded as biologically unique. About Life is written as far as possible in non-technical language; all scientific terms are explained straightforwardly when they are introduced. It is aimed at the general, non-specialist reader, but the novel approach that it takes to general issues in biology will also interest students of the life sciences.

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