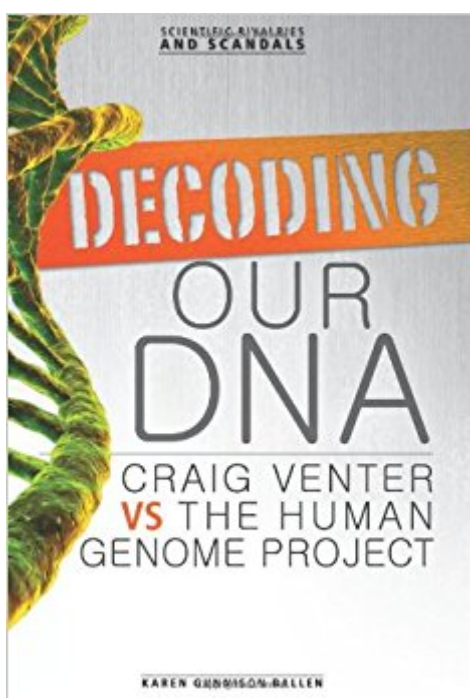


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# Decoding Our DNA: Craig Venter Vs The Human Genome Project (Scientific Rivalries And Scandals)



## Synopsis

In the mid-1980s, some geneticists proposed a daring project to sequence the human genome. That meant figuring out the exact order of the three billion chemical pairs that make up human DNA. Sequencing the human genome could help scientists understand how our bodies work and help doctors diagnose, treat, and prevent certain diseases. The Human Genome Project launched in 1990, with scientists around the world collaborating on the research. They worked slowly and methodically, trying to produce the most accurate information possible. By 1991 one of these scientists, Craig Venter, became fed up with the HGP's slow pace. He challenged the HGP to move faster and started his own company to compete with the HGP. Racing neck and neck, the two organizations reached their goal years ahead of schedule. But the challenge also led to a bitter public argument, especially over who could use the sequence and how. This book reveals how ambition, persistence, ego, greed, and principle combined--often with explosive results--in the quest to decode our DNA.

## Book Information

Series: Scientific Rivalries and Scandals

Library Binding: 64 pages

Publisher: Twenty-First Century Books (August 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0761354891

ISBN-13: 978-0761354895

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 6.2 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,604,568 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in [Books > Teens >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up-These books showcase major scientific developments and the brutal competition behind the scenes. They are highly engaging accounts of researchers resorting to cheap shots, spying, and double crossing to take credit for pivotal discoveries. But they are also disturbing documentation of how ego can trump the greater good, as in the battle between Luc Montagnier and Robert Gallo over the discovery of the virus that causes AIDS. Proprietary arguments and fraud delayed progress

in its identification, which undoubtedly came at the cost of lives. Written cleanly and fluidly, these titles let the drama and occasional absurdity of the players' actions speak for themselves. Captioned photographs and diagrams correspond well to the texts, while sidebars contribute additional facts. In-depth time lines are the most noteworthy of the strong supplementary features. This fascinating set would be equally useful in history and science classrooms. (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

This slender volume from the Scientific Rivalries and Scandals series introduces the race to sequence the human genome, with scientists competing for possible fame, fortune, and a place in history. On one side, the players included James Watson, who first headed the U.S. branch of the international Human Genome Project, and Francis Collins, who followed him in that position. Researcher Craig Venter challenged the slow, methodical pace of their government-funded project by working on a privately funded venture to complete a similar project more quickly and patent the results. The small, rather crowded pages include some black-and-white photos as well as sidebars and pull quotes. Readers with a solid grounding in genetics may well become caught up in the narrative, which features professional rivalry as well as ethical concerns. Others may find themselves muddling through the vocabulary, acronyms, and explanations of technical points. Still, Ballen clearly lays out both sides of the issues as well as the story's eventual resolution. Grades 9-12. --Carolyn Phelan

Great shipping and a good read.

Gregor Mendel's observations of seemingly simple breeding experiments in the mid-1800s would have far reaching implications on how we view our genetic inheritance. When he observed the "different traits, such as round versus wrinkled peas," this led to the discovery of dominant and recessive units or genes. Later in the century microscopes further enhanced research as microscopes enabled scientists to view chromosomes, "long coiled strands of DNA" inside biological materials. Little did they know what they were looking at, but soon other scientists would discover the implications of these discoveries. Thomas Hunt Morgan's work with fruit flies and their genetic inheritance or genetic linkage fascinated one of his students, Alfred Sturtevant. Sturtevant subsequently "created the first genetic map," a discovery that Morgan dubbed "one of the most amazing developments in the whole history of biology." Work on genetics quietly progressed as scientists began to link and build on the work of their predecessors. Scientists in the early 1950s

"knew the basic components of DNA," but it wasn't until Rosalind Franklin, a British biophysicist, captured an "X-ray diffraction photo of a DNA molecule" that they knew the structure was a double helix. Franklin was neither acknowledged nor thanked for her work when three scientists won the Nobel prize for confirming the structure of DNA. Work once again progressed into the 1970s when genome sequencing began. No one could possibly know that debate and outright war would lie ahead for those striving to sequence the human genome. Patents and profits entered into the formula. You'll read and learn about the sequencing, the Human Genome Project (HGP), the genome shotgun technique, the Bermuda Accord, the "war" between biologist Craig Venter and geneticist Francis Collins, and you'll learn many other fascinating things about the rivalries and scandals surrounding the decoding of our DNA. This is an amazing overview of the science and the scientists behind the sequencing of the human genome. Many young people are familiar with Gregor Mendel and his study of the traits of different pea plants, however the history of genetics leading to the sequencing of the human genome is not as well known. The book starts out with the conflict surrounding "the crown jewel of twentieth century biology" and the scientists and debate surrounding its ownership, so to speak. This exciting introduction then goes back to Mendel and builds back up to the "genome war." The book was well-researched and will be a high interest book for those students interested in science. In the back of the book is an index, a timeline (1866 to 2012), a glossary, source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book, and website resources to explore.

Scientific Rivalries and Scandals  
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Decoding Our DNA: Craig Venter vs the Human Genome Project  
The Race to Discover the Aids Virus: Luc Montagnier vs Robert Gallo  
War of the Currents: Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla

This book courtesy of the publisher.

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