

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM
BY DAN H. SANES, THOMAS A. REH,
WILLIAM A. HARRIS**

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*Development
of the
Nervous System*

DAN H. SANES
THOMAS A. REH
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Review

"...a truly excellent text that will serve to excite new students in neuroscience and development for years to come...[The authors] imbue their text with enthusiasm, which combined with a scholarly and methodical review of the history of developmental neurology generates a shockingly easy to read and interesting text."

--Douglas Kerr, Johns Hopkins Hospital in **TRENDS IN NEUROSCIENCES** (May 2001)

"Clearly and accurately written, beautifully illustrated and thoughtfully organized, this book covers everything from neural induction to the ontogeny of behavior in a style that is easily accessible to students."

--RONALD W. OPPENHEIM, Ph.D.

Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy, Wake Forest University, Bowman Gray Medical School

"The book provides a scholarly review of the past and a carefully pruned view of the present. With relief, I can add that it is written in a clear, accessible style that students will appreciate."

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--JOHN L. BIXBY, Neuroscience Program, University of Miami, School of Medicine

From the Back Cover

Development of the Nervous System presents a broad outline of the principles of neural development as they are exemplified by key experiments and observations from past and recent times. The text is organized along a developmental pathway from the induction of the neural primordium to the emergence of behavior. It covers all the major topics that would form the basis of a comprehensive undergraduate curriculum including the patterning and growth of the nervous system, neuronal determination, axonal navigation and targeting, synapse formation and plasticity, and neuronal survival and death. The complete modernization of the field that has been achieved through the use of model organisms and the intensive application of molecular and genetic approaches to the field are also reflected in this new text. **Development of the Nervous System** is richly illustrated with original, artist-rendered drawings. These illustrations, combined with clear, concise writing make this a book that is well suited to serious students approaching this complex field for the first time.

Key Features

- * Synoptical coverage of concepts and experimental strategies
- * Easy-to-understand schematics of critical experiments
- * Molecular and genetic bases for many developmental events
- * Treatment of the field as an experimental rather than a descriptive science
- * Written with the undergraduate in mind

About the Author

Dan H. Sanes, New York University, New York, New York.

Thomas A. Reh, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

William A. Harris, University of Cambridge, U.K.

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Key Features

- * Provides a synopsis of concepts and experimental strategies
- * Includes designs of critical experiments that are easy to understand
- * Outlines the molecular and genetic bases for many developmental events
- * Presents new information on the function of the developing central nervous system
- * Richly illustrated with original drawings
- * Treats the field as an experimental rather than a descriptive science
- * Written at a level that is appropriate for undergraduates and beyond

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William A. Harris, University of Cambridge, U.K.

Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Easy to read, but keeps all the details!

By Kyla C.

This book makes it simple to read, so it doesn't take as long to get through chapters as other textbooks. It doesn't leave any details out, either, so it's really the best of both worlds.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

rich and detailed with beautiful illustrations

By Paul King

I purchased the second edition of this book and am thrilled with it.

The illustrations are some of the most beautiful and helpful that I have seen in any neuroscience textbook. The descriptions are clear, the mechanisms are systematically laid out, and research anecdotes are sprinkled throughout.

What is great about the developmental perspective is it helps you understand at an intuitive level that the brain is not a set of compartmentalized "brain areas" wired together like a digital computer. Instead, the brain is a complex 3-dimensional organ with a continuous structure that is the result of cell proliferation, tissue folding, and self-wiring.

The research anecdotes are helpful because they give you a sense for how dynamic and new developmental

neuroscience is as a field, and they show just how indirect the methods often need to be to uncover the processes of cellular differentiation and axonal wiring.

This book, especially with the illustrations and attached CDROM, truly seems to be a labor of love.

39 of 40 people found the following review helpful.

Decent content, but needs editing and is slightly confusing

By S. Nguyen

"Development of the Nervous System" is a textbook which appears to be an introductory text to the field. The textbook is supposed to be appropriate for undergraduates, however, as a biology graduate student with some previous exposure to neurobiology, I had some difficulties with the text because of some of the reasons mentioned below.

It was difficult not to be distracted by the numerous grammatical and spelling errors. There were so many of them (for example, 'roll' when the authors meant 'role' and 'spacial' instead of 'spatial'), I wondered if the text were ever edited.

Even without the mistakes in English, the textbook suffers from other flaws. One major problem is that the authors do not bother to explain basic terms or concepts before using them when describing experiments. For example, the authors never define the difference between 'afferent' and 'efferent' neuronal projections, but refer to the terms profusely. Ironically, one of the most common grammatical errors in the textbook was the use of 'effect' when the authors meant 'affect.'

A colleague of mine who borrowed the book from me remarked that the index was not very useful; I also noticed some mistakes in the index.

Having said that, one of the major strengths of the text is the organization of the chapters, which proceed logically from the earliest neural induction events to the behavior of a whole organism. The introductory paragraphs of each chapter are also well written; they relate the topics to something that should be tangible to everyone.

Another major strength is the introduction of concepts by discussing the experiments behind them. Importantly, the text describes experiments from many different model organisms and using a variety of techniques. Abundant figures accompany the text and sufficiently illustrate concepts and experiments.

The content of the textbook is decent, but to be more useful (especially as an introductory text), this textbook would benefit from:

- 1) editing for English
- 2) an improved, more thorough and accurate index
- 3) a glossary or definitions and explanations within the text
- 4) and perhaps side "boxes" explaining some of the experimental techniques discussed.

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