Prescott's Microbiology, Eighth Edition
DOI: 10.1128/jmbe.v11.i1.154


The eighth edition of the Prescott's series Microbiology was written for the second time by the able team of Willey, Sherwood and Woolverton. Again, they have presented a well-written, general microbiology text for the undergraduate science major. In keeping with the thematic prominence of topics begun in the first edition written by this literary team, the authors have emphasized the significance of evolution and microbial diversity, and have gracefully integrated these themes throughout the text.

Chapters are grouped into nine sections covering the traditional topics of microbial physiology, genetics, taxonomy, and ecology. Throughout the book, there has been appropriate updating of each section from the previous edition, especially those pertaining to microbial prominence in bioinformatics, molecular biology and clinical microbiology – making this edition a great comprehensive textbook.

As professor-educators, it is apparent that the authors have tried to prioritize the essential microbial elements
necessary to teach microbiology to science majors. Each chapter begins with a glossary, and moves quickly into cross-referenced content with notes. Each section has review questions, and chapters conclude with summaries and critical thinking questions to encourage problem analysis. Each chapter also has an excellent assortment of well-crafted illustrations, tables, charts, graphs and photographs.

A total of nine chapters have been devoted to a section presenting the diversity of the microbes. Each major taxonomic grouping is represented by a chapter that contains logical associations between metabolic components and their implications to genomic evolutionary features. This section is a more detailed presentation of the broader representation of microbial diversity found throughout the book.

This textbook has an exceptionally wide variety of supplemental materials that are provided by the publisher. These are very user-friendly, easily adaptable to most teaching styles, and are downloadable from a website. Supplemental materials include: artwork, PowerPoint lectures, animations, exam banks, critical questions, and end-of-chapter question results – all available through the online access site. A desirable feature of this edition is the “List of Changes” that gives instructors concise statements of revisions per chapter, making updates of teaching material quick and easy.

In addition to the supplemental materials, there are digital products that have been designed to provide web-based interactive programs to enhance the student learning through review study guides, links, flashcards and self-paced quizzes. Still greater flexibility is provided in the use of a web-based interactive platform known as Connect Microbiology. Connect Microbiology allows the instructor to reorganize the sequence of chapters and sections to their preferences. The entire text or part of it can be downloaded as an e-book, reducing the cost of the traditionally printed textbook. Instructors can utilize the class management features of Connect Microbiology to generate and record the self-paced practice quizzes integrated with grade reports and student tracking. These features are some of the many new aspects available through Connect Microbiology online.

I highly recommend adopting Prescott’s Microbiology, by Willey, et al. This book is well-written and beautifully-illustrated, contains supplemental materials that include links to an interactive website, and is adaptable to a wide variety of teaching styles.

Joanne J. Dobbins
Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky
E-mail: jjdobbins@bellarmine.edu