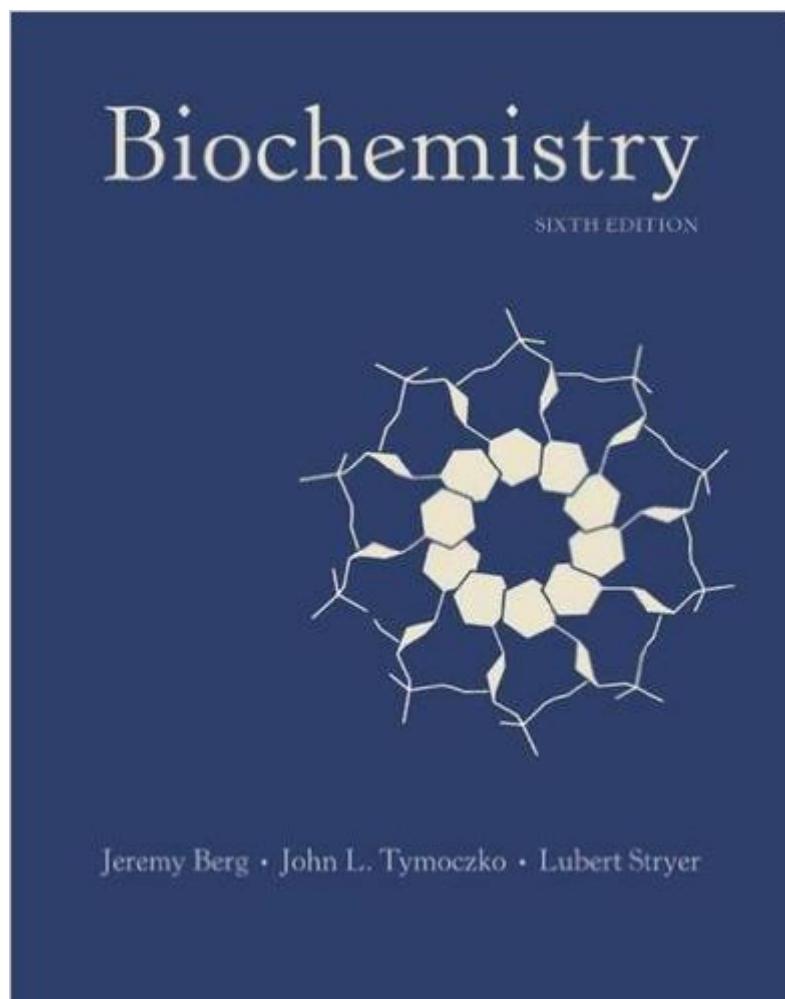


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Biochemistry, 6th Edition



Synopsis

In the new edition of Biochemistry, instructors will see the all the hallmark features that made this a consistent bestseller for the undergraduate biochemistry course: exceptional clarity and concision, a more biological focus, cutting-edge content, and an elegant, uncluttered design. Accomplished in both the classroom and the laboratory, coauthors Jeremy Berg and John Tymoczko draw on the field's dynamic research to illustrate its fundamental ideas.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are a lot of blatant errors with the seventh edition. I spent 20 minutes trying to figure out why equilibrium constant didn't match the answer given a specific free energy value. Comparing it to the sixth edition revealed that they forgot to add a constant in their equation. I wonder why this book has more errors and mistakes since its supposed to be an "updated" version.

I'm halfway through a biochemistry course using this book (Edition 6). I care about textbooks. Some really go the extra mile to make concepts accessible and memorable. Not this book. Berg et al are the opposite of exciting. They fail to provide emphasis and perspective that would help concepts stick. Read Richard Feynman's Physics series to see what exciting teaching is all about. He understands what is amazing and what deserves special treatment, use of analogies, etc. Berg et al use a very stodgy dry style, I think in an effort to avoid saying anything wrong, which is admirable. Feynman on the other hand is not afraid to make lively oversimplifications, and warns you he is, in

order to get the basic concept across. Then he slowly develops the concept to a more sophisticated level, sometimes leaving the original model behind, but that's OK because you take an intuitive path similar to the original scientists discovering the concepts. Berg et al on the other hand insist on a kind of "top-down" approach where often a subject is introduced with sentences thick with generalizations that make no sense (or only vague sense) until more specific examples or detail is developed later. A little top-down is ok if it is simple and gives you a roadmap. Berg et al do it heavy-handedly, often using terms which have not been defined, leaving you to thumb wildly through previous chapters wondering if you missed something. Top-down explanations are very appealing to writers who already know the material thoroughly. A best-kept-secret of teaching though is that bottom-up explanations (start with building blocks and work up to complex concepts) is really how powerful learning takes place. It's how the concepts were developed in the first place; it's how we learned in kindergarten. To be fair, my organic (and inorganic) chemistry background is weak, as perhaps with many biology students. Berg et al assume you know chemistry thoroughly, and that is understandable. But aside from that, the language and writing style is simply dense, dry, and requires you pay close attention to each word in the sentence so you don't misinterpret what is being said. Again, compare it to Feynman's writing. The concepts are not easy in his books, but you really feel caught up in his explanations. Using Berg/Stryer is exhausting, not what I admire in a textbook. I encourage students to make frequent trips to the index, as quick visits to later chapters may very well help you understand an earlier chapter better (for instance tRNA mechanisms). Or just read it back to front, it might flow better that way :) By the way, I agree with other reviewers that criticize the index as being mediocre (does not indicate where the prime definition of terms are), and in general the authors do not seem to understand the importance of defining terms clearly and emphatically prior to referencing them. I think often reviewers that give favorable reviews to books such as this already know the material so of course the sentences full of generalizations and undefined terms make perfect sense. However, the true value of a textbook is careful organization, defining of terms, making distinctions, building up of concepts out of simpler ideas, demystifying convoluted concepts, highlighting what is important, and clearly pointing out when simplified results of non-obvious concepts are employed (such as reaction rates, equilibrium constants). This book gets low grades for that kind of teaching. On the other hand, I've noticed that most biochemistry books just blast you with new substances, sentence after sentence, with little substantiating or clarifying logic, as if you are on a memorization marathon; so I can't suggest a better single alternative at this time. Someone needs to write a book with the approach of imparting a usable set of knowledge with some kind of theme (such as understanding mechanisms to fight cancer).

Perhaps the field is just so vast that one must wade in hip deep and muck around for several years until some light begins to dawn. I would like to believe a good book can be written with a building block approach. The book does get high grades for excellent summaries at the ends of the chapters and additional (but I've seen more) references. The authors take their duties very seriously to present correct and accurate information. They are just not the most gifted writer-teachers to come along. Actually, I should say not the most gifted "communicators", as they are highly competent writers, which in a way works against them. I will say it is a pleasure to find authors who use the word "comprise" correctly - kudos for that! As I reach the end of the course, which covered about 2/3 of the book, my opinion has not changed. Reading the book is tough sledding for me and I'm digging into basic chemistry, organic chemistry, and even physical chemistry (to better understand free energy concepts) to really get a feel for what drives these biochemical processes. I also am realizing that one probably would benefit greatly from some cellular biology to get a perspective on the metabolic processes described in this book. The mechanisms seem to appear magically out of nowhere, as if in a vacuum. I think real understanding will involve delving more into why certain things don't happen, how the processes are controlled, where the processes happen, etc. I can't overly criticize the presentation until I find a better alternative (but I have already been exposed to too much to look with fresh eyes again) -- perhaps the subject is just so incredibly vast that it requires many, many rereadings and additional texts -- but I just feel there must be a better way to make the concepts stick in an introductory book. It is a matter of style as well as organization. By the way, a book whose style I find pretty good is: *Modern Physical Organic Chemistry* by Eric V. Anslyn; Dennis A. Dougherty (Author). You can feel them trying to communicate. I have an old Morrison & Boyd organic chemistry textbook whose introductory chapters on stereoisomers, I feel, really developed the ideas from the ground up nicely.

This is a dry and elementary book. I've taken Biochemistry at two different schools; a State School in Missouri (Goooooo Tigers!) during my undergraduate, and "Jesuit Harvard," during my Graduate studies. My undergrad used Lehninger-- a textbook that will live in dry-and-prolix infamy. However, when it came time to take Biochem at the Graduate level, our Professor prescribed this book. And let me tell you-- it is childish compared to Lehninger. If you want to know the real answer and hate yourself for it, get Lehninger. If you want "Diet Biochemistry," get this one.

Some chapters are too dense for their own good and other chapters can throw out too much terminology leaving readers confused. If you don't have any previous experience with biochemistry

I'm not saying you should be scared of this book but you must use other references in addition to this one. For college course it would be easier to seek references on the internet and then consult this book for a better explanation if there is time to do so.

This is one of my favorite textbooks I have ever purchased. Beautiful binding, illustrations, and organized content. Excellent source for biochemical questions and absolutely packed full of information.(This wasn't even a required course for me, but the book is amazing regardless.)

Most biochem teachers don't like textbooks; they usually prefer to write or use their own material. But it seems a large majority of biochem teachers can agree this one is possibly the best biochem textbook out there. Biochem is dense and difficult as it is, but this book did a pretty good job of explaining things.

This book is probably at graduate or medical school level. It was way too advanced for my Intro Biochem (BI 230) course, although I'm not complaining because the book was helpful in pushing me to understand the concepts at a deeper level. I will have to use the same book for my 400 level Biochem courses anyway.

Pretty good book considering the amount of information it has to cover. It does not have a glossary, and it does not bolden key words (it does italicize them though). This can be a pain. I've read better Chem books that break the material down in a more reader-friendly way. For example, it does not do a terrific job in tying in glycolysis, the citric acid cycle, and oxidative phosphorylation together. The different photos cover specific topics in good detail though. I have this book on kindle. It has been great in e-form. I don't recommend this book in paper unless you have difficulty with e-readers and are willing to pay extra.

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