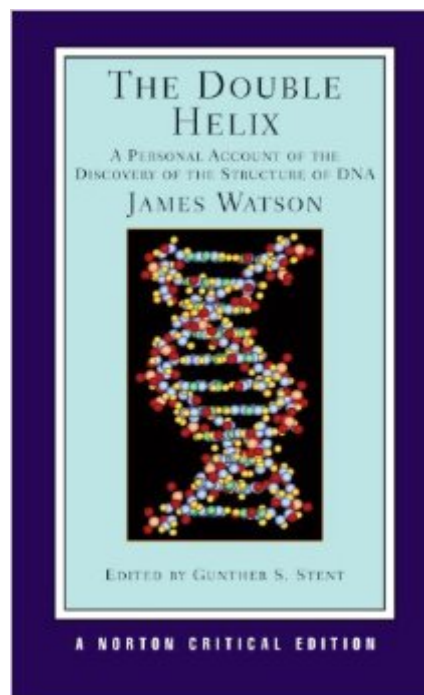


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# The Double Helix: A Personal Account Of The Discovery Of The Structure Of DNA (Norton Critical Editions)



## Synopsis

Since its publication in 1968, *The Double Helix* has given countless readers a rare and exciting look at one highly significant piece of scientific research—Watson and Crick's race to discover the molecular structure of DNA. In this Norton Critical Edition, Watson's lively and irreverent account is placed in historical perspective by Gunther Stent's introduction and by retrospective views from two major figures in the adventure, Francis Crick and Linus Pauling, and by Rosalind Franklin's last student, Aaron Klug. Background materials include reproductions of the original scientific papers in which the double helical structure of DNA was first presented in 1953 and 1954. In *Criticism*, which begins with "A Review of the Reviews" by Gunther Stent, other scientists and scholars reveal their own experiences and views of Watson's story. There are reviews by Philip Morrison, F. X. S., Richard C. Lewontin, Mary Ellmann, Robert L. Sinsheimer, John Lear, Alex Comfort, Jacob Bronowski, Conrad H. Waddington, Robert K. Merton, Peter M. Medawar, and André Lwoff; as well as three letters to the editor of *Science* by Max F. Perutz, M. H. F. Wilkins, and James D. Watson.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

XXXXXIn this book (first published in 1968), "Honest Jim" (as a scientist friend called him) or Dr. James Dewey Watson has explained his "version of how the structure of DNA was discovered" and "this account represents the way [he] saw things then, in [the fall of] 1951 [to the spring of] 1953." (The discovery was announced in April 1953.) That is, he has "attempted to re-create [his] first

impressions of the relevant events and personalities" that he encountered along the way to making the discovery. Thus, understand this is not a book of historical facts. Also, because of the personal nature of this book Watson states that "many of the comments [that he makes] may seem one-sided and unfair, but this is often the case in the incomplete and hurried way in which human beings decide to like or dislike a new idea or [a new] acquaintance." This book revolves around five main people: (1) Dr. Francis Crick (1916 to 2004) of the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, England (2) Dr. James Watson (born 1928) also of the Cavendish Laboratory (3) Dr. Rosalind Franklin (1920 to 1958) of King's College, a division of the University of London (4) Dr. Maurice Wilkins (1916 to 2004) also of King's College (5) Dr. Linus Pauling (1901 to 1994) of the California Institute of Technology. However, along the way the reader meets many other people, both scientists and non-scientists. As Watson explains, the above five people are in a "race" to discover DNA's structure. However, I got the impression that neither Franklin nor Wilkins knew they were in a race. By the end of the race, Watson was "one of the winners" who shared the Nobel Prize in 1962 with Crick and Wilkins.

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