

Discussion Questions

The Code Breaker

1. Overall, what did you think of this book?
2. Do you think the author did a good job of explaining the scientific developments that led to the discovery of CRISPR biotechnology in a way that made it easy for non-scientists to understand?
3. What do you think of Jennifer Doudna?
4. The book focuses on Doudna, but also introduces many other scientists involved in this research that are contributing in other ways. Did any stand out to you in particular? Can you see another book being written about one of these other scientists?
5. What ethical and moral considerations have to be made with the introduction of this revolutionary scientific research?
6. What are your thoughts on the choices that parents may have to make in the future on gene-editing for their future children? Where do you draw the line between gene-editing for “treatments” to genetic abnormalities versus gene-editing for enhancements?
7. What are the humanistic considerations of CRISPR technology? Do you see any benefit of being inflicted by some of these diseases like sickle-cell anemia that have the ability to be edited from our genes in the future with the CRISPR technology?
8. What are the implications of this scientific development for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in this book? How will this research serve those that have been historically underserved in the medical community?
9. What stance does the author take on these moral issues?
10. What have you learned after reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective?