

Genetics: What is a gene?

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1. Helen Pearson is a reporter working for Nature in New York.

[Top of page](#)

Abstract

The idea of genes as beads on a DNA string is fast fading. Protein-coding sequences have no clear beginning or end and RNA is a key part of the information package, reports Helen Pearson.

'Gene' is not a typical four-letter word. It is not offensive. It is never bleeped out of TV shows. And where the meaning of most fourletter words is all too clear, that of gene is not. The more expert scientists become in molecular genetics, the less easy it is to be sure about what, if anything, a gene actually is.

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v441/n7092/full/441398a.html>