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## Review of Memmler's The Human Body in Health and Disease, 9th edition

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**Book review**  
**The Human Body in Health and Disease, 9th edition.**

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1. Accurate?
2. Readable?- that is logical, vocabulary understandable, clarity?
3. Format good?
4. Encourages the learning process?

Is this your check list when considering a textbook for use in your class? I reviewed Memmler's The Human Body in Health and Disease, 9th ed., updated by Barbara Janson Cohen and Dena Lin Wood, and its companion workbook and can check "yes" to each of the above.

Accuracy, of course, has a matter of "degree" to it. Some texts have more facts and details than others, depending on the intended audience. This reference is considered in their own words "an excellent primer to basic anatomy and physiology." In my mind I emphasized "primer" and "basic." Its' form of stating general ideas then expanding to more detail is very effective, yet seems almost too simple in some places. This would not qualify to be medical school required reading but is quite sufficient for all nursing levels through LPN and some chapters are detailed enough for RN studies. Also this could be helpful for many other allied health field studies.

Another aspect of accuracy is the question of whether the source includes updated information. This text does seem to be quite contemporary, with special interest boxes

about such subjects as Prozac, and inclusion in the main body of newer studies about the relation of rheumatoid arthritis and antibody development and the relation of Alzheimer's and the use of hormone, Vitamin E and anti-inflammatories. Such updates serve well to make this revised course book relevant to today's health care.

It is important to communicate accurate facts in a logical, understandable and clear fashion for the student to be able to obtain the information. This authors have done very well on all counts. Te book uses the logical order of discussing the body as the whole and the chemical basis of human life then considers each of the systems or groups of systems in succeeding chapters.

After the initial discussion of the body as a whole, the authors include a general discussion of the disease processes so that in future chapters it becomes easier to follow the discussions of the system then the diseases related to that system. Again this arrangement of information provides a logical grouping that aids the understanding of the disease entities and makes the information more utilizable.

Vocabulary is critical to understanding any writing and this book includes not only a glossary in the back of the book but also defines newly introduced words within the passage themselves. This is a much easier form than books that put the definitions off to the side so that the student must interrupt the flow of reading to check the definition. The only drawback would be for the advanced student who already understands much of the vocabulary and therefore finds these defining sentences unnecessary. However I feel the benefit outweighs this negative. Newly introduced words are also boldfaced for easy notice if the student needs to refer back to these. Clarity is the third criteria I ask of a text's readability. The sentences of this work are short and succinct and therefore clear

instead of so wordy and convoluted as to be difficult. There are clear efforts made to explain the differences between reference books over such things as names of systems and to expand definitions to clarify the common over-simplifications that actually cause misinformation. Again, the going from general information to greater detail within each topic makes the message much clearer. The diagrams are very helpful and contain some of the best I have seen. This is particularly true of the movements of the synovial joints which explains the motions better than any words or drawings I have previously encountered. The drawings of atoms and molecules in three dimensions also give a clearer view than many I have seen in other Allied Health course books. Labels of these drawings are very visible and the colors chosen are excellent in allowing the student to see where the pointer is actually pointing. Furthermore, the summary outlines at the end of each chapter add to the clarity of the content, as well as review the material. All in all I would consider this a very readable textbook for high school, technical institute and college level studies leading to health careers.

The format of the whole book and of each chapter are both useful for the student and encouraging to the learning process along the way. The book itself has colored sections along the sides of the pages for easy finding of sections within the book and the diagrams and drawings are in proximity to the discussion correlated to them so the student can relate the information more readily. The “special interest boxes” are included in pertinent places as well so that the student can seek further information at the point of interest. They increase the use of the textual information and contain either information about normal function, a clinical focus or a health topic. Other aspects of the format, namely the listing of objectives, key terms, bolding and defining new terms, the check

points and the review questions, all add to the encouragement of the student to make the information part of their process. The objectives make it clear to teacher and student what is hoped to be gained from this body of facts. This helps prepare the mind for filing the data in relevant fashion. The key terms and defined new words help the student to find details to master as part of finding understanding. Checkpoint questions are scattered throughout each chapter with answers at the end of the chapter. Some review a major point of the section but others are relatively minor detail so may give the student the wrong message on what should be remembered. Most of them though have very thorough answers for the student to review as they end the chapter. The review questions at the end of the chapter are extremely thorough in covering the material for the chapter and any student who comprehensively answers these will surely be ready for any test to be given.

The study guide which accompanies the textbook is an excellent one and well structured. The questions are of a variety of types- matching, true/false, multiple choice, labeling of diagrams, applications and short essay. The matching questions are in groupings that are not unwieldy. Where there is much information to cover there are more groupings so the material is sufficiently covered. The true/false section requires the student to correct the key phrase if the original was false. The diagrams used for labeling are also shaded for optimum visibility. The short essay questions are the weakest section of questions and could be made more comprehensive and should expect more than a short essay for some of the queries.

Accuracy, readability, good formatting and encouraging of the learning process make this textbook one which I could easily recommend to be used in health career studies for the basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology so relevant to undergrad

understanding for those roles providing for care of persons in health and with disease.

Consider it for your next update.