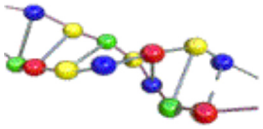
**Introduction to**
**Genetic Algorithms**





# II. Biological Background

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## Chromosome

All living organisms consist of cells. In each cell there is the same set of **chromosomes**. Chromosomes are strings of DNA and serves as a model for the whole organism. A chromosome consist of **genes**, blocks of DNA. Each gene encodes a particular protein. Basically can be said, that each gene encodes a **trait**, for example color of eyes. Possible settings for a trait (e.g. blue, brown) are called **alleles**. Each gene has its own position in the chromosome. This position is called **locus**.

Complete set of genetic material (all chromosomes) is called **genome**. Particular set of genes in genome is called **genotype**. The genotype is with later development after birth base for the organism's **phenotype**, its physical and mental characteristics, such as eye color, intelligence etc.

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## Reproduction

During reproduction, first occurs **recombination** (or **crossover**). Genes from parents form in some way the whole new chromosome. The new created offspring can then be mutated. **Mutation** means, that the elements of DNA are a bit changed. This changes are mainly caused by errors in copying genes from parents.

The **fitness** of an organism is measured by success of the organism in its life.



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