The production of a good introduction to the field of bioinformatics has been a very difficult task because of the duality of the target audience. A text that is appropriate for the computer scientist is typically not good for the biologist, and vice versa. Producing a primer that is suitable for both has been a target of numerous authors in the past few years. One of the most successful has been the first edition of David Mount's book, and so it was that I received this second edition with no little sense of anticipation. Would this be a successful upgrade, or would the changes be merely cosmetic? Furthermore, would the third class of bioinformatics students be well served; namely, those many …