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This book is neither a comprehensive text nor an exam-review tool. It is an overview of the immune system, designed to give anyone who is learning immunology a feel for how the system fits together.

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The immune system is a “team effort,” involving many different players who work together to provide a powerful defense against invaders. Focusing in on one player at a time makes it hard to understand the game. Here we view the action from the grandstands to get a wide-angle picture of what the immune system is all about.

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B cells and the antibodies they produce are part of the adaptive immune system. This defense evolves during our own lifetime to protect us against invaders that we, personally, have never encountered before.

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T cells, another weapon of the adaptive immune system, only recognize invaders which are “properly presented” by specialized antigen presenting cells. This feature keeps these important cells focused on the particular attackers which they are able to defend against.

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