Cognitive and biological ageing has become a fast-growing and dynamic area of study and research, and the scale of this acceleration in growth makes this new four-volume collection in the Psychology Press Major Works series, Critical Concepts in Psychology, especially timely.

A primary question is why we and all other complex animals and plants age, a question studied mainly by biologists, and Volume I (‘Biological Bases of Ageing’) includes key research on models for ethological and evolutionary ageing. It also takes full account of the body of work on the genetics of animal and human ageing and on genes that directly cause or that interacts with environmental influences to cause, individual differences in the rate of age-related changes.

A quite distinct field of research has been the development of models for cognitive changes in the brain that are based entirely on behavioural evidence. Volume II (‘Cognitive Ageing’) gathers together the most important work on the search for the neuropsychological bases of cognitive ageing and in so doing helps to make sense of the rapid growth of developments in this area.

The third volume in this collection (‘Relating Cognitive Ageing to Brain Ageing’) makes available the most significant recent research on how the amounts and time-courses of gross age-related changes in local areas of the brain affect cotemporaneous global and local changes in cognitive performance.

Finally, the material collected in Volume IV (‘The Effects of Health, Demographics and Social Conditions on Rates of Change in Old Age: Interpreting Data from Large Studies’) examines how the methodology of longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies affects the conclusions that can be reached from each and explores recent statistical models to analyse complex data sets.

With comprehensive introductions to each volume, newly written by the editor, which places the collected material in historical and scientific context, Psychology of Ageing is destined to be a vital work of reference. It will also be valued by scholars, students, and practitioners as a primary research resource.