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| A large transcription complex made of **RNA polymerase** and other proteins recognizes the start of a gene and begins to unwind the segment of DNA. |
| RNA polymerase uses one strand of the DNA as a template. RNA nucleotides form complementary base pairs with the DNA template. The growing RNA strand hangs freely as it is transcribed. |
| The completed RNA strand separates from the DNA template, and the transcription complex falls apart. |