Plasma Encyclopedia Article

Plasma

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The term plasma has two major definitions in science. In biology, it refers to the clear, straw-colored liquid portion of blood. In physics, it refers to a state of matter in which atoms are completely ionized. By this definition, a plasma consists entirely of separate positive and negative ions. Plasmas of this kind exist only at high temperatures. The study of plasma is extremely important in research on **nuclear fusion**. One of the most difficult problems in that research is to find ways of physically containing a plasma in which fusion reactions are occurring.