

Interphase Encyclopedia Article

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Interphase

Interphase refers to that period of time between periods of mitotic division in the cell. Mitotic division (mitosis) is that time in a cell's development when it has duplicated its genetic information, and is actively involved in dividing into daughter cells. Because much attention has been paid to the fascinating process of mitosis, many people have mistakenly looked upon interphase as a quiet, resting phase existing between the more important, more active phases of cell division. In fact, interphase is more than just a "between" phase, as its name mistakenly suggests. The largest part of a cell's existence is spent in this interphase. It is the period of time during which the cell's true functions are carried out, during which time any products of the cell are elaborated, and during which the cell actually has the opportunity to grow. While the interphase nucleus (the part of the cell containing genetic material in the form of chromosomes) exists in a form which is hard to study under a microscope, the rest of the cell (the cytoplasm and its organelles) are at their peak of activity. Later in interphase, the chromosomes in the nucleus will duplicate (replicate) themselves), in preparation for mitosis.