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Mr. Palshaw

English IV

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Fahrenheit 72

Let's just take a moment and consider this one thing: how do you feel right now—warm, cold? No, I'm not talking about your personality, even though we all know that person with an internal temperature of -98.6 degrees. I'm talking about the air around you, the tiny molecules that we constantly regulate to achieve the *perfect* room temperature, said to be precisely 72 degrees Fahrenheit. But like the barrage of *sleep-number* commercials that come on every time you just want to watch the six o'clock news with anchor Holden Ontomyhairline, some people are soft, cool 10s and prefer colder air, and others are the hard, warm 80s who like a slightly hotter temperature. Perhaps 72 degrees Fahrenheit might not be as *perfect* as we might think after all.

What's funny is just *how much* room temperature preferences vary from person to person. Imagine for a moment that the air around you suddenly drops to -25 degrees. You sit there in your seats, shivering, rubbing your hands together to make up for the Siberian conditions you find yourself in. Now stop imagining, and walk over to Mr. Dooner's room, where every morning the heater is as broken as denatured proteins and the insulation is as weak as Van der Waals forces. And as you sit there, take a gander at Mr. Dooner himself, and notice that he sits comfortably in a short sleeve shirt within his giant refrigerator.

On the other hand, I can distinctly remember being on a Mock Trial field trip last year, sitting in my hotel room, working on homework, in a comfortable room temperature around the 70-degree level. Suddenly, one of my team members walks over, in a *sweatshirt*, and cranks the thermostat up to 75 degrees. Those that were there likely remember my perhaps too aggressive reaction, yelling “seventy-five degrees?!” at the top of my lungs. I subsequently realized that 75 degrees really isn’t that bad and we had a nice laugh. I have to say, I was still a bit surprised though—75 degrees and a sweatshirt is a little much.

But the temperature discrepancies don’t end there: the perfect room temperature also varies with different parts of the world, though not in the ways you might think. For instance, you might expect my fellow Russians to be used to the cold, frigid, temperatures that plague them each winter, but according to *BrightSide* (the scholar’s *BuzzFeed*), Russia’s average room temperature happens to be a staggering 77 degrees. Suddenly “seventy-five degrees!” doesn’t seem so bad. And to think that’s just the average—meaning there are some people that keep it even hotter. But Russia’s peculiar average is quite different from somewhere like Japan, which apparently has an average room temperature of 50 degrees. (That’s almost as cold as Mr. Dooner’s room!) Seriously though, I can’t even begin to imagine how cold that would be, especially when we in Carmel experience weather warmer than that every day. Japan’s temperature of choice is even less than the 61-degree average of *igloos* in Alaska, even when outdoor temperatures there reach -40.

With such a massive variation in room temperature differences from person to person and around the world, why then has 72 degrees been dubbed the *perfect* heat intensity? User “BurnCalories” from *PeakOil News and Message Boards* seems to solve the debacle, explaining

that when our body temperatures are around 98.6 degrees, the temperature of our skin is right around that 72-degree level. Though perhaps not coming from the most trustworthy information website, I think that this guy's grand total of 21 posts over the last 12 years speaks for itself. Fortunately, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers back's up his claim, also stating that 72 degrees is considered the optimum indoor temperature for that very reason.

With that established, I'd like to ixnay the idea that 72 degrees is really optimal, and instead adopt a standard of: whatever the heck you want the temperature to be. Why do we need a "correct" temperature when Russians will just crank the thermostat up and the Japanese will turn it off, open all the windows in winter, and fill their rooms with icicles that formed in Mr. Dooner's room earlier. I personally think that room temperature not only varies from person to person or from country to country, but it also depends on the time of day it is and what you're doing. If you are getting swole with some intense weightlifting in the middle of the day, you might not want your room to literally suck the sweat out of you with every one of those 72 degrees. On the other hand, if you're sitting still on your couch late in the evening and catching up with the Kardashians, you might prefer a higher temperature to keep your inactive body a little warmer.

I hereby reject society's proclamation of 72-degree perfection and ask that we become inclusive of the variety of temperatures that exist out there for people to prefer. So if you're all with me, I will, from this day forward, judge people's temperature preferences not through a booming exclamation even when they turn the thermostat to 75 degrees, but rather judge them silently and from within.