

Student 1

Student

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### Sexist Methods for Heating and Cooling in Architectural Structures

The standard comfortable temperature for a building is and has been based on a typical three piece suit for men since the dawn of airconditioned public/work spaces. As a result, women are often much colder in these conditions. This topic can directly link to both my major in Architecture and my first project featuring the interview with a female in the field of architecture who has experienced sexism in her work. While this particular topic may seem insignificant in comparison to the larger, more general matter of sexism today, or even the issue of sexism within the field of architecture, it shows just how common this can be in the work place and in many cases can be left completely unnoticed due to it being the social norm.

I chose to enter the conversation using Reddit as my form of social media. Of the various social networks, Reddit has the most direct connection to architecture, it has the option to subreddit the information directly to people involved in the field. Reddit is a social/news website where people can interact with others over specific topics they are interested in. When creating my post, I wanted to include my reasoning behind uploading it; being a student in need of responses for an essay. I did this to hopefully help avoid rude and hateful comments while also prompting viewers to respond because it is for a specific cause and not just a random argument:

"I've never actually used Reddit before, so not quite sure how to go about this... I am writing an essay over the outdated/sexist methods for heating and cooling in architectural structures and need to address the topic on a social platform...The standard comfortable

**Commented [KL1]:** This is a fascinating topic, and one that I've never thought about or realized! You do a nice job of introducing it in your intro, but I would have liked to hear about the forum/post you are working with in your intro (rather than in the first body paragraph).

**Commented [KL2]:** Thanks for providing a brief description of Reddit and connecting it to architecture.

**Commented [KL3]:** You don't need quotation marks around a block quote.

Student 2

temperature for a building is based on a typical three-piece suit for men, and as a result, women are often much colder in these conditions. Anyone and everyone please share your opinion on the matter!”

I didn't want to appear directly one sided, so I left the statement relatively open by not specifically saying that I was against the typical method for determining the average room temperature of office spaces/public buildings. While Reddit is meant to be an anonymous form of media, I believe my username might have given away the fact I am female, which I thought would cause some responders to assume I believe it is a sexist matter and counter with something along the lines of I am simply being dramatic over the issue.

The post received a handful of responses. There was a mixture of both positive and negative views on the matter, not necessarily mean, much different than my assumption. I believe this is due to the openness of the post, aka being less biased toward a specific side of the matter, and including in the statement that I am a student writing on the subject, which may have caused viewers to be more civil. The first response included that the standards should be changed and that there could already be advancements on the issue, “I think that the standards should be changed, there are probably already movements about the topic, but I'm not sure.” I chose not to respond to this reply immediately because I do not want to give away my opinion on this until I had comments both positive and negative toward the issue, so comments against the opinion that it is a sexist matter would be more likely to state polite reasoning rather than just trying to bash on the post with hate for having this view on ‘such a small matter’. I later replied agreeing, I'm sure there are businesses making steps toward a more equal work environment, but it has not been a large enough impact all together.

**Commented [KL4]:** I appreciate your initial post, and it seems like it would attract other users and posts!

Student 3

Another comment was made later on, “I mean I’m pretty sure they make business suits for women **too**.” Again, I chose to delay my response on the matter. However, there was only a small group of replies since the post was created and with time restrictions on the project, I decided to begin replying in hopes to get further explanation behind viewers opinions. After at least a few different opinions were given, I responded with; “Yes, but it is often expected or even required of women to wear dresses/skirts as business attire, which is an even worse sexist issue in my opinion. But if this is the case in a workspace, it is also probably true that the air conditions are the typical temperatures in accordance to a three piece business suit.” Unfortunately, I did not receive any additional feedback after initial comments.

**Commented [KL5]:** Try not to start paragraphs with quotes - have topic sentences that introduce the focus of the paragraph and then move into integrating quotes.

A third comment was posted shortly after the previous, “Firstly, not many people wear suits anymore. And back in the day they would set room temperatures based on wearing a suit to reduce discomfort from heat wearing so many layers, but building heat is now based on energy costs and outdoor temperature.” I later responded with, “While these may be factors now, the overall ‘comfortable’ temperature settings remain to be based on 3 layers of a business suit.” Again, I have not received any additional **comments**.

**Commented [KL6]:** This paragraph could use some development (maybe combine it with the paragraph before it?).

The next reply given took a different stance on the subject, “Older building’s insulation standards also enable heat to escape making the furnaces work harder in an attempt to keep the workplace at a comfortable temperature, which could be reasoning for the cold temperatures.” It seems this person was trying to give a separate reason behind the cold air in these spaces, to be an issue with the ventilation rather than it being based off men’s work attire. However, this would account more for issues with heating in the past, buildings today are much better insulated, yet still remain at the preferred temperatures in accordance to the comfort level in a business suit, which is how I responded to the comment.

Student 4

The final response was similar to the first but also included their idea for a possible solution:

“I think the temperature should be based off a compromise between both men’s and women’s business attire. This would make the temperature warmer and could potentially be slightly uncomfortable for men; however, I don’t see it being that difficult to remove the jacket portion of a suit if need be. It should also be kept in mind that women often have smaller structures, which can often lead to becoming cold easier. I completely agree with the first comment, the standards should be changed!”

This responder gave a potential fix for the problem as well as another point of the issue; not only are women’s clothes often thinner, but their body structures are often smaller than a typical man’s, resulting in being cold more easily. I thanked the commenter for their input and agreed that would be a step in the right direction toward equality in the workplace!

I was pleased to see some of the comments taking a different view on the issue and giving other reasoning behind rather than just arguing that it doesn’t matter. All in all, responses were mostly opinions of people just based off the post, not necessarily well-informed or educated on the matter. There were no hateful responses, mainly very polite and civil, which could have to do with the simplistic wording of the post and inclusion of the fact that I am a student writing about this, not what was expected! Unfortunately, I did run into a slight problem with this form of media because I am not familiar with using Reddit. My post was removed from the page a few days after the fifth reply for an unknown reason and can no longer be viewed.

**Commented [KL7]:** Thank you for including the responses you received; it sounds like this was an engaging and interesting experience for you! (Although I’m sorry to hear your post was deleted).

Student 5

Works Cited

“Reddit: the Front Page of the Internet.” Reddit: the Front Page of the Internet, Reddit Inc., Web. 2016, [www.reddit.com/](http://www.reddit.com/).

Great job of choosing a unique and interesting topic, and I’m happy to see you made clear connections to your field of study! Work on your paragraph development, and make sure the quotes you are integrating are properly introduced and given plenty of context. In short papers, you want to be careful about using too much quoted material.

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