

N. Redington: Writing Sample

1 Boston Globe Style

The climate of the Northeastern US changed over the course of the Twentieth Century, but not always in ways that could be guessed from world-wide trends. According to a twelve-author study published in the journal *Climate Dynamics*, computer models can accurately calculate the ever-faster rate at which temperatures in the Northeast rose in the last century, but produce dramatically wrong values for changes in the rates of rainfall, snow cover, evaporation, and soil moisture.

The failure of the models for the Northeast does not mean that scientists' understanding of global climate-change is incorrect, but only that unique regional conditions must be taken into account when considering how world-wide trends will actually show up in local weather. Apparently, such regional tendencies dominated almost every aspect of climate change in the Twentieth Century Northeast except for temperature, which followed the general global warming trend.

Such "Yankee peculiarity", however, may eventually be a thing of the past. The study also looked separately at the last thirty years of the century, and found significantly better agreement between computer models and reality. After 1970, the Northeast's climate began to fall in step with the rest of the world's. Disturbingly, the remaining differences between theory and observation all seem to point the same way: although closer to their expected values than before, most climate-change indicators are now consistently larger in real life than in the models. Local conditions are enhancing and reinforcing global warming.

This does not bode well for the Northeast. The study's authors also used the standard models to make predictions for the Twenty-First Century – predictions likely to fall short of what will actually happen if regional effects continue to magnify global ones. According to the models, the Northeast will become hotter over the next hundred years regardless of what is done to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions (although reducing emissions will at least slow the warming process somewhat). There will be more-frequent dry spells and more extreme weather-events. Spring will arrive sooner, summer will end later, and winter will be less snowy – except in southern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. There, with fewer snowy days to begin with, increased winter precipitation may make up for increased temperature, keeping snow levels about the same as now.

2 Boston Herald Opinion-Page Style

You get up in the morning and stick a slice of last week's pepperoni with extra cheese in the microwave for breakfast. (Yeah, yeah, but you're late already.) Beep. Any bets part of it's too hot to eat and part of it feels like a home for penguins?

Global warming won't burn your mouth, but what's true of pizza is true of the Earth. Some places heat up faster than others. And right here in New England – surprise, surprise! – we're getting hot faster than the Pats did.

That's what a team of twelve scientists found out recently. They looked at weather records from across the Northeast since 1970, and winters here are like Olympic athletes with the motto "Hotter, hotter, shorter!"

You read that right: winters. OK, maybe "hotter" isn't what you're thinking when you're waiting for the T at six o'clock on a January morning, but winters in the Northeast have not only gotten warmer, they've done it three times as fast as scientists' models say they should.

That doesn't mean the models are wrong, though. They're all about the whole pizza, not your next mouthful of pepperoni. It just means: hey, ain't it gettin' hot in here PDQ?

So much for hotter. What about shorter? Well, kiddies, do you remember the last time Mommy and Daddy took you for a walk around the Common in March? Did you have a snowball fight? Did you see people ice-skating on the Frog Pond? Did you throw snowballs at them? I hope you did, because when you're a Mommy or a Daddy, your kids will only get to do that kind of thing around First Night every other year, and that's if Al Gore gets drafted at the Convention.

Winter; hotter, hotter, shorter. Get used to it.