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I reading

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opening extract from

Chemistry

written by

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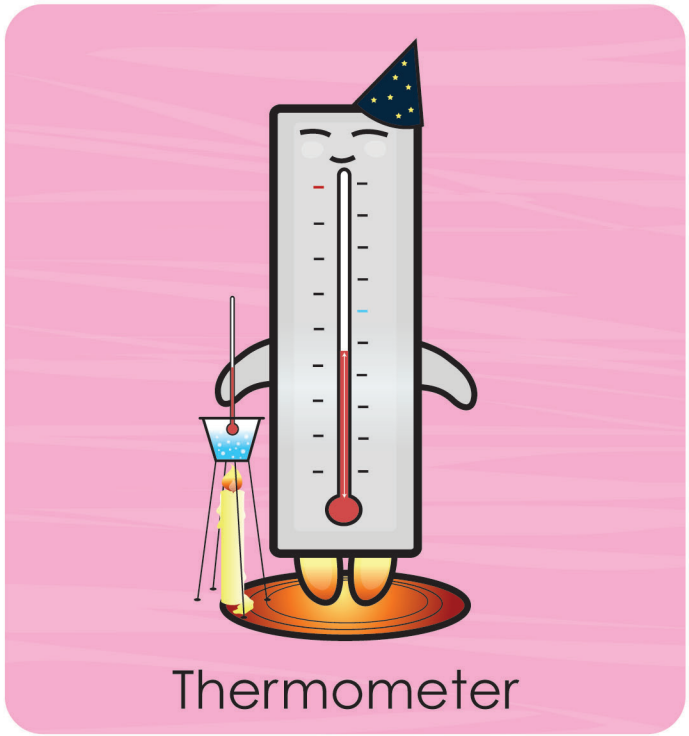
Thermometer

Lab Rats

- A hothead who measures temperature in °C and °F
- Uses mercury or Alcohol, which rises up the stem
- Never gets hot under the collar

I'm a little piece of magic you can hold in your hand – a true chemical wizard. Heat is a very strange concept to pin down. It's something you can only feel. Until a liquid boils, for example, it's very hard to see how hot or cold it is. Yet I turn that reality on its head and allow you to "see" temperature and read it off a calibrated (fixed) scale.

You have to handle me with care. I'm a delicate soul in a slender package. Surrounded by glass, my central column is a vacuum, which makes my liquid independent of Air's pressure. I work on the basis that materials expand and contract as they get hotter and colder. The longer my line, the higher the temperature reading. I am calibrated against known temperatures, such as the freezing and the boiling point of Water, to make sure I'm accurate.

From the Greek words for "heat" (therme) and "measure" (metron).

- Celsius scale invented by: A Celsius (1742)
- Mercury scale range: –38 °C to 357 °C
- Alcohol scale range: –114 °C to 78 °C