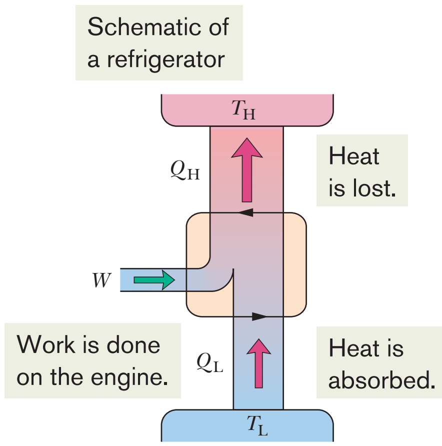

Figure 20-14 The elements of a refrigerator. The two black arrowheads on the central loop suggest the working substance operating in a cycle, as if on a *p-V* plot. Energy is transferred as heat Q_L to the working substance from the low-temperature reservoir. Energy is transferred as heat Q_H to the high-temperature reservoir from the working substance. Work W is done on the refrigerator (on the working substance) by something in the environment.

Entropy in the Real World: Refrigerators

A **refrigerator** is a device that uses work in order to transfer energy from a low-temperature reservoir to a high-temperature reservoir as the device continuously repeats a set series of thermodynamic processes. In a household refrigerator, for example, work is done by an electrical compressor to transfer energy from the food storage compartment (a low-temperature reservoir) to the room (a high-temperature reservoir).

Air conditioners and heat pumps are also refrigerators. For an air conditioner, the low-temperature reservoir is the room that is to be cooled and the high-temperature reservoir is the warmer outdoors. A heat pump is an air conditioner that can be operated in reverse to heat a room; the room is the high-temperature reservoir, and heat is transferred to it from the cooler outdoors.

Let us consider an *ideal refrigerator:*

> In an ideal refrigerator, all processes are reversible and no wasteful energy transfers occur as a result of, say, friction and turbulence.

Figure 20-14 shows the basic elements of an ideal refrigerator. Note that its operation is the reverse of how the Carnot engine of Fig. 20-8 operates. In other words, all the energy transfers, as either heat or work, are reversed from those of a Carnot engine. We can call such an ideal refrigerator a **Carnot refrigerator.**

The designer of a refrigerator would like to extract as much energy $|Q_L|$ as possible from the low-temperature reservoir (what we want) for the least amount of work $|W|$ (what we pay for). A measure of the efficiency of a refrigerator, then, is

$$K = \frac{\text{what we want}}{\text{what we pay for}} = \frac{|Q_L|}{|W|} \quad \text{(coefficient of performance, any refrigerator),} \tag{20-14}$$

where K is called the *coefficient of performance.* For a Carnot refrigerator, the first law of thermodynamics gives $|W| = |Q_H| - |Q_L|$, where $|Q_H|$ is the magnitude of the energy transferred as heat to the high-temperature reservoir. Equation 20-14 then becomes

$$K_C = \frac{|Q_L|}{|Q_H| - |Q_L|}. \tag{20-15}$$

Because a Carnot refrigerator is a Carnot engine operating in reverse, we can combine Eq. 20-10 with Eq. 20-15; after some algebra we find

$$K_C = \frac{T_L}{T_H - T_L} \quad \text{(coefficient of performance, Carnot refrigerator).} \tag{20-16}$$

For typical room air conditioners, $K \approx 2.5$. For household refrigerators, $K \approx 5$. Perversely, the value of K is higher the closer the temperatures of the two reservoirs are to each other. That is why heat pumps are more effective in temperate climates than in very cold climates.

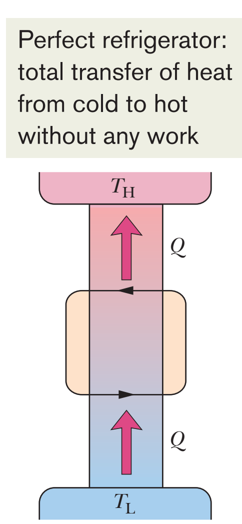

Figure 20-15 The elements of a perfect refrigerator—that is, one that transfers energy from a low-temperature reservoir to a high-temperature reservoir without any input of work.

It would be nice to own a refrigerator that did not require some input of work—that is, one that would run without being plugged in. Figure 20-15 represents another "inventor's dream," a *perfect refrigerator* that transfers energy as heat Q from a cold reservoir to a warm reservoir without the need for work. Because the unit operates in cycles, the entropy of the working substance does not change during a complete cycle. The entropies of the two reservoirs, however, do change: The entropy change for the cold reservoir is $-|Q|/T_L$, and that for the warm reservoir is $+|Q|/T_H$. Thus, the net entropy change for the entire system is

$$\Delta S = -\frac{|Q|}{T_L} + \frac{|Q|}{T_H}.$$