Save Money on Utilities

Pre-reading

Questions:
• How much do you pay for utilities?
• Would you like to pay less?

Definitions:
• Dread – to have a fear of what is to come
• Utility – a public service such as gas, electricity or water
• % - a symbol meaning percent; read it as “percent”

Reading

It comes every month. Look inside the mailbox. There it is…the dreaded utility bill. Is it scary to open? Does the “amount due” seem to grow larger and larger? How can you shrink the size of your bill? How can you save money on utilities?

Cooling and Heating

• Set the thermostat at the highest comfortable level in the summer and the lowest in the winter. It is best to set it no lower than 78 degrees in the summer. Each extra degree can raise cooling costs by 6%. Set it no higher than 68 degrees in the winter. Each extra degree can raise heating costs by 3% (or more).

• Use fans to move the air. Fans use about one-tenth as much electricity as an air conditioner. They make it feel about 10 degrees cooler.

• Look for areas where air is leaking out. Check around doors, windows, and other areas that may feel drafty. Use caulk, weather stripping, or plastic to close the gaps. A one-eighth opening around two doorframes will let in as much warm/cold air as a small window open 6 inches.

• Close doors or heating vents in rooms that do not get much use.

• In the summer, keep sunlight out by closing blinds or curtains. In the winter, let the warmth of the sunlight in.

Electricity

• Use your microwave instead of your stove. It can save you 50% in energy costs for cooking.

• Use the new fluorescent bulbs. They last 10 times longer and use less energy. They also provide four times as much light.

Use these simple tips, and you’ll be doing two great things. You will save money and save energy. It’s good for your wallet and good for our earth!
Understanding

1. What does the word **shrink** mean? ____________________________________________

2. Setting your thermostat at 78 degrees instead of 72 degrees, saves you how much in cooling costs?

3. Why should you use a microwave for cooking? _______________________________

4. Why is it a good idea to use a fan for cooling your home? ________________________

5. What does the word **drafty/draft** mean? ________________________________

Writing

**Choice A:** Which ideas from this reading can you use in your own home?

**Choice B:** What other ideas do you have for saving money on utilities?

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