PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

Reading Utility Bills

Difficulty level: Easy

Practical and Financial Literacy

This document was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Overview of the concept

This is how you check your electricity, water, or gas bill, so you can see what you used, spot a charge that looks wrong, and find ways to use less. A bill that jumps without a reason might mean a leak, a faulty meter, or a charge that does not belong to you. A household that watches its usage can see which month used the most and work out why. Reading the bill instead of just paying it is what keeps a small error from becoming a big one.



Rule

Total = usage charge + fixed charge.

Usage charge = amount used × rate. The fixed charge stays the same no matter how much you use.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q An electricity bill shows usage of 300 kWh at $0.12 per kWh and a fixed charge of $15. What is the total bill?

Usage: 300 kWh at $0.12 per kWh
Fixed charge: $15
Total: ?

SOLUTION

Usage: 300 kWh at $0.12 per kWh.

Usage charge = 300 x $0.12 = $36

Fixed charge: $15. Total = $36 + $15 = $51

Multiply usage by the rate: 300 x 0.12 = 36 usage charge.

Find the fixed charge, which does not depend on usage: $15.

Add them: 36 + 15 = 51 total.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Usage is 450 kWh at $0.10 per kWh and the fixed charge is $20. What is the total bill?

Usage: 450 kWh at $0.10 per kWh
Fixed charge: $20
Total: ?

SOLUTION

Usage: 450 kWh at $0.10 per kWh.

Usage charge = 450 x $0.10 = $45

Fixed charge: $20. Total = $45 + $20 = $65

Multiply: 450 x 0.10 = 45

Add the fixed charge: $20.

Total: 45 + 20 = 65

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Practice questions

1. 200 kWh at $0.15 per kWh. What is the usage charge?

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2. The usage charge is $30 and the fixed charge is $12. What is the total?

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

3. The usage charge is $36 at a rate of $0.12 per kWh. How many kWh were used?

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

4 The total bill is $65. The usage charge is $45. What is the fixed charge?

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

5 What is a fixed charge?

- **A** A charge that stays the same whatever you use
- **B** A charge that grows with every kilowatt you use
- **C** A charge for late payment
- **D** A charge for reading the meter

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

6 What does kWh measure?

- A Energy used: one kilowatt running for one hour
- B The speed of the electricity
- C The size of the meter
- D The number of plugs in a house

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

7 Usage doubles and the rate stays the same. What happens to the usage charge?

- A It doubles
- B It stays the same
- C It halves
- D It drops to zero

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

8 How can you lower an electricity bill?

- A Use less energy, or use it at cheaper times if your plan allows
- B Use more energy at peak times
- C Ignore the meter reading
- D Pay the bill late

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

9 What should you check first if a bill looks far too high?

- A The meter reading and usage compared with past bills
- B The colour of the bill
- C The name of the power company
- D The date the company started

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

10

What is the due date on a bill for?

A The date by which payment must arrive

B The date the meter was read

C The date the bill was printed

D The date the power was connected

Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

ANSWER KEY

1. 30

2. 42

3. 300

4. 20

5. A charge that stays the same whatever you use

6. Energy used: one kilowatt running for one hour

7. It doubles

8. Use less energy, or use it at cheaper times if your plan allows

9. The meter reading and usage compared with past bills

10. The date by which payment must arrive

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.