**Saving Money on Utility Bills**

They come every month. Look in the mailbox or your inbox. There they are: the dreaded utility bills. Are they 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, door sweeps, weather stripping, or plastic to close the gaps. A one-eighth inch opening around two doorframes will let in as much warm or 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 by opening blinds or curtains.

Keep your hot water heater set to about 120 degrees (F) or 49 degrees (C). This is a good temperature to prevent bacteria from growing in your water as well as preventing your hands from being burned by the water. If the hot water is too hot or not hot enough in your apartment, tell your landlord.

Electricity

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

Use the new fluorescent (CFL) or LED lightbulbs. 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!

1. What is another way to say, “the dreaded” utility bill?

2. What is another way to ask, “How can you shrink the size of your bill?”

3. What is another way to say, “It’s good for your wallet and good for our earth”?

4. Summarize this article in 2 or 3 sentences.