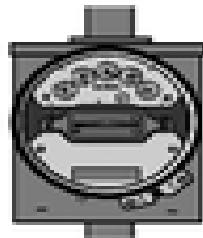


Name _____ Date _____

How to Read an Electric Meter

The electric company installs electric meters on homes and buildings in order to measure the amount of electricity used each month. The unit of measurement that they use is called a kilowatt hour (KWh). By learning to read the meter, you can track the amount of electricity that your family uses over a period of time.



Most meters have five dials, each numbered from 0 to 9. Notice that on the first, third and fifth meter the numbers read clockwise; but on the second and fourth meter the numbers read counter-clockwise. The hands all move in the direction that you read the numbers. Each hand points to a number in the meter reading. If the hand is pointing between two numbers, always use the smaller number (except between 9 and 0). The dials work together. When a dial to the right passes zero, the dial to its left will pass the next number. If it's hard to tell if the hand has passed a number yet, look at the dial to its right. If that dial has passed the zero, use the larger number. If the dial on the right has not passed the zero, use the smaller number on the left dial. Try reading the meter above. The correct reading is 19368.

To find out how much electricity you have used over a period of time, read the meter twice: once at the beginning of the time period, and once at the end. Subtract the end number from the beginning number. This tells you how many kilowatts you have used during that period of time. You can read your meter at the same time each day for a daily usage, or on the same day each week for a weekly usage. The electric company reads your meter each month to determine how much power you have used that month. Then they bill you for the amount of power you used.