

Electricity Conservation

Here's a simple way to see how much electricity you could save or are saving at your house. The best time to do it would be during the day on a normal weekend. Make sure an adult does this with you so things don't get left on or off when they shouldn't and make trouble.

Get Ready

Start by choosing a normal time of day with normal activities going on at home. Leave everything just like it is, lights, computers, TVs...BUT turn off any big electric users that you wouldn't normally leave on by mistake or that might come on automatically while you're testing, like stoves, air conditioners, furnaces, electric heat or hot water, garage shop equipment...remember to turn them back to normal when you're done with this test.

Normal Use Test

Go outside to your electric meter and find the spinning disk in the middle. It has a black mark on it so you can see when it goes around once. Start timing for 1 minute when you see the mark and count how many times it goes around in 1 minute. If the disk only goes around a couple times, you might want to time for 2 minutes instead for better accuracy. Write down your number.

Wasting Test

Now go back in the house and turn EVERYTHING on. Turn on all the lights. The extra TVs, the video games and DVD players, computers, fans, the stereo... all the stuff you might leave on when you don't really need it. You could even make the air conditioner or the furnace come on if you wish.

Go back outside and do another timed count. Write that down.

Saving Test

Now go back in the house and turn EVERYTHING OFF. Try to turn off everything that makes any sense to turn off, everything you could turn off when no one is home or during a long vacation.

Go back outside and do another timed count. If the disk is spinning too slow now to make a good count, do a longer time and divide to get your number.

Finish up

Go back inside and put things back to normal to finish up from testing.

Now make a simple graph (by hand or with a computer) to show your 3 readings. It will just be three columns, one for each test, with the number of meter turns up the side of the graph. It might look like this...

