

Understanding your gas bill

If your electricity and gas bills leave you a little bemused, don't worry, you're not alone.

But it is certainly well worth taking the trouble to understand your bills, because this is the first step to taking control of your energy use and saving yourself money.

This leaflet tells you how to read a **gas** bill. Use the key below and overleaf for an explanation of each item on the bill marked by a blue numbered disc.

Note that electricity and gas bills can look very similar, especially if you have the same supplier. For an explanation of how to read your **electricity** bill, please see our other leaflet.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012**

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Best GAS Ltd
Mrs G Smith
123 Fore Street
Newtown
NT3 5ZZ

Customer reference number **2468 13579 0004**

Bill date **17 January 2010**

Your gas bill
Please pay £211.21 by 31 January 2010

Billing summary

4	Bill period: 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009	
5	Your last bill	£115.23
	Payment received on 12 October	£115.23
	Balance before this bill	£00.00
6	Gas you've used (estimate)	£201.15
7	VAT at 5%	£10.06
	Please pay	£211.21

We must receive your payment by 31 January 2010

Need help?
Call 0845 000 246

Mon - Fri: 07.00 - 20.00
Saturday: 08.00 - 18.00
Sunday: 08.00 - 12.00

Please have your customer reference number handy when you call us

Meter point reference 12345678

KEY

- These are the contact details of your gas supplier including phone number and office hours.
- Your 'customer reference number' (also called an 'account number') is unique to you, and you'll need it when you contact your supplier.
- This is the date your gas bill was issued.
- You are charged for the gas you have used (or are estimated to have used) during the 'bill period', usually 3 months.
- This is the amount of your **previous** bill, plus the date you paid. Note that this is **less than** the current bill. This is because it covered July to September, which is warmer than October to December, so the central heating was on much less, if at all.
- This is the total cost of the gas you've used in this period before VAT is added. In this case it is an **estimate**, not a meter reading. For more about estimates see overleaf, point 12.
- The VAT charged on gas supplied for **domestic** use is 5%. If the VAT rate on your bill is higher than this it means you are being charged a **commercial** rate and you should contact your supplier immediately.
- This is the amount you need to pay for the gas you have used. On the other side of the bill it will explain how this figure was reached. Some suppliers offer an incentive for prompt payment.
- This is your 'meter point reference number', sometimes referred to as an MPRN. Each UK property on the mains gas supply has one, and you will need it if you wish to switch your gas supplier.



If you don't check your bills, you may end up paying more than you should

continued ...

KEY

- 10** Your 'tariff' (also called a 'package' or 'plan') decides the rate you pay and other terms and conditions. It won't always be shown on your bill. You should make sure you're on a tariff that suits your personal and financial circumstances.
- 11** This is the meter reading at the **beginning** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill.
- 12** This is a 'reading' for the **end** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill. The 'E' in brackets signifies that this is an **estimate**, and not a real reading. If this estimate is too low, you'll be charged for the difference on your next bill (and may have a nasty surprise), so you should check your meter to see that the estimate is at least close to what your meter says. For information on how to read a gas meter, see our other leaflet.
- 13** This is the 'last reading' minus the 'previous reading' and equals the amount of gas you've used, or are estimated to have used, in the bill period.
- 14** Oddly enough, gas is charged by kilowatt hour (kWh), a unit more often associated with electricity. See **point 18** below.
- 15** This shows how the first 1430 kWh of gas that you use costs more (per kWh) than the gas you use after this. This is normal practice for both gas and electricity supply.
- 16** This is the total you need to pay before VAT which will be added at a rate of 5% (see **point 7** above).
- 17** This explains about estimated meter readings (see **point 12** above).

10 Your usage - in detail

Your current tariff is **Standard**

11 Previous reading	12 Last reading	13 Units used	14 Units as kWh	15 Pence per kWh	Charges for energy used
7525 1 October	7750 31 December (E)	225	7072	First 1430 kWh at 4.152p Next 5642 kWh at 2.513p	59.37 141.78

16 Total charges: **£201.15**

Estimated meter readings

Estimated readings are based on your previous usage to date. If we don't hold details of your previous usages, we base the readings on average consumption levels.

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To make sure you receive accurate bills, please contact us directly to submit your meter readings.

How we calculate your gas charges

We convert gas units to kilowatt hours as follows:
 units used x 2.83 (metric conversion factor) x 1.02264 (volume conversion factor) x 39.1 (calorific value) divided by 3.6 (kilowatt hour conversion factor).

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Services for customers with specific needs

If you have any special needs, please contact us to let us know. We can print your bills in large print or in braille, or on audio tape if required.

To find out what we can do to help you, contact us on **0845 000 246**.

19 **Bank Giro Credit**

110 300	Reference (customer account number)	Credit account number	Amount due £	By transfer from bank account number

Cashier's stamp and initials

123 4567 8978 5634 12456

- 18** This explains how the volume of gas that you've used has been converted into kilowatt hours.
- 19** A payment slip will be provided to allow you to pay your bill at a bank or by post. Another way to pay is by monthly direct debit, and for some customers there are advantages to this. Firstly, most suppliers will give you a discount if you pay by direct debit. Secondly it spreads the cost (you pay a smaller amount every month and not a bigger amount every quarter) and thirdly the system is automated so the bill can't be lost or forgotten about.



Call us free for advice on your gas or electricity bill or other domestic energy issues

0800 512 012* or go to cse.org.uk/advice



3 St Peter's Court
Bedminster Parade
Bristol
BS3 4AQ

0117 934 1400
info@cse.org.uk
reg charity 298740

We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy advice at cse.org.uk/advice