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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 30/07/14

## 'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200

Today, let's talk about 'smart' meters. These electronic meters will measure your electric and gas usage. They are meant to replace your existing meters. The catch in the UK is – it will cost YOU £200 to install one, even though legally you don't need to. Next year UK energy companies will begin the mass installation of these 'smart' meters. The expense of which will be passed on over time to customers. The idea is to save customers money. Seeing as they will cost £214.80 to install, any saving will take at least eight years before anyone begins to benefit! The £11 billion project is supposed to cut down energy consumption and reduce bills! Really? So far, five EU countries considering similar such plans have decided it would cost more money than it saves.

It is worth noting the smart meters will not work in a third of British homes, including high rise flats, basements, buildings with thick walls and those in rural areas. Hackers and cyber terrorists could also break into the system, causing chaos in the national grid. They could also carry out large-scale fraud by fiddling bills. UK energy companies have admitted they will pass the installation costs on to customers; yet are planning on using Bob Geldof to promote the idea of using these 'green' meters. Smart meters work by recording gas and electric consumption every 30 minutes. Consumers are given In-Home displays, which lets them see how much energy they are using. Energy firms benefit because they no longer have to send meter-readers into homes, and they will be able to disconnect customers more easily if they do not pay their bills. Of course consumers will say, what is wrong with my current meters? The answer is nothing!

### SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about gas and electric meters. Go round the room swapping details with others.

### LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

### READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

### SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

**1) The article** – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

**2) The article** - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

**3) Article quiz** - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

#### Student A questions

- 1) Name the celebrity.
- 2) What is a 'smart' meter?
- 3) What is worth noting?
- 4) What will consumers say?
- 5) UK energy companies have admitted what?

#### Student B questions

- 1) Hackers and somebody else could what?
- 2) What does an In-Home display do?
- 3) How much are smart meters to install?
- 4) How much will the project cost?
- 5) How long will it take before the customer benefits?

**Category: Energy / Smart Meters / Business  
Intermediate / Upper Intermediate**

## 'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200 – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs.* On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**gas and electric meters**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs* – Write down your gas, water and electric company. Talk about them.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Add** three competitors for the companies you have listed above or is there a monopoly in your area? Discuss together.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

*The teacher* will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs* – Each of you thinks of three other types of meter. Compare! What are these meters used for?

*The teacher* will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Will smart meters be introduced in your country soon?
- 3) Would you like to have a smart meter in your property?
- 4) Think of two advantages of having a smart meter.
- 5) Think of two disadvantages of having a smart meter.
- 6) Surely, the only winners here are the gas and electric companies?
- 7) Will smart meters legally have to be installed in your property in your country or can you resist?
- 8) What has Bob Geldof got to do with this campaign in the UK?
- 9) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

### SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

*In groups.* One of you is the interviewer. There are up to four guests. You are in the *BBC World Business News* studio in London. Today's interview is: '**Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200. 10 mins.**

- 1) An electric or gas company spokesperson.
- 2) A consumer.
- 3) Someone on low income who has been cut off more than once.
- 4) Bob Geldof.

*The teacher* will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

### SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

*In pairs* - *Student A* is customer who has an ordinary gas meter and an ordinary electric meter. *Student B* is visiting your property to convince you of the merits of having one new smart meter for both installed in your property in the UK. *Discuss together (Imagine!). 5 mins.*

### SPEAKING – DISCUSSION - DEBATE

*Allow 10 minutes* – As a class.

**Smart meters to cost every UK household £200 – Compare with your country!**

*The teacher* can moderate the session.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student B questions

- 1) Why are energy bills so expensive?
- 2) How much profit do energy companies make in your region/country per year?
- 3) What is wrong with simply reading your own meters now, putting them on an excel spread sheet and working out how much you use per month. It is not rocket science, is it?
- 4) Can smart meters be hacked into?
- 5) Would you want your gas or electric meter controlled and turned off remotely by your utility company?
- 6) If five other countries have abandoned the idea of installing smart meters because of cost what makes it viable in other countries to run the scheme?
- 7) Will utility companies benefit by not having to send the meter man round?
- 8) Did you like this discussion?

### GAP FILL: READING

#### 'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200

Today, let's talk about 'smart' (1)\_\_. These electronic meters will measure your electric and gas usage. They are meant to replace your existing meters. The (2)\_\_ in the UK is - it will cost YOU £200 to install one, even though legally you don't need to. Next year UK energy companies will begin the (3)\_\_ (4)\_\_ of these 'smart' meters. The expense of which will be passed on over time to (5)\_\_. The idea is to save customers money. Seeing as they will cost £214.80 to (6)\_\_, any saving will take at least eight years before anyone begins to (7)\_\_. The £11 billion project is supposed to cut down energy (8)\_\_ and reduce bills! Really? So far, five EU countries considering similar such plans have decided it would cost more money than it saves.

**mass / benefit / customers / install / catch / meters / installation / consumption**

It is worth noting the smart meters will not work in a third of British homes, including high rise flats, basements, buildings with thick walls and those in rural areas. (1)\_\_ and cyber terrorists could also break into the system, causing (2)\_\_ in the national grid. They could also carry out large-scale (3)\_\_ by fiddling bills. UK energy companies have admitted they will pass the installation costs on to customers; yet are planning on using Bob Geldof to (4)\_\_ the idea of using these 'green' meters. Smart meters work by recording gas and electric consumption every 30 minutes. Consumers are given In-Home (5)\_\_, which lets them see how much energy they are using. (6)\_\_ firms benefit because they no longer have to send meter-readers into homes, and they will be able to (7)\_\_ customers more easily if they do not pay their bills. Of course (8)\_\_ will say, what is wrong with my current meters? The answer is nothing!

**disconnect / promote / consumers / displays / chaos / fraud / energy / hackers /**

### GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

#### 'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200

Today, let's talk about 'smart' meters. (1)\_\_ electronic meters will measure your electric and gas usage. They are meant to replace (2)\_\_ existing meters. The catch in the UK is - it will cost YOU £200 to install one, even (3)\_\_ legally you don't need to. Next year UK energy companies will begin the mass installation of these 'smart' meters. The expense of (4)\_\_ will be passed on over time to customers. The idea is to save customers money. Seeing as they will cost £214.80 to install, any saving will take at least eight years before anyone begins to benefit! The £11 billion project is supposed to cut down energy consumption and reduce bills! Really? So far, five EU countries considering similar (5)\_\_ plans have decided it (6)\_\_ cost (7)\_\_ money (8)\_\_ it saves.

**such / would / which / than / your / more / though / these /**

It is worth noting the smart meters will not work (1)\_\_ a third of British homes, including high rise flats, basements, buildings with thick walls and those in rural areas. Hackers and cyber terrorists could also break into the system, causing chaos in the national grid. They could also carry out large-scale fraud (2)\_\_ fiddling bills. UK energy companies have admitted they will pass the installation costs on to customers; (3)\_\_ are planning on using Bob Geldof to promote the idea (4)\_\_ using these 'green' meters. Smart meters work by recording gas and electric consumption every 30 minutes. Consumers are given In-Home displays, which lets them see (5)\_\_ much energy they are using. Energy firms benefit because they no longer have to send meter-readers into homes, and they will be able to disconnect customers more easily (6)\_\_ they do not pay their bills. Of course consumers will say, what is wrong with (7)\_\_ current meters? (8)\_\_ answer is nothing!

**the / yet / how / my / of / if / in / by /**

'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200 – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

### 'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200

Today, let's talk about 'smart' meters. These \_\_\_\_\_ will measure your electric and gas usage. They are meant to replace your existing meters. The catch in the UK is – it will cost YOU £200 to install one, even though legally you don't need to. Next year \_\_\_\_\_ will begin the mass installation of these 'smart' meters. The expense of which will be passed on \_\_\_\_\_ . The idea is to save customers money. Seeing as they will cost £214.80 to install, any saving will take at least eight years before anyone begins to benefit! The £11 billion project is supposed to cut down \_\_\_\_\_ reduce bills! Really? So far, five EU countries considering similar such plans have decided it would \_\_\_\_\_ it saves.

It is worth noting the smart meters will not work in a \_\_\_\_\_, including high rise flats, basements, buildings with thick walls and those in rural areas. Hackers and cyber terrorists could also break into the system, \_\_\_\_\_ national grid. They could also carry out large-scale fraud by fiddling bills. UK energy companies have admitted they will pass the \_\_\_\_\_ on to customers; yet are planning on using Bob Geldof to promote the idea of using these 'green' meters. Smart meters work by recording gas and electric consumption every 30 minutes. Consumers are given In-Home displays, which lets them see how much energy they are using. \_\_\_\_\_ because they no longer have to send meter-readers into homes, and they will be able to disconnect customers more easily if they do not pay their bills. Of course consumers will say, what is wrong with my current meters? \_\_\_\_\_!

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## WRITING/SPELLING

### WRITING / SPEAKING

**1) On the board** - *In pairs, as a class* - write down 10 things you know about gas and electric meters, as well as smart meters. *5-10 mins.*

**2) Sentence starters** - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) 'Smart' meters \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) My gas meter \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) My electric meter \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Homework** - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200.** Your email can be read out in class.

### GAP FILL READING

- 1) meters
- 2) catch
- 3) mass
- 4) installation
- 5) customers
- 6) install
- 7) benefit
- 8) consumption

### SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) electronic
- 2) install
- 3) installation
- 4) expense
- 5) which
- 6) benefit
- 7) yet
- 8) consumption
- 9) similar
- 10) really

### ANSWERS

- 1) hackers
- 2) chaos
- 3) fraud
- 4) promote
- 5) displays
- 6) energy
- 7) disconnect
- 8) consumers

### SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

**Pass = 12**

**Good = 15**

**Very good = 18**

**Excellent = 20**

- 11) basements
- 12) thick
- 13) those
- 14) hackers
- 15) terrorists
- 16) system
- 17) fraud
- 18) disconnect
- 19) current
- 20) nothing

'Smart' meter to cost every UK household £200 – *30<sup>th</sup> July 2014*