

Make the Meter Spin Slower

Analog Meters

Learn about your electric meter and how much electricity your home is using!

Find your electric meter

With permission and/or help from your parents, go find your electric meter on the side of your house. The meter measures electricity your home is using, allowing your electric company to bill your family for the electricity you've used in a month.

Your meter will look like one of the options below. These instructions apply to the meter on the left, an analog meter. If you have a smart meter with a digital screen, follow the instructions for a smart meter.



Analog Meter



Smart Meter

Is the meter spinning forwards?

You'll see a very thin disk in the center of your meter, underneath the five dials. Watch carefully – the dial should be spinning to the right. This represents electricity flowing from the grid into your home. Take note of how fast or slow it's spinning.

Can you slow the spin?

With permission and/or help from your parents, go through the house and turn off lights and appliances that are on (like a TV, a microwave, you can unplug a computer or phone if no one is using it). This is called energy conservation – turning devices off will help your home use less electricity.

Then go back out to your meter and see whether you've managed to slow the spin. If it still seems like it's going the same speed, you might need to turn off more devices.

Keep experimenting: try turning a few devices back on and seeing how these change the speed of the spin, or turning even more devices off to slow it further.

Can you reverse the spin? You can, with solar panels!

If your home has solar panels and it's sunny outside, turning off devices may actually result in the meter spinning backwards. That's thanks to net metering – you're sending electricity from your home to the electric grid, where it's consumed by your neighbors.