

# 11 Learn to Set Up and Budget Utilities

## TRANSITION OBJECTIVE

Students will practice setting up and conserving utilities.

## RELEVANCE TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Knowing how and where to apply for utilities and recognizing the cost and responsibility connected with the use of public utilities is a necessary prerequisite for successful independent living. With this knowledge new renters can make choices that fit their budget.

## INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

### ❑ STEP 1: Update Journal

We can conserve energy for future generations by . . .

### ❑ STEP 2: Convene Roundtable

"To conserve water I \_\_\_\_."

### ❑ STEP 3: Advance Organizer

"Today you will learn how to set up and conserve utilities."

### ❑ STEP 4: Activity - 10 Minutes

On the board, write the following words as column headings: electric, gas, water, trash, telephone, cable TV and Internet access.

Quickly go over the column headings and distinguish between services people choose and utilities that are necessary. Ask students if they know how much these services cost per month. Share information about what you or your friends have paid for utilities. Next, ask students to give several reasons to conserve use of utilities.

### ❑ STEP 5: Activity - 15 Minutes

Have students form groups of three to participate in an *Idea Race*. Once students are grouped, tell them they have five minutes to list ways to conserve energy and reduce their utility costs. Remind students to include all of the utilities when making the list. If needed, give them several ideas

to get started, such as turn the lights off when leaving a room; don't use the oven in hot weather; and turn off the water

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LIFE MANAGEMENT: Unit 3

LESSON 11

### Lights & Heat

Renters usually pay for their utilities. This includes electricity, gas, water, trash, telephone, cable TV and Internet. In some rentals, the landlord will pay for water and trash. Sometimes the landlord will pay for gas and electricity. The renter always pays for telephone, cable TV and Internet.

Utilities can be expensive. In fact, some utilities, like cable TV, can be a luxury. It is important to find out how much the utilities will cost at different times of the year. For example, if the rental is heated with gas, ask how much the gas bill is during the winter months. If the rental has air conditioning, ask about the cost of electricity in the summer months. Also ask about fees for late payments.

To activate utilities, the renter must pay a deposit and start-up fee. If the renter has no credit history, the deposit might be as high as \$150 to \$400. In addition, there may be other start-up fees as high as \$150 to \$275. It is important to plan for these costs before signing a rental agreement.

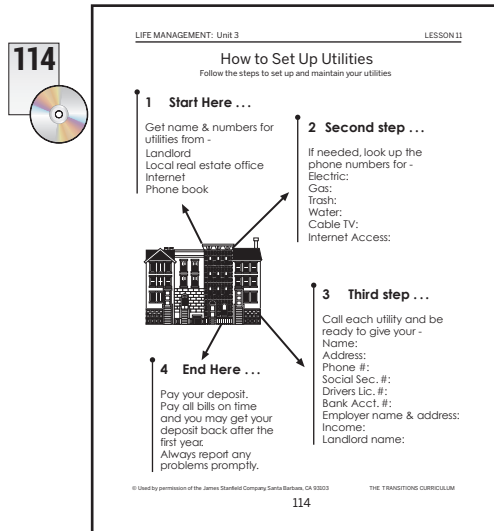
Renters can save money by keeping their utilities bills low. Ways to save on utilities are:

- ✓ Keep all lights turned off in unused areas.
- ✓ Take quick showers, no longer than 5-7 minutes.
- ✓ Keep the water heater on medium heat. Request an insulated blanket if it does not have one.
- ✓ Turn off the heat or air conditioning when you are not home and at night.
- ✓ Set the heater at 68° in the winter and wear warm clothes if you are cold. Set the air conditioner at 82° in the summer and use fans to keep cool.

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THE TRANSITION CURRICULUM



while brushing your teeth. Say “GO” and have students begin. Call time and ask students to report their ideas while you write them on the board in the appropriate column.

#### ❑ STEP 6: Activity - 20 Minutes

Have student take turns reading from the handout **Lights & Heat**. Compare the ideas on the handout with those the students listed

during the *Idea Race* activity. Go over the handout **How to Set Up Utilities**. Have students work with their roommates to complete Sections 2 and 3 of the handout. Have students mark the square labeled, *Set Up Utilities*, on **The Game of Life**. Have students take turns rolling a die to earn extra cash. A roll of one, two or three represents a savings on utilities and they receive \$50. A roll of four, five or six means they have wasted utilities and owe \$20 to the bank. Have students deposit any checks or extra cash they have and then balance their **Check Register**.

#### ❑ STEP 7: Evaluate Outcomes

One way to conserve water is “\_\_\_\_\_.”

#### ❑ STEP 8: Connecting Activity

Students look online and/or contact local apartment managers and real estate companies to obtain an information sheet listing the utility companies for that area. Students bring this list to class to share.

Also search online for start-up requirement costs for the most important utilities. Be prepared to share this information at the next session.

## KEY WORDS

utilities

conserve

landlord

electric

### MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- Student Handouts: **Lights & Heat**, page 113; **How to Set Up Utilities**, page 114; **Check Register**, page 103.
- Prepare for discussion on conserving resources.
- Prepare for the *Idea Race* game by labeling the board.
- Prepare to use handouts and make a screen image.

### SCANS FOUNDATION SKILLS

- Basic Academic Skills: Reading, Math, Listening, Speaking
- Thinking Skills: Creative Thinking, Reasoning
- Personal Qualities: Responsibility, Sociability, Self-Management