

Disputing a Utility Bill

CEFR B2 Roleplay



1. Warm-up Discussion:

1. Have you ever received a bill that was higher than expected? How did you react?
2. What steps do you take to verify the accuracy of your utility bills?
3. Why might a utility bill be higher than usual? What factors could cause this?
4. How would you approach a conversation with a utility company if you believe there's been a mistake on your bill?
5. What information do you think you would need to gather before disputing a bill?
6. What are the possible outcomes of disputing a bill, and how can you ensure the situation is resolved fairly?

2. Example Conversation: Disputing a Utility Bill

Customer (Student A): Good morning. I'm calling because I've just received my electricity bill, and it's much higher than usual. There must be some mistake.

Utility Representative (Student B): Good morning. I'm sorry to hear that. Let me pull up your account. Can you please provide me with your account number?

Customer: Sure, it's 456-789-123.

Representative: Thank you. I've got your account here. I see that your latest bill is significantly higher than previous months. Could you confirm the amount you were expecting to see?

Customer: I was expecting something around 100 euros, but the bill is for 250 euros. That's more than double!

Representative: I understand why you're concerned. Let me check the details. It looks like the higher amount might be due to increased usage during the last billing period. Did anything change in your household that might explain the higher consumption?

Customer: Not really. We've been using the same appliances as usual. That's why this bill doesn't make sense to me.

Representative: I see. There might have been an error with the meter reading. Would you mind checking your meter reading now and providing it to me? We can compare it with the reading on your bill.

Customer: Sure, just a moment. The current reading is 15,250.

Representative: Thank you. According to your bill, the reading was 15,300, which seems to be incorrect. I'll make a note of this and adjust your bill accordingly. You should receive an updated bill within the next few days.

Customer: I appreciate that. Will the corrected bill reflect the correct usage, or do I need to do anything else?

Representative: The corrected bill will reflect the accurate usage based on your current meter reading. You don't need to do anything further. I'm really sorry for the inconvenience.

Customer: Thank you for your help. I'm glad we could sort this out quickly.

Representative: You're welcome. If you have any more questions, feel free to call us again. Have a great day!

Customer: Thanks, you too. Goodbye.

Representative: Goodbye.

3. Background:

The roleplay involves a customer who has received a utility bill (e.g., electricity) that is much higher than expected. The customer believes there has been a mistake and contacts the utility company to dispute the bill. The utility company representative must investigate the issue, explain possible reasons for the higher bill, and take the necessary steps to resolve the dispute.

4. Instructions:

- **Instructions for Student A (the customer):**

You are a customer who has received a utility bill that is much higher than usual. You believe there has been a mistake and decide to call the utility company to dispute the bill. Explain your concerns clearly, provide any necessary information, and work with the representative to resolve the issue.

- **Instructions for Student B (the utility company representative):**

You are a customer service representative for a utility company. A customer calls to dispute a bill that is higher than usual. Your task is to listen to the customer's concerns, investigate the issue, and offer a solution. Make sure the customer feels understood and that the problem is resolved fairly.

5. Vocabulary List:

Dispute, meter reading, billing period, consumption, account number, adjust, incorrect, concern, representative, usage.