Watt Meter

Purpose: An electricity monitor that measures power consumption of a device

Application: To determine watts used by appliances or electronics; to identify devices that draw power even when switched off or in standby mode

How-to:

Get permission from an adult before beginning this activity. There is risk of electric shock.

1. Choose an appliance or electronic device to be measured. Turn off and unplug the appliance.
2. Plug the watt meter into electrical socket near the appliance to be measured.
3. Plug the appliance into the meter and make sure the appliance is turned on and in use.
4. Press Watt button on the meter until "watts" appears on the display screen.
5. Record the watts on the display screen. If the reading remains at zero, the wattage is too low to be detected.
6. Turn off and unplug the appliance. Then unplug the watt meter.
7. Return the appliance to the same condition in which you found it.

Helpful Hints:

- On the worksheet when calculating cost of an appliance in use for less than one hour, round to the nearest quarter of an hour.

    15 minutes = .25   30 minutes = .5   45 minutes = . 75
- In situations where the electrical outlet is difficult to access, plug meter and appliance into a powerstrip or extension cord instead.
- For some devices, such as a microwave, the watts shown on the display screen may fluctuate making it difficult to record a stable number. Choose an average reading when in use.
- Consider measuring the following home appliances: lamp, TV, hair dryer, toaster, vacuum cleaner, microwave, radio, iron, humidifier, portable heater, computer, coffee maker, or blender.