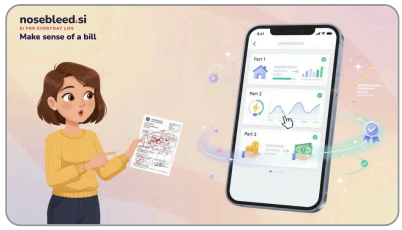
Make sense of a confusing letter



Use AI to turn a letter full of jargon into a short, plain summary.

By the end, you'll be able to:

- find the key facts in a letter
- keep your personal details private when using AI
- check AI's summary against the letter

Warm-up Which letters do you find hardest to follow?

Tick any that apply, then talk about it with your group.

☐ Bills ☐ Bank ☐ Council ☐ Health ☐ Tax ☐ Pension ☐ Other: _____

1 Find the key facts

Read the sample letter on the next page. It's from a made-up energy company. Then answer these questions.

What's changing? _____

By how much? _____

From when? _____

Do you have to do anything? If so, by when? _____

2 Keep it private

Before you share a letter with AI, cover up your personal details. On the sample letter, **circle everything you'd cover up**.

How many did you find? _____

> **Remember:** AI explains; it doesn't advise. Always check its summary against the letter. If something matters, ask the company.

Brightwell Energy
brightwell-energy.example.org · 01632 960 123

20 January 2027
Account number: 7700 1234 5678

Mrs Margaret Hill
12 Example Street
Anytown
ZZ1 1ZZ

Your Direct Debit is changing

Dear Mrs Hill,

We review Direct Debits regularly, to make sure you pay the right amount through the year. Based on your estimated annual consumption, and our current unit rates and standing charges, we need to increase your monthly payment.

Your current Direct Debit	**£96.00 a month**
Your new Direct Debit	**£112.00 a month**
First payment at the new amount	**1 March 2027**

Why is it changing? Your estimated annual consumption has gone up, based on your recent meter readings, and our unit rates changed on 1 January. Your account is also £34.50 in debit, which we have spread across your next 12 payments.

What do you need to do? Nothing, if you're happy with the new amount. If you'd like to discuss it, or send us a meter reading, please contact us by 14 February 2027.

Yours sincerely,

Customer Accounts Team
Brightwell Energy

SAMPLE

Brightwell Energy is a made-up company, and this letter is a sample for practice only. The web address and phone number can't be real: example.org is reserved for examples, and 01632 960 numbers are reserved for drama.

3 Ask AI to explain it

If you have a device, open an AI chat app and start a new chat. Type this prompt, then type out the main parts of the letter (or take a photo of it, with the personal details covered).

TRY THIS PROMPT

Please help me understand this letter from my energy company. I've covered up my personal details. In plain English, please tell me: what it's about; the key amounts and dates; whether I need to do anything, and by when; and what any jargon means. If you can't read part of it clearly, say so rather than guessing.

Talk about it: which word or phrase did AI explain that you found most useful?

4 Spot the mistake

Here's a summary an AI assistant might give. It has **one mistake**. Check it against the letter, and find it.

EXAMPLE SUMMARY

This letter is from Brightwell Energy. Your monthly Direct Debit is going up from £96 to £112, starting on 1 March. This is because your estimated yearly use has gone up and prices have changed, and because you owe £34.50, which will be spread over the next year. You don't have to do anything if you're happy. If you'd like to change the amount, contact them by 28 March.

The mistake is:

Talk about it: why might a mistake like this matter?

5 Your questions

Write two questions you could ask the energy company. For example: "Why has my estimated use gone up?"

Find out more: watch the 10-second video and read the full step-by-step guide, free, at
nosebleed.si/ideas/make-sense-of-a-bill

Teacher notes: Make sense of a confusing letter

Time: 45 to 60 minutes

Level: beginners; no AI experience needed

Group: any size; works well in pairs

You'll need: a copy per learner; highlighters; phones or tablets with an AI chat app (optional)

Before the session

Try the prompt yourself with the sample letter. Learners should use the sample, never their own letters, in class. The company, address, web address and phone number are all made up.

Running order

5 min	**Warm-up.** Which letters people dread, and why. Reassure them: these letters are often hard to follow, even for confident readers.
15 min	**Parts 1 and 2.** Pairs read the letter, answer the questions and circle the personal details.
15 min	**Part 3.** With devices: try the prompt. Without: the teacher reads out an AI answer, or the group explains the jargon together.
10 min	**Parts 4 and 5.** Spot the mistake, then write questions.
5 min	**Wrap-up.** The golden habit: always check the summary against the letter.

Answers: Parts 1 and 2

What's changing? The monthly Direct Debit.
By how much? £16 a month, from £96 to £112.
From when? 1 March 2027.
Anything to do? No, unless you want to discuss it or send a meter reading: by 14 February 2027.

Part 2: four places: the name (in the address and in "Dear Mrs Hill"), the address, and the account number. A good discussion: the date and company name are fine to share.

Answer: Part 4

The deadline is **14 February**, not 28 March. Relying on the summary, you'd miss the chance to send a meter reading or discuss the new amount. AI can misread dates and numbers, especially from a photo.

Jargon in the letter

Estimated annual consumption: how much energy the company expects you to use in a year.
Unit rate: the price for each unit (kWh) of energy you use.
Standing charge: a fixed daily charge, however much you use.
In debit: you owe the company money.

Discussion points

- Sending an actual meter reading can make the estimate more accurate.
- AI explains what a letter says; it can't say whether the company is right.
- In the UK, Citizens Advice can help with energy bills. If a complaint isn't sorted out, the Energy Ombudsman can look at it.

Safety notes

- Outside class, learners should cover their name, address and account numbers before sharing a real letter with AI.
- Contact companies using the number on the letter, or on their official website, never a number from an unexpected text or email.

Adapting it

Large print: enlarge to A3. **Extension:** ask AI to write a short, polite email asking the company to explain the new amount, then check it before "sending".

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