

## Suspicious Bills.

Paying bills can be such a pain. It's a necessary evil. It's also something that keeps us honest: when we have to look at our true expenses in the face\*, it makes us consider our life styles, and whether or not we are being responsible. But still, it's a pain. I have to have peace and quiet to do it properly: no one around, no music, no tv. Like other people, I have a system that helps me. Daily, I sort out the bills from the junk mail. The junk goes into the recycling bin, and the bills go in a neat pile on my desk. Then, later on, I'll open the bills and sort them out chronologically, so the ones that need to be paid soonest go on top of the pile. The system cuts down on paperwork, and it makes me feel as if the job is already half done. So, when I eventually sit down to pay the bills, I'm organized: I have stamps, stickers with my name and address, extra envelopes, and the bills. What else do I need\*? Enthusiasm.... The bills that take up most of my time are from the credit card companies that we use. Why? Well, it's because I pay a lot of my bills automatically with my credit card. It saves me\* getting a late fee because I've forgotten to pay, let's say, my electricity bill, or my phone bill on time. It's convenient, and nowadays, most credit card companies have security arrangements, so you only pay what you really owe. If there is a charge to your credit card that you're unfamiliar with, you can always question it, or even stop it. Suspicious charges do crop up every now and then, and so it's important to check all of the charges on your monthly statement. That has been my experience. Even today, as I looked over the list of figures, I saw a substantial charge from a company that I know I owe nothing. I had previously bought a product from them, but had paid 50% of the total cost when I placed the order, and the remaining 50% when I received the product. "Gosh!" I said to myself. "They're charging me a third time!" I got on the phone, and told one of their billing specialists. Surprisingly, she was not apologetic at all, quite the opposite; she was abrupt and impatient. Perhaps she'd been hearing from lots of people about the same issue. She asked for my credit card number in order to reimburse\* me, and we said goodbye. I wasn't satisfied, however. So, I called the credit card company and asked them to make a note that I don't owe anything else to this particular company. The lady said that customers, like myself, need to be vigilant. It is our responsibility to keep checking to see if the reimbursement has taken place. "It can take three days, or even up to 28 days, depending on the company." I was glad that she told me that, and have decided to check every few days to make sure that these suspicious bills don't crop up again.

Related vocabulary and expressions: to look something in the face, what else, it saves (a person) or (a continuous verb), to reimburse

1. He looked his laziness in the face, and decided to take action and do his laundry.
2. We've got everything for the trip: passports, money, credit cards, hotel reservations....what else do we need? Oh, luggage!
3. Pin the socks together before they go in the washing machine. It saves searching for the other sock afterwards. OR It saves your mother time!
4. I was overcharged when I bought the sofa, but after telling the company, they reimbursed me.