

# Finding a Roommate or Housemate: A Guide for Undergraduates

Choosing a roommate is one of the most significant decisions during your university experience, capable of turning it into either a great adventure or a source of stress. Finding a compatible housemate is key to creating a supportive **place of refuge** where you enjoy living.

## A Strategy for Finding a Good Match

The core principle is: **A good friend does not necessarily make a good roommate.** Focus on finding a great roommate first.

### Step 1: Self-Reflection and Observation

Be observant and thoughtful about your own habits and the habits of others.

- **Prioritize the essentials:** While music preference or hobbies matter, focus on critical issues like **cleanliness, sleep schedules, personality, and character.**
- **Define your priorities:** What is important to you regarding messiness, tidiness, and hygiene?
- **Look for shared values:** Identify others who demonstrate priorities similar to yours.
- **Embrace compromise:** Realize that perfect compatibility is rare. Be ready to compromise on less significant aspects.

### Step 2: Initiate the Conversation

Don't be afraid to talk to others about their roommate's expectations.

- **Ask directly:** Everyone is thinking about it and feeling a little nervous; bring it up openly.
- **Seek counsel:** While you must make the final decision, ask trusted friends or mentors for observations or advice.

### Step 3: Narrow Down and Ask the Tough Questions

Start narrowing down your options and schedule time for an honest discussion.

- **Define Expectations:** Clearly discuss what they are hoping for and what you are expecting.
- **Address Conflict:** Crucially, discuss how each of you prefers to have problems or concerns addressed and resolved. Ask these tough questions *now*, not when a conflict arises later.

- **Acknowledge change:** Realize that every year is different; past experience doesn't guarantee you have it figured out.

#### Step 4: Make the Offer

Ask someone to be your roommate.

- **Be resilient:** It is common for students to ask several individuals before securing a connection (it is **not** a marriage proposal).
- **Stay flexible:** Things change (transfers, withdrawals, etc.). Don't despair. Re-examine whether your "non-negotiable" expectations are truly non-negotiable.
- **Adjust for scale:** The more roommates you plan to have, the more extensive and thorough your conversations should be.

#### Step 5: Secure the Housing

Only after you have a committed roommate group should you finalize the apartment or house selection.

### Questions and Considerations for Compatibility

Use these suggestions to guide your self-reflection and your conversations with potential roommates.

#### Part I: Goals, Preferences, and Habits

Category	Key Questions
<b>Sleep</b>	How much sleep do you need, and what are your preferred sleeping hours?
<b>Cleanliness</b>	How important is it to have the living space neat and clean?
<b>Academics</b>	What are your study habits like? What grades do you hope to earn, and how important is that goal?
<b>Personal Space</b>	How do you feel about your possessions (what items are okay to borrow vs. what things are strictly <i>not</i> to be touched)?

**Guests** How do you feel about having other students or visitors in the home?

**Lifestyle** What kind of music do you like and when do you listen to it (e.g., while studying, waking up)?

**Money** How do you like to spend your money (budgeting vs. spontaneous spending)?

**Health & Wellness** How is your health most of the time? What do you like to do for exercise?

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## Part II: Emotional Style and Conflict Resolution

Area	Discussion Points
<b>Handling Distress</b>	Describe what you are like when you are down or upset. What cheers you up when you are down?
<b>Anger/Pressure</b>	Describe how you usually let people know that you are angry. How are you when you feel intense pressure (e.g., during exams)?
<b>Annoyances</b>	Describe those things that are likely to annoy you or those things that require you to be left alone.
<b>Communication</b>	When is it easy for you to let people know what you are feeling or what you need?
<b>Compromise</b>	Describe what you are willing to compromise on and what your " <b>deal breakers</b> " are in a relationship or living situation.