



Choosing a College Roommate

By Britney Cox

All of the exciting things are starting to happen! You have received your admissions letter in the mail. You have accepted your admissions decision and figured out your financial aid. Next up? The daunting task of deciding your living arrangements. First, you have to choose your physical living arrangements. Do you choose a dorm on campus or an off-campus apartment? We are sure you have read all about the benefits of living on campus in a dorm, and not only this, but most colleges require you to live on campus anywhere from one to two years. There is another issue at hand: how do you pick a roommate?

Single dorms are expensive, as is living alone in an off-campus apartment. Few students can swing this cost on top of tuition, books, and food. So, you opt-in for a roommate. Choosing a roommate can vary from student to student and whether you have chosen to stay in-state or out of state for college. Living with a stranger can be scary to think about. Sure, you are used to living with your family for eighteen years, but now you have to share a room, a bathroom, and appliances with someone unfamiliar. Worry not! Colleges do not let you go through choosing a roommate solely on your own. Many colleges have a matching system to pair you with your future roommate. If they do not, they might do it manually within their housing department.

Bringing Colleges & Students Together

If you are going to an in-state college or going to a college with someone you know, you have the opportunity to choose your future roommate if you so wish. You can indicate that you want to room with someone by contacting your university's housing department directly or by selecting that person in your college's system for your convenience. However, indicating you want to room with someone does not guarantee that they will be your future roommate. You get roomed by various factors, such as learning communities, athletics, and other social interests. You may need to indicate that you want to live within the same community as the person you want to room with.

Maybe you do not have someone in mind for a roommate. That is okay! College is for exploring new opportunities, making new friends, and discovering who you are. There are obvious benefits to not knowing your future roommate. The most important is that you get to create a new friend! Your future roommate can even introduce you to more friends. They can also make or break your housing experience that academic year. You will learn their ins and outs — what time they get up, what they do when stressed, their preferred TV show, and what time they go to bed. They will, in turn, learn these things about you. It can be awkward or scary, but in time, you will become comfortable with them, whether you like them or not.

If your college has a system to pair you with your future roommate, you may get to choose somebody random at your college. You will likely build a profile about yourself that might include your interests, major, sleep schedule, and how social you are. It might give you suggestions based on your input, or it might be something you have to search for on your own through a search/swiping system. The most important things to remember are your sleep schedule and social level. You do not want a night owl if you are an early bird, and you might not want someone who is constantly going to have someone over if you prefer being alone or having significant alone time to study. Though you can still get along with your roommate if they have different preferences, choosing someone similar to you is best to avoid an extra layer of stress and personal dynamics.

Choosing a college roommate can be stressful for a variety of reasons. There are a lot of factors to keep in mind while also having to deal with financial aid and the physical act of moving to college. However, once you have chosen your roommate, it is important to keep in contact with them over the summer before you move in. Discuss your interests and what type of items each of you plan on bringing to your dorm. You do not want to show up with two TV's and microwaves. It would be best if you were responsible for half of the items you plan on sharing, which will significantly reduce the cost of your overall move-in. Roommates will not dictate your entire college experience. You will have many opportunities to grow and make friends with them and others outside of your living space.