



College Preparation Toolkit

Tips for Living with a College Roommate

Living with one or more students can be both exciting and infuriating. This article advises students on how to resolve and prevent conflicts, making living with a roommate easier.

Whether you're living in a dorm room, an on-campus apartment, or an off-campus house, you will probably have to deal with one or more roommates. Sharing a place may seem like a good idea because you'll be around other people and save some money on housing (if you're living off campus). On the other hand, having roommates can be frustrating at times. Cleaning schedules, noise levels, moodiness, and bills can quickly transform a friendly relationship into a stressful one.

The College Board says, 'You'll find that sharing space builds character.' It will probably make you have more patience at the very least. Here are some tips for dealing with your roommate:

Establish Rules

Talk about one another's preferences immediately. Are you an earlier riser? Does he or she like to listen to music really loud? Do either of you need complete silence when working on assignments? Discussing these preferences can help you establish certain rules. Make sure that the rules are clear. If they are, then both of you may be able to avoid minor disputes and make living together smoother.

Compromise

Compromising is important whenever people are living together. Living together involves blending two lives and lifestyles. You may be very similar or very different. Both of you may feel different about certain things. For instance, your roommate may not start working on homework until 10 o'clock at night and like to have all the lights on while you prefer having your homework done before 10 o'clock so you can get plenty of sleep. In this case, you will need to find a compromise. A compromise doesn't mean one person is surrendering to another person, but rather that two people are working together towards a solution they can live with.

Communicate

If you're frustrated about something, tell your roommate. Your roommate can't read your mind or vice versa. You will need to communicate in order to have a good relationship and to be able to live together. It's understandable that you may annoy each other, but you may want to try hard not to annoy each other as much as possible. Communicating doesn't mean being critical or nitpicking, it means being honest with someone. Choose your battles carefully. Complaining about everything may cause problems. As often as you critique your roommate, you should try to praise him or her as well.

A Final Thought

Hopefully, these tips can help make living with your roommate tolerable, if not pleasant. Staying open-minded and being respectful may also make life easier for you both. For more tips on handling roommates, try the College Board website (it has more information than just SAT dates) at www.collegeboard.com.