

IF ONLY I'D THOUGHT TO ASK...

**TIPS FOR STUDENTS*
HEADING TO
COLLEGE**

*A good resource guide for parents, too!

The applications have been sent to the colleges and you are starting to hear back from them. You know college is in your future, but you probably still have many questions. It can be scary to think about and a bit overwhelming as you move to the next step of making the final college choice and getting ready to head to that college. This booklet is designed to help answer some of your questions, and also to make you aware of what questions should still be asked as you make your final choice and head off to college.

Where did the questions and answers come from for this booklet? Resources include dozens of high school and college students, numerous parents, and student handbooks from area colleges. Each Section labeled with a  contains honest tips from college students about specific topics. All tips that are inside a  were submitted by multiple students – **pay particular attention to them!**

Undoubtedly not all the information in this book will be valuable to every person. Some tips are even contradictory - remember that these are the opinions of many different people. Each reader will discover different bits of wisdom that will be pertinent to his own needs. Highlight what works for you, and ignore the rest. Additionally, remember that each college is unique and will have its own particular answer to each question in this booklet. Make a point of confirming with your college any new questions that might arise after reading this book.

Good luck and have fun as you begin this next chapter of your life!!!

Note: For ease in writing this booklet all students, professors, advisors, deans, etc. are referred to as “he”.

It all started when a friend said her oldest daughter got stuck in a number of rotten classes her first semester of college because she attended the last possible summer registration session, and by then all the good classes were already full. It was their first experience with college ... they didn't know how important it was to attend an early registration session! If only she'd thought to ask someone who had been through it before! Thus - this booklet was born.

Thanks to the Conestoga Student Services Department for supporting this project, and to the many Conestoga students, graduates, parents, and numerous friends for supplying tips so future students and families can avoid at least some of the stresses related to “heading off to college.”

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Confidence comes not
from having all the
answers, but from knowing
what questions to ask.

CHOOSING YOUR COLLEGE

I'VE BEEN ACCEPTED TO A NUMBER OF COLLEGES. HOW DO I DECIDE WHERE I SHOULD GO?

This is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make! When you applied to schools you probably made a list of factors that were really important to you. Look back at that list and prioritize! Also, look at the other questions in this booklet for things you didn't think to ask before. Don't be afraid to call your colleges and ask any new questions that might be important to you.



TIPS ON MAKING THE FINAL CHOICE

- Go visit again! Eat a meal in the dining hall. Go sit in the library. You've got to feel good on the campus for it to work for you.
- Visit at least once when school is in session - not just during spring break or over the summer. Being able to see the students may help you decide if the campus is right for you.
- ***Spend the night!*** Make arrangements with someone you already know there or contact the college to set up an overnight. This is the best way to see if the kids are similar to your current friends.
- Go to some classes! Find out if they seem the right level for you.
- Get the names of local students who currently attend each of your choices and call them to see what they think about the schools. (Your guidance office should be able to give you a list of these students.)
- If you were wait-listed at a college you really hoped to attend, don't give up! Go visit again. Call it. Make a scene. Let the admissions people know you are really interested! This may significantly increase your chances of getting in. (Some colleges are known to take kids off the wait-list solely by how much they lobbied to get in.)
- Keep in mind your academic skills and work ethics, and try to match those with the school's expectations. It's no fun going to a school that's too easy or too hard.
- How much diversity are you hoping to experience when you go to college? (ie: in- state/out-of-state, male/female, ethnic/international representation, preppy/artsy, etc.) These might be important factors to explore when making your final choice.
- Know the grading policy for all colleges. Some don't give grades for freshman year. Some require a final thesis. It varies a lot!
- What are your academic interests - does your college offer your planned major?
- Do you plan to teach? You'll be certified in the state in which your college is located. This may be a critical factor for you to consider. For example - if you plan to live in PA - the state has very strict requirements for teacher certificates. You might want to consider going to a college in PA which makes it easier to qualify. Other states may be the same - just check out the rules!
- Do you hope to participate on a club sports team? If the program you want is offered (ask to confirm even if it's listed in brochures!!), call the school and get the name/number of a member of the team and call that person! Find out if it sounds like a program you'd like.

If you have a chance to spend the night and go to some classes, that can REALLY help you to know if the college is right for YOU!

- Think about how often and how easily you want to be able to go home. Is your college on a train or bus line, or near an airport? How easily can you get to the airport or train/bus station? How expensive will these trips be? Will you always need to rely on your parents or on finding a ride in order to get home?
- If you are outgoing and will tend to go to professors, then a school with big classes will be fine for you. But if you tend to be shy around professors, then don't go to a school with big classes - you'll never get to know your professors and vice/versa.
- Does the type of dorm matter? For example, if you would prefer to live mainly with your own sex (at least on the same floor), then don't go to a college where all the dorms are coed by room only. Just be sure to know your options.
- Keep in mind any extra activities in which you expect to participate and the amount of time they will demand from you. Do you plan to pledge a sorority/fraternity? How about a club sport? Does the college even offer them?
- Think about rural vs. city schools: some students need the vitality of a city around them, while sometimes small rural campuses can have great "college towns." Also, check to see how many kids go off-campus on the weekends (commuter school). Does this matter?
- What are the calendars like for your colleges? Some have long winter breaks, some short breaks, some special winter terms. Some have finals before the winter break, some after. Some go August-May, while some go September-June. Does this matter to you?
- What are the core requirements? I.e.: do you need to take a foreign language? Math? Do the colleges require lots of writing in your major?
- If you have taken AP courses/tests in high school, keep in mind that some colleges don't accept AP credits! Some do, and these can be very important if your college registers for classes or assigns housing lottery numbers based on course credits, or if you want to graduate early.
- How comfortable are you with the security plans for the colleges? Don't overlook these issues - they can be very important!
- Find out how many graduates end up settling in that state. If the number is high, is this a state you might want to live in someday?

ACADEMIC ISSUES

WHEN WILL I REGISTER FOR CLASSES?

For your first semester you should get your registration information in the mail at home. Be sure to confirm this process in advance so you don't miss out! Many colleges now do registration on-line, right from your home during the summer. Other colleges do registration in person - either during a spring/summer orientation or during move-in days in late summer. A few colleges even assign you your first semester's classes (keeping your major in mind). For subsequent semesters your college will notify you as to your scheduled time and procedure. Some still register in person, while more and more register on-line. Be sure to verify the process used by your college in advance, so when the time comes to register, you are ready.

WHAT IF A CLASS I WANT FILLS BEFORE I REGISTER?

Check the class listings frequently prior to your time to register. (This can usually be done on your college website.) These listings change often and what was closed earlier may open up. If a desired class does not open up when it's time for you to register - be sure to sign up for an alternate in the meantime, just in case you can never get in your preferred class. But to improve your odds to get in the class of your choice:

- (1) Try contacting (e-mail/phone) the professor AS SOON AS you know the class is full or if you can guess that it will be full by the time you are allowed to sign up. Some professors will make an exception to the class size (so you can override the computer) or at least put you on a waiting list.
- (2) If you are on a waiting list, then check with the professor as soon as registration is over to check your status. If still necessary, check again as soon as classes start to plead your case.
- (3) If possible, go to the class you want on the first day the class is held and talk with the professor directly.

If none of these methods work - take something different and try for this class again in a subsequent semester! If the professor is good - it's worth the wait!

At least once during your time in college you will spend weeks begging a professor to get into his class, only to regret your decision for the rest of the semester!

CAN I CHANGE A CLASS ONCE I REGISTER?

Once you are registered you can usually make changes anytime up through the drop/add period, which is usually during the first week or two of each semester. (YOU really have to be aware of the deadlines; most colleges don't allow extensions on things like this.) You might also try talking with the department chair if changing sections would solve your problems. Additionally, students may withdraw from a problem course up to a certain point (verify this date with your college) without having the grade included on your transcript. You may not be able to add a replacement class during this time, but at least the problem class can be removed. (Sometimes the course will still be recorded on your transcript, but you will get a "W" instead of a grade.) *Remember that at most colleges*

students are required to be enrolled in at least 12 academic credits to remain a full-time student. Among other things, being a full-time student is usually required for you to stay in a dorm.



REGISTRATION TIPS

- **Pick courses by professor first, content second!** (If possible check out the teaching assistants, too.) Talk to upperclassmen already at your college!! The best class might be an unusual subject that you'd never consider taking. Other students might be able to tell you some professors to avoid or classes that you should really try to take. Although it's possible to change classes once you start - it's better to make the right choices the first time.

- Go to sites like www.rateyourprof.com and www.ratemyprofessors.com - this is a website made by students to talk about professors they like and others they don't. Although not all professors at all colleges are listed, it can be very helpful as you consider what classes to take.

- **Register as soon* as you are allowed to!** The sooner you register, the better will be your choice of classes. All colleges allow upper classmen to register first, so freshmen are already at a disadvantage related to course availability. If you register as soon as you are allowed, you might at least beat other freshmen to the classes of your choice. Some colleges register on-line right from your home. Some require you to come in person. Know what is required of you. (*This is especially important to remember if you are going to a college that does registration AT the college during staggered orientations during the summer. *Try to arrange to attend one of the earliest orientation sessions!*)

- Be sure to have various options ready in case some of the classes you want are full when you register.

- Try to balance your course-load with reading/non-reading classes. The same is true for writing/non-writing courses. The amount of reading/writing required in certain college courses can be incredible - you don't want 4 of those courses in the same semester! (Talk to upperclassmen about the amount of required reading/writing for classes if you are concerned about this.)

- Before you register for any courses, become familiar with all general college requirements and, if known, any requirements for your major. Also know the overall graduation requirements for your college. Then check off which of these requirements you can waive through AP or placement tests, and which requirements will be completed as you sign up for classes. Remember to update this information at the end of each semester.

- If your school has general core requirements - try to get as many of these courses taken as you can during your freshman year. Once you begin to concentrate on courses for your major, it can be hard to fit in any general requirements. (NOTE: Find out if any courses fulfill TWO requirements - and if so, try to take them! This is more common than you think!)

- Once you know your major, try to make a list of all courses you expect to take over your remaining years, so you won't get caught missing a requirement when you are ready to graduate.

- If you want to register for a class that is offered at a popular time (like a 10am class), and it's got plenty of space available even if you are registering late - *there's often a reason why*. (Bad prof???) Try to find out who's teaching the class or the academic requirements. (NOTE: If you don't know who to ask about the professor/class, ask someone at the book store. Employees there can be a good source of information about professor stories and required books.)

- Intro level courses for specific majors are sometimes used to weed out people. Don't think they'll be easy A's!

- College may be your last good opportunity to be exposed to new topics. Don't always take the traditional courses. For example, unless biology is required for your major to fulfill a science requirement, you might take a course like meteorology or astronomy.
- Talk with your roommate before you schedule your classes. It can be helpful if you have at least somewhat compatible schedules.
- Sign up for a gym class! They're fun! Take Latin dance or fencing or aerobics.... whatever! Be creative!
- Take at least one or two courses pass/fail while at college. As long as they aren't required, colleges often let you do this. It's a great way to try something "different" without the pressure of a grade.
- One way to get extra information about any registration particulars of your college is to ask upperclassmen, so you can try to find out early about any "quirks". (For example where registration is done in person, some kids will cut classes to sit in a line!)
- Verify your student profile for accuracy as soon as you get on campus (or even better during the summer before you go). Talk to your advisor if you find any errors. It is important to verify that any AP, SAT 2, or placement test credits are accurately posted. Continue to check your transcript information periodically to verify accuracy so you are not caught at graduation time with a major problem.
- When deciding which courses to take for a semester, have a copy of the final exam schedule with you. This may help you avoid taking courses that will force you to have a horrible exam schedule. (If possible try to avoid having big breaks between the tests - it can be really hard to be motivated to study for 3-4 days if you have just one test left. It's also hard to study if you have the last scheduled test and all your friends have finished, and are partying or leaving.)
- When deciding which courses to take for a semester, have a copy of the campus map with you. Try to avoid scheduling back to back classes that are way across campus!
- If you have to register before your high school senior year AP scores are returned to you in the summer, you may have to guess as to the scores and register accordingly. As soon as the scores are received (if you guessed wrong) contact the college and try to make changes to your schedule.
- Even if you normally are a morning person, avoid 8am classes. It's hard to go to bed before midnight in a dorm! (Expect to change your sleeping habits!) Also try to avoid Friday afternoon classes.
- Keep an extra copy of your schedule hanging in your room so if there's an emergency your roommate knows where to find you.
- If you tested out of a course (or are exempt due to AP credits), you might want to take the course anyway. If "testing out" means you just have to move up to a harder level - then you have to guess how successful you expect to be in the harder level class. If "testing out" means you are exempt from that requirement altogether - then take advantage of the opportunity to take something "new and different!" Be sure you understand another difference between the two options. The option of "moving to a higher level" usually doesn't give you credits towards graduation, while the "exemption" option often does. Check with the registrar's office if you aren't sure of your college's policy related to this.
- If you enter college with advanced credits due to AP or placement tests, don't be too quick to think you should just take lighter loads instead of taking the normal course load each semester. These credits can

be very important if your college registers for classes or assigns housing lottery numbers based on course credits. It's to your advantage to keep ahead of your peers by continuing to build on these credits. (It can be better to just graduate early if you'd rather not take extra courses.)

- If you plan to play a sport - find out in advance when you will have your practices so you can avoid scheduling classes during that time. Also find out what days your team tends to have games and avoid scheduling afternoon classes on those days.
- If you want to take a class outside your major - you may have to lobby hard to get in. Some colleges allow specific majors to take specific classes. Don't be afraid to keep trying!
- Don't overload your schedule during the first semester - especially if you expect to play a sport, participate in a theatrical production, rush a fraternity/sorority, etc. This semester will have enough stress just getting adjusted to college life.

Two registration MUSTS: 1. Register as early as possible. 2. If possible, choose a course first by professor, second by content.

HOW DO I GET AN ADVISOR?

Each freshman is usually assigned a faculty member as his advisor. You should receive the name of this person over the summer and plan to meet with him early during your freshman year. At some colleges a new advisor will be assigned (from the department in which you are majoring) once you declare your major. (If you indicated your desired major on your application, you may have an advisor in your intended field as soon as you enter.) NOTE: If you can find a professor that you like and trust, try to use him as your "unofficial advisor" as well. It's good to develop a relationship with an extra person in order to get a second opinion on questions you might have, especially if you and your assigned advisor don't get along very well.

HOW CAN I GET TO KNOW MY PROFESSORS?

Most professors are willing to work with students outside of class, but most prefer that students take the initiative to arrange these meetings. Most professors are required to hold office hours. If you have questions or just want to chat, go to these. The professors will be there whether you go or not, and they like visitors. Also, if your professor holds study sessions - GO!! Don't be shy!

WHAT IF I DON'T DO WELL IN MY CLASSES?

If you are struggling in just one class and you don't want to withdraw from the class, then you need to contact that professor and see if any special help can be obtained. Perhaps you just need to adjust your learning style. If you know of another student who is also struggling in the class, try to go in together to see the professor.

Sometimes you can take courses pass/fail - which may be an option if you aren't doing well. Often required classes (either general requirements or classes for your major) can not be taken this way. There are generally limits as to how many classes can be taken pass/fail, so you should check with your advisor if you are considering this option.

If you are having trouble in multiple classes, you should contact your college's academic advising and support office. Most colleges offer many tutoring opportunities (and they are often free!) for students who ask. NOTE: Many colleges will put you on academic probation if you get below a 2.0 in a marking period, and will require you to get at least a 2.0 before becoming a sophomore, so don't wait until it's too late to get help.

HOW DO I DECLARE MY MAJOR?

Some colleges require you to declare a major before you start as a freshman (especially specific majors such as engineers). A few don't allow you to declare your major until the end of your sophomore year, while most allow you to do it anytime before the end of your sophomore year. Some people feel that once you have even a slight idea about your preferred major, you should declare it. This would be especially true if you can't get into classes (even intro classes) until you've declared your major. If you don't have any ideas about a major and there's no advantage to declaring early - then take a variety of classes and explore your options before actually declaring anything.

Generally your advisor will help you plan your courses and look at options related to majors, double majors, and minors. Once you are ready, most colleges have you fill out a form (check with your advisor or the registrar's office) on which you declare your major. At some colleges you simply have to fill out a new form to change your major, at others you must get permission from a dean. Become familiar with your college's policy related to declaring and changing your major so you don't get caught in a bind!

**** NOTE:** Try to keep an open mind when thinking about selecting a major. Choose your major out of enjoyment, not obligation. Think about not only the subject area, but also the professors and the facilities for that department. Consider requirements (a final thesis? internships?) and academic/extracurricular opportunities available with or required by your major. Many college handbooks remind you to keep in mind when selecting a major that, with few exceptions, specific training in a subject area is not as important as what the student learns in the process of completing coursework. The abilities to communicate effectively, to solve problems, to relate to other people, to analyze and synthesize data, and to understand the history and culture that surrounds us are ultimately more important than the particular concentration a student chooses. This is especially true when examined in the context of national statistics, which show that most adult Americans change from one job to another several times during their first 5 years after college.

CAN I GO ON A STUDY-ABROAD PROGRAM?

A freshman would rarely participate in this program. Most programs require a certain amount of established credits before applying. Generally semester or year-long study-abroad programs are designed for sophomores, juniors or seniors (with the majority of students being juniors). Some colleges offer summer-abroad programs as well. If you are interested in a study-abroad program, talk soon with your advisor about how to get more information. Some points to consider:

- If you are positive you want to go abroad at some point, find out ASAP the required courses taken overseas, in case there are any prerequisites you can complete on campus during your freshman year.
- If you attend a private college or an out-of-state school and you have intentions to study abroad at some

point, you might want to see if you can apply to it through a state school in your state. You might then be able to get in-state tuition rates for that semester. It doesn't always work, but if it does, you might save a lot of money.

- If you plan to go abroad for a semester - it can be easier to leave your college campus for the spring semester (so you don't have to find housing coming back in the middle of the year). However, it might also be easier to make new friends in the new school if you go there during the fall semester. Just think about these options before you make your choice.
- If you go on a study abroad program, often the credits will transfer but the grades won't count toward your GPA. Verify this.

HOW DO I GET MY GRADES?

Grades are either mailed home to you (not to your parents, unless you are under 18) one to two weeks after the semester ends, or they are available through the college website (find out the link before you leave for break), or both. Grades may also be available via intercampus mail. Some colleges also report mid-term grades for the students. Check with your college for specific procedures.

CAN I TAKE ANY CLASSES AT ANOTHER COLLEGE?

Some colleges have student exchange programs where the students can take individual classes (if the campuses are nearby) or entire schedules (for a full semester) at specifically identified colleges. These can be great opportunities to see other campuses and/or parts of the country. You should check with your college to see if such programs are available and get details if this is an option in which you are interested. (Be sure to verify if there are any restrictions on transfer credits.)

CAN I TAKE SUMMER CLASSES ON CAMPUS OR AT A LOCAL COLLEGE?

Whether you want to start in a summer school session before your freshman year, or go in subsequent summers, check with your college's Registrar's Office to see how it handles these classes. If your college offers summer school sessions, you will need information as to the courses offered, the course load limits (usually 6-8 credits), the dates, the cost, living arrangements, etc.

If your admission to a college requires that you start during a summer school session - be sure to remember that this usually means it is a probation period for you! It is likely that a minimum GPA is required for you to return for the fall semester. Know the specifics before you spend the summer partying!

If you'd rather be at home and take summer classes from a local college, be sure to verify IN ADVANCE if the courses will be accepted by your college (either accepted as just an elective or accepted to fulfill specific requirements for your college). Often only elective courses are transferable, and only if the grade is "C" or better. Usually these courses are applied to the total number of credits required for your college's degree but the grades do not count in the calculation of your GPA.

TEXT BOOK TIPS

- **Get your books as early as possible so that used books are still available.** You'll save money if you can buy them used!
- Look through the used books before buying them - some are so marked up and highlighted you won't want to use them. But books with small notes in the margin are often helpful!
- **Expect to spend a lot!** New text book prices range from \$25-\$100+ each, and some classes require 2+ books. Assume \$200-\$500 per semester if you go to the bookstore.
- Find a friend from whom you can buy a book if possible. (But first verify that the same book will be used from one semester to the next - professors often change editions!)
- Go early in the day to buy your books. When it's crowded, a college bookstore can be a madhouse!
- Don't buy "suggested" or "optional" books the professor may have put on the course book list *until* you've been in the class and heard directly from the professor. Often these books are *just* suggestions.
- At the end of each semester if you can sell your books directly to other students or on ebay or Craigs List - you'll get much more money than selling them back to the bookstore. If you have to sell to the bookstore - do it early! (Once they have a certain number of a particular title, they often won't take more back.) Obviously you shouldn't try to sell back any books that you might want to keep for future reference.
- Buying books on the internet is becoming a more popular option. Check out Craig's List or eBay for used books, or Amazon.com or other similar sites. Cost can be a huge advantage buying this way, but there may be some disadvantages:
 - 1-You may have to pay shipping/handling.
 - 2-Verify also that you are getting the correct edition!
 - 3-Delivery can be slow.
 - 4-Your bookstore may not buy the books back at the end of the semester.
 - 5-If you drop the class you may not be able to return the books.
- Another new option is downloading textbooks onto e-readers. If this is an option and you have an e-reader - it might save you a lot of money! You can also check out downloading your books directly onto your computer. There may be royalty fees to do this, but they might be much less than buying the book directly.

To save money, shop early for text books while used copies are still available. Check on-line options. Better yet- buy them from a friend.

STUDY TIPS

- *Make notes in your text book as you read.* Don't just highlight! You often have so much reading you can't go back and reread all your highlights - the notes make studying easier.
- There are lots of sources for tutors (most free) on most campuses - don't be afraid to seek them out if necessary. Check with your advisor or the Dean of Students if you don't know where to find help.
- Most colleges offer free Resource Centers - especially for students who need help with writing papers. These can be very valuable for reviewing mechanics, improving style, or just getting you started if you have writer's block. Take advantage of these resources!
- You will have lots more free time in college than in high school. Learning how to appropriately fill this time can be challenging. Time management and self-discipline are the biggest things you'll learn in college.
- Expect to read a lot more than you did in high school. Some classes might assign 100-200 pages a week!
- **DON'T CUT CLASSES!** No one will make you go to classes in college, but it's really hard to make up missed work. If your professor offers study sections, go to them! Even if they aren't mandatory, they will usually be extremely valuable (and will help the professor get to know you better).
- Expect to change your study habits from high school!
- Keep a syllabus and a calendar. Mark all holidays, breaks, major events at the college (ie: parents weekend when your parents will expect you to visit at least a little bit!), and all academic assignments as soon as you know them. *No one will be giving you periodic checks to see if you are getting your work done in a timely way. You need to set up your own schedule to avoid doing everything at the last minute.*
- The biggest difference between high school and college is the lack of opportunities for buffer grades. In college many classes have just 1 or 2 tests plus a final PER marking period, with no class participation, homework, or extra credit opportunities. Some classes just have 1 or 2 papers for the whole marking period. In these classes each grade is extremely important.
- Use the library or your dorm's study lounge if it's hard to study in your room. There may be too many distractions in your room to be able to concentrate there.
- It's easy to find yourself putting off your work - especially lengthy reading and long term assignments. There aren't often nightly homework assignments like there were in high school. It's critical to organize your work and budget your time - especially if you participate in some extracurricular activities.
- Take advantage of office hours for your professors - you'll get help with your classwork AND get to know your professors better!
- Many colleges say that for each assigned class hour/week you should assume you'll study an additional 3 hours/week.
- Try to find upperclassman who have taken your class (with your teacher) and ask them about the teacher's testing style. Some teachers use mostly lecture material on tests, some go only with the text books, etc. It's as important to know what to study as what not to study.

- Chances are there is someone smarter than you in your dorm! Don't hesitate to ask around for help! Find a study partner for each class.
- Go to study groups. (Study groups work best if they meet after all members have finished studying on their own.)
- Buy CD's or use a CD burner and make a CD of "study tunes" before you go to college - soft music with no words often works best for background noise.
- Sit close to the front in large classes. You will be forced to pay attention, the professor will recognize you better, and you might pick up little things that may go unnoticed in the back.
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to transfer to another school if the coursework is just too hard for you! There are lots of other colleges out there. One will be right for you!

STUDY TIPS:

Go to class! Keep a good calendar for assignments!
Ask for help! Get to know your professors! Expect to read and
write a lot! Get out of your room if it's too hard to study!

And above all...

LEARN TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS!

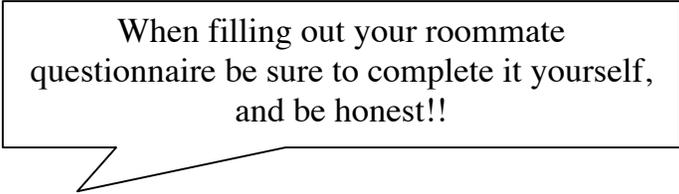
RESIDENCE LIFE

HOW DO I GET MY ROOMMATE?

For most colleges, sometime in the late spring or early summer you should get a questionnaire that asks you questions about your living preferences. (Do you smoke? Do you like to stay up late? What type of music do you like? etc.) You'll mail this form back and later in the summer the college will send you the name/phone number of your roommate.

** Two important points when filling out the questionnaire: (1) *DON'T LET YOUR PARENTS FILL IT OUT FOR YOU - YOU WILL BE LIVING THERE, NOT THEM!* (2) *BE HONEST!* Being honest on the form is critical. If you don't want to stay up late at night or if you love loud music - **PUT THAT DOWN** on the form. Even if you and your roommate don't end up being best friends, at least if your living habits are similar you might still make compatible roommates. Most kids tend to put "average" answers and then are disappointed when the match isn't accurate.

NOTE: It is rare when two people are randomly matched and then become best friends. The questionnaires aren't usually detailed enough to guarantee perfect matches. Don't feel you are a failure if you don't become best friends with your roommate!



When filling out your roommate questionnaire be sure to complete it yourself, and be honest!!

SHOULD I ROOM WITH A FRIEND FROM HOME?

This is a very personal question - and with some roommate stories out there, people may think it is "safer" to pick someone you already know. But many times your best friend isn't going to be the best roommate! (Be sure you have similar living habits!) Some students also feel that rooming with a good friend from home inhibits your ability to make new friends.

WHAT IF MY ROOMMATE AND I DON'T GET ALONG?

Even when you fill out your roommate questionnaire honestly, sometimes things just don't work out. (Remember, your roommate may not have been honest on his form!) Most colleges require you to "give it a try" for a specific length of time before requesting a change. You might talk to your RA (Resident Assistant) and fill out or change an existing roommate contract (sample contract in appendix). If that still doesn't help - you need to contact the college's housing department and explain the situation. Remember that if YOU ask for a change - that might mean YOU will have to move out. Sometimes a change can be made within the dorm you are in, but sometimes it may mean a whole new dorm for you. The question you have to ask yourself is: Is the situation so bad that it's worth the hassle of making the change?

CAN I TRADE ROOMS WITH ANOTHER STUDENT?

The Housing Office may have a suggestion as to a new location, or they may be willing to help if you have prearranged people who are willing to participate in a voluntary roommate exchange. Ask first! *Do not make an unauthorized change* - many colleges will assess significant fines for students who do this.

ROOMMATE TIPS

- Some feel it can be helpful to room with someone with a similar major as yours - then you have similar classes and study requirements. (Be careful - this can also lead to competition between roommates.)
- Some feel that if you are an athlete, it can be helpful to room with another athlete - then you will have similar schedules and better appreciation for the special scheduling needs of your roommate. However, if you are on the same team, remember that you will spend time outside the room together as well, and you may get tired of each other's company!
- Talk to your roommate over the summer. Meet if possible, or at least share pictures. The sooner you get to know your roommate the easier it will be those first few awkward weeks. Talk about what items you plan to bring and what items can be shared.
- Use good communication skills! *Talk when problems arise!*
- Report your roommate to the RA if there is a serious issue. You may need to get the issue documented if you hope to avoid future problems.
- If you are in a suite - try to find out who your suitemates will be. (Many colleges just initially give you your roommate's name.) Certain items can be shared within a suite - so it's helpful to talk with all suitemates before heading to campus.
- No matter how well you expect to get along, consider filling out some sort of roommate contract with your roommate at the beginning of the year. You might want to review it 1/2 way through the year as well. If you find it awkward to have such a contract - ask your RA to organize this for you. Putting desires in writing can make it easier to solve problems. (Sample contract in appendix.)
- If having a clean room is important to you - be sure to talk with your roommate at the beginning of the year as to when/who will do the cleaning. If you have a suite bathroom - consider set up a cleaning schedule with all your suitemates at the beginning of the year.

TIPS ON MAKING NEW FRIENDS

- *Try not to go home the first month of college!* Many groups are forming and you could miss out on opportunities to make new friends.
- Get involved in at least one group or organization - this will be the best way for you to make friends.
- While clubs and activities are good ways to make friends, there are a few even simpler ways, such as: leave your hall door open when you're in your room; sit next to people you don't know at dinner (you'll be amazed at how accepted this really is); get a job; go out on the lawn to play frisbee; find the coffee shop and ask your neighbor to go; attend events...sports, a capella...you name it!

- Go to the gym! You'll meet the kid on the treadmill next to you.
- Often residence halls have programs....go and you'll meet the people in your dorm. This is especially important the first few weeks.
- Don't expect to make tons of friends in classes - particularly the first semester. It is especially hard in the bigger lecture classes where the teachers utilize most of the time for lectures and there isn't much interaction between students.
- Play on an intramural sports team. Most colleges have teams for all types of sports, and beginners are as welcome as "pros."
- Bring a candy machine or similar unusual object - they can be great conversation pieces and terrific ice breakers when meeting new friends.

HOW DO I GET MY DORM ROOM?

Most colleges use some sort of lottery system to assign dorm rooms for upperclassmen. But for freshmen, in the late spring or early summer you will likely get a form asking for any residency requests. (Many colleges use the same form for both roommate selection and dorm preference.) It's important to do your homework *in advance* and know if there are specific dorms you want to request. (Look at the dorms during your visit to the campus, and/or ask people who attend the college for suggestions. Some dorms have reputations for being quieter, some are typically "party" dorms, etc. Find out as much as you can in advance.) If you have a preference as to dorms, say so on your form - *even if there is no specified place to do so*. Even if the form says it doesn't honor requests, many kids say that they got what they requested. NOTE: To guarantee a room in a dorm, more and more colleges are requiring a room deposit payment *as soon as you are accepted at the college*. If you have any thought that you might attend that college, send in the money when you get that bill. Some colleges also assign dorms in the order the payments are received (even though your specific assignment won't be mailed to you until mid to late summer), so the best rooms are given out first. If the deposit payment isn't too unreasonable, don't take the risk! If you don't end up going to that college, you'll have to consider it a gift to the school, but it might be worth having peace of mind while you are still making your final college decision. (If in doubt, call the college and see how they do their dorm assignments.)

A **VERY** important point for freshman: Return any requests for room deposits and/or the roommate selection cards ASAP. Some colleges assign dorms (and even specific dorm rooms) as soon as the forms are received and/or the payments are made – so the best dorms and rooms can often be allocated first!

SHOULD I TRY TO LIVE OFF-CAMPUS?

Most colleges require or strongly encourage freshmen to live on-campus (except commuting students). After that first year it's more of a personal decision as to whether or not you should live off campus. Living off-campus usually offers you more space and more flexibility to choose your

roommates, at an often cheaper rate than dorms. However, there are some disadvantages. If you have the option to live off-campus think about these factors:

- Remember the extra responsibilities you have living off-campus, such as: Extra time may be needed to get to/from your classes. (Can you have a car?) Extra time may be needed to cook your meals. (Can you still get a meal plan? Do you live near a grocery store?) Do you have to pay your utility bills and how will you share these expenses with your roommates? Who will do repairs to the plumbing, etc.?
- Your insurance company should be contacted if you want to live off-campus. Usually most items you take to college are automatically covered on your policy if you live in campus housing, but an additional policy (or a rider to your policy) may be needed for off-campus housing.
- Being off-campus often means you may not have access to the college's ethernet system. Unless you have a wireless option, this means you may also need a cable hookup or a phone line in your apartment to access the internet. Note: if you get dial-up, you and your roommates may have to share "on-line" time. Would you want to get a 2nd phone line?
- The apartment may not offer cable for the TV. Can you get satellite? How many rooms have hook-ups?
- A lot of the friends you make in college will come from your first year housing experience. Because dorms tend to have more frequent "hall activities" than apartments, it can be harder to make friends in an apartment complex. (Also remember that most apartments will tend to house upperclassmen, not freshmen.)
- Apartments may not offer a support network. Verify if there are RAs or similar advisors for your apartment that can help you deal with difficulties ranging from poor professors to troublesome roommates. Security may also be an issue, too.
- Plan how to handle group items (cleaning supplies, furniture, dishes, etc.), and the purchase of food/cooking meals. These are some of the most challenging issues when living with other people.
- Off-campus housing can appear to be less expensive, but (besides rent!) remember to include utilities, transportation, food, and possibly furniture in the equation. Also - is the housing contract for 12 months or just for the 9 months you will be on campus? (Can you lease it for the summer months?)

HOW CAN I GET MORE SPACE IF MY ROOM IS SMALL?

Some dorm rooms are VERY small. Some doubles become "forced triples". Unless your beds, desks, and/or dressers are attached to the walls (some are!), you can try to:

- Bunk your beds. (Are you allowed to?) NOTE: If you have no extra chairs in the room, the bottom bunk will usually be the "couch" for the room. If you don't want people sitting on your bed - opt for the top bunk. (And don't forget to bring a ladder!)
- Loft at least one of the beds. Confirm college requirements for these - not all colleges allow lofts. If they do, some offer construction plans. Some coordinate with companies that deliver lofts to your room. Some also sell lofts on campus during move-in day. Sometimes you can get a used loft from an upperclassman. (Talk to the housing department for any suggestions on where to get a loft in the area if you don't want to bring one from home.) Stores like Home Depot have plans so you can build your own loft and take it with you. (To save time you might want to build it at home, take it apart, then reassemble it in the room.) Most colleges require students who build lofts to complete a loft construction form once it's built - check about that. NOTE: Building a loft will

take significant time during move-in day. Allow for this time and be sure to take plenty of tools with you. (A hammer, screw drivers, and a ratchet set can be very helpful.) Keep in mind that if you build a loft - you usually still have to store the bed frame in your room during the year, and you have to dismantle and store the loft each summer.

- Use bed risers to lift at least one of the beds to improve storage space. under your bed. Note: cinder blocks are often not allowed to lift beds. If you want to use them - ASK first!
- Build up! Get shelving units that stack on top of each other!



DORM TIPS

- Many colleges now show their dorms on their college web-sites. You might be able to get information on dorm layouts, specific floor plans, room sizes, etc. Check out this information BEFORE you fill out the form asking about your dorm requests. Then use it again once your dorm room is assigned to you.
- If possible, get a room with air conditioning - no matter what your college's climate. (If you need AC because of allergies - be sure to note this on the dorm application.)
- If you plan to eat 3 meals/day, then you might want to request living near a dining hall.
- If you plan to participate in a sport or be in a musical group, etc., you might want to request living near those activities. It can be easier to live near your "nighttime" activities rather than try to live near your "daytime" classes. NOTE: Some colleges have dorms with music practice rooms. Check on this and request such a dorm if this is important to you.
- If you want to be in a smoke-free and/or alcohol-free dorm, *then be sure to request that*. At least find out how many of these dorms are on the campus so you know what the odds are of being with a smoker or drinker if you don't request these dorms. (Some colleges have just one smoke-free dorm; some have only one that allows smoking. Big difference!)
- If you have the opportunity of living in an honors dorm, you might want to find out some facts, such as: how many honors students do not live in this dorm (would you be the only one if you didn't), what special activities take place in this dorm, are there other opportunities for you to be with honor students if you don't live there, etc.
- Verify with the college who does the cleaning for the dorm. Few colleges offer cleaning for the rooms or suite bathrooms - that's usually up to the students. Most colleges employ housekeepers to clean hallways, hall bathrooms, lounges, and public areas. Vacuums are often provided in dorms, but verify this before you decide if you want to take one. (Be sure to ask how easy vacuums are to get - some have to be signed out and only at certain times and are 3 floors downstairs. It may be easier just to have your own - shared with your roommate/suitemates of course!)
- Take the time to organize your room when you first get there. This will likely be the only time it's really organized!
- If you can request a suite bath vs hall bath - suite baths are generally more convenient. However, keep in mind that students usually have to clean their own suite baths! (And you have to supply the cleaning supplies! The dorms usually do supply toilet paper, but that's it.)
- If you have a choice of a freshmen dorm or a mixed-grade dorm, keep in mind that most of your college friends come from your 1st year dorm. If you'd prefer the best chance to get to know as

many freshmen as possible - choose a freshmen dorm. If you are in a dorm with upper classmen - *take advantage of their experience!* Ask them questions about classes, professors, other dorms, activities, etc. Don't be shy - this information can be invaluable.

- The amount of storage space in a room is as important (if not more important) than the size of the room itself. If having a closet is important to you, find out if all dorms have closets. Sometimes colleges just put wardrobes in some rooms, which have significantly less storage.
- Coed dorms are usually organized either by wing, by floor, or by room. Keep in mind that if you are in a coed dorm that's organized by room, then often the bathrooms are coed. If they aren't, then the girl's bathroom may be on one floor and the boy's bathroom on a different floor - and you may have your room on the opposite floor. If this matters to you - be sure to request a different dorm. Obviously if the rooms have suite baths, then this is not an issue.
- Most colleges offer special interest dorms of various types (specific ethnic dorms, international dorms, scholar dorms, single sex dorms, etc.). Students are rarely placed in one of these dorms without making such a request. If you think you want to live in one - try to contact someone who has lived in it before so you can get first-hand knowledge about the experience.



MOVE-IN DAY TIPS

- If possible try to arrive about the same time as your roommate if you want to have some say as to how the room will be set up. Remember, whoever arrives first gets first choice of the bed, closet, desk, etc.
- Take cold drinks - you will get hot and thirsty!
- If you know your dorm room is on an upper floor in a dorm with no elevator, then you might consider renting a dolly - it can be a huge help when hauling up all those boxes. (Find out first if there is help available on move-in day.)
- If you have limited time to get set-up, pack some food/drinks for lunch. You won't want to take the time to go find something to eat.
- Arrive as early as possible - many dorms have check-in procedures that can be very time-consuming and slow! You will go nuts standing in line for 2 hours waiting your turn to sign-in when you could be in your room getting set up.
- If you are moving into an all freshmen dorm - keep in mind that it will be incredibly crowded in the halls and rooms getting things set up. If your dorm is mixed grades, move-in day for freshmen isn't as hard (because freshmen tend to come a few days early, so everyone isn't moving in on the same day).
- If your college has a limited amount of time for the initial set-up (ie: all freshmen meet at 2:00pm for reception), then be sure to get an early start. It can take a number of hours to get set up - and once the orientation activities get started there's often not a lot of time to keep working on your room.
- Every year that you go to college - if there's a way to move-in a day earlier than scheduled - try to do that. Move-in works so much easier if there aren't tons of other people around! Then on move-in day you are free to visit, get your books, help others, fine-tune your own room, etc. *You will be SO glad you did this!* *NOTE: Colleges often ask football players to help with move-in for freshmen - so it might not be a good idea to move in a day early that year. (That extra help is wonderful!)
- The first thing to get in your room is your carpet. Then get your furniture arranged. If it's hot and

you have no AC - bring in your fans early! Get your refrigerator plugged in early, too. Before putting items in drawers or closet, put down some shelf-paper (pack a few rolls) - they can be disgusting!

- You might want to take a can of Lysol and spray the whole room BEFORE you set it up - to kill any germs left over from last year's (or last summer's) students. This may sound ridiculous - but you'd be surprised how often students get sick from the "dorm plague!"
- Take tools with you just in case something needs to be built, moved, or tightened: hammer, utility knife (if cutting carpet), regular and long-nose pliers, crescent wrench, screw drivers, nails, tape measure, drill, level, ratchet set (if building loft), and (of course!) duct tape! You might also take a dolly to haul heavy items (especially if you know you have to climb stairs).
- When setting up your room - try to avoid a "my side vs. your side" configuration. Design it more like home than like a camp.
- Call as early as possible for hook-up if required for computers, AC, etc. The wait can take DAYS if you aren't first on the list!
- At many colleges the parking near the dorms is very limited, so you may be asked to unload your car near the dorm, move your car to a different location, then return to the dorm and carry your items up to your room. If possible keep a careful eye on cameras, stereos, computers and other items that might be stolen while in the "pile" - get them into the room as quickly as possible. (And watch them in your room, too, as you'll likely keep it unlocked while you are moving in.)
- Bring some rope or bungee cords to help tie open doors in dorm when moving in - when you are carrying a big load it's impossible to open the doors! (Assume multiple doors, too!)
- If possible before move-in day, find out where the nearest Home Depot, Staples, Target (or similar stores) are. Then if you need something for your room - you will not have to take the time looking for these stores on move-in day.
- If it's recently rained, put a big plastic tarp on the ground if you have to unload items out of your car more quickly than you can take them up to your room. And if it's raining on move-in day, take a 2nd tarp to cover remaining items while you are carrying other items into your room. (Take big plastic bags to cover items as you carry them, too.)
- *If you have a chance to go see your room over the summer before move-in day, do so!* Take a tape measure, draw a diagram, measure your closet space, etc. Look at your ceiling and walls to determine how items can get hung. Measure windows if you plan to bring curtains. It will be a big help to know this information before you arrive for move-in day! (NOTE: Many colleges say you can't go in advance to look at rooms. A number of students said they went anyway and found summer school kids who let them in the dorms!)
- If you didn't go to your college for summer orientation, you will likely have to pick up your mail box combination and get your ID picture and card when you come for move-in day. Be sure you allow time for these activities when scheduling your day.
- If you have to buy your books on move-in day, remember that everyone will move in first, then go to the bookstore. Try to find a time that will be less crowded. *The best solution is to come the day before and hit the bookstore that day.* (Maybe you can get your ID card and mail box information that day, too. Then you are set to arrive right as the dorm is opening to move in, with no interruptions.)
- Rent a van or U-Haul if you have a lot of stuff to take! It can be a huge help.

WHAT MEAL PLAN SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Many colleges require freshmen to get the full meal plan, at least for the first semester. Some plans include 3 meals/day (2/day on weekends), some give you points toward food purchased, some combine various plans. If you have an option - think about what meals you currently eat. If you never eat breakfast now, you probably won't start at college. Part of your decision may be determined by how close your dorm and/or your classes are to a dining hall. If you have easy access to a dining hall you might be inclined to stop in more often, even if just for a quick bite. If your college only has one dining hall and it's not near your dorm or your classes, the chances are you won't be stopping there as often. It might also help in your decision making process if you've had a chance to eat a meal in a dining hall prior to picking a plan. One other thought - if you don't want the basic meal plan - before you drop to the next level offered, be sure to verify the price difference. Many colleges so strongly prefer that the students buy the full plan, that the difference in the charge between the full plan the minimal plan is almost negligible. If you still aren't sure what to do - see if your college lets you change plans each semester. If you don't think you got the right plan at the start perhaps you can change it during the year.

**** NOTE:** Consider taking some daily vitamins to help balance your nutritional needs with your daily intake of junk food! And don't forget to exercise regularly!



LAUNDRY TIPS

- Most dorms have washers and dryers. If yours doesn't, you'll need a strong and closed container for transporting your laundry outside in all sorts of weather.
- If you don't plan to wash your sheets on a regular basis - at least wash your pillow case each time you do the laundry.
- If possible, avoid doing laundry on the weekend - it's busiest then and you'll waste time waiting around! (If you have no choice but weekends, try to get up early and do it while everyone else is sleeping.)
- Practice doing laundry at home a few times before you go. It's not as easy as you think!
- If there's space in your room, a drying rack is very helpful - college dryers love to shrink clothes!
- Most college dryers don't have a variety of settings - it's on/off, and always high. To avoid shrinking certain clothes, you often need to take them out long before the cycle is over. *To avoid forgetting that your clothes are in the dryer - take a small timer and set it while your clothes are drying.*
- Verify if your college uses coins or your student debit card to pay for laundry. If you need coins - take at least \$10 worth of coins (\$20 is better!)
- Remember to clean off the dryer's lint tray before every use. The dryer will work more efficiently and be less of a fire hazard.
- To reduce static cling in your clothes, use dryer sheets.

Beware: college dryers love to shrink clothes!
Practice at home before you go to college to learn the secrets of proper clothing care.



SECURITY TIPS

- Verify if your college has a curfew. Most have computerized access cards which keep unauthorized people out of the dorms at night. (Many colleges also require students to use these cards during the day.)
- Most colleges have RAs (Resident Assistants) in each dorm to help with questions, orientation, etc. for the students. They are responsible for the safety and well being of the residents in their halls.
- Most campuses offer shuttles and escort services - take advantage of these options if you are uncomfortable walking back to your dorm in the evening!
- *Keep your dorm room locked when you aren't in your room.* Why offer the opportunity to have someone come in and steal something? If you and your roommate can't agree on this issue, then talk with your RA to work out an agreement.
- Avoid taking lots of expensive jewelry to college. You don't need it there! It's only something that others might want to take.
- Use the buddy system - not only at night but during the day, too!!!!
- If you take a car to campus, depending on where it has to be parked, you might consider getting something like "The Club" to help protect it from theft. (Cars with out-of-state plates - especially for students at city schools - are often more likely to be vandalized because crooks think they are tourists with suitcases, etc. in the trunk. Be sure you have a school parking sticker displayed on your car to avoid this confusion.)
- Be sure to lock your laptop (buy a special lock) if you are keeping it in your room. Laptops are known to "walk" easily!
- Become familiar with the security measures your college has *before* you start to go to events on campus. And always try to go with a friend at night so you aren't walking around alone!
- Even if you don't expect to have any roommate problems, bring a trunk with a combination lock in which to keep your extra money, camera, portable CD player, etc. This just gives you an extra layer of security when you're out of the room (especially when on breaks).
- Know the college's process for campus emergency alerts. Does your college use a reverse 911 process where it calls all dorm rooms and/or cell phones? Do they send emails or text messages? Be sure you have signed up properly to receive any emergency notices

Keep your dorm room locked. Walk in groups, especially at night. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.

MONEY, BANK ACCOUNTS, CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS

SHOULD I TAKE A CREDIT/DEBIT CARD?

By the time most kids are 18 years old, they will have at least one credit/debit card. This card is useful for emergencies, and is required for e-shopping. Having such a card is a personal decision for your family. *A related question is, should the bill/statement be mailed home or to the student?* If you are responsible for all your own purchases and you can reliably pay the monthly bills/balance statements - then it could be mailed to your college address. (Be sure you have checks and stamps to pay any bills.) But if there is any question about your reliability, and/or your parents want to verify what monthly purchases were made, then the bill/statement should be sent home. If the bill/statement does go to you at college, remember to send a change of address to the credit/debit card company if you come home for the summer, so those bills/statements don't sit in your college mailbox building up overdue notices and interest charges! (Plan ahead if you have a long winter break or you go abroad as well.) *If you do get a credit card remember: don't build credit in college - it's important to learn NOW to pay off your bill each month.*

If credit/debit cards don't appeal to you try a prepaid debit card such as Visa Buxx. (Parents deposit money from home, kids use like a credit card.) Be sure you understand how re-deposits are made.

SHOULD I OPEN A CHECKING ACCOUNT?

Most students do need a checking account when they are in college. Some students have an account on campus (open this when you visit over the summer or during your orientation), while others have their account at a bank near their home. For either location, be sure you get an ATM card for your account so you have easy access to your money. If possible, look for a bank that offers free ATM transactions. (Ideally use a bank with branches at home AND on campus!)

For accounts at a bank on/near campus (with no branches near home):

- You will be responsible for all transactions and balancing monthly statements. Everything will be mailed directly to you.
- You can deposit or cash any checks you might receive (if you have a job, celebrate a birthday, etc.). Usually this money is available for use within a day or two.
- You will need to plan what to do for absences, such as winter and summer breaks, semester abroad, etc.
- You will need to give the bank an address change each year if you change dorms (unless you have one permanent mailing address while in college).
- There may be fewer ATM charges if you use a machine on campus.
- If you expect to use checks to pay for most purchases at local stores, you will be better off having an account at a local bank. (Sometimes local stores don't accept out-of-area checks.)
- If you need additional money from home - it may have to be mailed to you and then deposited (this can take time) unless the bank has a branch in your hometown. (Wire transfers can be expensive if you

need the money immediately.)

- You won't have rollover protection from overdraft fees if you overdraw your account. (Rollover is where the balances for multiple accounts in one bank combine before charging overdraft fees.)

For accounts at banks near your home:

- You can have it up and ready before you leave for college and won't have to worry about that during orientation. (This also gives you a chance to practice balancing an account with your parents' help before you go!)
- Your parents can easily deposit money into your account if needed, and you should have immediate access to that money. (Note: most banks take a few days to clear a check. You might need to deposit *cash* for immediate access.)
- If you have personal savings and checking accounts in the bank, you can usually make transfers right from your computer in your dorm room.
- The address on your driver's license and on your checks will match in case you need to make a check payment that requires this verification.
- Unless you give your bank a change of address card, your monthly statement will be mailed home and you will have to coordinate with your parents to verify accuracy.
- You'll have easy access to money when you are home over breaks.
- If you receive a check at college (job, birthday, etc.), most local banks won't cash it. You should be able to deposit it into your personal checking account via the ATM, but there will likely be a 5 day hold on the check. (So if you expect to need the money right away, this isn't a good option.)
- If your account is at the same bank as your family's accounts, you may have rollover protection. (Check with your bank.)

HOW MUCH MONEY WILL I NEED FOR BOOKS AND BASIC EXPENSES?

There are different ways to "take" money. Besides taking cash, you'll likely have a credit card or a debit card or Visa Buxx. You will probably deposit some money in a checking account. Most colleges also offer a college debit account. This debit account enables students to pay for a variety of goods (food, books...) and services (laundry, movies ...) on and off campus using your ID card instead of cash or a credit card. As long as deposits can be made throughout the year into the checking account and/or debit account, you don't need to worry about putting in a lot of money to start. If you don't have a credit card, you may want more money in your checking and debit accounts to cover extra expenses.

As to the amount of money you'll need, new books average about \$200-\$500/semester. Used books should be less. You'll also need access to extra money if:

- You are in an apartment and need to buy food, pay rent, utility bills, etc.
- You have a car and related expenses.
- You are planning a trip over a break.
- You are in a sorority/fraternity, a club sport, or similar activity that has dues, etc.
- You need to take shuttles/cabs to planes/trains, etc. for trips home. (Do you need to buy the plane ticket, too?)
- You have a credit card or personal cell phone and will be expected to pay those bills yourself

each month.

- You have friends at other colleges and expect to make periodic trips to visit them.
- You like to shop!
- You are a senior and expect to have expenses related to job-searches or graduate school applications.

HOW MUCH SPENDING MONEY WILL I NEED?

You know your own spending habits. Reports indicate that although the amount will vary greatly, an average of \$25-\$40/week is needed for “play money.” Items such as movies, concerts, sporting events, haircuts, clothes, food, greeting cards, etc. are common “play” expenses. Talk with your family about this before you go.

AVOIDING IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is a growing problem. By exercising a few simple precautions, you can reduce your chances of having problems:

- Never give out your social security number to companies (most colleges themselves do require it).
Never put it on a check.
- If you receive credit card bills - examine all charges carefully! Keep track of billing cycles, too. (A missing bill can mean your number has been stolen and the bill temporarily redirected while excessive charges are being made.)
- Examine all bank statements carefully! Balance your accounts monthly.
- Avoid using sketchy-looking ATM machines. They can be fake!
- Whenever using credit/debit cards or ATM cards - use your free hand to shield the number (from other people, and from camera phones!)
- Have two credit cards - one for regular use and one for all phone and e-purchases.
- Have a separate “junk email” address for all solicitors, online sites, e-purchases, etc. Then they won’t have access to your school account.
- Request a credit/debit card that has a picture of you on the card. It’s less likely to be stolen and used by someone else!
- Open all credit/debit card accounts *before* you start college. You will get many credit card offerings in the mail when you are at college. *Rip them up before you throw them out!!* *These solicitations can be stolen from the garbage, and false accounts set up in your name.*
- Invest in a shredder! Then use it!
- If possible - don’t pay by check. Thieves can get lots of information on you if they have your check. (ie: your signature, bank account number, address, and often your driver’s license number!)
- Watch out using debit cards - some banks don’t stand behind stolen debit cards. Plus a thief may have access to your bank account information.
- Be sure to install (and regularly update!) virus software and firewalls on your computer.
- Use *real* passwords for all accounts (not obvious ones like 1234 or mother’s maiden name).
- THINK before you put personal information or photos on websites!

MONEY TIPS

- If you are taking a car to college - it's especially helpful to have a credit/debit card in case of emergency when you are traveling in your car.
- Don't carry a lot of cash - that's opening yourself up for theft. Have a safe place to lock any extra money (ie: a big trunk with a lock).
- If you get your own credit/debit card, be sure you are aware of the credit limit, any special fees, and special services.
- Most colleges have ATM machines around the campus. Be sure to verify the cost of ATM withdrawals from these machines. If there is a charge - don't just take out \$10 at a time! (Those \$1 fees add up!) And keep careful records of withdrawals from ATM machines - don't overdraw this!.
- Get a Visa Buxx card - a prepaid debit card for teens. Parents deposit money; like a credit card allowance! Google *Visa Buxx* for more info.
- Keep in mind that most new books run \$25-\$100+ each, and many classes require at least 2 books. If you buy all new books, you should expect to spend between \$200 and \$500/semester.
- Be sure to know if your checking account requires a minimum balance!!! Also verify in advance what its overdraw policy is.
- Be aware of the school's policy related to carry-over for their debit cards. Most colleges will let you carry money over from year to year, but **YOU** must request a refund of any extra money before graduation. How much money you put in this account generally depends on how many places accept it. If it's only good at the bookstore for books, then you'll need less than if it's also good at various stores and eating establishments near campus.

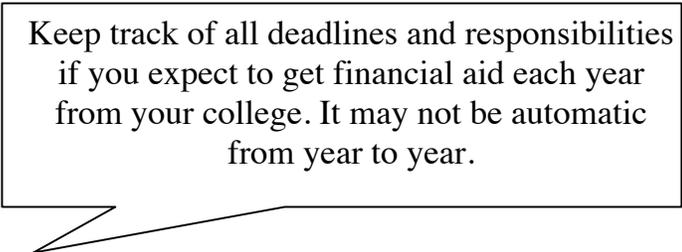
Take responsibility for your finances. Keep receipts, don't overdraw your checking account, & don't build up credit on your credit cards.

ANY HINTS FOR STUDENTS ON FINANCIAL AID?

- Often students who receive financial assistance are given priority for employment (for campus jobs) over students who just wish to work.
- If you need to get a job in order to fulfill a financial aid requirement, **YOU** usually must contact the job placement office of the college to get that job. Otherwise, you might not get credit for the work that you do. NOTE: Some schools pay you directly for your hours worked on the job and then you use the money to pay your college bills; some pay your bills directly instead of paying you. Verify how payments are made at your school.
- To cut expenses, some colleges are cutting back on aid. Apply **EARLY** for all aid - when money runs out, late applicants get nothing.
- There are many sources of aid: federal loans (FASFA), aid from your college, general grants and scholarships, etc. Check them all out!
- Don't assume that just because you received aid the first year, you'll get it every year thereafter. Many times **YOU** need to reapply for funding each year. Be aware of those deadlines!
- If you are on financial aid and you are thinking about taking a leave of absence from your college, talk to the financial aid office about how this absence will affect your aid package, as well as what (if any) steps you should take to ensure that you will get aid if you return. This is especially important if

you leave mid-term.

- Do you get aid for summer school classes?
- Some financial aid packages require you to live on campus, or will cover only on-campus housing costs. Confirm if you want to live off-campus.
- Be sure you know what your responsibilities are for maintaining your aid and what factors (if any) could jeopardize it. Do you need to maintain a certain GPA? Are you thinking of taking fewer credits than normal or becoming a part-time student? Check with the financial aid office first!
- If you weren't on financial aid the first year but conditions change and you need help in subsequent years, contact the financial aid office and verify the procedures for applying. Be sure not to wait until the end of one year to get this information for the following year - often the aid is passed out earlier in the school year.
- If you are on financial aid and would like to study abroad, be sure to check with the financial aid office to verify details for this. (Not all schools offer aid for study abroad programs.) NOTE: If you will be abroad at the time the applications are due for the next year's aid, be sure you take care of these forms *before* you go abroad.
- If you need aid and aren't eligible for financial aid, look for grants and scholarships (both through the college and through independent sources) that might be available. Not all grants and scholarships are given out prior to your freshman year. NOTE: Check out the deadlines and apply for these early!
- Colleges are competing to attract good students. One way they compete is by offering financial aid. If you receive any financial aid offers directly from a college you can often negotiate with competing schools to match or improve upon their offers.
- If you need assistance bringing down your balance owed – have your parents apply for a Parent Plus Loan. Go to <https://studentloans.gov> for more info about this. If the parent does not qualify for a loan through this program, the college will sometimes reduce the amount owed by the student.
- If you can't afford to pay the balance due in one big chunk – go to Higher Education Services (www.highereducationservices.org). HES offers no interest payment plans for families.



Keep track of all deadlines and responsibilities if you expect to get financial aid each year from your college. It may not be automatic from year to year.

USING YOUR FREE TIME



TIPS ON GETTING A JOB OR DOING COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Often students who receive financial assistance are given priority for campus jobs over students who “just wish to work.” If you’re on federal work-study and you have first choice of jobs, take advantage of it and do something you’ll enjoy.
- *If you go to an out-of-state school and get a job, you may have to file a tax return for that state!! Verify this!*
- Most colleges recommend that students not commit more than 15 hours/week to a job.
- Most colleges have job placement offices if you want to find a job during the school year. You can try to work through them, or just go on your own to area businesses.
- If you need to get a job in order to fulfill a financial aid requirement, YOU should work through the job placement office of the college. Otherwise, you might not get credit for the work that you do.
- Often there are organizations on campus whose purpose is to do community service. You can get involved in these organizations, or talk with someone in the Student Affairs Office to best understand opportunities to do community service.
- During orientation, there are usually postings for jobs all over the place, often with info sessions. Go to them just to get the facts, even if you don’t think you’re interested.
- Some jobs give you time to do homework while on the job. If you are on a tight schedule, look for that type of job.
- If you get a job, try to get one with flexible hours. That way you won’t be forced to work your class schedule around your job schedule!
- If you want to get a job and don’t know how to find one, try checking in your college’s student employment office, the campus career office, the library, the local newspaper, campus job boards, or the area Chamber of Commerce. You might also talk with your professors - networking through them can often open up great opportunities.
- If you don’t find anything interesting ON campus, try the web. Many area businesses/jobs put postings there.



TIPS FOR THOSE PLAYING A SPORT

- If you don’t have good skills in time management, you’ll never make it playing a varsity sport in college!
- Sports at a D-I college are a lot more intense than at a D-III college.
- Consider playing on a club team if you want to continue to play a sport but don’t want the commitment of a varsity program. Club programs are usually more organized than intramurals but less intense than varsity. Not all schools have club programs in every sport - you should confirm this with your school (even if it’s listed in the school brochure). Also ask about schedules, any travel, uniforms/equipment, and costs. (Does the school cover the costs, or is it up to the players?) You might also ask about coaching - some club teams have real coaches, but some are run by the students

themselves. (Try to talk with someone who recently participated on the club team to best learn how the program works.)

- You might want to try to room with another athlete. You will have similar schedules and you will better appreciate the special scheduling needs of your roommate.
- If you want to play a varsity sport, remember that a coach can leave the school at any time - *never choose a school JUST because you like the coach*. If possible spend time with the other staff and team members as well.
- If you are playing a varsity sport - verify the off-season training schedule as well as the practice and game schedule. Be sure you are aware of any requirements over any school breaks. (If you are required to be on campus over a break, verify your ability to remain in your dorm room and if the dining hall will be open.)
- If you know the games for your sport tend to be on particular days of the week, try not to schedule afternoon classes for those days. This reduces the chances of you having to miss classes, especially when you have away games. (Try to also avoid early morning classes on the days AFTER games.)
- Playing on a team (even a club or intramural team) is a great way to meet people and an even better way to keep in shape. Unless you are really self-motivated, it's hard to stick to a regular work-out schedule if you don't have a "reason."
- Check for the intramural signups ASAP - don't miss the deadline! Find some friends and form a team.
- Think of being on a team as if it's a class - you HAVE to schedule time for the practices, games, etc. if you are going to be a member.

Varsity sports, Greek associations, music and theater groups, etc. can all be great ways to have fun and meet people, but also can be very demanding of your time. It's crucial that you develop good time management skills if you plan to participate in these of any other similar activities.



SORORITY/FRATERNITY TIPS

- If joining a fraternity/sorority is important to you, verify when rush takes place. Be sure you don't overload your schedule during that time - rush is a very time consuming process!
- Keep in mind the financial commitment when joining a sorority or fraternity. There is usually a one-time pledge/initiation fee as well as semester/quarterly dues. Verify these costs in advance of joining! (Realize the costs will vary for each fraternity or sorority.)
- Verify Greek housing before you join. Is there a separate house? Do the members all live in the house or is it just used for parties/meetings, etc.? Who takes care of the house? Who cooks the meals? Where is the house located compared to the college campus?
- Think of being in a sorority or fraternity as if it's a class - you HAVE to schedule time for the meetings, events, etc. if you are going to join.
- Rushing is a great way to meet people, so consider going through it even if you are hesitant about joining or know you don't want to join. You can always drop out before committing.



GENERAL TIPS ON USING YOUR FREE TIME

- Don't be afraid, just because you're a freshman, to try to get into instrumental, choral, theatrical, athletic, or governmental groups. Many of these groups include all types of talent. You may not get the "best" job during your freshman year, but you'll get to know the people and the basics for the group, and then you can make a more informed decision in subsequent years as to whether to stay with them or not.
- Try to get involved in some group in which, before you graduate, you can take a leadership position.
- If you spend free time on sites such as Facebook - be aware that future employers, coaches, etc. are often checking out these sites for details about students. Be VERY careful what you post (both text and photos) to these sites - it may come back to haunt you! (Be careful in general on these sites - there are some bad people out there!)
- Before joining a group - confirm time commitment, costs, travel expectations, requirements, etc.
- Most schools hold an activity fair early in the school year - go to it! Sign up for anything that even might be a potential. Then you'll get more information, and you can make a more informed decision.
- Verify if there is a shuttle service to get you off campus when necessary. (How often does it run? What does it cost? How do you get it when it's time to go back to your dorm?)
- Many colleges let students attend sporting events free of charge. However, depending on how popular those events are, you may still need to get your tickets in advance (ie: Duke basketball or Penn State football games). Check with upperclassmen to learn the procedures if you attend a college with this situation. (All colleges usually charge for NCAA tournament games.)
- Most clubs welcome new members - they don't just accept freshmen, they LOVE freshmen. Go to a number of the groups, and then stick with the ones you like.
- It's important to get involved, but don't get so involved in organizations that you forget that the main purpose of being in college is to learn! Know how difficult your college (and your major) is, what your course load is, and how well you can organize your study time before you sign up for a lot of activities.
- If your college doesn't offer a club you want to join - then try to start one yourself!
- Avoid just hanging out on your computer by yourself. This will not help you make new friends!



PARTIES AND PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

- If you go to a party or bar - *don't EVER accept a drink (in a glass or opened can/bottle) from anyone and don't put your drink down (whether you are drinking alcohol or not!).* Substances are sometimes added to drinks that can cause serious illness/death.
- Most students feel that no matter how common drinking/drugs are at your school, it's easy to identify other students who don't abuse them. Choose your friends wisely and carefully!
- If you will be turning 21 sooner than some of your college friends, remember that, by law, YOU will be considered the responsible adult if there is a problem related to drinking at an event you host or attend (especially if proved that YOU provided the drinks). Think twice when buying booze!
- If you plan to drink - don't rely on others to take care of you. Watch out for yourself.

- Choices you make in college can go on your record - bad choices can ruin your future! Think about all consequences before making a bad choice!
- If you go in a car to an event that involves drinking, be sure *someone you can trust* is designated as the non-drinker. If this is not an option, consider contacting the college escort service to see if they will bring you back from the event. (Or take cab money in case you need to pay for a cab ride home!)
- Colleges have different policies related to drinking on campus. Admittedly some are quite lenient, but others can impose very stiff penalties. Be sure you are familiar with your college's policy if you plan to drink before you are legally of age.
- You *can* party without "partying"....that is to say, you can go and dance all night without ever taking a drink. Surround yourself with people you enjoy, and you'll have a blast.
- Remember that alcohol and drugs can lower your inhibitions, thus making you more willing to take risks. This impaired judgment can get out of control if you aren't careful to avoid situations with alcohol and drugs, particularly during the first year when the new-found freedom of college can cause people to make decisions they might not normally make.
- When you meet someone for the first time and decide to go out - try to go with a group. Get to know your friends *before* being alone with them!
- Two tips if you don't want to drink at a party: (1) Think of some excuses not to drink *before* you arrive at the party, (2) Get a soda/water and drink it slowly so there's always something in your cup and people won't offer you a drink.
- At all times - respect YOURSELF and your intuition! Don't let the crowd make choices for you!
- Keep in mind that in some states males can be accused of date rape if the female has been drinking. In those states, by law it's assumed that the female is innocent if she was drinking and could not give true consent.

No matter what you are drinking, don't **ever** put your drink down at a party, or accept a glass or open bottle/can from someone you don't know.

GETTING ALL THE GEAR

HELP! WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?

A basic supply list is included in the appendix of this booklet. Make a copy of this, stick it in your pocket, and go shopping! It's important to be comfortable in your room but not overcrowded with unneeded supplies. Keep in mind the following factors as you shop:

- *The weather:* Students going to cold climates need heavier clothes, boots, and coats. (check your closet space!)
- *Travel accommodations:* If you are flying to college, you may need to arrange to ship your goods there or buy most things once you arrive. (Remember also they will need to be shipped home or stored at the end of each year.)
- *Ease of shopping:* Think about how easy is it to go shopping when you arrive (Is there a Walmart near the campus?) AND how easy is it to restock when your parents aren't around to drive you. (Should you take some extra supplies of things you're sure you'll need more of during the year? Some colleges have great shopping within a walk of campus. Others don't! Knowing this in advance will help!)
- *Size of room:* Many colleges can give you room dimensions or have websites that show room layouts. Also - if you have a chance to go see your room over the summer - do so! Take a tape measure, draw a diagram, measure your closet space, etc. It will be a big help later on! (NOTE: Many colleges say you can't go in advance to look at rooms. A number of students said they went anyway and found kids there for summer school who let them in the dorms!)
- *What you are sharing:* Verify in advance with your roommate what items you plan to share. Most rooms do not need 2 TVs, 2 microwaves, 2 vacuums, etc. (NOTE: Many students did say that 2 refrigerators can be useful.) You might also want to talk about coordinating colors for bed spreads, rugs, curtains, etc.
- *Room/hall bath:* If you have a connecting/suite bath, instead of the normal hall bath, you will need additional bathroom supplies (see supply list).



PACKING TIPS

- You might want to label certain items that are important to you or that you may loan out (CD's, movies, etc.), as well as items you might leave behind when visiting friends (coats, hats, sweaters, umbrellas, etc.).
- Label clothing items you buy at the bookstore. Remember just about everyone on campus has a college sweatshirt and/or t-shirt - it's hard to tell them apart!
- Label your towels in case they get left in the hall bathroom.
- Before you leave for school, borrow an engraver from your local police station and engrave your name on easy-to-steal items (bike, computer, stereo, TV, CD player, etc.).

- If possible, don't PACK clothes (items you normally keep on hangers) in a suitcase when you are heading to school. Just leave them on the hangers and cover them (in small groups) with garbage bags for easiest transport and quickest unpacking. *NOTE: Don't bring your whole closet of clothes!!! Dorm closets are not very big!*
- Take clothing items for a variety of weather conditions and seasons - even if you plan to go home now and then to make exchanges. That way if the weather changes before you've brought the next load, you still have something to wear. Don't expect to go shopping for clothes while you are at school.
- Don't forget a raincoat and umbrella. (You might consider taking 2 umbrellas - one will definitely get lost or left behind somewhere!)
- *Take at least 2 pairs of sneakers - one for rainy days and one for regular weather/sports.*
- Take 2 sets of sheets and 2-3 towels so you don't have to worry about washing as often.
- Buy assorted over-door hooks - both single and multiple types. You will need as many of these as your room can handle. Until you arrive you may not know how many doors you have or the thickness of the doors (not all hooks fit on all doors). Some doors are in locations that don't warrant hooks, and some are sliders and can't handle hooks at all. But wherever you can put hooks or hangers - you'll be glad you have them. (Whatever you can't use, hopefully your parents can return when they get home *if you kept the receipts.*)
- Pack loose items in big (heavy-duty) plastic bags which can be thrown out when you arrive (or easily stored for the return home in the spring). Note: there is rarely room to store suitcases!
- Even if your dorm has AC or if you are in a colder climate - think about taking a small fan. The rooms can get stuffy and circulating air can really help! Also - often the AC is controlled by the college and is turned off/on at specific times of the year. Hot spells can occur when the AC is not functioning - so it's helpful to have at least one fan. If you have no AC, most double rooms need at least 3 fans - one for each person and one for the room in general. *NOTE: Take a quiet, good quality fan! It will often be running 24/7.*
- If you have a specific health need that would be improved by having AC, and you don't get a dorm with AC, call the college and see if you can bring your own window-unit. Many colleges will let you bring your own unit if you have a doctor's note explaining your need. But usually YOU have to ask. (Confirm *in advance* who will install it!)
- Before you head to college buy a couple of cans of waterproofing spray and spray your tennis shoes, jackets, and bookbag. It will make a huge difference when it rains. (Repeat each summer, too.)
- No matter what the climate for your school - take a raincoat and a pair of shoes for rainy days. It WILL rain and you WILL be walking in it ... more than once! (*You'll walk plenty in college - rain or shine!*)
- Unless you can use them during the school year for underbed storage containers, try to avoid packing in big suitcases when you head to college. Because most dorm rooms have limited storage space, it may be better to take duffle bags that can flatten and put under beds.
- If rain is expected on the day you are to move in - be sure to take some big plastic bags into which you can slip boxes or items that shouldn't get wet. Also, take 2 big plastic tarps - one to put on the ground (because you may have to unload items out of your car quicker than you can take them up to your room) and one to cover remaining items while you are carrying other items to your room.

- If you plan to be in a band or orchestra, be sure to take your instrument, as well as extra supplies (reeds, music, etc.)
- Check to see if your dorm has extra long beds (many do). If they do, you'll need special sheets. You can get x-long blankets and comforters, too, but they aren't as necessary - especially if you don't plan to cover your pillow when making your bed. However - whether or not you have x-long beds, you might want to consider getting a double bed comforter for a twin bed - the extra width helps cover up items stored under the bed!
- Some colleges report that they have XL beds and when you arrive you find that they don't, and vice versa. *This happens more frequently than you think!* Check and double check before you buy sheets!
- If you plan to play a sport, be sure to take a sports bag and any other supplies you might need. Even if you don't plan to continue at the club or varsity level in college, you might still want to take the required gear (ie: soccer cleats) in case you join an intramural team.
- Pack some cleaning supplies and drawer liner paper, and *use them first* when you arrive at your dorm. It can be helpful to use the liner paper in your dresser and desk drawers, and on closet shelves. (Some can be pretty disgusting.)
- If you can, take a big trunk or something that can be locked (and not easily picked up and taken out). It's good to have a place to lock special items when not in use or when you go home for break: extra money, checkbook, camera, CD player, laptop, etc.
- If you are shopping over the summer, it can be hard to know exactly what type or size of items to buy that will fit in your room (computer cable cord and phone cord lengths, bookcase size, etc.). If you have room in your car - buy a variety of options and just keep the receipts. Use what you can in your room and send what's not needed back home for your parents to return. (This is usually easier than shopping when you arrive.)
- Many students report that a microwave is *not* a critical item to take. Many dorms have lounges which often have microwaves. Or you can usually use a friend's microwave if you are just popping popcorn or heating a cup of hot chocolate. If you don't expect to use a microwave more than once or twice a week - it can be just as easy to borrow from someone rather than take your own. (Be sure to talk with your roommate about this!)
- Some people prefer to take the bulk of their winter clothing items back to campus at Thanksgiving instead of taking them in August. This can be a problem if you travel by plane, bus, or even in a carpool because space is very limited - especially when thinking about big bulky winter clothes. (Remember also that many students are home a full month around Christmas - you'll need warm clothes then, too!)
- Before you get a lot of appliances, be sure you verify any restrictions with your college. Some don't allow hot plates, microwaves, or toaster ovens; some have specific size restrictions on refrigerators. Most won't allow space heaters.
- Girls: take at least a couple of formal dresses for events that are scheduled suddenly and you can't go shopping. This is especially important if you expect to join a sorority, but even if you aren't in a sorority, most girls will have at least a few opportunities to wear formal dresses. (These are great chances to wear your high school prom dresses at least a few more times!)
- Guys: take at least one suit or sport coat, and a few ties.
- Most colleges won't allow candles in dorm rooms - don't bring them, even for decorations.

- *Don't plan on saving your carpet from year to year.* Buy an inexpensive one from Home Depot or Target so if you have to throw it out you won't feel bad. Wall to wall size is not critical but a rug bigger than a throw rug is nice. *The rug should be the first thing you put in your room - so buy one in advance if possible.* If you buy one on campus (some colleges sell them on move-in day) - try to get it before you take your supplies up to your room. NOTE: Some dorms come with carpeting. You may still want a throw rug, but certainly won't need a huge rug. Also - don't get a rug with heavy pile - most doors will not open over it!
- Can't decide what posters to take? Many colleges have poster sales during the first month and you might get some there. Another idea is to make your own poster collage of pictures of friends, family, pets, etc. (Make color copies of your favorite pictures, attach them to a poster board, then get it laminated - at Staples, Kinkos, etc.)
- Check dorm rules about bringing in your own furniture. Especially if the beds are bunked or lofted, you may want a chair or two for easy seating (besides your desk chairs). Take a folding chair if you don't have room to keep the chair out in the room all the time. Futons are popular if you have room for them. (Be sure they are allowed.)
- Find out in advance if your room has a built-in ceiling light and/or a desk lamp. Also, can the desk and/or bed handle a clip-on lamp? (Some can't!) Try not to buy a desk lamp that has a big base (most desks are small). Flexible-neck lamps are often good options for both the desk and bed. If you have room - a pole lamp and/or strings of Christmas lights are popular options for additional lighting. Keep in mind - *most colleges do NOT allow halogen lamps!* And don't forget to take light bulbs (and some extras as well).
- Don't waste your under-bed space. Get as many under-bed containers/shelves as will fit under your bed! If you can raise your bed a bit (with bed risers) - then that gives you even more space! If you bunk the beds - then be sure to *share the under-bed space* with your roommate!
- Some desk chairs can be really old and uncomfortable. Be sure to check your chair before your parents leave if you plan to study at your desk a lot. You might want to get a new chair before they go.
- If you plan to study on your bed - take at least 2 pillows and/or take a study pillow (firm back pillow)! A large clip board or lap desk can also be useful.
- What about a TV? It's rare anymore for the dorm lounge to be the location for the only TV in the building! Many students have TVs in their rooms. Most rooms are wired for cable, but confirm this. Also ask if you need anything special for the DTV requirements. (There is often no charge for basic cable, but for premium channels you may have to pay extra. You and your roommate will have to agree to this.) 13"-17" TVs are the most common sizes unless you have a huge room. You and your roommate will have to talk about how the TV will be used. If you can't study with a TV on, be sure you make this clear to your roommate at the start of the year! Also - many students also bring DVD players.
- As for decorating your room - most colleges will not let students paint their walls, or even use nails to hang things. However, many students seem to get away with using small nails to hang some items - just be aware that you may get a damage fine at the end of the school year. Or try "command strips" (hang items on walls with no damage!)
- One popular item to hang are strings of Christmas lights - a few small nails or sticky hooks will help secure them in place easily. Be sure to bring a few extension cords if you want to do this.

- If your dorm has a false ceiling, you can easily secure items from the grids. Common hanging items include nails, tacks, S-hooks, wire/string, etc. *NOTE: If you go early to look at your dorm, be sure to notice the ceiling and wall areas, so you can plan how you'll hang things!*
- Take a candy or gumball machine to put in your room. It's a great conversation piece and helpful icebreaker when making new friends. Some say it's a better way to meet people than having a puppy!
- Ants are common in dorm rooms (especially 1st floor) - be sure to bring ant traps and bug spray (and be careful where you store food!)
- If you don't want to bring everything home over the summer, find a local storage facility to use. You might want to share it with a friend to save costs. Look into this EARLY in the year - all units may be taken if you wait until finals week to make plans! (Some colleges allow free storage in dorms. Ask!) Remember to verify if the unit has AC if you plan to store your computer.
- If you expect to be in a top bunk or on a loft bed, don't forget some sort of shelf where you can put an alarm clock, light, etc. (Some students just stack shelves [yaffa block type] until they reach the proper height.)
- If you have a suite bathroom, bring a paper towel holder and rolls of paper towels. This way, when friends are visiting and need to use your bathroom, they can dry their hands on paper towels instead of using your personal towels. (To attach the holder to the wall - if it's a tile wall - you will need very strong suction hooks.)
- "Just add water" cake and cookie mixes are popular to take - use the dorm oven to whip up a cake for a birthday, etc. (Don't forget a pan.)
- Most dorms provide shades for the windows. Curtains are usually up to you. Unless you've seen the room in advance, it will be difficult to bring curtains with you. All windows are different sizes and hanging arrangements vary greatly.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE TOOK

We asked a dozen college freshman if they could name the most important things they took to college their first year. Here's a list of their answers (in no particular order): bed risers, an assignment book, drying rack, laundry basket, air freshener, ant killer, shower shoes, raincoat, alarm clock, surge protector & extension cords, Zout stain remover, Febreze, Britta Water Filter, white board, refrigerator, cell phone (with lots of minutes!) a fan, nails & hammer, a BIG wastebasket, a candy machine, duct tape, and a couple of your favorite movies (even if you don't have a DVD player – someone will).

WHAT ABOUT TAKING A PHONE?

Most students these days take a cell phone to school and use this as their main (and sometimes *only*) phone. Some reminders if you plan to rely on your cell phone:

- (1) Confirm reliability of your phone on campus *before* you go. You don't want to be caught paying roaming charges or have no service at all.
- (2) If the school uses reverse 911 to contact students in case of emergencies, see what happens if you only have a cell phone.
- (3) Be sure to bring a phone charger!
- (4) Be careful having a plan with shared family minutes - those can be hard to monitor with a student away.
- (5) Think about who will monitor the minutes used and pay the bill each month? Will the bill come to you or go home?
- (6) If you go to a college out of the country - be sure to buy a cell plan that includes calls back to the states!
- (7) If you tend to run short on minutes - then you should really consider ALSO getting a room phone. You can use that phone to receive incoming calls, and for making all local calls - thus saving your minutes!!! Most colleges offer this at no additional cost to the student (other than the cost of the phone - see below), including an answering machine.

If you plan to use your college dorm room phone, you need to verify if the school provides the phone or if you need to bring your own. If you must bring your own phone, check to see if your college offers a message service (most do). If they do - you don't need a phone with lots of options - just a basic phone is fine. If your college allows portable phones (some don't - verify this!) taking one can give you options if you want to sit on your bed or go in the hall for privacy. (Be sure you get a high frequency phone so you can get a clearer signal! *And remember - if you have a power outage, portable phones won't work!*) Most double dorm rooms have 2 jacks for 2 computers, but one basic phone jack. If your room has just one jack and you want 2 phones, you'll have to take a splitter and some extra cord, or a phone with 2 handsets and one base. You will usually get your phone number assigned when your dorm information is sent to you in the summer. When you arrive you just plug in the phone, set up your voice mail message, and you are set. (Note: if you hope to use this phone for long distance calls - confirm in advance if such calls can be made, and how the charges are billed.)

If you don't have a cell phone and don't want to use your dorm phone for long distance calls, you can buy some prepaid calling cards.

WHAT ABOUT TAKING A COMPUTER?

Most colleges provide student access to computers in libraries and computer rooms around campus. However, more and more students are also taking their own computers just for the convenience of having them right in their rooms. Most on-campus dorm rooms have high speed Ethernet access directly to the college network (one jack per student) which provides easy access to both email and the internet. Most dorms (and campuses) are now wireless. ASK! (NOTE: A few colleges provide each student with a computer. Verify this before you make a purchase.)

WHAT TYPE OF COMPUTER SHOULD I TAKE?

(Desktop vs. Laptop)

This is a very personal decision. Keep in mind the following points:

- Certain majors at some colleges require students to bring laptops.
- Verify the size of your desk and/or dorm room - some think laptops fit better if your desk is small. However, if the tower for the desktop can go on the floor, this type might give you more desk space.
- If you have a thin monitor, you will have much more room on your desk, so consider that option if you want a desktop.
- If you expect to study outside your room and expect to use your computer to study, take a laptop.
- Desktops tend to be less expensive and more durable.
- If you take a laptop, be sure to take a lock and secure it to your desk whenever possible (especially for vacations).

WHAT TYPE OF COMPUTER SHOULD I TAKE?

(PC vs. Mac)

Another totally personal decision. Some questions to ask if you are deciding between a PC and a Mac:

- What is your major? (ie: Many art/architect majors prefer a Mac.)
- What type have you been using at home? Comfort level is very important! You don't want to spend the first few months learning all new computer programs and formats.
- Does your college's network support both types of computers?
- Does your college recommend one type over the other?



COMPUTER TIPS

- Is your campus wireless? Does this matter to you?
- If you take a laptop, be sure to take a lock and lock it to your desk! This is especially important when you go away for the weekend or for break. (Special locks are available for laptops.)
- Decide if you need a printer. Some colleges have computer centers in which you can take a flash drive with your papers and print them there, so you don't need your own printer. This saves you space and the cost of ink/paper, but of course means more planning. (Remember to bring a flash drive if you don't bring a printer!)
- If you take a printer, take extra ink & paper! If you run out in the middle of a project, it can be a problem getting replacements in time.

Give yourself plenty of time to learn your new computer before you head to college, Keep it safe with a virus protection program (and update it regularly!).

- If you are buying a *new* desktop or laptop, ***GET IT BEFORE YOU GO TO COLLEGE!*** It's incredibly helpful to have the computer over the summer so you can get use to it, get programs loaded onto it, and work out all the glitches (are they ever all worked out?) BEFORE you get to college.
- *Before buying a computer - call the college Information Systems Office and ask for its recommendations as to appropriate hardware and software configurations.*
- If you plan to hard-wire your computer, check with your college to see if it provides (free?) an ethernet card (required for access to the college network) and the necessary ethernet cables. If they aren't provided free, try to buy these off campus where they'll be cheaper. Talk with the Information Systems Office as to the correct types to buy. (If you don't know where your computer will be located compared to the Ethernet jack in the dorm room, buy cable lengths between 25'-50' to give you plenty of options. Better yet, buy 2 lengths, keep the receipts, and return one!)
- If your college offers the opportunity to buy a computer through the school, this may be a good option. Check out price and find out how they handle technical support and set-up. What kind of computer do they offer? Can you get the computer in advance so you have time to use it before school starts? (Don't be caught on some "set-up list" so you don't have a computer the first few days of school!)
- Even if you don't have a CD/DVD burner, take a few blank CDs/DVDs to use with other people's burners
- Purchase a virus protection program and update it OFTEN! Back up your schoolwork regularly, too. Until you lose a term paper, you won't know how critical this is! (Take an external hard drive and/or a flash drive!)
- Set up a secondary email address to use in chat rooms, when surfing the web, for web purchases, etc. to avoid getting spam sent to your primary account.
- If storing your computer at school over the summer, be sure the storage location has AC!
- If you are going to live off-campus, you may not have ethernet access to the college network, so you may need a separate internet service provider and a phone line or a high speed connection to gain access to the college network. Another option is to get an air card or Mi-Fi box or another such wireless option.

WHAT ABOUT TAKING A BIKE?

Bikes can be extremely useful or a huge pain in the neck, depending on a number of factors. Generally the bigger the school the more likely there will be lots of bikes. Ask yourself these questions to help in making your decision as to whether or not to take a bike:

- Do you plan to work? Would a bike help you get to your job?
- Are you living far from your classes? Would a bike help?
- Are you living far from your activities (fraternity/sorority houses, sports center, music center, etc.)? Would a bike help you get there?
- Is your campus hilly? Does your campus have a lot of steps?
- Would a bike help you to get to the dining hall more quickly?

- Do your friends/roommates plan to take bikes? (If you are the only person in your group with a bike, you likely won't ride much.)
- Would a bike help you get off campus more easily (for shopping, etc.)
- When you were first looking at the school - did you see many bikes?
- Where can you park your bike, especially when you are on breaks, etc.



BIKE TIPS

- It will be sitting out in all sorts of weather, 24/7. Don't get a brand new expensive bike! Be sure to get a seat that is waterproof!!!
- Find out what the school policy is regarding putting your bike in your dorm room (or elsewhere) when you are gone for breaks.
- Be sure to take a strong lock with a long chain, and a backpack!
- Find out how to get your bike registered. (Some campuses have mandatory registration.)

WHAT ABOUT TAKING A CAR?

If your college lets freshmen have cars (many don't), then this is a very personal family decision. There are many pros and cons of having a car on campus, especially in your freshman year. If you do decide to take a car, a few points to remember include:

- Verify registration and parking requirements.
- Verify with your insurance company as to your coverage, especially if you are going out of state.



CAR TIPS

- *If you take a car, be sure you can parallel park - in TIGHT spaces - on both sides of the street! Street parking is very common on many campuses.*
- While at college avoid the need to take care of basic maintenance such as oil changes, car inspections (especially if you are out of state), etc. Schedule these for over breaks or during the summer.
- Prepaid gas cards can be very helpful to have. If you get them before you go, be sure you know what stations are near the campus.
- Keep an extra car key IN YOUR ROOM!
- Put some extra car supplies in the trunk - tire repair kit, jumper cables, extra oil, etc. Don't forget a brush or car vacuum and some window wipes.
- Take a credit or debit card so you can handle emergencies easily.
- Get a GPS - especially if you have to drive long distances or in big cities. (Hide it carefully in your car - it's a high theft item.)
- Do you belong to AAA? You might consider joining.
- Get a map for each of the states you drive through to get to your college, plus a detailed map of the area around your college. (AAA has free maps.)
- If possible, take a cell phone for emergencies. (And a battery charger.)

- If your college gets snow, be sure to take some snow supplies. (Do this also if you might be driving home in snowy weather.) Buy a can of “lock de-icer” and *keep it in your dorm room*, not your glove compartment! (Even the southern schools get ice/snow on occasion -take an ice scraper/brush.)
- Be sure to verify where the cars can be parked. Some colleges have the cars parked off-campus and it can be a real pain to access them.
- *If it's not common for freshmen to have cars, be aware that if you do have one YOU will be the one everyone asks for rides to stores, trips, etc.* If you aren't okay with that responsibility or you can't easily say “no”, then either don't take a car or keep it a secret!
- You might not want a car most of the time you're in college. But at least think about taking one in your senior year - it can be very helpful when you have to go to job interviews on one day's notice!

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES



HEALTH CARE TIPS

- Be sure you know what vaccinations are required and take care of these before you go to college. Most colleges require the MMR vaccine, a tetanus vaccine, and a meningococcal meningitis vaccine. Hepatitis vaccines are becoming more common as well. Check with your school to confirm!
- Most colleges require a physical before attending. Get it at home during the summer if possible! (It may be required that you have your physical *before* you even come to the campus. Confirm all deadlines!)
- If you have a chance over the summer or during move-in time, find a local hospital, dentist, eye doctor, etc. At least identify where they might be located. (Ask your college if it provides a list of names, or ask your RA for names.) It can be hard to find these doctors if there is an emergency. This is especially important if you have a medical condition that may need periodic attention during the year. (Health centers are not always reliable for specific medical conditions. They can sometimes be quick to blame things on allergies!)
- Locate the nearest pharmacy to your dorm and pre-register all of your prescriptions and your prescription plan with them so you are on file. That way you can have prescriptions called in directly from your doctor. (Know if your plan allows for generic or brand name medications.) See if the pharmacy delivers! Also - check to see if it's better to use the campus health center pharmacy to get your medications - they may be cheaper there! (If you are on campus over the summer - do all this then!)
- If you take prescription medicine on a regular basis, be sure to take an ample supply with you. You might also want to keep extra prescription medicine at home in case you go home for a quick visit and forget to bring your supply with you.
- Have emergency phone numbers posted in your room!
- Be sure you bring copies of your medical insurance information (*bring your family's insurance card*) so if you go to a doctor or need to get some medicine you can do this more easily. NOTE: At most colleges students are required to either purchase campus insurance or have outside health insurance. If you have no family insurance or if you have an HMO plan that has no local office, you may need to purchase individual health insurance that covers you during the academic year. Check with your college and insurance company to confirm this.
- If you will use your family's insurance plan - do you need pre-authorization from your home doctor? Does your plan require a co-pay for visits? Are you restricted to certain doctors? Know how the plan works!
- If you are 18+, colleges cannot send medical information (except in extreme emergency) about you to your parents without your permission. If this concerns you or your parents, check with your college as to its definition of "emergency." If it's defined only as "a life threatening event," you might want to sign a release form that permits the college to contact your parents more easily.
- *If your college offers flu shots, get one!* The flu travels through dorms quicker than you can imagine.

- Be sure you know all your allergies - especially if you have any allergies to medicines or foods! Keep a card about this in your wallet. You might want to be sure your roommate knows about them as well.
- Do you have allergies to foods or bee stings that require you to have an epipen? Be sure your roommate knows where the pen is kept and how to use it! *Watch the expiration of the epipen - they don't last long!*
- Take a few boxes of the dry chicken noodle soup that just needs to be mixed with water and heated in a microwave. If you get a bad cold or the flu, you will be glad you have this hot soup to eat!
- Take a package of disposable plastic gloves. These are great to have on hand if someone has the flu and you have to clean up after him! Get packages of the cheap gloves with at least a dozen/package - then you can throw them out after each use. (Found in paint aisles of stores like Lowes.)
- If you feel depressed or totally stressed, or if you have a friend who is depressed (or suicidal), you need to seek help as soon as possible. Sometimes just talking to your friends will help. If you need more professional advise, talk to your RA or your college's counseling service. The pressures of college can be more than some students can handle - but the colleges have much experience helping these students. **ASK FOR HELP!**
- If there's a regular hospital near your campus and you have a serious illness - you'll often get better treatment if you go to that hospital rather than to the infirmary on campus.
- If you wear glasses - consider taking an extra pair with you. If your glasses get broken or misplaced and you have just one pair you may not be able to replace them quickly. (Similar thoughts related to contacts. Don't wait until the last minute to refill prescriptions!)
- Many colleges will offer the opportunity to buy student accident insurance. Check with your own insurance company as to your need for this coverage. (This may be especially important if you play a sport.)

SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Colds, the flu, and similar illnesses are common on college campuses. Other more dangerous medical conditions can also occur because of the close living conditions. The following are basic descriptions of symptoms often associated with four serious illnesses common to college campuses. Be sure to contact your student health center, a doctor, or a local hospital *immediately* if you think you have any of these conditions.

(1) **MENINGITIS** is a relatively rare infection that affects the membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. Many forms of meningitis can be contagious among people who come in close contact -- in classrooms and university dorms, for example. The bacterial form of meningitis is an *extremely* serious illness that requires *immediate* medical care. If not treated quickly, it can lead to permanent brain damage or even death within hours. Viral meningitis is more common than the bacterial form & generally - but not always - less serious. Symptoms of bacterial meningitis usually develop suddenly. Symptoms of viral meningitis may develop suddenly or gradually over a period of days. The most common **symptoms of either form of meningitis** include: fever, severe/persistent headache, stiff & painful neck (especially when trying to touch the chin to the chest), vomiting, confusion, & seizures. Other possible symptoms include: sluggishness; muscle aches/pains/weakness; strange feelings (such

as tingling) or weakness throughout the body; eye sensitivity & eye pain from bright lights; skin rash; & dizzy spells and/or mood swings. NOTE: Most campuses are now requiring vaccinations for meningitis. However, there are some forms that the vaccination does not cover.

(2) **MONONUCLEOSIS**, often referred to as “mono,” is a very common viral illness. When mono occurs during adolescence the disease can be serious. Mono comes on gradually. It begins with flu-like **symptoms** -- fever, headache and a general malaise and lethargy. After a few days, the lymph glands -- especially those in the neck, armpits and groin -- begin to swell, although this symptom is not noticeable in everyone. Swollen glands in the back of the neck are especially typical of mono. Many people develop a sore throat, which can be very severe, with inflamed tonsils. A fever also can develop and may last up to three weeks. A small percentage of people with mono develop a generalized red rash all over the body. In about half of all cases, the spleen becomes enlarged, causing an area in the upper-left abdomen to become tender to the touch. In many cases, the illness affects the liver. *The fatigue that results from mono may last for months.* Other early symptoms of mononucleosis include: jaundice (a yellow tinge to the skin and eyes); and tiny red spots or bruise-like areas inside the mouth, especially on the roof of the mouth. NOTE: Mono is highly contagious. You can even re-give it to yourself if you weaken your system too quickly upon recovery.

(3) **STREP THROAT** is a sore throat caused by bacteria, not a virus. Strep throat is important to diagnose and treat because certain kinds of strep may cause *significant* problems if left untreated. It is not possible to tell if a sore throat is caused by strep from just looking at the throat itself. The symptoms of strep throat often resemble a sore throat, so a throat culture is needed to accurately diagnose strep. Besides having a sore throat, **symptoms of strep throat** may include: fever; pus, or white spots on the throat area; swollen, tender lymph nodes in the throat area; and a feeling of being sicker than you normally would be with a cold. Problems that can come from untreated strep include: rheumatic fever (which can cause arthritis and heart problems); nephritis (kidney inflammation); scarlet fever; and sometimes even death.

(4) **HEPATITIS** is inflammation of the liver. It usually is caused by viruses, such as hepatitis A, B, or C. However, hepatitis has many other causes, including needle sharing, long-term alcohol abuse and exposure to certain chemicals. All types of hepatitis can cause the liver to become swollen and tender. Some types can cause permanent liver damage. Viral hepatitis can be spread from one person to another, but the other types cannot. Although there are differences between A, B, and C, the **general symptoms of hepatitis** include: constant tiredness; a general sense of not feeling well; sore muscles; headache; widespread abdominal pain or pain that is concentrated in the upper right quadrant of the abdomen; nausea; dark urine or light (clay-colored) stools; loss of appetite or weight loss; and aversion to some foods, particularly those that are fatty or fried or high in protein. A less common symptom of acute hepatitis C is yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes (jaundice). Long-term (chronic) hepatitis C occurs when the liver is inflamed for longer than 6 months. NOTE: Some colleges are now requiring hepatitis vaccinations.

One other note: if your school has lots of woods nearby - watch for ticks. Lyme disease is a big problem as well.



TRANSPORTATION TIPS

- Many colleges shut down for Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break. Be aware of the rules allowing students to stay on campus, especially if you will have to fly home and need to get tickets early. Don't assume you can just stay on campus. (Athletes are sometimes an exception to this rule.)
- Be sure to verify finals schedules before making plans to come home at the end of each semester. (This is especially true if you are flying, because making changes to your flight schedule isn't easy or cheap.) Don't assume you will come home on the last day of the semester - you may not have finals all the way until the end of the final exam period.
- Most colleges have a "rider's board" where people list *needs for rides* as well as *rides available*. Take advantage of this if you can't get home on your own. (NOTE: You are more likely to develop an on-going relationship if you offer to pay gas costs for your driver!)
- Check to see if there are student discount fares if you are flying or taking the train/bus. This is often the case - but YOU must ask.
- See if there are any cheap means of transportation - like the Bolt Bus that runs for \$10 from DC to Philly to NYC to Boston.
- Find out if your college offers shuttle service to/from the airport or train/bus stations. Many colleges provide this service free or at nominal cost - especially for popular breaks such as Thanksgiving, the winter holiday, and spring break. Know the schedule for the shuttles *before* you make any reservations on the plane, bus, or train.



TOTALLY RANDOM TIPS

- Deadlines in college are usually taken much more seriously than they were in high school. Don't assume you can easily get extensions for bills, registration, class work, etc.
- Photocopy *everything* (course selection forms, roommate forms, etc.) you send to the college, so you have a back-up in case there's a problem.
- Now and then check your student profile for accuracy! If you find an error, get it fixed as soon as possible - don't wait until your senior year! (And just like when you were in high school - keep an updated list of what activities you are in, what awards you receive, etc. When you become a senior it will be helpful to have this list already in place.)
- If you are planning a trip out of the country without going home first (spring break, semester abroad, etc.), be sure to take your passport with you to college! (Make a copy of your passport first.) Don't forget about voltage converters and traveler's checks, too. You might also look into overseas cell phones as well.
- During the summer before you start college, one of the many mailings you will likely get from your college is for the purchase of some sort of a "new student profile book" (usually with a photo and bio of new students). If the cost isn't prohibitive, these can be useful for freshmen to purchase. You will meet so many new kids the first few weeks - it's helpful to have a book to refer to when learning names and faces. (*Talk with your roommate - you both don't need a copy!*)

- Find a good thrift store near your school - these can be really helpful if you need Halloween costumes, etc.
- If you want to be able to vote in a primary or general election - you may have to get an absentee ballot. *Well in advance of the elections*, you should check with officials in your hometown as to how (and when) to get such a ballot. (Don't forget that you have to be registered first!)
- If your college has a message board - check it now and then. People sell books, calculators, concert tickets, etc. on this. You never know what you'll find.
- In some areas your student ID can be used to get discounts at movie theaters, entertainment venues, restaurants, etc. around the town. Sometimes you can get discount coupons for local businesses from your Registrar's or Admissions Office or in your college newspaper. Watch for them.
- Don't feel bad if you don't go somewhere big for spring break! Although some kids will take big trips, many students (especially freshmen) tend to go home over spring break.
- Unless you work out an arrangement with your parents, remember to cancel any memberships you might have in organizations that require payments by you during the year for mailings they make to your home address (ie: a CD-of-the-month club).
- Verify with your auto insurance company if you are still eligible for good student discount rates while at college.
- Know your social security number - you'll have to put it on everything related to college!
- Read your school newspaper - it's a great way to know what is happening on campus!
- A few colleges offer special shipping services to students who have to travel long distances at the beginning of the school year and again at the end. You might want to check with Admissions or Student Services to see if this is available at your college. It can be a great way to get those big items that you can't take on a plane to/from the school.
- Dorm rooms get very dusty. You might want to take some "grab-it" towels which make dusting much easier. Especially watch fans, your TV and computer screens, and your computer keyboard. (Blow out your keyboard with a can of air now and then, too!)
- Plan ahead for possible emergencies. Keep a list of emergency contacts in an obvious location. Also - hide some emergency cash in case credit/debit cards can't be accessed.



A FEW TIPS FOR THAT SPECIAL SENIOR YEAR

If you keep this book long enough to remember this section - we also asked some seniors for tips they would pass on.

- Lots of businesses come on campus to interview students in the fall, and even more come in the spring. It can be to your advantage to sign up for some of those early fall interviews - even if you have no intention of applying for a job with those particular companies. It's always good to practice interviewing with a few companies to which you *don't* plan to apply!
- Use your College Career Development Center - they can be a huge asset in helping you find a job!
- Don't put off getting measured for your cap and gown.

- Have a car during your senior year; it's useful for going on interviews.
- Get dinner reservations for graduation weekend well in advance! Be sure that anyone coming for graduation has hotel rooms well in advance also.
- Take plenty of stamps, resume paper, and stationary for thank you notes for your senior year. Send thanks for *all* interviews.
- Proofread, proofread, and then proofread again any job applications you send out. Resumes should be PERFECT as well. With so many people applying for each job opening these days, a company is quick to pass over an application or resume with a spelling mistake.
- During your senior year, try to register for classes leaving one day/week free - especially in the spring semester. You can then use that free day to go on interviews.
- Remember that if you don't get a job upon graduation you will likely need to get medical insurance. Most family plans do not continue once the child is out of college.
- Try to get an internship during the summers - paid or unpaid these are great ways to make connections and build a resume for those all important senior year job interviews.

IT DIDN'T WORK OUT

WHAT IF I DON'T END UP LIKING MY COLLEGE?

Remember that you aren't alone if you come to the decision that your college is just not for you. Not every college works for every student. Most colleges suggest you try to stay for at least one semester before you leave. Even then you might determine you want to take a break from college altogether. But if you know you want to continue in college, your two best options are:

Taking time off with the intent to return to your college: As long as when you withdraw you are in good standing and do not become a degree-seeking student elsewhere, you can usually be readmitted at the college for a period of up to one year. You should see the Dean of Students for more details, including what refunds you might be eligible for while you are not in school.

Transferring to another college: As soon as you are sure you want to leave your school for good, you need to contact the Registrar's Office or the Dean of Students. You will then get more information about what refunds you might be eligible for, as well as the process for withdrawing. If you want to apply to a different college, then you should contact that college and learn what it requires for application as a transfer student. (*Do this enough in advance in order to meet all deadlines.*)

SPECIAL REMINDERS IF YOU LEAVE SCHOOL

- Remember that once you turn 18, any medical insurance coverage you have under your family's policy is generally good only as long as you stay in college. Many policies will stop covering dependents once they are out of college. Verify your family's plan if you drop out of school.

Avoid making any decisions about leaving college during high stress periods such as exam time. Those aren't easy times for anyone!

- If you plan to return, talk with your advisor to get an accurate picture of where you stand academically, how your leave will affect your major, if your absence will prevent you from taking specific required classes, etc.
- If you are leaving for medical reasons, be sure you know the college's policy for readmission.
- If you are on financial aid and want to take a leave of absence, talk to the financial aid office about how taking this leave will affect your aid package, as well as what (if any) steps you should take to ensure that you will get aid when you return. This is especially important if you leave mid-term.
- Most colleges will refund almost all of your tuition and room/board if you drop out before a specific period of time. Be sure you are aware of that deadline if you have any thoughts of leaving the school.

- If you are in a sorority or fraternity, verify what will happen with that membership if you leave. If you are transferring to a different school - see if you can transfer your membership as well.
- If you are in college on a sports scholarship, be sure you are aware of the consequences of taking time off related to your scholarship AND team membership.
- If you are transferring to another college, be sure to verify which credits will be accepted by the new college. Knowing this before you actually transfer may factor into your final decision as to which college you'll ultimately attend.

GENERAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



ANYTHING SPECIAL FOR PARENTS TO KNOW?

- All sorts of things will come in the mail during the summer before your child's freshman year that need immediate attention. Your child will be at a disadvantage if he doesn't receive (and return by stated deadlines) information about class registration, roommate/dorm placement, orientation activities, and of course those bills. Keep this in mind if you schedule lengthy vacations that summer.
- As soon as your child chooses his college, get a list of hotels in the area. *This is CRITICAL if the college doesn't have a lot of hotels nearby.* If there aren't many available, as soon as you get the dates for move-in day, family weekend, a big football game, graduation, etc. - *make your reservations!!* Many times these reservations must be made *well in advance!!!* Just remember to get the hotel's cancellation policy, so if you need to make a change you can do that easily. (Better to have the reservation in advance and cancel, than wait to confirm your plans and then find out all the hotels are full.) You might want to talk to alumni as to how they handle these events!
- Don't forget to contact your insurance company to verify your property insurance coverage for items your child is taking to college (especially for a computer or car). Be sure to mention if your child is living in a dorm or off-campus (insurance rules are often different depending on where they live). In most circumstances colleges will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged student property.
- During the summer before school starts you will likely receive information from numerous private companies offering help in paying your child's tuition bill. If you need to set up a payment schedule, verify their authenticity with the college before signing up with any of them. (Some are scams!)
- A great way to keep informed about events and happenings around the college is to order a subscription to the school's newspaper! If you don't get a notice offering this over the summer, contact the college yourself. (Or check the college's website - it might be available on-line!) Knowing the news on campus can be a great way to have something to talk about with your child!
- Have an emergency plan in case of floods, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes or other disasters. These don't happen often, but when they occur, they can wipe out a college, and the results can be devastating.
- Get cell phone numbers for your child's friends or roommate so if there is an emergency and you can't reach your child - you can reach someone!
- If you aren't comfortable using the Internet, try to get a Yellow Pages phone book from the area where the college is located! Then if you have to make any dinner or hotel reservations, or if you need to order something at a store to send to your child, you'll have a handy source for phone numbers. (One book for all 4 years is generally fine - business phone numbers don't change that much.)
- *Federal law restricts the information concerning students that the college can make available to parents without the student's consent (if the student is at least 18 years of age). This includes information about grades, academic status, disciplinary action, psychological or physical health issues, and scholarship and financial issues. Exceptions to this are made only upon the receipt of a written request from the student or in case of an emergency.* Because everyone's definition of an emergency is different, you should discuss with your child IN ADVANCE your feelings about the need to receive information the college would otherwise consider confidential. If you want to receive information routinely, you should ask your child to file the release form available, generally with the Dean of Students. (YOU must ask about this form - rarely will a college just offer it.)

- Find out how fast/slow mail gets to your child BEFORE you put homemade cookies in the mail. Some campuses are notoriously slow about getting packages to the kids!
- Be sure to talk with your child prior to his leaving about how any state and federal tax payments (including estimated taxes) will be paid and how the forms will be filled out. If your child has been filling out the forms himself, be sure to give him plenty of time prior to the April 15 deadline to deal with this. *Also - if your child goes to an out-of-state school and gets a job, he may have to file a tax return for that state!! Verify this!*
- You will find that the kids won't call home as often if they are billed for those calls! Consider getting them a cell phone (get a plan with plenty of minutes, and watch shared family plans which can be harder to monitor) or give them plenty of calling cards.
- If you have a pet that is strongly attached to your college-bound child, start to work with this pet *well in advance* of your child's departure. Separation anxiety for pets is very real and pets suffering from it can be quite destructive.
- Move-in days can be very hard (physically and emotionally) on parents. Help with the physical problems by renting a dolly if you have heavy items and stairs to climb! Take plenty of water and snacks! Start early! BE PATIENT!
- Pay special attention to your child's experiences and activities during that critical first 6 weeks on campus. Excessive alcohol consumption (common early on) can interfere with successful adaptation to campus life. (Note: 1/4 of first year students fail to re-enroll for their second year.)
- Make sure your child understands the penalties for underage drinking, using a fake ID, driving under the influence, etc. For alcohol policies on college campuses see www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/policies.
- Most colleges have some sort of "parents council". This is a group of parents who meet with administration a few times each year, sponsor assorted activities, and raise money for the school. If you are interested in participating in such a group, contact your child's college (or check the web site) for further details.
- Whenever you go visit your child, it can be to your advantage to offer to take a friend along if you go out to lunch or dinner. Your child will likely be chattier (therefore, you'll learn more info about the school) plus you'll get to know his friends better.
- Prepare to be flexible when visiting your child when trying to set up dinner or activity plans. Your child is now in charge of these plans - and most kids (even college kids) still like to make these arrangements at the last minute.
- A few tips for the first time you go visit your child:
 - (1) Try not to ask too many questions.
 - (2) Expect to go shopping!

Like it or not, they do grow up...

- When you are there for move-in day, don't hang around longer than necessary. It's better for all involved if you leave and let your child begin the process of making new friends as soon as he can.
- Don't over-schedule activities if you visit for family weekend. Assume you'll be on your own some of the time. Don't be surprised if your child will need time to do work or just hang out with friends. *You are now the visitor!*
- Be prepared for the first time your child is home on a break, and you overhear him say something

about going “home” but mean “going back to college.” It will happen ... and it will be hard to hear.

- Be aware that it is very normal for the first thing your child to do upon returning home is call his friends to plan to get together. This is not a personal attack on you; it’s all part of the growing up process.
- Those first few times your child returns home for a break can be very difficult. You are used to less confusion. He is used to more freedom. It can be tricky striking a balance between respecting your child’s emerging independence and wanting to run your household with some degree of order. Sharing your honest feelings about this with your child can be an important way of working this out.

SAMPLE ROOMMATE CONTRACT

Use of personal belongings - what can and can't be shared? (Put "YES", "NO", or "ASK FIRST" for any of your items.)

stereo _____	computer _____	printer _____
TV/DVD _____	movies _____	CDs _____
vacuum/iron _____	clothes _____	food _____
desk _____	closet _____	dresser _____
desk supplies _____	shelves _____	bed _____
medical supplies _____	refrigerator _____	microwave _____
other _____		

Give your opinion about:

1. cleaning the room (how often, which areas, etc.)
2. sleeping arrangements (early/late nights, music on/off, lights on/off, etc.)
3. study arrangements (best times, noise tolerance, visitors in room, TV on/off, etc.)
4. guests in the room (same sex/opposite sex, overnight, how often, how many, advance warning, what can be used if you are away for the weekend - bed, towels, etc.)
5. communication/respect (relaying messages, pet peeves, phone time, etc.)
6. smoking/drinking (even if the dorm rules forbid these, you should confirm your roommate's plans)
7. security (locking the door, giving keys to other people, etc.)
8. allergies or illnesses (any that your roommate should be aware of)

If applicable, consult with roommate and suitemates about:

Cleaning the bathroom or any common space (how often, who buys supplies, etc.)

Name _____ date _____

SAMPLE COLLEGE SUPPLY LIST

BASIC SUPPLY LIST

- strong bookbag, assignment book/PDA
- desk and/or wall calendar
- clock radio; battery alarm clock (storms/weekend trips)
- cell phone and charger
- phone, extra phone cord and splitter (if needed)
- 1-3 fans (number depends on size of room, if AC, etc.)
- flashlight/batteries
- tons of extra batteries/chargers (get calculator batteries, too)
- 3-4 surge protectors, 2-3 extension cords (that's not too many!)
- desk lamp & bed lamp/light bulbs (clip ons?)
- bulletin board/tacks, wall posters/poster tack, command strips
- 2 white boards, eraser/marker (one by phone, one for door)
- S-hooks/wire (if room has a molding strip or false ceiling)
- over-door hooks: single/multiple hooks; suction cup hooks
- laundry detergent, stain remover, fabric softener, dryer sheets
- laundry basket/bag for closet, drying rack, timer
- clothes hangers: single, multiple, with clips; hangers for belts & ties
- small sewing kit
- duffle bags (big, weekend, gym bag), luggage tags
- file organizer for important papers/receipts
- credit/debit card(s), bank book, ATM card, extra emergency cash
- camera (film/memory card/batteries and charger)
- family and friends pictures, photo albums (for old & new pix)
- key chain for room key (college lanyard?)
- Lysol spray, room air freshener, Febreze
- wastebasket (not too small!)/garbage bags
- bug spray, fly swatter, ant traps
- stamps, addresses, stationary/envelopes
- list of family/friend birthdates (& extra birthday cards)
- resume paper

FOR FUN

- deck of cards, favorite games, favorite movies
- sports equipment (basketball, frisbee, mitt, tennis racquet, cleats, etc.)
- in-line skates, scooter, skate board (protective gear)
- CD's (and holders); portable CD player/iPod; headphones

COMPUTER SUPPLIES

Computer/printer (if not wireless: extra cable if jacks are not near your desk), paper, ink (+ extra ink), external hard drive, flash drive (at least 4mg), ethernet card, blank DVDs/CDs, CD cases, mouse pad, lock for laptop, air card (if needed for internet connection)

SCHOOL/DESK SUPPLIES

calculator, thesaurus, dictionary, foreign language dictionary, small desktop supply holder, desk drawer organizer, white-out, pens, pencils, ruler, scotch tape, masking tape, glue, pencil sharpener, stapler and staples, staple remover, post-its, highlighters, black marker, colored pencils, scissors, folders, 3x5 cards, binders, notebook paper, notebooks, dividers, report covers, eraser, paper clips, spiral notebooks, scratch pads, rubber bands, hole puncher, clip board, bed tray (a hard surface for doing work in bed), bookends (1-2 sets), packing tape, a few file folders, a pencil container for bookbag

BATHROOM SUPPLIES

bucket for supplies, toothbrush (plus case), toothpaste, floss, mouthwash, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, hair spray, hand lotion, razor/blades (plus case) and/or electric razor, shaving cream, brush/comb, antibacterial soap, bodywash or shower soap (plus case), nail clippers/file, plastic bathroom cup, hair dryer (Depending on how easy it is to get and to store additional supplies - take extra shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.)

MEDICIAL SUPPLIES

supply box, general vitamins, any special vitamins, Tylenol, cold medicine, Advil, antacid, band aids, bee sting wand, Neosporin, suntan lotion, Solarcain, Chapstick, ace bandage, ice pack, heating pad, thermometer, tweezers, itch cream, diarrhea medicine, cough drops, cough syrup, sore throat spray, acne cream, Benadryl, Kleenex, anti-nausea medicine, any prescription medicines (*don't forget glasses/cases, contacts/related supplies, retainers, or any other such personal items*) Note: be sure to check expiration dates on items at least once a year and restock as needed.

LINENS

2 pillows, 2 sets sheets (verify if X-long beds), comforter, blanket (not too heavy), throw blanket, mattress pad, egg-crate cover for mattress, 2-3 LARGE bath towels, 1-2 beach towels, wash cloths

FOOD/SNACK SUPPLIES

bottled water and/or plastic bottle for refills, can opener, plastic silverware, cup, plate, bowl, mug (coffee/soup?), large glasses, pitcher (for water, ice tea?, etc), water bottle (for sports activities), chip clips, ziploc bags, paper towels, dish soap & a few dish towels, snack foods, sodas/drinks (don't forget hot chocolate mix, coffee, tea), cookie/cake mix ("just add water" type), cake/cookie pan NOTE: Be sure all dishes are microwave safe!

CLOTHING ITEMS YOU SHOULDN'T FORGET

- extra underwear, extra socks, bath robe, bathing suit
- raincoat/umbrella
- winter gloves/hat/boots/silk underwear (for cold climates)
- shower shoes (*The most important thing you'll take!!!*)
- watch, wallet, sunglasses
- at least one nice dress/sport coat

TOOLS

2-sided sticky tape, duct tape, hammer, screw drivers, assorted nails, long-nose pliers, pocket knife (with multi-functions if possible)

ESPECIALLY FOR GIRLS

curling iron, make-up, nail polish, perfume, feminine care products, make-up mirror, jewelry, purse

POSSIBLE STORAGE ITEMS FOR EXTRA SPACE

(depends on room size, bed configurations, room storage, etc.)

storage boxes (to put on closet shelves), trunk & pad lock, under bed chests, shelving units of some sort, shoe organizer or shoe shelf, night stand, bed risers, bunk bed shelf unit

EASY TO SHARE WITH ROOMMATE

fans, window AC unit, refrigerator, microwave, TV, DVD player, stereo, iron/ironing board, small vacuum or broom, battery wall clock, long mirror (if not supplied by college), floor rug, floor lamp/light bulbs (NOT halogen), extra chairs (folding type best - can easily be stored in a corner of the room), shelves, paper shredder

NOT ESSENTIAL, BUT

desk chair (some school desk chairs are VERY uncomfortable), tape recorder and blank cassettes (easy way to take notes), computer shelf/table, curtains (get measurements first!), study pillow, bean bag chair or futon (or similar chair), bike/lock, sleeping bag (for visiting friend, etc.), holiday decorations and lights (Halloween, Christmas, Hanukkah, etc.), Britta Water Filter/filters, small cooler/ice pack (for picnics, trips), closet lamp/light bulbs, coat rack/stand (if there is space)

IF YOU HAVE A SUITE WITH A BATHROOM

(share with your roommate and suitemates!)

bathroom cleaning supplies (bucket, toilet brush, toilet cleaner, Windex, Lysol spray, 409 cleaner, shower cleaner, brush, bleach, sponges, rags), plunger (critical!), bathroom wastebasket/bags, extra big shower caddy, bathmat (bring a few - they get gross!), shower curtain (if needed), some sort of shelving for supplies (if space), over toilet caddy, broom/dust pan, bath rugs, paper towel holder and towels, toilet paper (verify if dorm provides this)

FOR A SEMI-FURNISHED APARTMENT

beds/dressers, extra chairs/tables/shelves, extra lamps, bathroom supplies (see above list), vacuum/broom, fire extinguisher/smoke alarm (verify if the apartment provides these), patio or balcony furniture (if necessary), dishes, cups, silverware, pots & pans

basic kitchen supplies: knives, peeler, spatulas, wooden spoons, slotted spoon, butter brush, ice cream scoop, tongs, timer, silverware holder for drawer, cheese grater, serving spoons, measuring spoons, colander, measuring cups, 9 x 13 pan, whisker, microwave dishes, storage containers for leftovers, casserole pans, strainer, hot pads, mixer/bowls, hand towels, dish towels, sponges, SOS pads, baskets, toothpicks, cutting board, can/bottle opener, ice cube trays, dish drying rack, kitchen wastebasket/bags, rolling pin, cake pans, cookie sheets, coffee maker, paper towel holder/towels, George Foreman grill, toaster, apron, cookbook, spices, salt, vanilla, baking soda/powder, flour/sugar/brown sugar/xxx sugar, baggies, aluminum foil, ... (and the supply list is endless!)

RESOURCE GUIDE

Below are suggestions of some websites that students found to be helpful. Keep in mind that this list should be revised frequently as new sites are developed and old ones are dropped. (Note: We are not responsible for the content or accuracy of material on these websites.)

SOME POPULAR WEBSITES FOR COLLEGE KIDS

- <http://www.allmyfaves.com/> - lists many common websites
- www.studentadvantage.com - offers various discounts to students
- www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm - Merriam-Webster online dictionary
- www.quoteland.com - great site for famous quotes for reports
- www.weather.com/ - quick look at the weather
- www.usatoday.com - quick look at headline news
- www.msn.com/ - quick look at headline news (MSNBC)
- www.espn.go.com - ESPN sports highlights
- www.amtrak.com - use this site to get a train ticket
- www.tvguide.com - description of TV shows and movies
- www.movies.go.com - identifies movie theaters near each campus
- www.ebates.com - get cash back on any e-purchases
- www.howstuffworks.com - explains lots of how-tos
- find local news station - bookmark it for local weather and news
- find local transportation (ie: subway/metro/bus) schedules - bookmark this for quick reference as needed

A few helpful websites (besides the obvious ones) when getting ready for college include:

- www.timbernest.com - offers prebuilt lofts, sent to your dorm
- www.rackraiser.com - offers posts to lift beds & many other dorm items
- www.cnet.com - good place to research computers and other electronics

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