

8 questions to ask your potential roommate before signing a lease:

1. Do you prefer to live alone?

This may sound silly, but some people prefer to do things on their own. These individuals may plan to spend most of their time in their room and may not be interested in becoming friends. If you aren't too concerned with making a new best friend, then that person may be a good roommate fit for you!

2. Do you tend to have your significant other over a lot?

Nobody likes to be the third wheel. If your roommate tends to have their better half over almost every night (and probably day) then you may soon feel like you have an extra roommate. Maybe you are someone who feels the "more the merrier", but this is a topic that should be discussed before it becomes an issue.

3. What is your schedule like?

Are you a night owl or a morning person? Do you spend most of your time on campus? At work? In your room? Getting a general idea of someone's typical day is a good way to find out if you are compatible. No fighting for the bathroom or for the stove!

4. Pets?

Knowing what you're getting into with pets will save a big headache later...especially if you are allergic! Ask your potential roommate if they have or plan to get a pet, what kind and how much time they plan to spend with the creature. Some animals, such as dogs, need extra attention like going out for walks and for potty time; if your roommate doesn't take care of the pooch then you may end up doing it for them. Nobody wants to have to call animal control!

5. When is lights out time?

Going to back to some schedule concerns, it is a good idea to ask if your prospective roommate has a job that ends late, likes to party into the night or just enjoys staying up late. Depending on the type of apartment you choose (and where your bedroom is) you will want to hash this out before it becomes a problem. Having different sleep times can lead to many a sleepless night if doors slam and clattering proceeds.

6. What is your party style?

Whether you answer all night or none, this question needs to be asked. If your potential roommate prefers to have people over for a dinner party and games then you should know to hash out plans for either being included or escaping. Again, staying out all night or closing down the bars could also lead to problems if your roommate is loud getting through the door and into bed.

7. What interests you?

This question will help identify personality compatibility. Maybe you bond over Jackie Chan movies, or really dig Indiana Jones. If you are going to be agreeing on sharing a year of your life with someone, you should probably know a little bit about them.

8. Are you a share-bear or lone-wolf?

Sharing is a big deal. Maybe you are looking for someone who is cool with sharing costs of TP and ketchup. Maybe you prefer to pay only for what you use. Not a big deal to catch this detail after you sign a lease but it will be something you should talk about at some point.

Sample Email to Send to Potential Roommate:

Hello [Name of person you are email]!

My name is [Your Name] and I am a [Year in School] at the UMN. I saw your name on the UMN Roommate Finder and wanted to reach out to see if we would be a good match! Here is a little bit more about me: [see the 8 questions above for ideas of what to include. You can talk about your major, involvement, work, living habits, etc.]

Would you be interested in chatting more [you can suggest either in person or on Facebook if that is more comfortable for you]. I am free [suggest a time and place to meet up].

I look forward to hearing from you and I hope you have a great rest of the day.