You finally got into a university, congratulations! But the hard part is yet to come. Moving to the US is a huge change. This section is intended to give you tips on how to make this transition easier.

First things first, if you haven’t yet reached out to a Kenyan that goes to your school, what are you doing? If you don’t have anyone’s contact information, send me an email at [salomekariuki22@gmail.com](mailto:salomekariuki22@gmail.com) and I will get you in touch with a Kenyan student in your school.

**Your first week**

Here is a list of things you need to do when you get to school:

1. Move in- keep your room keys and school ID safe because it is expensive to get replacements.
2. Get a phone subscription- usually T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, Verizon etc.
3. Open a checking bank account- usually Bank of America, US Bank and other banks depending on your school location. Your bank account is important because in the US, people don’t carry cash around and you’ll need a debit card to purchase almost everything including getting an uber ride.
4. Go shopping. Here is your shopping list: A blanket, a duvet, at least one pair of sheets, a pillow, a towel, detergent, toiletries, a lamp, and sanitary towels if you’re female. Also get ibuprofen or Advil because you’re going to get a headache soon. You can get more stuff later but this is what you basically need for your first week.
5. Figure out your school’s bus schedule. This will save you a lot of time and money. All schools will have an orientation week and someone will take you through this.
6. Figure out how to do laundry. Usually your dorm will have a laundry room in its basement, you may or may not need to pay a quarter to use the machines. There’s two machines: a washer and a dryer. There’s different brands of washers but you can watch this YouTube video to get the gist: [using a washer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9OtgepK7s) and [using a dryer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9OtgepK7s).

**Transitioning**

The first and most important thing you need to know is to ask for help. We’ve grown up in a society where asking for help especially in your studies was a sign that you were aren’t as smart. Forget all that, ask for help! Your school has so many resources: professors, teaching assistants, peer mentors and [slader.com](https://www.slader.com/).

Educational help is not the only help you’ll need. You’ll experience culture shock, you’ll miss Kenyan food and you’ll be homesick sometimes. You should cut yourself some slack. All universities have counselling and psychological services. If you start to feel sad or depressed, I advise you to go in and talk to someone.

There’s most likely other Kenyan students in your university and I cannot stress enough about how much your Kenyan friends (family now) will help you settle in to your new life. They’ve already gone through their freshman year so they are a great resource. Another advantage is that you can buy books from them for much cheaper prices.

You need to set goals for yourself, doesn’t have to be anything to ambitious but having goals in mind keeps you organized (trust me, it gets hard). You also need to start using google calendar to schedule your classes, meetings, appointments and basically everything. You need to start your assignments and papers early, most instructors won’t give you extensions without deducting points and frankly your education is worth more than 6 million per year, so you better work!

I don’t recommend getting a job in your first month or so because you still aren’t quite settled in enough to handle an added responsibility. According to the stipulations in your I-20, you can only do on-campus jobs and work for less 20 hours a week. When you decide to get a job, you will need to get a Social Security Card, instructions for this can be found on your school’s international office website.

I’ll say it again. Ask for help!

Also don’t forget that you are amazing and smart and a lot of people love you.