So you’ve decided to graduate from on-campus housing, but who will join you?

Getting assigned a random roommate in college can either be the worst or best thing to happen to you. The beauty of living off-campus is that the power is now in your hands to pick the perfect living mate. Sometimes, however, it can be the hardest decision to make. Roommates that sign a lease together are jointly responsible for the *entire* rent, meaning you really need to find someone who isn’t going to ditch you midway through the lease or do any excessive damage. But there are many ways to ensure that your new roomie is the one for you.

1. Rent

On a more technical note, it’s important to figure out how you will be paying rent straight off the bat. In an ideal scenario, you and your roommate(s) will each pay your own monthly dues, but sometimes your landlords only accept a single check. Regardless, make sure your roommate is on the same page about your budget–if they aren’t able to pay their rent, you will be responsible for covering it instead.

1. Every day schedule

Obviously, you and your roommate(s) should be compatible in order to enjoy your new home. Ask the following questions to see if you would live easily with them: how much do you plan on studying each day and at what time? Do you think you’ll be going out a lot or staying in? Do you see yourself inviting guests over frequently? What time do you typically go to bed? What are your privacy needs? Do you drink/smoke?

1. Semester/Year plan

Check in with your roommate about their plans for the semester. Are they a full time student or doing school part time? Will they be spending most of their time in the apartment? If they are unsure about their plans, that may be a warning that they could move out before the end of your lease, creating major issues for you.

1. History

If you have any mutual friends who have lived with this roommate before, ask them about how it went! Even if you don’t, there’s no harm in asking for a referral from your potential roomie. Make sure you know the pros and cons from a different POV before you commit to living with them.

1. Friend Blinders

Nothing sounds better than living with your best friend. However, sometimes this can be a relationship-crusher. Figure out if you are your bestie could make it work as roommates or if you need a little space to salvage your friendship.

More often than not, the perfect roommate doesn’t exist. But that doesn’t mean you can’t follow these steps to make sure you have found the best option. The most important takeaway might be that you don’t have to nail down a roommate before you make the decision to move off campus