Roommates 101

Why should you fill this out?

We know what you’re probably thinking. You think you have better things to do than answer a whole bunch of questions that DON’T affect your GPA at all. You think you probably know everything about roommates. But for many of the students living on campus, it’s their first time sharing a room with someone, and learning to live with other adults is an important skill to learn as a college student. Conflict may be inevitable, but what counts is how you respond to it. This guide will help you figure out how to handle this conflict. Plus, you know, it may actually be a good idea to talk to your roommate(s) to see how he/she/they feel about the room. Who knows? You might make a friend in the process!

What’s in this packet?

- My Personal Preferences form (to fill out before meeting with your roommate(s))
- Roommate Agreement (insert to be filled out and signed by all roommates)
- Conflict Do’s & Don'ts (something to help if things get rough)

Welcome to the residence halls at Kent State University!

Congratulations on your choice to live on campus! Research shows that students who live on campus do better academically, graduate sooner, and have more interaction with faculty and staff than students who do not. I am confident that you will enjoy these benefits. In fact I am certain that this year is going to be an exciting one for you, but I also know that it will be challenging at times.

One of the biggest challenges you will encounter is learning to live with another adult. Conflicts are predictable. While some of you will be ‘best friends for life’ many others will really need to work at living together respectfully and won’t become close friends — that is OK!

I have staff in place that were hired to help you navigate these conflicts before they start and when they occur! Your RA is going to be your biggest resource. Your RA will introduce you and your roommate to the roommate agreement. This agreement is designed to help you anticipate issues and resolve them when they arise. Please use the inside of this booklet to help you get started!

Sincerely,

Jill Church,
Associate Director, Residential Communities
jcchurch@kent.edu
330-672-7000
Department of Residence Services, Korb Hall

http://www.kent.edu/housing

Your source for resident student success!

Find information on:
How to get involved on-campus
Connect to academic support services
Find a job
Get in touch with your A/RHD, and more!
Step 1: My Personal Preferences

Fill this out before meeting with your RA and your roommate(s). You should feel comfortable sharing this information in that meeting.

Section 1: At home, I lived:

- [ ] Alone
- [ ] With sibling(s)/family member(s)

What I liked most about that living arrangement was:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What I liked least about that living arrangement was:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Section 2: Guests

You may want to have friends over in your room. It’s important to really think about what matters to you when it comes to guests. Please refer to the Hallways Handbook for the guest policies in your hall. Guests are to be accompanied by a resident student at all times.

Guests that I anticipate having visit (friends, family members, study partners, etc.):

In order for guests not to be a problem for me, I will need:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

For what purposes are you comfortable having guests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitors Allowed</th>
<th>Overnight Guests</th>
<th>Same Gender Overnight Guests?</th>
<th>Opposite Gender Overnight Guests?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Yes</td>
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<td>[ ] Ask First</td>
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<td>[ ] Ask First</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are my guidelines for how my belongings are used/left while I am away and guests are present:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Section 3: Cleanliness

Your room will quickly become your home on campus. It’s important that you let your roommate know what you expect/prefer when it comes to your room so that you both can be comfortable coming home.

In order to feel clean, I need:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Personal Hygiene: I bathe/shower every ______ day ______ few days ______ week. I expect my roommate(s) to bathe/shower at least every ______ day ______ few days ______ week.

To be clean the room must be (check all that apply):

- [ ] vacuumed
- [ ] dusted
- [ ] belongings/books picked up
- [ ] clothes put away
- [ ] trash removed
- [ ] fridge/microwave cleaned

I don’t like it when my room is (check all the apply):

- [ ] untidy
- [ ] too neat
- [ ] noisy
- [ ] quiet
- [ ] empty
- [ ] overcrowded

Other:

________________________________________________________________________

Section 4: Noise

Noise can be an important factor in determining how happy you are in your room.

FYI: there are 24 hour courtesy hours in every hall. Quiet hours on Sun-Thurs. nights, are 8 PM—10 AM. Friday and Saturday nights are 2 AM—10 AM. The general rule of thumb is that noise from your room shouldn’t be heard more than two doors away.

Noise bothers me when:

- [ ] I’m sleeping
- [ ] I’m studying
- [ ] I’m on the phone
- [ ] I’m using my computer
- [ ] I’m napping
- [ ] I’m hanging out with a friend
- [ ] I’m relaxing in the room

Other (Explain):

________________________________________________________________________

I usually go to sleep at: ____________ I usually get up at: ______________

I am a [ ] morning [ ] night person

Noise includes:

- [ ] music
- [ ] talking
- [ ] computer use
- [ ] talking on the phone
- [ ] all noise

Other (Explain):

________________________________________________________________________

In order for noise to not to be a problem for me, I need:

________________________________________________________________________
## Section 5: Study Habits

Studying is an important part of your college experience. Your study habits might change over time, but it’s important to discuss your studying needs with your roommate at the start of the year.

**I prefer to study:** (check all that apply)
- [ ] in my room
- [ ] in the library
- [ ] in a lounge
- [ ] in a friend’s room
- [ ] other: __________________

**Times I study:**
- WEEKDAYS: _____ AM/PM to _____ AM/PM
- WEEKENDS: _____ AM/PM to _____ AM/PM

Describe your ideal environment for studying—a sensory guide
- Sight (light level): __________________
- Sound (background noise/music): __________________
- Touch (overall environment, including location): __________________

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## Section 6: Technology

You may love to use social media to connect to your friends, but everyone prefers different levels of openness on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, LinkedIn, etc. It’s also important for you to continue to think about how you are portrayed online.

**My roommate(s) can post information about me on social media sites in the following ways**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Videos</th>
<th>Status Updates</th>
<th>Check-Ins/Locations</th>
<th>Other: ________</th>
<th>Other: ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Yes</td>
<td>[ ] No</td>
<td>[ ] Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In order for technology to not be a problem, I need: __________________

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## Section 7: About Me

You are a unique individual, unlike anyone else! So while it’s easy to think that everyone thinks the same way you do about certain things, that may not be the case. It’s important to share those unique characteristics with your roommate(s) so they can begin to see things from your point of view.

**What are my pet peeves?**
- __________________
- __________________
- __________________

If I have done something that they consider a pet peeve, how would I like my roommate(s) to let me know?
_______________________

**Things that you may want to think about sharing:** (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>School/Art Supplies</th>
<th>Food/Drinks</th>
<th>Computer/Printer</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Other: ________</th>
<th>Other: ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Yes</td>
<td>[ ] No</td>
<td>[ ] Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In order for personal items to not be a problem, I need: __________________

**Other things about me that would be important or interesting for my roommate(s) to know about me:**
- __________________
- __________________
- __________________
## Golden Rules for Getting Along with Roommates

- **Take time to get to know each other**—share information about yourself and ask questions but remember, roommates don’t have to be best friends. Being respectful to each other is all that is necessary.
- **Be open, ask, listen, discuss.** Don’t wait until things get out of hand. If you are not open with your roommate, your frustrations may keep building until you blow up and say things you really don’t mean.
- **Weird (awkward, uncomfortable) talks are necessary and important.** Remember that problems can’t be solved by only talking to your parents. Tell your roommate in a mature fashion what is bothering you and help them understand why.
- **Be sensitive to each other’s moods.** Everybody has bad days, so try to understand when your roommate has one too.
- **Sharing:** share what you can & clearly state what you are not comfortable sharing.
- **Remember making fun of someone’s music (religion, heritage, hometown, clothing) is making fun of them.** When there are problems stick to the issues at hand.
- **When things can’t be worked out between the two of you, seek assistance from someone else, your RA, ARHD, or RHD.**
- **Roommates can be fun and they can help you get to know people on campus.** Share successes, say thank you, show common courtesy, and let the other person know when things are going right, as well as when they aren’t!

## Conflict Do’s & Don’ts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Do’s</strong></th>
<th><strong>Don’ts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go directly to the person when there’s a problem</td>
<td>Gossip about your roommate(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be willing to fix the problem... even when you find that it’s on your end</td>
<td>Attack the person, rather than the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be quick about bringing up issues</td>
<td>Bring up old issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen! Chances are there’s a problem on their end too!</td>
<td>Plan your response before the other person finishes talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for answers so everyone gets what they need</td>
<td>Look for ways to get even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about your feelings</td>
<td>Use superlatives like “always” or “never”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make excuses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Kic the Squirrel’s Conflict Tips**

It *is* okay to change your mind! You’re an ever-growing and changing student and your preferences on one day may not be the same as they were the day before. Be sure to keep your roommate(s) up to speed of these changes by taking time to regularly re-visit and revise the roommate agreement as needed.