

Welcome to Lakeland College and life in the residence halls!

Living in the residence halls will be a new and exciting part of your college experience. Please keep an open mind while getting acquainted with your new community. With new experiences, there can always be challenges. One of the first relationships formed will be with your roommate. Roommates can learn to value differences and live peacefully with one another.

How do you let your roommate know who you are and what you are about? The key is open and honest communication. Communication is the give and take of ideas—listening and talking about each other's beliefs, values and hopes.

This brochure is designed to help roommates begin to communicate. We hope that by using this information, you and your roommate will begin to have an open and sharing relationship. Listen carefully to your roommate and you'll learn a great deal about the person you will be living with this year. You may even learn more about yourself. Have a good time!

Roommate Bill of Rights

I have the right to read and study in my room.

I have the right to expect that a roommate will respect my belongings.

I have the right to sleep without undue disturbances from noise, guests, or roommate activity.

I have the right to a clean environment.

I have the right to free access to my room without pressure from my roommate.

I have the right to personal privacy.

I have the right to host guests with the expectation that they will respect the rights of my roommate.

I have the right to address grievances. The RA is available to assist me in settling conflicts.

I have the right to be free from fear of intimidation, physical and/or emotional harm.

I have the right to confront in a tactful manner when these rights are not respected.

Having a roommate and being a roommate can be one of the best experiences of college life. This information is intended to make it easier for you to begin an acquaintance and build a friendship with someone who may or may not be a complete stranger to you. How you approach this new experience and what you expect from it will be the basic ingredient in what may turn out to be a lifelong friendship. The outcome depends on both of you to develop this friendship—your willingness to share, to communicate, and, above all, work through conflict. You and your roommate will share the ups and downs of one another's lives, the good moods as well as the bad, the joys and sorrows—in short, all that makes each of you, you.

Hopefully, you will become friends, although it doesn't always happen. With care and energy you can work out a good living situation with the degree of friendship you wish. Begin by getting to know each other.

Get to know your roommate as a person. Share some of yourself, too. You will probably find similar likes and dislikes between the two of you. A good way to get to know your roommate is to talk about some of the open-ended statements suggested on the next page. These statements are intended to provide a guideline for beginning conversations. Take turns responding to each item. Hopefully, by discovering your individual likes and dislikes early in the semester, later disagreements can be avoided.

** I grew up in...*

** My high school and hometown can best be described by...*

** My family...*

** This summer I...*

** During my free time I...*

** Things I hope to accomplish this semester include...*

** A disorganized and dirty room...*

** I like daydreaming about...*

** What I like about you is...*

** My pet peeves include...*

** When I am approaching a deadline I...*

** ...makes me laugh!*

** My first impression of you was...*

** I usually react to negative criticism by...*

** My personal belongings...*

** I like to be left alone when...*

** Things I like best about you are...*

** I prefer to get feedback...*

** I feel...about drugs and drinking.*

** I become angry when...*

** What I think you need to know about me...*

** Right now this experience is making me feel...*

** I like such things as...*

** You and I can...*

** Having guys/girls in the room is...*

** I think we might have to compromise on...*

** My personal goals are to...*

** It seems to me that an important similarity between us may be...*

** The way I feel about this conversation is...*

Several other specific areas may need further discussion to facilitate life with your roommate.

1. Sit down with your roommate sometime during the first couple of days at school and decide what you will do about the following:

- * Who sets and turns off the alarm clock?
- * Anticipated bedtimes?
- * Do either of you require total darkness and quiet to go to sleep, or can the light be on?
- * Study best with the radio or TV on or off?

Remember—both of you live there!

2. Make an agreement about who cleans what and when. Divide up all the cleaning responsibilities and if someone isn't doing his or her part, talk to him or her right away. Don't demand or write complaining notes. These things make for hard feelings and just increase problems instead of solving them.
3. Company is one of the great joys of group living, but remember that you already have a roommate. Decide how much, how long, how often and when you want people over. Each of you will have friends—some mutual, some separate—and you need to work out how to let each other know when someone else's presence is disruptive. Be considerate—do not bring the gang in to listen to a new CD if your roommate is studying. Boyfriends or girlfriends can also end up being around a lot (maybe too much). Set up some guidelines you both can live with.
4. Find out your roommate's feelings about loaning his or her things to other people — including you. These things can include clothes, money, hair dryers, stereos, cars, etc. If you make joint purchases, decide who gets them at the end of your roommate tenure. Some roommates don't mind loaning things to their roommates, but do to other people. Find out. Let your roommate know your feelings, too.

The most important ingredient of a successful roommate relationship is communication. Always strive to keep the lines of communication open between you and your roommate. We all have our own opinions. Respect one another and learn how to discuss, disagree and still be friends. Let one another know when you're angry, sad, happy, content. We react differently depending on our moods. Be willing to talk over hassles. Be tactful when you talk with your roommate. Remember your roommate is human, too.

We'll help!

If you find you and your roommate are having problems getting along, there are people in the residence hall who can help you; but please be honest with your roommate first. Right on your floor is a resident assistant who has had some training in communications and listening skills and is willing to help you or refer you to someone who can help with a specific problem. Hall staff is also available to listen to your concerns and provide assistance. You and your roommate should feel free to approach any member of the residence hall staff when you have questions or need help of any kind.

Coming to Lakeland College and living in a residence hall is a major change in your life. You are on your own; you have a great deal of freedom and with freedom comes responsibility. As an adult in this responsible living environment, you are expected to act responsibly and with consideration for your roommate and for the other people in the residence hall. Living with someone can be a significant learning experience. Be open, listen, discuss and try your hardest to make this a good year together.



Publication is courtesy of the Department of Residence Life
Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.
(920) 565-1228

Having a Roommate and Being a Roommate

Tips to help you get to know your Lakeland College roommate



The Department of Residence Life has prepared this brochure to help answer some of the questions you might have before you move into your new home.

