1. If you know you’ll be sharing a room with an American student, try and contact them ahead of time to get acquainted with them. Research a little about Texas and America— it’s important that you know a few things about the history and culture of the new place in which you’ll be living. Once you get to Trinity, you’ll be able to talk with your roommate about what you already know about their home - it’ll provide a common ground on which both of you can communicate and your roommate will respect that you have taken the time to get to know a little about her background.

2. If you are flying, your luggage allowance is limited. Make sure you communicate with your roommate about this so that they are aware that you may not be able to contribute as many things to your shared living area—unless you plan to buy a few things in America and you both make arrangements to divide the costs. Most American roommates are more than understanding about this and will assist you as much as they are able to.

3. Although you may feel uncomfortable within the new social culture initially, don’t feel that you are being isolated. Certainly you will feel unsure about how to interact appropriately at first, but by being involved with your roommate and in your new lifestyle as much as possible, you’ll quickly learn. You will find yourself settling into the system more quickly and you will both learn how to understand each other and respect each others’ differences. Make the best of your first-year experience with your roommate! It’s so comforting to have a familiar face to come home to every day and because they’re American you’ll have the added benefit of receiving plenty of great advice for your transition to the U.S.

4. Ask questions about your roommate’s background and interests. The more you know about them, the more you’ll understand them and life in America in general. Share your own culture with them and be open about your background and experiences— it will only add diversity to your friendship and it will help your roommate to understand you better.

5. As an International student, you probably have preconceived ideas from having met Americans before or from the media that color your impression of what Americans are. Please try to be open-minded and be prepared to learn about American society that is enormously diverse and complex and cannot be reduced only to a few stories or stereotypes. Ask your roommate about important differences that exist between geographical regions, between rural and urban areas, and between social classes.

6. Ask your roommate to explain some commonly misunderstood aspects of the English language or anything verbal you encounter that you’re not sure of. Also share with them some phrases and words from your native language— they will appreciate your openness and hearing them use even just a few words will help make you feel more at home. Don’t feel intimidated by possible language barriers— try to speak in English with your roommate but don’t feel that communication has to be perfect! Students at Trinity are very welcoming of diversity and your roommate will appreciate you more for trying to use their language than if you just didn’t bother to converse at all. The more openness you show, the more they’ll open up to you and you’ll automatically feel more comfortable around them.

7. You may need to make long distance calls to your family at what may seem to be inconvenient times of the day to your roommate. You will need to take into consideration time differences and how your calling times may affect them adversely. Communicate with your roommate about this and try and compromise on the time and/or day of the week when you will plan to make/receive personal calls that will suit both of you.

8. If you are unable to return home during breaks, your roommate may offer for you to go home or on holiday with them. This is a great way to experience more of America and to get to know their family and background better. Remember to offer to contribute in any little way towards your stay with them and show appreciation for the great consideration they have shown you by bringing you into their home.

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