

## Renting an Apartment in the US

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**Lindsay:** So guys, when you're renting an apartment in the US, (like) what should you expect – what are a few things that you should expect that might be different from your country?

**Francis:** So there's (there are) a lot of different fees involved. There's a **security deposit**. Sometimes if you're dealing with a **realtor**, there's a realtor's fee. (Um) some ads or some places have first and last month, so I would always try to (um) save your money as much as possible and, (you know, if you can avoid dealing with a realtor do that, if you can have something without the security deposit.

**Lindsay:** What's a security deposit?

**Francis:** So what happens with the security deposit is you pay this up front and at the end when you move out, you're supposed to get it back, meaning you haven't damaged the place, (um) whatsoever and meaning stained some rugs or any damage to the walls, (um) things like that.

**Keriann:** My apartment that I moved into did not have a security deposit and I think that was because I moved in at the, in the middle of a lease. (Um), and if I move out and someone else moves in in my place, then

### Key Vocabulary Words

1. Security deposit
2. Realtor
3. Month-to-month lease
4. Utilities
5. Horror stories
6. To settle for
7. To take one's time
8. Knock on wood

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they might not have to pay the security deposit either. I'm not sure, but (um) one thing about the first and last month's rent (uh), it is important to save your money, like Francis just said, (um) but after your first apartment, now you don't have to pay your last month's rent and you can use that money to pay the first month's rent for the next apartment. So my lease is ending in May and I'm really excited to find a new place to live and now I'm going to have an extra \$700 to my bank account.

**Francis:** One other thing is that there is (are) different types of leases. You can get a whole year lease and you can also get a **month-to-month**. So it

really depends (um) on the place that you're renting and you should always ask if you don't want to stay a whole year, maybe get a month-to-month rent place.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, that's a great point. What's usually included in the monthly rent, (like) in terms of **utilities**?

**Keriann:** I think most of the time water is included, but not hot water, so you would have to pay for the heat to heat the water. (Um) water and (uh) that sounds about it.

**Francis:** (Um) some places include heat and some places don't and some include all utilities, meaning heat and electricity. (Um) and so you really have to check what is included and what's not.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, I think that's the point. It depends on the city sometimes. I noticed back in New York, heat and hot water was usually included in the – yeah in the apartment, but here it's not at all.

**Francis:** No, it's random.

**Lindsay:** So it ends up being more expensive here actually.

**Francis:** Exactly.

**Keriann:** But you also need to remember when you're looking at the price, if the heat and hot water are-*are* included, it might be a little bit more expensive on the surface, but really you might be paying either the same amount and not even have to deal with paying utility bills or it might be a little bit more expensive, but you have that convenience of not having to deal with it. So...

**Lindsay:** Where would you go to find an apartment?

**Francis:** A lot of people (um) find apartments on Craigslist. That's a (uh) website. (Um) you can also check on (like) bulletin boards at your university or just ask for references from friends.

**Keriann:** I mostly just use Craigslist.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, I've always had really good luck on Craigslist, **knock on wood**. But sometimes I've heard, I've heard a few **horror stories**.

**Francis:** (Unh). Definitely.

**Keriann:** My current roommates I got on Craigslist. (Uh) I'm just counting down the days till (until) I move out. Yeah, it's not the -- and it has nothing to do with Craigslist, it's just (um) I kind of rushed in. That

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would definitely be a mistake that I made with **settling** for something. So now **I'm taking my time**, (um), looking for a new apartment and just exploring all my options instead of taking the first thing that I find.

**Francis:** And one other tip I would give is to really ask a lot of questions when you're renting a place about the noise level, (um), just about, (you know), the laundry, what, what's really included, what's not. Currently where I live, it's a bit noisier than they told us it would be and (uh) we're, we're surprised actually.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, that's really tough.

You gotta (got to) ask as many questions as you can, sit down with the potential – if you're moving into a shared apartment, right, with other roommates who are already in there, really sit down and get a sense of who you're moving in with.

**Keriann:** Also is the landlord responsible for snow removal? Because if not, then you're going to have to shovel for five months out of the year. (Um) where does the mail go if you're not home? Will you have to go pick it up at the post office? That's very inconvenient. (Um) yeah, there's (there are) just a lot of things to consider. So make a list before you go.

**Lindsay:** That's a good point about snow removal, especially this winter 'cause (because) it's been a really big winter.

**Keriann:** Yeah.

**Francis:** Yes.

**Lindsay:** And we've been shoveling snow all winter here. Thanks guys.

**Francis:** Thanks.