

ACTIVITY

FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE

Finding a place to rent can be stressful and time-consuming. It's usually not easy and often requires compromises. But the hunt can also be fun!

To kick off your search, make a list of things you'd like in a rental home. This wish list will help you sort out what's important for your well-being.

With your wish list in hand, check out what's available. Places to look for rentals include:

- local newspapers and online ads
- housing registries from universities or colleges
- real estate agents who handle rental property
- leads from friends and neighbours
- walking through a neighbourhood to look for rental places

Once you've found a few places, take a closer look. What exactly does each have to offer? Things to consider include the place, the costs, and the safety and security.

THE PLACE

- Is it conveniently located? Think about shopping, parks, transit, work, school, friends, family, and other things important to you.
- Does the space meet your needs?
- Is it suitable for the number of occupants?
- Are all the appliances you need provided?
- Are there laundry facilities on-site?
- Are window coverings provided?
- Does it come furnished, partially furnished, or unfurnished?
- Is there outdoor space? If so, who takes care of green spaces and snow removal?
- Are there extra amenities, such as a gym or a pool?
- Is it pet friendly?
- Is smoking allowed?
- Is growing cannabis allowed?

THE COSTS

- How much is the rent?
- Is it a month-to-month tenancy or a fixed term lease?
- Does the landlord plan any rent increases?
- How much is the damage or security deposit?
- Who pays the utilities?
- What do the utilities usually cost every month?
- Are there extra charges for parking or more storage?

THE SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Is it clean and in good repair?
- Have there been reports of insect or rodent infestations?
- Are there working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Are the fire safety inspections up-to-date?
- What kinds of security and safety features are there?

The answers to the questions about the place, the costs, and the safety and security can help you make a shortlist of potential properties to rent. What are the pros and cons of each place on your shortlist? What things from your wish list can you give up?

To help with your shortlist, check out what people are saying about the building, the landlord, and the neighbourhood. Feel free to ask people in the building or the neighbourhood. Also consider going online. Local discussion forums on places like Reddit often have threads that deal with these topics. If you can't find the information you need, consider posting a question.

Remember: renting a place to live is forming a contract between two or more parties. If there are aspects about the rental arrangements that you think could be improved—perhaps lower rent, small improvements to the property, or other favourable conditions—you can try to negotiate that with the landlord. They can decide if they will accept the terms, but you will be in a better negotiating position if you know more about what is on offer at comparable properties.