tips & vocabulary terms
for Global Launch students renting an off-campus apartment

For details about all housing options for AECP students, visit: http://LearnEnglish.asu.edu/housing.

If you want to rent an apartment off campus, you should make hotel reservations before you arrive. It may take a couple of days or a week to find an apartment.

how to look for an apartment and important things to think about:
You will find helpful resources at ASU’s Center for Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services (OCCSS) website.

Before you look for an apartment, you must think about several things:
- How long will you live in Tempe?
- How much money per month do you want to spend on rent?
- How many bedrooms do you want in your apartment?
- How close to campus do you want to be?
- What kind of transportation will you use?
- Do you want a furnished or unfurnished apartment?

After you answer these questions, look at the information provided and identify apartments that match your budget and desired size and location. If you will be in Tempe for less than six months, you should look for apartments that offer short-term leases.

After you have a list of possible apartments, you can call to confirm the costs and to see if any apartments are available. Then you can visit the apartments and choose the one you like the best.

After you find an apartment, you will need to sign a lease, pay a deposit, and move into the apartment. Before you sign a lease, please read the following information and be sure you understand it. If you have any questions, please ask a Global Launch Student Advisor.

common terms used in the apartment rental process:

- "Amenities": Amenities are extra things the apartment complex provides to make living there more comfortable and more enjoyable. If a complex has many amenities, you should expect to pay more rent. When comparing apartments, you should consider the amenities, not just the rent! Most apartments have a swimming pool and laundry facility. If it is a large complex, there may be more than one pool. Other amenities include items like a spa, covered parking, a clubhouse, volleyball and basketball courts. You should also consider the amenities included in the apartment itself. Some complexes offer a microwave oven, a washer and dryer, vertical blinds, or ceiling fans. You should compare all the amenities when choosing an apartment!

- "Application Fee": Most apartments charge an application fee. This fee is usually per person, so if you want to rent an apartment with a friend, both of you will pay the application fee. This fee is not refundable.

- "Lease": A lease is a legal contract. When you sign a lease, you agree to rent the apartment for the length of time specified in the lease and for the amount of money specified in the lease. Even if you move before the end of the lease, you are still required to pay the rent until the last month of the lease.

- "Legal Assistance": If you have any problems with a roommate or a landlord, you can receive free legal assistance from Student Legal Assistance in Ocotillo Hall Building C, Room 105. They are available to help you understand what your rights and responsibilities are as a tenant. Please make an appointment to see them if you have any problems.

- "Redecorating Fee"/"Processing Fee"/"Administrative Fee": Some apartments charge a redecorating fee or processing fee. Unlike the security deposit, this money is not refundable. It is simply an additional charge you must pay to move into an apartment.

- "Rent"/"Tax": This is how much per month you will pay to live in the apartment. If you request a furnished apartment, the rent will include the furniture. In Tempe, there is a tax on rent. If your rent is $480 per month, you will pay an additional $5 in tax. When an apartment complex tells you how much the rent is, be sure to ask if that includes the tax.

- "Rental Agreement": Some apartments have Rental Agreements instead of leases. A Rental Agreement is usually a month to month contract. This type of agreement can be canceled at any time by giving 30 days notice prior to the next rent payment date. Also, with this type of agreement, the rent can be increased at any time.

- "Renter's Insurance": When you move in to your apartment, you should consider purchasing renter's insurance to protect yourself in case of theft, fire, or water damage to your personal belongings. The cost for one year is usually between $100 - $200. Many local insurance companies offer renter's insurance. Compare plans from different companies before purchasing renter's insurance.

- "Security Deposit": The security deposit is money you pay before you move in to the apartment. The apartment complex keeps this money to pay for any damage you may cause. When you move out, if you leave the apartment clean and have not damaged anything, some or all of the security deposit will be refunded to you. If you have damaged something or have not cleaned the apartment, they may keep some or all of your money.

- "Small Print": Besides the rent, the Lease or Rental Agreement will specify other conditions for renting the apartment. The print is very small and there is a lot of information, but it is important for you to read the lease before you sign it so you understand it. If you have any questions, you should ask the apartment manager to explain the information to you.

- "Utilities": Utilities include water, sewage, electricity, gas and garbage collection. Most of the apartments listed here include water, sewage and garbage collection in the rent. If the "utilities included" section says "yes," it means that the rent also includes electricity and gas (if the apartment has gas). The cost of utilities averages $40 - $60 per month in the winter, and can be over $100 per month in hot months when you use the air conditioning.