

A Read the seven quotations below and give each a score between 1 and 5 according to how much you agree (1 = strongly agree / 5 = strongly disagree).

- 1 Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city. George Burns

1	2	3	4	5
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- 2 The first half of our life is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children. Clarence Darrow

1	2	3	4	5
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- 3 A man can't get rich if he takes proper care of his family. Navaho Indian saying

1	2	3	4	5
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- 4 Q: Why do grandparents and grandchildren get along so well?  
A: They have the same enemy – the mother. Claudette Colbert

1	2	3	4	5
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- 5 The family you come from isn't as important as the family you're going to have. Ring Lardner

1	2	3	4	5
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- 6 If a family lives in harmony, all its affairs will prosper. Chinese proverb

1	2	3	4	5
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- 7 The family: I believe more unhappiness comes from this source than from any other – I mean the attempt to prolong family connection unduly, and to make people hang together artificially who would never naturally do so. Samuel Butler

1	2	3	4	5
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B Discuss the quotations and your responses to them.

C Work with a partner.

- 1 Describe the similarities and differences between the two families in the photographs.
- 2 What kind of lifestyle do you think each family has?
- 3 Which of these family groups would you prefer to belong to? Why?



A Read this article about the importance of birth order. As you read, think about your own family. How far are the lists of characteristics of children in the three birth orders true for you and your brothers and sisters?

Psychologists who have studied the impact of birth order on personality have found first-borns tend to be highly motivated to achieve. Of the first twenty-three astronauts sent into outer space, twenty-one were first-borns or only children.

**Characteristics of first-borns and only children:**

- Goal setters
- Responsible
- Determined
- High achievers
- Organised
- People with an eye for detail
- Perfectionist
- Rule keepers

A good description of middle children is 'balanced'. Middle children are good mediators and have superior co-operation skills. They don't have their parents all to themselves or get their own way, so they learn to negotiate and compromise.

**Characteristics of the middle child:**

- Flexible
- Generous
- Diplomatic
- Social
- Peacemaker
- Competitive

Youngest children in the family are typically outgoing. They are also affectionate, uncomplicated and sometimes a little absent-minded.

**Characteristics of the last-born child:**

- Risk takers
- Creative
- Outgoing
- Humorous
- Ideas people
- Question authority

Birth order isn't a simplistic 1-2-3 system that says all first-borns, middle children or last-borns are equally one way. These are tendencies or general characteristics.

B Discuss these questions in groups.

- 1 How much truth do you think there is in the idea that a person's birth order in their family can affect their personality and behaviour?
- 2 What other factors affect personality and behaviour?
- 3 How do you explain these apparent 'facts' from the article?
  - a First-born children tend to be perfectionist high achievers.
  - b Middle children tend to be generous peacemakers.
  - c Last-born children tend to be creative risk takers.

**Language development**

C Complete these sentences about fictional characters with appropriate words and phrases from the article.

- 1 Jo is a typical last-born child. She is outgoing and humorous. She also enjoys taking ..... and is always questioning .....
- 2 Her older brother Tom is a typical first-born child. He is a high ..... who is a determined, responsible and ..... child.
- 3 Becky is the second of three children and has all the qualities of a middle child. For a start she's the ..... of the family, which means that if other people are arguing she can be very ..... . Despite this she's still ..... and doesn't like to be beaten by her older brother or her younger sister.

D Write sentences about three people you know, using words and phrases from the article in A.