


1 SPEAKING

- a**  Ask and answer the question with a partner.
- 1 Do you think siblings (brothers and sisters) usually get on well together? Why / Why not?

2 READING

- a** Look at the title of the text below. What do you think the article will be about?
- ☐ The ways that girls and boys are different
 - ☐ How to be a good parent (mother or father)
 - ☐ Why siblings don't usually have the same personalities
 - ☐ The life and career of the writer's brother

Why is my brother so different from me?

by Darius Collins

1 My brother and I share the same parents. We grew up in the same house. We had the same hobbies as kids – we both bought guitars, we both wore the shirts of our favourite football teams, we both spent time building models. Now, as adults, we look a bit like each other, but that's all. In terms of personality, we're completely different. I'm single, self-employed and you'll never see me wearing a suit and tie. My brother is married with kids and a conventional job and has over a hundred ties. So what happened?

2 According to research, it is quite common for brothers or sisters to look the same but have very different personalities. In fact, siblings have the same personality in only 20% of cases. There are a number of possible reasons.

3 One possible reason is that siblings compare themselves with one another. So, let's say for example that you were *quite* good at sport as a child, but your sister was *very* good at it. In that case, you perhaps saw yourself as *not* being very good at sport and you lost interest in it. Perhaps after that you chose a different interest instead, such as art.

4 Another possible reason is that the family you grew up in is actually very different from the family your brother or sister grew up in. If you were the first born child, then with you your parents had to learn how to be parents from zero. They were probably quite strict. If you were the child born last, your parents already knew how to look after children. They were probably more easy-going with you.



5 There is a big difference between being an oldest or youngest child, according to research. People say that the oldest child is usually more hard-working and does better at school. The oldest child usually gets a better job. They say that the youngest child is more fun-loving and creative. The youngest child may choose a more unusual career.

6 Which brings us back to me and my brother. For us, research seems to be wrong. I am the oldest child, but I chose a more unusual life. My brother is the youngest, but he worked harder at school and got a better, more 'normal' job. He got married and had children. I became an artist and never bought a house. So you see – research can tell us what *most* people do, not what *all* people do. But my brother is very different from me, so at least the research got that right!

- b Read the article and check your prediction from exercise 2a.



BETTER READING: SKIMMING TO IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA IN A PARAGRAPH

When you're reading, it isn't always necessary for you to understand every detail – you just need to understand the main idea, or *gist*, of the text. We can also use this strategy to identify the main ideas in each paragraph.

- 1 What is the gist of each paragraph in the text? Match paragraphs 1–6 with topics a–f below.

- a ☐ Strict or easy-going parents
- b ☐ Research isn't always right.
- c ☐ My brother and I are different.
- d ☐ The differences between first and last child
- e ☐ Siblings compare their abilities.
- f ☐ Research on the personalities of siblings

- c Find words in the text with these meanings.

- 1 the opposite of *married* _____
- 2 the past tense of *wear* _____
- 3 the opposite of *easy-going* _____
- 4 the past tense of *buy* _____
- 5 the opposite of *serious* _____
- 6 the past tense of *know* _____
- 7 the opposite of *conventional* _____

- d Choose the best endings for the sentences.

- 1 The writer and his brother ...
 - a look different.
 - b have the same hobbies.
 - c had guitars when they were children.
- 2 In 80% of cases, siblings ...
 - a have different personalities.
 - b have the same personality.
 - c look the same.
- 3 When they have their first baby, parents ...
 - a already know how to look after a child.
 - b learn how to look after a child.
 - c are usually easy-going.
- 4 The youngest sibling usually ...
 - a works harder.
 - b gets a conventional job.
 - c does something more unusual.
- 5 The writer ...
 - a is an uncle.
 - b is a parent.
 - c has a conventional job.

3 SPEAKING

- a Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 Do you have siblings? Compare yourself with them. Think about appearance, jobs, interests and personality.
- 2 If you don't have siblings, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child?

