THE SIBLING EFFECT

We don't always get on well with our brothers and sisters, but we get a lot of benefits from them. Research shows that siblings have a big effect on our personalities – and in general, it's a good effect.

When you're young, you argue with your brothers and sisters. It's part of life. Why? Because you learn important skills from these arguments. And according to research, you don't get these skills from friends, only from siblings.

A big brother or sister is also an advantage at school. According to research, when your big brother or sister does well at school, you do well too. They can also give you important information about your school and your teachers. The research shows that a big brother or sister can bring you an extra 4% in your exams! (And for children from poor families, it's 11%)

Some benefits are only true when your sibling is a girl. For example, according to research at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, boys with sisters are usually good at talking about emotions. This helps them to be happy, because when they feel worried about something, they can share their feelings.

But what about stepbrothers and stepsisters? The answer is: yes, they do – but only when they are part of the family for six years or more.

Task 3: True or False

1. Friends teach the same skills as siblings.
2. Older siblings can influence school success.
3. Boys with sisters are worse at emotions.
4. Step-siblings help immediately.

LIVEWORKSHEETS