d Look at the highlighted words in the two texts. Try to work out their meaning from the context. Then match them with definitions 1–12.

1 _____ *adj* ill
2 _____ it's no surprise that
3 _____ *noun* competition between two people
4 _____ *noun* the time when you were a child
5 _____ *noun* a meeting of people, e.g. family
6 _____ *noun* people who are fully grown
7 _____ *adj* knowing about or being conscious of sth
8 _____ *noun* a school where children can live during the year
9 _____ *verb* think that sb or sth is important
10 _____ *verb* divided sth between two or more people
11 _____ *verb* try to hurt sb else
12 _____ *noun* a group of friends

Rivalry between brothers is normal, but there was a special reason for the tension between us. I was very ill when I was born, and spent three months in hospital with my mother. My brother did not see her at all during that time, as he went to stay with an aunt. When our mother returned home, it was with a sick newborn baby who took all the attention. No wonder he hated me (although if you ask Jeff, he will say that he didn't – we remember things differently).

My brother and I were completely different. We shared the same bedroom, but he was tidy, and I was really untidy. He was responsible, I was rebellious. He was sensible, I was emotional. I haven't got any positive memories of our childhood together, though there must have been good moments. Jeff says we used to play Cowboys and Indians but I only remember him trying to suffocate me under the bedcovers.

My relationship with Jeff has influenced my attitude towards my own four daughters. If the girls fight, I always think that the younger child is innocent. But the good news about brothers and sisters is that when they get older, they value each other more. Jeff is now one of my best friends, and I like and admire him greatly. For better or for worse, we share a whole history. It is the longest relationship in my life.

I went to boarding school when I was seven, and the hardest thing I found was making friends. Because I was an only child, I just didn't know how to do it. The thing is that when you're an only child you spend a lot of your time with adults and you're often the only child in a gathering of adults. Your parents go on living more or less the way they have always lived, only now you are there too.

I found being an only child interesting because it gave me a view of the world of adults that children in a big family might not get. And I know it has, at least partly, made me the kind of person I am – I never like being one of a group, for example. If I have to be in a group, I will always try to go off and do something on my own, or be with just one other person – I'm not comfortable with being one of a gang.

My parents are divorced now and my mother lives in the US and my father in the UK. I feel very responsible for them – I feel responsible for their happiness. I'm the closest relative in the world to each of them, and I am very aware of that.

COME IN ENGLISH
Practice Lab

LIVEWORKSHEETS