2 BAT READING

BROTHERLY LOVE

PART 1

If you have grown up with brothers and sisters, you will know that they are a big part of your life. Today, scientists are turning their attention to these sibling relationships, to examine how they work and what effect they have on our lives both inside and outside the family.

When they are young, brothers and sisters spend more time with each other than they do with anybody else. A study published in the United States in 1996 found that, by age 11, siblings spend about one-third of their free time in each other's company, far more than the time spent with parents, friends or even by themselves. More recent research shows that even teenagers, who are generally busier with outside interests, spend at least 10 hours a week doing things with their siblings. It is, therefore, not surprising that siblings influence each other.

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer:

1. It seems that nowadays,
   a. siblings are becoming a bigger part of our life
   b. more research is focusing on the relationship between siblings
   c. scientists are working on relationships inside their own family
   d. siblings have little effect on our lives
   e. siblings can walk away from each other if they don't agree

2. A 1996 study in the United States
   a. looked at the amount of time young siblings interacted
   b. proved that siblings spend less time together than alone
   c. recommended that children spend more time with parents
   d. found that 11 year olds had very little free time
   e. proved that teenagers spend about 10 hours a week doing things with their siblings

3. Later research has shown that
   a. younger children are often busier than teenagers
   b. teenagers interact with siblings for about 10 hours a week
   c. siblings have a surprising influence on each other
   d. siblings tend to have similar outside interests.
   e. None of the other answers are correct.

PART 2

Many of these interactions, even if they seem to be negative, can, according to researchers, be an important learning tool. For example, friends who disagree can walk away from each other; by contrast, siblings must continue to live together and find some way to deal with each other even after a fight. By learning how to do this, scientists think that children develop negotiating and coping skills that are not only important within the family, but that will be needed later in life, for example, at school, at work or in a romantic relationship.

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer:

4. Fights between siblings
   a. should always be avoided
   b. are very similar to fights between friends
   c. can teach people skills for coping with life
   d. cannot affect relationships outside the family

LIVEWORKSHEETS

PART 3

Growing up with a sibling of the opposite sex can affect interpersonal relationships in other ways. It has been shown that girls with brothers are more stereotypically feminine in childhood, and the opposite is true in the case of boys. But as children grow up, having siblings of the opposite sex can prove helpful. One study examined how university students who had grown up with an opposite-sex sibling were able to talk with each other. It turned out that girls with older brothers and boys with older sisters had the easiest time. Here again, it seems that early rehearsal with siblings made for a smoother transition into situations faced by adults.

Other behaviour, both positive and negative, may also be traced to early sibling interaction. Siblings obviously learn from one another, often consciously. Not only do younger children want to copy the behaviour of an older brother or sister, but older siblings may be encouraged to achieve something simply to keep ahead of the younger ones. Equally interesting to scientists, however, is a phenomenon called "de-identification", whereby a child avoids imitating the behaviour of a sibling. This helps children form their own personality. For example, it is known that many youngsters start to smoke because they are copying an older brother or sister. However, according to a study published in 2003, when siblings are close in age, the younger one may consciously decide not to smoke as a way to assert his or her individuality.

Due to the strong influence that siblings have on each other's personalities, psychologists are now also examining how children who haven't got any siblings interact with people and the relationships that half-and step-siblings have.

Siblings, however annoying they may sometimes be, should be appreciated. Because friends change and parents eventually die, they may be the only people who know us for our entire lifetime.

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer:

5. Boys who have got sisters
   a. are no different from boys who haven't
   b. like to help others
   c. are often more stereotypically masculine
   d. are found to be more helpful to girls
   e. see interactions as more negative

6. Students who spoke most easily with others were
   a. those who had an opposite-sex sibling
   b. girls who had grown up with older brothers
   c. all students who had an older sister
   d. boys who had practised talking with adults

7. "De-identification" .
   a. encourages older siblings to learn from younger ones
   b. describes how younger siblings copy older brothers and sisters
   c. refers to a process in which siblings decide not to copy each other
   d. stops a child from developing his or her own personality

8. The writer believes that
   a. sibling relationships are important and valuable
   b. more studies should be done on one-child families
   c. half- and step-sibling relationships are unimportant
   d. more attention should be paid to friends and parents

LIVEWORKSHEETS