

HOW BIRTH ORDER AFFECTS YOUR PERSONALITY.

Where are you in your family? Are you a big brother or sister, the baby or somewhere in the middle? Or maybe you're an only child? Whenever you are, psychologists believe your position in the family has an important effect on your personality. Selina Miley finds out more.

Only children

Only children are people who are pro-active: they mature early, they are dynamic, organised and conscientious, and they love facts and details. On the other hand, they hate criticism and they can seem far too sensitive to other people. As only children, they are often the centre of attention, so they can become angry if they don't get their own way ... famous only children include golfer, Tiger Woods, and pop stars John Lennon and Elton John.

Eldest child

Are you an eldest child? If so, you could be a natural leader ... eldest children are often ambitious, punctual and hard-working, and regularly score higher marks on achievement tests. On the negative side, eldest children often feel jealous of their younger siblings, who often seem to get better treatment from their parents. First-borns can appear to be 'know-it-alls' who frighten other people with their bossy, insensitive attitude. So, maybe it's not surprising that more than half of US presidents have been first-borns!



Last-borns

Last-borns are often their parents' favourite, and their personality reflects this. Parents are often less strict with the youngest child, which can cause resentment from older children. They also have the least responsibility. On the positive side, last-borns have good people skills: they are sociable and love entertaining others. Many famous actors and comedians – Jim Carrey and Cameron Diaz for example – are youngest children. On the other hand, youngest children often have a short attention span and can be self-centred.

Middle children

Middle children often seem to get the least attention from their parents and complain that they are always stuck in the middle ...

especially during family arguments! Typical middle children can see both sides of an argument and so they are often peace-makers in the family. They are usually easy-going and good listeners; but they can be unambitious and indecisive and they are often unsure what to do with their lives. Princess Diana was a middle child and so are the singer Madonna and the computer billionaire Bill Gates!



Read the description and write which group this characteristic is from.

- 1 This person thinks they know everything.
eldest child
- 2 This person sometimes has difficulty concentrating.
- 3 This person is bad at making decisions.
- 4 This is probably the best person in the family to go to with a problem.
- 6 This person is happy to take control of situations.
- 7 This person often helps to solve problems between members of the family.
- 8 This person grows up quickly.
- 9 This person is probably the most fun to be with.

Listen to what Stefan, Melanie and Oliver say about the ideas in the text and write True or False next to each sentence.

Stefan's younger sister is very sociable and likes talking. True / False

Stefan is more ambitious and dynamic than his elder brother. True / False

Melanie thinks the article is true for her family. True / False

She isn't as easy-going as her brother. True / False

Her brother is the bossiest member of the family. True / False

Oliver has brothers and sisters. True / False

He doesn't think he's a natural leader. True / False

He is easy-going and a good listener. True / False