A. Blood is thicker than water. This means that family is more important than anyone else. Many young people, though, spend more time with their friends than with their family. They value their friends' opinions more and enjoy their company. When it's time to visit grandma or go to a cousin's wedding, teenagers often prefer to be left at home. But are they missing out?

B. In Asia, the Middle East, South America and Sub-Saharan Africa over 40% of children live in families with other adults such as aunts, uncles and grandparents in addition to their parents. In South Africa, it is almost 70%. On the other hand, in Europe, Australia and North America, less than 25% of children live in extended families. Is the lack of close contact with relatives putting some children at a disadvantage?

C. The people they live with have a great influence on the way children grow up. Those who live with their extended family have many advantages. They usually get lots of love and attention. Grandparents often have more time to read to children and play with them. As they are often retired, they are not always busy and stressed as many parents are. They have learnt to be patient and they have already handled most of the problems children and young people face.

D. It is good for children to grow up to understand the needs of older people: they may become more caring and less selfish if they spend time helping their grandparents. Children learn about the past from grandparents' stories. Sometimes they feel closer to their grandparents than to their parents.

E. Young adults often feel that living alone will be exciting, but they forget that it can also be lonely. By remaining with the family during this stage of their lives, they can avoid this. They can also save money for their education and future.

F. Young people whose grandparents live far away can gain some of these advantages by keeping in close contact by phone, email, letters and visits. It is nice to know there is someone you can go to if you have a problem. As the Italian proverb says, 'Se non sta andando bene chiamare la nonna.' - 'If things aren't going well, call your grandmother.'

G. Friends are important to young people, but friends come and go. Your family is always on your side. Grandparents won't be there forever. Appreciate them while you can.

1. What percentage of children live in extended families in Asia, the Middle East, South America and Sub-Saharan Africa?
2. Why are grandparents often less busy and stressed than parents?
3. What do young adults often think living alone will be like?

LIVEWORKSHEETS