




Ordinary People, a novel by Judith Guest, is about a typical American family— the Jarretts. Calvin and Beth have 2 sons, live in an upper class Chicago suburb, and live a “normal” life when tragedy strikes the family. This novel tells the story of how each of them deals with both their own emotions and those involved within their relationships in the aftermath of this tragedy.

We will be exploring some important questions throughout our reading this quarter, including but not limited to the following: How important is family to one’s **identity**? How do family relationships affect one’s **personality** and how he/she deals with **conflict or challenges**? What is one’s **role** in his/her family? How does **birth order** affect one’s personality? What is the difference between a healthy/**functional** family as opposed to a unhealthy/**dysfunctional** one and how does that affect one’s development? How does family help one develop **empathy** for others?

PART I: Look at the graphic below to familiarize yourself with birth order and matching personality.

Then, briefly summarize the personality for each birth order in one cohesive sentence through your interpretation.

1. First borns are the “good” children and students whom everyone can rely on to be a responsible and cautious leader.
2. _____

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| FIRST BORN | MIDDLE BORN | LAST BORN | THE ONLY CHILD |
| perfectionist achiever leader bossy responsible motivated conscientious controlling cautious reliable | adaptable independent go-between people-pleaser can be rebellious feels left out peacemaker social | social charming outgoing uncomplicated manipulative seeks attention self-centered fun | confident conscientious responsible perfectionist center of attention mature for their age seek approval sensitive leader |

3. _____
4. _____

PART II: Watch the video on birth order and personality. Write a summary of the information you learn, using only the most important information. Consider these Qs: How does birth order affect a person? Why does something like this matter to one’s identity? In what ways is one’s personality altered based on their family role? *(4-6 sentences)*

PART III: Watch each TV show clip and study the birth order that is represented by the characters. Based on your knowledge of birth order and its effect on personality and identity, answer the questions below thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Clip 1 — *Friends*; Ross and Monica Gellar are siblings who have very different relationships with their parents. Ross is the oldest, Monica is the youngest.

What seems to be the role of both Ross and Monica in their family? What conflict does each of them have? What is their relationship with their parents?

Describe both Ross's and Monica's personalities as related to their birth order. Use specific examples to help you explain.

Clip 2 — *The Brady Bunch*; Jan Brady is the 4th child of 6 children, the 2nd oldest girl. She falls in the middle of all her siblings.

What seems to be the role of Jan in her family? What conflict does she have? What is her relationship with her parents?

Describe Jan's personality as related to her birth order. Use specific examples to help you explain.

Clip 3 — *The Cosby Show*; Rudy Huxtable is the youngest child of 5 siblings; all girls with just one boy. This makes her the baby of the group.

What seems to be the role of Rudy in her family? What conflict does she have? What is her relationship with her parents?

Describe Rudy's personality as related to her birth order. Use specific examples to help you explain.
