

## Does your sib ever frustrate you? How?

Even though she is older than me, she gets away with things that I would get blamed for because "I know better." And it frustrates me when she doesn't understand the reason behind things that we have to do. She wants to do her own thing and gets upset when she can't. —Kristin S., 19, Virginia

I think everyone gets frustrated with their sibling at one time or another, whether they admit it or not. But when Adrienne does get on my nerves, I can't stay frustrated for long! She has the ability to make anyone smile. —Lauren O., 16, Georgia

All the time. He can be very stubborn and argumentative. He doesn't like to change his behavior and it can be really annoying to argue with him about the same things every day. —Amanda M., 19, Washington State

I get frustrated during the summer because my family and I cannot go to the beach. It is too hard to push Monica's wheelchair through the sand. —Martha P., 13, Connecticut

I get irritated when we argue and she refuses to see logic and rationale in my flawless and utterly reasonable points of view ;) and frustrated when she seemingly doesn't make an effort to include herself in social situations, when she is obstinate, sulky and when she pulls the "I'm a teenager and I'm here to annoy you" line. —Jenna H., 17, N.S.W

I do get frustrated—not at him, but at the situation—when I don't understand what he is trying to tell me. He gets frustrated too and I feel bad for him and then he throws a fit and I know he's hurting inside. —Rebekah C., 17, California

I know he is smart and he can talk really well when he wants to—but sometimes my mom babies him or he acts so lazy. And sometimes he gets mad at my parents and takes his anger out on me, just because he doesn't really know any better. —Jill B., 18, Florida

I often have to answer the same question over and over to get Stephen to understand. Overall, though, he is more of a blessing than an annoyance. —Kevin T., 14, Virginia

It bugs me when Dylan can't do something without help, like making himself something to eat. It seems like he always needs help with something, and it just bugs me sometimes. —Alisa, 18

All the time—but God knows how many times I must frustrate him. Especially with his yelling and his constant playing of video games (which he always turns up very loud, since he can't hear). Sometimes the frustration is nonstop. —Allison S., 17, Connecticut

Many times, Emily wants to express herself but can't; as a result, she will burst into tears and sometimes get violent. This is hard for her and for me, too. I long to know what Emily wants to tell me about. What secrets does she hold?  
—Monica R., 15, Massachusetts

When he has his mind on something, he has to do it and won't give up. It's especially frustrating when he's doing something dangerous and you can't get him to stop. —Kayla L., 13, Arizona

Of course, but Jared, my brother without special needs, frustrates me too! Everyone gets frustrated or embarrassed, but I like to turn those moments into learning experiences. Yeah, sometimes Scott acts weird in public or is impatient, but I try to move on and love him for who he is.  
—Carly H., 17, Georgia

My brother sometimes comes into my room and messes things up or takes something from my desk—even though we ask him over and over to not go into my room.  
—Emily I., 15, Washington State

My sib screams a lot. Once, on the way to the movies, she started screaming. I tried to ignore her and my dad told me to pat her stomach. I did that for a little while and she kept on screaming. When we pulled into the parking lot, my dad lectured me on how inconsiderate I was being. My head was throbbing, my sib was still screaming, and I just wanted to scream at her to shut up.  
—Catherine C., 13, California

Often! The most frustrating thing is when she hits me I can't fight back to defend myself. Most normal siblings fight but they both understand the consequences. I have to control myself and not hit her back. —Emily N., 17, Oregon

My brother acts out a lot, and he can become aggressive, which is really frustrating. I try to give him chances to socialize but all he wants to do is play computer and it makes me crazy. I constantly have to defend him from bullies, but he never tries to improve the situation himself.  
—Miri L., 16, Illinois

Grant always seems to frustrate me one way or another. At dinner, he likes to copy me by drinking from his glass at the same time I do. Hey, after a while it gets on your nerves!  
—Brooke W., 13, Virginia

Who doesn't? But I usually become frustrated with Jackie when I am frustrated about something else. It is a sibling thing. —Emily D., 18, Virginia

He sometimes expects me to do anything he wants, but when I can't because of homework, he gets mad. I feel bad, but I'm also frustrated because I want him to understand that I don't have the time.  
—Emily J., 14, Colorado

Oh yeah! She can't communicate as well as we'd like her to, and whines for things she wants until she has them. Sometimes, it's hard to figure out what she wants, even if it's only juice! —Lindsay K., 15, California

My sibs frustrate me when they ask me to do things they can do on their own—such as getting a drink of water or washing their hands or telling me they have to go to the bathroom. It just gets really old!  
—Kate F., 13, Wisconsin.

My sib frustrates me when he won't walk. He loves being outside, but when it's time to come in he becomes a "limp noodle" and it seems impossible to get him in the house.  
—Cassandra W., 15, Iowa

Oh yes! She can't give herself a bath, so that is usually my job. Every night I can't just sit down and relax because I have to bathe her and it's kind of weird giving someone my own age a bath. I can't do what I want to do because I have to take care of her, like right now I have to go give her a bath and stop answering questions. —Anna H., 15, North Carolina

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She gets away with lots of things that my parents feel she can't help doing—like making loud noises at the dinner table, pulling people's hair, and making messes. And if I do something by mistake (like spilling something), I get in trouble, told that I'm too clumsy, and need to pay more attention.

It annoys me when I get yelled at for things my sister gets away with. —Amber C., 13, California

Yes, Matthew has plenty of times. Since he is deaf, it is hard to make him understand certain things sometimes. —Britny G., 16, Missouri

Oh, gosh, all the time! Sometimes he has an attitude. Developmentally, he's going through his adolescent stage and wants some independence. I worry, because I feel like an older sister (when really, I'm younger)... and he thinks I'm being bossy, and gets mad at me, which is always frustrating. —Stephanie B., 16, Maryland

Yes! My sister often carries on about a particular person or event. She becomes obsessed with her helpers and carers, and talks about them constantly, often repeating the same thing over and over and talking about them at times when the conversation is on a completely different topic. She doesn't seem to realise that no one else is as interested in it as she is. —Ariella M., 16, N.S.W.

It is often the little things such as when I try to have a conversation and he tells me to leave him alone. —Michelle M., 15, New Jersey

Sometimes I get frustrated when my sister won't concentrate on homework when my parents or I are trying to help her, and she'll just randomly spit out stupid answers that she knows are wrong. —Sarah S., 18, Pennsylvania

sometimes he can't move fast enough or can't get himself ready fast enough. He needs help getting on his shoes and coat and seatbelt, and sometimes I don't feel like taking care of him when my parents aren't around. —Nora G., 13, Virginia

Sometimes Matthew wants to hang out with me and my friends, but I just want it to be us girls. Sometimes I need time away from him and he doesn't always accept that! —Nicole P., 15, Pennsylvania

My sister is very stubborn and, as my mom says, "has attitude to burn." So these things can get in the way and she can sometimes be hard to work with—but what sibling isn't at times? —Stephie N., 15, Arizona

Yes, my sib likes to push my buttons—he mimics my younger brother and me and enjoys irritating me in public because other people think it's cute, and I hate that! He also does it when my parents aren't around so that he doesn't get in trouble. —Emily P., 13, Indiana

They both frustrate me when I'm getting them ready for school or church. They don't move! And they put their clothes on backwards or won't put them on at all if I don't stand over them. Also, my brother's noises and my cousin's moods frustrate me. He just gets in moods where he behaves very badly—biting and using stupid, repetitive language. —Elizabeth T., 19, Oklahoma

Yes, when she is disobedient and runs away from me  
 —Leah K., 13, Iowa

Sometimes it frustrates me when my sister cries or grinds her teeth (her nervous habit) when I'm trying to get a big assignment done or I'm in a bad mood. I get upset and then feel bad because inside I know that that is her only way to communicate.  
 —Caitlin M., 14, Maryland

Yes, because I feel like sometimes she gets more attention than me and that everyone cares more about her. But in the end, I understand.  
 —Nancy R., 13, California

There are many times when I'll be home watching him, and I'll want to do one thing, while he wants to do another. Of course, I have to do what he wants to make sure he's safe. Or, he'll get in one of his pouty moods. It's very difficult to deal with sometimes. —Katelyn C., 16, Virginia

In more ways than I can count! However, it is not always his fault. It is frustrating because he cannot always express himself. —Alicia F., 17, Illinois.

When I was 13, she used to smooch with her Raggedy Andy doll. I couldn't take that. I would go get my mom and have her tell Janae to stop. Also, Janae moves so slowly. When we walk places together as a family, it takes forever. —Ty H., 17, Washington State

Reader, write where you can!

When Jeremy gets emotional, it bothers me. Sometimes when he's tired or highly stressed he begins to cry and it feels like such a small matter to me and I think "Jeremy, buck up and take it like an adult." I want him to act 19 but I understand that in some ways he is only at the age level of a 7-year-old. This knowledge makes me feel so cornered and trapped. I want him to be expressive, just not in the ways that a 7-year-old would. Although we all cry at times of tension. Maybe Jeremy is just trying to let me know that we're all human. —Lindsay D., 17, North Carolina

When I argue with my parents at the dinner table, David will really want to get in on the conversation, but usually doesn't have anything that would add to either argument. He'll just say something that he feels strongly about, which usually gets me to yell, "That has nothing to do with what we're talking about!" I always feel really bad afterwards, but it is still frustrating. —Katie J., 19, Illinois

Sometimes. She is very stubborn and often wants to have her way. She doesn't always get it, but when she doesn't she gets mad. She also talks a lot sometimes and takes forever to say something. —Megan D., 14, Michigan

When we try to persuade him to do something we know he likes doing but he refuses point blank and complains even when we get there—but he will say at the end that he enjoyed it. —Jemma J., 18, Berkshire

Getting out of class. —Lauren V., 14, Connecticut

# What are some advantages—good parts—of having a sibling with a disability?

I get to meet so many great people, not only people with disabilities, but also people who work with them. My sib's teachers and aides are some of the nicest people I've ever met. They have given us ideas that have helped Keaton and our whole family. They are more than just teachers, though. I can honestly say that they are great friends.  
—Cassandra W., 15, Iowa

You get more clothes because she doesn't care about them. —Lydia Q., 13, Massachusetts

If my sister wasn't a part of my life, I would be so ignorant about people who have disabilities.  
—Margaret C., 14, Illinois

It gives you a different outlook on life. You don't take anything in life for granted. Jeremy helps me to slow down and just take a moment to relax and love life.  
—Lindsay D., 17, North Carolina

If you meet other kids who have sibs with special needs, you'll know what they are going through. —Amy S., 15, Washington State

It makes you more aware of other people's feelings and situations. It makes you more accepting of a wide variety of people and shows you that those with disabilities are just the same as everyone else. It also gives you a curiosity into what "normal" means in a larger sense than just disability. Being a sibling has shown me things that I would never have known otherwise, and I would hate not to know those things and therefore not be the person that I am. —Ariella M., 16, N.S.W.

I learn about patience, understanding, and acceptance. I am surrounded by sincere, generous, and loving people. I am part of a close-knit community. I am different. I get to participate in this book and help others, and the list goes on. I am so the luckiest sister alive.  
—Carly H., 17, Georgia

One thing is that we have a handicap sticker for parking. She also brings happiness to our family.  
—Matt M., 15, Illinois

Reader, write where you can!  
me. —Lauren O., 16, Georgia

You take life more seriously and know that life is a gift from God.  
—Leah K., 13, Iowa

I always look like the good kid next to him. I have also learned so much about patience and compassion from him. —Miri L., 16, Illinois

Having a sister who is such a caring person. Adrienne will be the first to notice when I'm upset and will be the first one to comfort me.

He changed who I was and opened my eyes about life.  
—Alicia F., 17, Illinois.

I have a unique life. No one else can describe how it feels to have a sibling with a disability unless you are a sibling yourself. —Kathryn C., 14, Illinois

It's been such a learning experience and I've met a lot of great people that I can't imagine living my life without. —Kaleigh H., 16, New Hampshire

You don't fight nearly as often, your sib doesn't mind hanging out with you, and you don't have to be perfect around them because they will always love you, no matter what, and will always think you're cool! ☺ —Michelle O., 14, Virginia

You learn a lot about understanding and to value what you have. You also get to do fun activities (such as Camp Easter Seals) that you wouldn't be able to do otherwise. —Kevin T., 14, Virginia

It's opened my eyes to many talents I wouldn't have known I had. It's given me many insights into what a gift it is to be who you are. And it's given me the chance to express opinions on disabilities that I never would have had without my sibs. Plus, my parents put less pressure on me when they have Nathaniel and Sophia to worry about. —Alethea R., 13, Minnesota

The advantages are easy! I'm different from other people because of it, and I'm involved in a world that most people just gawk at.

I think growing up with a sibling who's disabled enables me to have a gratitude for life, and even when I have my ups and downs, to know that everything is going to be alright. —Lindsay K., 15, California

Sounds awful, but we cut everyone in line when at theme parks because of Andrew. —Allison S., 17, Connecticut

I've learned tolerance and respect, traits others may never learn and qualities that I value beyond everything else. —Erin G., 14, Alberta

It has really formed who I am and how I see things—and has exposed me to a world bigger than my own. —Rebekah C., 17, California

You don't have the little brother that picks up and listens to your phone calls, then tattles on you. —Katelyn C., 16, Virginia

Like many other people with Williams syndrome, my brother is really friendly and outgoing, so I have met many people through him I may not have met any other way. Another advantage is that we have gotten to take some pretty fun trips to the Williams syndrome conferences. —Emily I., 15, Washington State

Your world is opened up to many different kinds of people. It really puts things into perspective. Not only have I learned about disabilities from my brother, I've also learned about the world—and even myself. —Michelle D., 16, New Jersey

I think David's made me a better person. —Katie J., 19, Illinois

My sib helps put things in perspective. —Catherine C., 13, California

You become sensitive to other people's needs and more understanding and accepting of people's differences. You also get to be part of special groups like Sibshops. —Christiana R., 13, Wisconsin

It's definitely shaped my values. No matter how selfish it might sound, I'm so thankful that I've grown up with my brother the way he is! —Maggie W., 17, Wisconsin