

3 GRAMMAR

Noun clauses after *be*

A noun clause is a part of a sentence with a subject and a predicate that functions as a noun. *That* is optional in noun clauses after *be*. Also notice the prepositions followed by gerunds in the first part of the sentences.

The only trouble **with** being a two-income family is **(that)** we don't spend as much time together.

The big advantage **of** having Grandma at home is **(that)** she can babysit more often.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 107

A Look at the Starting Point on page 6 again. Can you find the noun clause in the last paragraph? Which preposition is used in the first part of the sentence?

B Combine the sentences. Then compare answers with a partner.

- I'm the youngest in the family. The nice thing is I get a lot of attention.
The nice thing about being the youngest in the family is that I get a lot of attention.
- I have a younger sister. The trouble is she always wants to borrow my clothes.
- I'm away at college. The bad part is that I miss my family.
- I work at night. The worst thing is I can't have dinner with my family.
- I'm the oldest in the family. One bad thing is that I always have to babysit.

C Complete the sentences with your own ideas. Then compare answers with a partner.

- An advantage of being a twin is . . .
that you always have someone to hang out with.
- A problem with being an only child is . . .
- One benefit of being the oldest is . . .
- A big disadvantage of having an older sibling is . . .
- The best thing about having a big family is . . .



4 DISCUSSION

Family matters

A Choose at least three questions you'd like to talk about with your group.

- What's the best thing about spending time with your family? What's the worst thing?
- What's one advantage of having a close family?
- What are some rules that people have to follow in your family?
- What's a benefit of having strict parents?
- Are you most likely to confide in a parent, a sibling, or a friend?
- Do you believe mothers and fathers should do the same chores?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a two-income family?

B Group work Discuss the questions you chose in part A. Ask follow-up questions and make sure everyone in your group participates.

1B Noun clauses after *be*

The downside of, the upside of, the hard part about, the good thing about, the only thing about, the trick to, the secret to, and one difficulty with are used in complex phrases that introduce noun clauses after *be*.

The downside of sharing a bedroom is (that) it's hard to have any privacy.

The hard part about being a twin is (that) people are always calling you by the wrong name.

The trick to living in a crowded house is (that) you have to find a private space of your own.

One difficulty with being the youngest is (that) everyone is always telling you what to do.

The phrases ending with a preposition can be followed by a gerund phrase, *not* + a gerund phrase, or a noun phrase.

The secret to **getting along with your siblings** is (that) you have to respect their privacy.

The good thing about **not being in a big family** is (that) you always get to choose what's on TV.

The upside of **a large family** is (that) you always have someone to spend time with.

The only thing about **working moms** is (that) they have less time to spend with you.

1 Complete the sentences with *about, of, with, or to*.

- The best thing about my grandmother living with us is that she's a great cook.
- The upside _____ being a two-income family is we can afford a few small luxuries.
- One difficulty _____ living with my in-laws is that they want everything their way.
- The trick _____ living in a large family is you have to learn to respect each other.
- The hard part _____ strict parents is you always have to remember the rules.
- The problem _____ not going to our family reunion is I won't see my cousins.

2 Rewrite the sentences. Change the noun phrases in boldface to gerund phrases.

- The trouble with **a big family** is it's expensive to feed everyone.
The trouble with having a big family is it's expensive to feed everyone.
- The trick to **a two-income family** is you have to schedule family time together.
- The hard part about **a big house** is there's so much work to do.
- The upside of **a big house** is no one has to share a room.
- The only bad thing about **little brothers** is I always have to babysit them.
- One good thing about **little sisters** is they really look up to you.
- One problem with **an extended family** is we had to get a bigger car.
- The greatest thing about **a small house** is the bills are a lot lower.

Conversation (3)

I'm not really into

I love on the weekends.

After dinner, I usually feel like

I worry about more and more these days.

My parents insist on

The great thing about being a student is

One disadvantage of being single is

The best thing about online education is

The biggest problem with online education is

The best thing about is