Family Ties...

a World Apart

What makes a family in Moscow different from a family in Beijing?  
And what makes it the same? No matter where you come from,  
family is the cradle of life and love, the place where you feel special, secure and accepted.  
Let's take an inside look at the lives of six teens from around the world as we see  
how special events, cultural traditions and family bonds all play a part in shaping the unique structure and lifestyle of each of I their families

I am an only child because, in 1979, the government in my  
country introduced a one-child-per-family policy to control China's  
population explosion. In the countryside, several generations often  
live under one roof! ln urban areas, however, housing is small and  
can only accommodate a nuclear family, so I live with just my  
parents. All my relations live close by. We care for and help each  
other and spend a lot of time together. Family honour is very  
 important in Chinese society, as is respect for your elders.’

Cheung, 16

I am an only child and I live with my parents and my grandma,  
or 'babushka' as we say here in Russia. My grandpa passed away  
last year so Babushka left her house in the country to come and  
live with us here in the city. When I was young I lived with my  
grandparents at their dacha and in many ways they were like  
parents to me. I don't see my parents as much as I would like, as  
they work long hours. Still, we've learnt to make the most of  
our time together, so there's never a dull moment in our house!'

Natasha**,** 15

Parents both come from large families, but in ours there's  
just my brother and I. Although the birth rate has dropped a lot  
here in recent years, family still takes priority. My parents make  
feel special. We can express ourselves openly and have our  
 opinions listened to. We have lots of family celebrations and we  
often share Sunday lunch with my grandparents, aunts, uncles  
and cousins. Meal times are really important to us, as they are  
to most Italians. After dinner, we often dress up and go out for a *passeggiata,* or evening stroll.

Sylvia*,* 19

'My parents are separated, so my sister and I live with our mum. We spend most weekends at our father's place though, as our parents think it is important that they both remain a big part of our lives. I don't see much of either of my grandparents as they live in different cities. I am very

close to my maternal grandmother though, and I speak to  
her on the phone a lot.'

Thomas. 17

'My family is the centre of my life. Family hierarchy is very  
important in Jordan and the young show respect to the old  
at all times. Getting married and having a family is a top  
priority for me. My marriage will probably be arranged by  
my father, which is quite common here. I have a large family  
and my house is often full of relatives visiting us. Indeed,  
the concept of privacy is alien to us Jordanians!

Aalia, 17

The Japanese, believe that the strength and support of   
the family is essential for reaching your full potential in  
life. Like all Japanese children, I was taught to obey  
authority and to be very polite, as poor behaviour would  
reflect badly on my family. Being a parent is considered a  
very important role. My sister and brother-in-law have  
just had their first child, so they have started calling each  
other *'Otoosan'* and *'Okaasan'* (Father and Mother)  
instead of their first names. This is very common here!'

Takumi, 18