



## Families

In our Ojibwe language when we talk about our relatives, it is always in relation to somebody. For instance, when we use the term “nookomis” what we are saying is “my grandmother.” “Gookomis” is your grandmother. In our area, there is no word for “a grandmother.” These relationships are expressed in our language and cannot be said without indicating the relationship. (This may not be true in all places that Ojibwe is spoken, but it is true for those of us in Minnesota.)

The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary describes this as:

There is no simple independent word for **grandmother**. A personal prefix or a suffix goes with the dependent noun stem **l=ookomis-** *grandmother* to make a full word:

- **nookomis** *my grandmother*
- **gookomis** *your grandmother*
- **ookomisan** *h/ grandmother*

The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/gookomis-nad>

Our extended families are of equal importance as our immediate families. Additional family relationships that are of high importance are our clan relationships and those of our namesakes. When we share a clan with someone, that is considered a family relationship. We’enh, the familiar term for a namesake, is taken from niyaw’enh. Niyaw is “my body.” Niyaw’enh demonstrates the closeness of this relationship expressed through language.

There are many words to describe our relatives. These are just a few.

<b>Nookomis, Nimaamaanaan*</b>	My grandmother, My (our) grandmother
<b>Gookomis</b>	Your grandmother
<b>Ookomisan</b>	His/her grandmother
<b>Gookomisinaan</b>	Our grandmother, (also used to refer to the earth and the moon)
<b>Nimaamaa* or Ninga</b>	My mother
<b>Gimaamaa* or Giga</b>	Your Mother
<b>Omaamaaya*n or Ogiin</b>	His/her mother
<b>Imbaabaa*, indeed* or noos</b>	my father
<b>Gibaabaa*, gidede*, or goos</b>	your father
<b>Obaabaayan. Odedeyan, oosan</b>	his/her father
<b>nisayenh</b>	my older brother
<b>gisayenh</b>	your older brother
<b>osayenyan</b>	his/her older brother
<b>nishiime</b>	my younger sister or brother
<b>gishiime</b>	your younger sister or brother
<b>Oshiimeyan</b>	his/her younger sister or brother
<b>nimisenh</b>	my older sister
<b>gimisenh</b>	your older sister
<b>omisenyan</b>	his/her older sister
<b>nimishoomis, nimbaabaanaan*</b>	my grandfather, my (our) grandfather



<b>gimishoomis</b>	your grandfather
<b>omishoomisan</b>	his/her grandfather
<b>Gibaabaayinaan</b>	Our Grandfather
<b>nimbaabaayens*</b>	my uncle
<b>gibaabaayens*</b>	your uncle
<b>obaabaayensan*</b>	his/her uncle
<b>nimaamaayens*</b>	my auntie
<b>gimaamaayens*</b>	your auntie
<b>omaamaayensan*</b>	his/her auntie
<b>nizhishenh</b>	my uncle
<b>gizhishenh</b>	your uncle
<b>ozhishenyan</b>	his/her uncle
<b>nimishoome</b>	my stepfather; my uncle (my father's brother)
<b>gimishoome</b>	your uncle (your father's brother); your stepfather
<b>omishoomeyan</b>	his/her uncle (his father's brother); h/ stepfather
<b>nizigos or inzigos</b>	my aunt (my father's sister)
<b>gizigos</b>	your aunt (your father's sister)
<b>ozigosan</b>	his/her aunt (his father's sister)
<b>ninoshenh</b>	my stepmother; my aunt (my mother's sister)
<b>ginoshenh</b>	your aunt (your mother's sister); your stepmother
<b>onoshenyan</b>	his/her aunt (his mother's sister); his/her stepmother
<b>Niniijaanis</b>	my child
<b>Giniijaanis</b>	your child
<b>oniijaanisan</b>	his/her child
<b>ningozis</b>	my son
<b>gigozis</b>	your son
<b>ogozisan</b>	his/her son
<b>nindaanis</b>	my daughter
<b>gidaanis</b>	your daughter
<b>odaanisan</b>	his/her daughter
<b>noozis</b>	my grandchild
<b>goozhishenh</b>	your grandchild
<b>oozhishenyan</b>	his/her grandchild

Check out links for these words on the Ojibwe People's Dictionary, the entries from <http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu> with GH or LW by them are of speakers from Inger.

For more on our family relationships, check out the Family Names episode from KOJB's language show <https://beta.prx.org/stories/152311>.

\*Some of our common phrases demonstrate some influences from other languages.

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