



Phrases for Families

Sometimes learning to read and write Ojibwemowin can be tricky. Most publications these days use the double vowel way of writing. This writing system uses many of the same letters that you will find in English, but they may make different sounds.

Here are some helpful hints for reading and writing in the double vowel writing system. Simply use the sound found in the English word to read the Ojibwemowin. For example, use the sound found at the end of **café** to read Ojibwe**e**. Try it out yourself!

a	namadabi	about
aa	aagim	father
e	Ojibwe	café
i	ikwe	sit
ii	biinichige	seen
o	Ojibwe	okay
oo	goon	soup
g	giin	good
'	a'aw	uh oh
j	jaanzh	jeep
nh	baaka'aakwenh banajaanh abinoojiinh oonh	nasal sound with no english equivalent,

For more help with pronunciation, check out the entries from fluent first speakers in the Ojibwe People's Dictionary. Those with LW or GH beside them have audio links from speakers from Inger.

<http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about/voices>

For more about the double vowel writing system, check out the online Ojibwe People's Dictionary.

<http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language>



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When you add “gi (or gid if the action word begins with a vowel)” to an **action word**, and leave off any final “o” or “i” as necessary, you create a sentence that translates as “you **action**.” So, gi + **wiisini**, drop the i off the end = **giwiisin** = you eat. You can use many action words this way to create useful phrases.

Try it out!

Here are some ideas you can use:

gwayakochige	s/he is doing things perfectly*
gizhewaadizi	s/he is kind
minochige	s/he does good things
aadizooke	s/he tells a traditional story
minotaagozi	s/he sounds good

gi (insert **action word** here) (drop i or o ending if necessary)

gwayakochige	Add gi-, (no o or i to drop)	Gigwayakochige.	You do things perfectly.
gizhewaadizi	Add gi-, drop i	Gigizhewaadiz.	You are kind.
minochige	Add gi-, (no o or i to drop)	Giminochige.	You do good things.
aadizooke	Add gid-, (no or or i to drop)	Gidaadizooke.	You tell a traditional story.
minotaagozi	Add gi-, drop i	Giminotaagoz.	You sound good.

*These translations are attempting to convey the ideas in the language and not literal translations.



Phrases for Families

Adding “ina” or “na” as the second spot in a sentence creates a yes or no question, i.e. “Mashi na gibakade” = “Are you hungry yet?” You can insert “ina” or “na” into most sentences to turn them into yes or no questions.

Try it out!

Here are some ideas you can use:

Gimino-ayaa.	You are doing well.*
Gidaa-wiidookoon.	I could/should help you.
Gidaa-wiidookaw.	You should help me.
Gidaa-wiidookawaa azhigwa.	You should help her now.
Gigii-poogid.	You farted.
Mino-giizhigad noongom.	It is a good day today.

Add the question:

Gimino-ayaa na .	Are you doing well?
Gidaa-wiidookoon ina .	Should I help you?
Gidaa-wiidookaw ina .	Could you help me?
Gidaa-wiidookawaa na azhigwa.	Could you help him or her now?
Gigii-poogid ina .	Did you fart?
Mino-giizhigad ina noongom?	Is it a good day today?

*Translations are to convey the ideas and not literal meanings



Ojibwemowin Resources

Ojibwe Peoples Dictionary: <http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>

An online dictionary with many entries. There are often links to audio files to help with pronunciation, including entries by local speakers.

Ojibwe Stories: Gaganoodidaa : <https://www.prx.org/series/33038-ojibwe-stories-gaganoodidaa>

Radio interviews with Ojibwe speakers, including two first speakers from Inger.

Ojibwemowin: Learning the Ojibwe Language: <https://www.prx.org/series/33120-the-ojibwemowin-learning-the-ojibwe-language>

Access archived language lessons from KOJB.

Oshkaabewis Native Journal: <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/airc/journal/history-and-back-issues/>

Access archived copies and the audio files of the Oshkaabewis Native Journal online.

Fond du Lac Anishinaabe Lessons: <https://www.fdlrez.com/ojibwe/lessons.htm>

Language videos featuring Inger first language speakers.



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Adding “gidaa” to an action word (leaving out any single letter “o” or “i” off the end of word as necessary) translates to “you should/could/would + (action)” i.e., Gidaa-**wiisin** = you should/could/would eat (depending on context). You can insert many action words into this pattern to create useful sentences.

Try it out!

Here are some words you can try:

biindige	S/he is coming in
namadabi	S/he is sitting
niimi	S/he dances
bimose	S/he walks
odamino	S/he plays

Gidaa- (insert action word here) (drop any o or i ending)

biindige	Add Gidaa-, (no o or i ending to drop)	Gidaa- biindige .	You could come in.
namadabi	Add Gidaa-, drop i ending	Gidaa- namadab .	You should sit.
niimi	Add Gidaa-, drop i ending	Gidaa- niim .	You should dance.
bimose	Add Gidaa-, (no o or i ending to drop)	Gidaa- bimose .	You should walk.
odamino	Add Gidaa-, drop o ending	Gidaa- odamin .	You could play.

*Translations are to convey the ideas and not literal meanings



Phrases for Families

More strategies for incorporating more Ojibwe into your day.

Use what you know.

Take advantage of the Ojibwe words and phrases you already know by incorporating them every day.

Replace common phrases.

Examine your everyday speech and look for new phrases you can use to replace English with Ojibwe.

Concentrate on one topic.

Build new phrases around one topic such as mealtimes or weather.

Try it out!

Here are some words you probably already know that you could use every day:

Boozhoo	Hello
Miigwech	Thank you
Giga-waabamin	I'll see you.

Here are some words you could use to replace things you say every day:

Onizhishin	That is nice. (could be used for "good job")
Maamakaaj!	Amazing
Gidaa-wiidoonaw ina?	Could you help me?