

This article appeared in the FamilySearch.org website:

<https://familysearch.org/blog/en/cousins-removed/>



In the English language, there are specific terms to describe the relationships between people of the same generation, meaning people who are the same number of generations from a common ancestor.

- Siblings share a common parent
- Cousins share a common grandparent
- Second cousins share a common great grandparent
- Third cousins share a common second great grandparent
- Fourth cousins share a common third great grandparent
- Fifth cousins share a common fourth great grandparent

Common Ancestor	Relationship
5th great grandparents	6th cousins
4th great grandparents	5th cousins
3rd great grandparents	4th cousins
2nd great grandparents	3rd cousins
great grandparents	2nd cousins
grandparents	cousins

parents

siblings

What happens when you share a common ancestor but are not in the same generation? You define your relationship by determining the total number of generations that you are removed from your cousin and then combine it with your cousin relationship. Sound confusing? Let's see it in action.

Henry and Charlotte share a common ancestor, Eleanor. Eleanor is Charlotte's 6th great grandmother (or great great great great great great grandmother) and is Henry's 2nd great grandmother. How are they related? Let's look at in the form of a table.

Eleanor		Relationship
5th great grandparent	great grandparent	Siblings
4th great grandparent	grandparent	1st cousins
3rd great grandparent	parent	2nd cousins
2nd great grandparent	Henry	3rd cousins
great grandparent	children	4th cousins
grandparent	grandchildren	5th cousins
parent	great grandchildren	6th cousins
Charlotte	2nd great grandchildren	7th cousins

To put it a different way:

- Charlotte's 6th great grandmother is Henry's 2nd great grandmother
- Charlotte's 5th great grandparent is the sibling of Henry's great grandparent
- Charlotte's 4th great grandparent is the cousin of Henry's grandparent
- Charlotte's 3rd great grandparent is the 2nd cousin of Henry's parent
- Charlotte's 2nd great grandparent is Henry's 3rd cousin
- Charlotte's great grandparent is the 4th cousin of Henry's children
- Charlotte's grandparent is the 5th cousin of Henry's grandchildren
- Charlotte's parent is the 6th cousin of Henry's great grandchildren
- Charlotte is the 7th cousin of Henry's 2nd great grandchildren

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Now that we see it visually, we can quickly determine the relationship between Henry and Charlotte. First, figure out the cousin relationship between Henry and Charlotte's ancestor of the same generation. In this case Henry is the 3rd cousin of Charlotte's 2nd great grandmother. Next, count the number of generations between Charlotte and her 2nd great grandmother (or between Charlotte and Henry) which is four. This is the number of generations one cousin is removed from the other cousin. Finally, combine the two numbers. This means that Henry and Charlotte are third cousins four times removed.

Try it on your own.

- William and Catherine are related through a common ancestor, Stewart. Stewart is Catherine's 3rd great grandfather. Stewart is also William's 8th great grandfather. How are William and Catherine related?
- Myrtle is also related to Stewart. She is Stewart's 5th great granddaughter. How are Myrtle and William related? How are Myrtle and Catherine related?
- John is also related but through Stewart's grandfather, James. How is John related to Stewart, William, Catherine, Myrtle?
- Try it with someone in your own family.

Remember my work friend who everyone thought I looked like? She and I sat down, diagrammed our ancestors, and came to the conclusion that we were fourth cousins once removed.

Ancestor		Child	Grandchild	Great
grandchild	2nd			
great				
grandchild	3rd			
great				
grandchild	4th			
great				
grandchild	5th			
great				
grandchild				
Child	Siblings	Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/				
Nephew				
Great				
Aunt/Uncle				
Niece/				

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Nephew	2nd Great
Aunt/Uncle	
Niece/	
Nephew	3rd Great
Aunt/Uncle	
Niece/	
Nephew	
4th great	
Aunt/Uncle	
Niece/	
Nephew	
5th great	
Aunt/Uncle	
Niece/	
Nephew	

Grandchild	Aunt/Uncle
Niece/	
Nephew	
Cousin	

first cousin, one time removed
first cousin, two times removed
first cousin, three times removed
first

Great	
grandchild	Great
Aunt/Uncle	
Niece/	
Nephew	

first cousin, one time removed
2nd cousin
2nd cousin once removed
2nd

twice removed	2nd cousin
three times removed	2nd cousin
four times removed	

2nd
great
grandchild
2nd Great
Aunt/Uncle
Niece/
Nephew
first cousin, two times removed
once removed
twice removed
3rd cousin
three times removed
3rd

2nd cousin once removed
3rd cousin
3rd cousin

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great		
grandchild		
3rd Great		
Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/		
Nephew		
first cousin, three times removed	2nd cousin	
twice removed	3rd cousin	
once removed	4th cousin	4th cousin
once removed	4th cousin	
twice removed		

4th		
great		
grandchild		
4th great		
Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/		
Nephew		
first cousin, four times removed	2nd cousin	
three times removed	3rd cousin	
twice removed		
4th cousin		
once removed	5th cousin	5th cousin
once removed		

5th		
great		
grandchild		
5th great		
Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/		
Nephew	first cousin, five times removed	2nd cousin
four times removed	3rd cousin	
three times removed		
4th cousin		
twice removed	5th cousin	
once removed	6th cousin	

6th		
great		
grandchild		
6th great		
Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/		
Nephew		
first cousin, six times removed	2nd cousin	
five times removed	3rd cousin	

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four times removed	4th cousin	
three times removed	5th cousin	
twice removed	6th cousin	
once removed		
7th		
great		
grandchild		
7th great		
Aunt/Uncle		
Niece/		
Nephew	first cousin, seven times removed	2nd cousin
six times removed	3rd cousin	
five times removed	4th cousin	
four times removed	5th cousin	
three times removed	6th cousin	
twice removed		