

Counting Cousins

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Hi all. I'm just starting to learn how to count cousins to figure relationship, so I thought I would share what I've learned. There are actually quite a few articles on the subject online and at the bottom of the page are links to these articles. Well, here we go...

Although there are charts and diagrams available to use in helping to determine the degree of a relationship between to people, I often forget where I put them when I need them. Probably the easiest solution I've seen for figuring out the relationship between cousins is simply to count the "Gs." I can see you saying to yourself right now, "Huh?"

What this means is to count every "g" from the grandparent back. If two people share and connect with their grandparents, "Grandparents" is 1 "g" so that makes them first cousins. If two people share and connect at their great grandparents, "Great Grandparents" is 2 "gs" so that makes them second cousins. If these two people connect at their great-great-grandparents, that makes them 3rd cousins. See the formula now?

Here is an example, using myself:

I am a descendant of David Bradford of Cabarrus County. David is my great great great great grandfather. His son James is my great great great grandfather. His son John is my great great grandfather. His son Harry is my great grandfather. His son Fred is my grandfather, then my father, then me. Last year, at school, I met a cousin descended from David as well, but our connection ends with James. We are both the same generations away from James so this is fairly easy to figure out (see below for "removed" cousins). Since James is our great-great-great grandfather, that makes us 4th cousins, not that close.

So now you're asking, "What the heck is a 1st cousin once removed?" This formula is a little bit more complicated. I think the easiest way to do this is determine the common ancestor. After that is done, figure out which person is closest in the number of generations, and by how many generations (grandparents, great grandparents, etc.). This determines the degree of cousin-hood (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). To determine how many times removed, you need to determine the second person's generational gap (great grandparents, great great grandparents) and subtract the difference: person 2 is the great grandson (2Gs) - person 1 is the granddaughter (1G), the difference is 1 so that makes you once removed. So, let's put these together to figure out how I'm related to my cousin's father (who I have not yet met).

Steve (my cousin's father) is the same generation as my father, so that makes him the great great grandson of James, while I'm still the great-great-great granddaughter of James. Since Steve is closer in generations, that makes us 3rd cousins. Then we subtract 4Gs (me) from 3Gs (Steve) and we get 1, so that that makes Steve and I 3rd cousins once removed.

Let's try something a little easier. Mindy and I are descended from the same grandparents, 1G, so that makes us first cousins, but what is my relationship to her children? Frederick Eugene Wilder and Opal May Coventry are my grandparents and their great grandparents. This means we are still first cousins, but 2 (Mindy's kids) minus 1 (me) is 1 so we are once removed.

Boy, I hope I can remember this. It sure is complicated to figure out cousin connections, and math is not my forte. Have I confused you yet??

Below are some links on the subject that might help you more than I have. Good luck everyone!

- [Rhonda's Tips - scroll down the page](#)
- [Counting Cousins Diagram - give yourself a visual!](#)
- [A Helpful Chart](#)
- [Church of England's chart](#)
- [This one is confusing for me, but someone else may find it helpful](#)