SO

SOMALI LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 5 · Your Family

Somali Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 5 · Talking About Your Family

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Your Family — Qoyskaaga

By the end of this chapter you will be able to name your close relatives, say who you have and who you don't, and ask someone about their family. Respellings use CAPITALS as a rough guide to stress; c, x and q stay as themselves (see Chapter 1). ***Please read the Not Yet Verified box at the end.***

💬 Six Conversations — Wada hadal

① Is Your Family Big? — Qoyskaagu ma weyn yahay?

A:

Qoyskaagu ma weyn yahay?

qoys-KAA-goo mah wayn yah-HAY?

Is your family big?

B:

Haa, waa weyn yahay. Adiguna?

HAA, waa wayn yah-HAY. ah-dee-GOO-nah?

Yes, it's big. And yours?

A:

Maya, waa yar yahay.

MAH-yah, waa yahr yah-HAY.

No, it's small.

② Brothers and Sisters — Walaalo

A:

Walaalo ma leedahay?

wah-LAA-lo mah lee-dah-HAY?

Do you have brothers or sisters?

B:

Haa, waxaan leeyahay hal walaal iyo hal walaalo dumar ah.

HAA, wah-XAAN lee-yah-HAY hahl wah-LAAL EE-yo hahl wah-LAA-lo DOO-mahr ah.

Yes, I have one brother and one sister.

A:

Magacyadoodu waa maxay?

mah-gah-CYAH-doo-doo waa mah-XAY?

What are their names?

B:

Walaalkay waa Cumar, walaashayna waa Sahra.

wah-LAAL-kay waa COO-mahr, wah-LAA-shay-nah waa SAH-rah.

My brother is Omar, and my sister is Sahra.

③ My Parents — Waalidkay

A:

Hooyadaa maxay ka shaqeysaa?

hoh-yah-DAA mah-XAY kah shah-qay-SAA?

What does your mother do?

B:

Hooyaday waa macallimad.

hoh-yah-DAY waa mah-cahl-li-MAHD.

My mother is a teacher.

A:

Aabbahaana?

AAB-bah-HAA-nah?

And your father?

B:

Aabbahay waa dhakhtar.

AAB-bah-HAY waa DHAHKH-tahr.

My father is a doctor.

④ Are You Married? — Ma guursatay?

A:

Ma guursatay?

mah GOOR-sah-tay?

Are you married?

B:

Haa, waan guursaday. Laba carruur ah baan leeyahay.

HAA, waan GOOR-sah-day. LAH-bah cah-ROOR ah baan lee-yah-HAY.

Yes, I'm married. I have two children.

A:

Maashaa Allaah!

maa-SHAA al-LAAH!

How lovely! (said when praising)

⑤ No, I Don't — Maya, ma lihi

A:

Carruur ma leedahay?

cah-ROOR mah lee-dah-HAY?

Do you have children?

B:

Maya, carruur ma lihi. Laakiin bisad baan leeyahay.

MAH-yah, cah-ROOR mah LEE-hee. laa-KEEN BEE-sahd baan lee-yah-HAY.

No, I have no children. But I have a cat.

⑥ Who Is This? — Kani waa kuma?

A:

Sawirkan, kani waa kuma?

sah-WEER-kahn, KAH-nee waa KOO-mah?

In this photo, who is this?

B:

Kani waa adeerkay, tanina waa habaryartay.

KAH-nee waa ah-DEER-kay, TAH-nee-nah waa hah-bahr-YAHR-tay.

This is my uncle (father's brother), and this is my aunt (mother's sister).

🔑 Key Phrases — Weedho muhiim ah

Somali has no separate polite "you", so the columns show a fuller and a shorter or related wording.

MEANING	PHRASE	ALSO USEFUL
Do you have ...?	**... ma leedahay?** *mah lee-dah-HAY*	**Imisa ... ayaad leedahay?** (how many?) *ee-MEE-sah ... ah-YAAD lee-dah-HAY*
I have ...	**Waxaan leeyahay ...** *wah-XAAN lee-yah-HAY*	**... baan leeyahay.** *baan lee-yah-HAY*
I don't have ...	**... ma lihi.** *mah LEE-hee*	**Waxba ma lihi.** (I have nothing) *WAHX-bah mah LEE-hee*
This is my ...	**Kani waa ...** (male) *KAH-nee waa*	**Tani waa ...** (female) *TAH-nee waa*

🔤 Three Verbs — Saddex fal

leh (to have), jecel (to love, to like) and joog (to live, stay: revision from Chapter 2). Somali often uses leh and jecel with the "to be" endings you met in Chapter 2, which is why they look alike.

WHO	LEH (HAVE)	JECEL (LOVE)	JOOG (LIVE)
I: *waxaan*	**leeyahay** *lee-yah-HAY*	**jeclahay** *jeh-clah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*
you: *waxaad*	**leedahay** *lee-dah-HAY*	**jeceshahay** *jeh-cesh-ah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*
he: *wuxuu*	**leeyahay** *lee-yah-HAY*	**jecel yahay** *jeh-CEL yah-HAY*	**joogaa** *joh-GAA*
she: *waxay*	**leedahay** *lee-dah-HAY*	**jeceshahay** *jeh-cesh-ah-HAY*	**joogtaa** *johg-TAA*

WHO	LEH (HAVE)	JECEL (LOVE)	JOOG (LIVE)
we: *waxaan*	leenahay *lee-nah-HAY*	jecelnahay *jeh-cel-nah-HAY*	joognaa *johg-NAA*
you all: *waxaad*	leedihiin *lee-dee-HEEN*	jeceshihiin *jeh-cesh-ee-HEEN*	joogtaan *johg-TAAN*
they: *waxay*	leeyihiin *lee-yee-HEEN*	jecel yihiin *jeh-CEL yee-HEEN*	joogaan *joh-GAAN*

🧬 My, Your, His, Her — Relatives

*In Chapter 2, "my name" was magacayga. Close relatives often take **shorter** endings.*

RELATIVE	MY	YOUR	HIS	HER
mother	hooyaday	hooyadaa	hooyadiis	hooyadeed
father	aabbahay	aabbahaa	aabbihiis	aabbaheed
brother	walaalkay	walaalkaa	walaalkiis	walaalkeed
sister	walaashay	walaashaa	walaashiis	walaasheed

> **One Word for Brother and Sister**
>
> *Walaal* covers both. The ending tells you which: *walaalka* is the brother, *walaasha* the sister. To be clear without "the", you can add *rag ah* (male) or *dumar ah* (female). When **speaking to** a brother or sister, you may hear *abboowe* and *abbaayo*; the source I read gives age meanings for these that I could not confirm.

🌳 Mother's Side, Father's Side — Reer hooyo, reer aabbe

English "uncle" and "aunt" are not enough: Somali asks which side.

RELATIVE	FATHER'S SIDE	MOTHER'S SIDE
uncle	**adeer** *ah-DEER*	**abti** *AHB-ti*
aunt	**eeddo** *EED-do*	**habaryar** *hah-bahr-YAHR*
grandfather	**awoowe** *ah-WOH-weh*	**awoowe**
grandmother	**ayeeyo** *ah-YAY-yo*	**ayeeyo**

The side for uncles and aunts follows Preply. For grandparents, Preply puts these two words on the father's side and gives habar for the maternal grandmother; from general knowledge ayeeyo and awoowe are used for both sides, so I have shown them that way.

Family and Clan

Family ties often reach much further than the English “immediate family”, and clan identity matters to many people. It can also be a very sensitive subject after years of conflict, so **do not ask someone's clan**. General knowledge, not checked.

Somaliland and Djibouti

I found no source showing different family words in Somaliland or Djibouti, so none are marked as such.

📖 Vocabulary — Ereyada

20 key words. Nouns are shown with their “the” ending.

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	**qoyska**	*QOYS-kah*	the family	noun (m)
2	**waalidka**	*WAA-lid-kah*	the parent(s)	noun (m)

#	SOMALI	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
3	**hooyada**	*HOH-yah-dah*	the mother	noun (f)
4	**aabbaha**	*AAB-bah-hah*	the father	noun (m)
5	**wiilka**	*WEEL-kah*	the son, boy	noun (m)
6	**gabadha**	*gah-BAH-dhah*	the daughter, girl	noun (f)
7	**carruurta**	*cah-ROOR-tah*	the children	noun
8	**walaalka**	*wah-LAAL-kah*	the brother	noun (m)
9	**walaasha**	*wah-LAA-shah*	the sister	noun (f)
10	**xaaska**	*XAAS-kah*	the wife	noun (m)
11	**sayga**	*SAY-gah*	the husband	noun (m)
12	**awoowaha**	*ah-WOH-wah-hah*	the grandfather	noun (m)
13	**ayeeyada**	*ah-YAY-yah-dah*	the grandmother	noun (f)
14	**sawirka**	*sah-WEER-kah*	the picture, photo	noun (m)
15	**bisadda**	*bee-SAHD-dah*	the cat	noun (f)
16	**leh**	*leh*	to have	verb
17	**jecel**	*jeh-CEL*	to love, like	verb
18	**guurso**	*GOOR-so*	to marry	verb
19	**weyn**	*wayn*	big	adj
20	**laakiin**	*laa-KEEN*	but	joining word

✍️ Try It Yourself — Layliyo

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask someone if they have children.

▼ Show answer

Carruur ma leedahay?

2. Say “I have two children”.

▼ Show answer

Laba carruur ah baan leeyahay.

3. Say “my mother is a teacher”.

▼ Show answer

Hooyaday waa macallimad.

4. Which word is your mother's brother, and which your father's brother?

▼ Show answer

abti (mother's) · **adeer** (father's)

5. Say “his sister” and “her brother”.

▼ Show answer

walaashiis · **walaalkeed**

6. Say “we love our family” (*qoyskeenna* = our family).

▼ Show answer

Qoyskeenna waan jecelnahay.

Not Yet Verified

Checked against one page (Preply, Family members in Somali, read 2026-11-25): *qoys, hooyo, aabe, waalid, ilmaha, wiil, gabar, xaas, say, walaal, adeer, abti, eedo, habaryar, awoowe, ayeeyo* and the sentences *Hooyaday waa macallimad* and *Aabahay waa dhakhtar*. That page has some internal inconsistencies, and it spells some words differently from this chapter (*aabe, eedo*). A

search summary of other lesson pages listed several of the same words.

Not checked, from general knowledge: the whole of *leh* and *jecel* (the source has no use of *leh* at all), the possessive table apart from the two “my” forms above, the rest of the dialogs and key phrases, *rag ah / dumar ah*, the grandparent choice, the clan note, the other vocabulary, and every respelling and stress mark. No textbook, dictionary or native speaker was consulted. **Please have a Somali speaker check this chapter before you rely on it.**

Sources for This Chapter

Preply, Family members in Somali.

Coming Up in Chapter 6

Your job: jobs and workplaces, and **Maxaad ka shaqeysaa?** (“What do you work at?”).