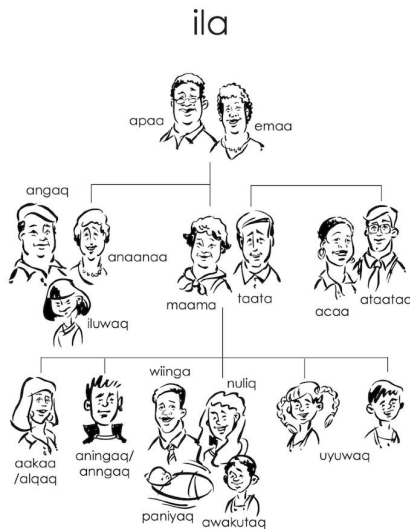


Cousin — Iluwaq

AMLESQANEK ILUWANGQ'RTUA. – I HAVE MANY COUSINS.



Graphic: Alutiiq terms for family members. Courtesy of the Alutiiq Picture Dictionary.

relationship is as strong as that of a sibling.

The term cousin can be applied to a confusing array of relatives. In American society, a cousin is any child of an aunt or an uncle. However, cultures around the world differentiate between types of cousins, especially parallel and cross cousins.

Parallel cousins are the offspring of your parents' same-sex siblings. In other words, they are your mother's sisters' children or your father's brothers' children. Cross cousins are the opposite. They are the offspring of your parents' opposite-sex siblings—your mother's brother's children or your father's sister's children.

This distinction between cousins is particularly important in matrilineal societies—those that trace kinship through women like the Tlingit or the Athapaskan. Here, children inherit family ties from their mothers. In these societies, parallel cousins are treated like siblings and cross cousins as more distant relatives.

Although the Alutiiq people are generally thought to have a bilateral kinship system, where descent is traced equally through mothers and fathers, there are hints of an older, matrilineal system based on the treatment of cousins. Among the Chugach Alutiiq, for example, marriage to a parallel cousin was forbidden as parallel cousins were considered siblings.

Today, cousins are close family members in Alutiiq communities. From fishing boats to tribal councils, cousins often live, work, and serve together. In part, this reflects the small size of Alutiiq communities. However, it also shows the deep ties between cousins. For many, the cousin