

INTERMEDIARY
BOOK 6

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Disclaimer

Some of the educational materials in this language program have been edited, adapted, and modified from their original form to ensure compatibility with the local dialect.

Verbs

There are two main features of Ojibwe verbs, which affect their inflections transitivity and animacy.

Transitivity.

Take a look at these examples:

- 1) I walk, you go, he is standing, we are living;
- 2) It works, it rains, it is shining, it is falling;
- 3) I see him, you hear me, he knows us, I remember you;
- 4) I see it, you hear it, he knows it, I remember it.

Can you see the difference between the first two and the last two lines?

Verbs in the last two lines are used with words him, me, us, you, it. These words are called objects. Objects could be also nouns: I see a boat, you hear a bird, he knows John. Such verbs which can take objects are called transitive verbs. Verbs in the first two lines can't take objects (just logically) - these are intransitive verbs, they have only subjects (those, who are doing actions are called subjects.)

In English it is not vital to know if a verb is transitive or intransitive. In Ojibwe it is. In English you can say: I eat, I eat it, I know, I know him, I know it. We use the same verbs both with and without objects. We just don't care about it.

In Ojibwe if a verb is intransitive, you can't use an object with it. At all. If you need to add an object, or if you talk about an object even without naming it, you have to use an appropriate transitive verb:

wiisini - eat (intransitive verb)

niwiisin - I eat

niwiisin opin - I eat potato - incorrect phrase; opin is an object, you can't use intransitive verb with it.

nindamwaa - I eat him/her (transitive verb)

nindamwaa opin - I eat potato - correct phrase; transitive verb is used with the object. (potato is animate noun in Ojibwe - he)

nindamwaa opin



Animacy

The second thing which affects Ojibwe verbs is **animacy**. To know the gender of nouns you use with verbs is also vital. For intransitive verbs with animate subjects (subjects which are animate nouns) you need to use animate intransitive verbs:

niwiisin - I eat (without saying what you eat);

(n)indagaashiinh - I'm small;

ninibaa - I sleep.

With inanimate subjects you need to use inanimate intransitive verbs:

gimiwan - it is raining;

bangishimo - it is sunset;

agaasaa - it is small.

soogiboni - it is snowing

mizaa- it is big

Transitive verbs are also affected by animacy. But for transitive verbs you need to know the gender of an object. If you need to add an animate object you need to use an animate transitive verb:

niwaabamaa - I-see-him/her (=i see him, or i see her)

niwaabamaa nimaamaa - I-see-him/her my-mother (=i see mymother)

(n)indamwaa opin - I-eat-him/her potato (=i eat potato)

And if you need to add an inanimate object, you need an inanimate transitive verb:

niwaabandaan - I-see-it (=I see it)

niwaabandaan waakaa'igan - I-see-it house (=I see a house)

nimiijin wiyaas - I-eat-it meat (=I eat meat)

So once again:

wiisini - eat (intransitive verb)

niwiisin - I eat

niwiisin opin - I eat potato – incorrect

opiniig is an object, you can't use intransitive verb with it.

nindamwaa - I eat him/her (animate transitive verb)

nindamwaa opin - I eat potato - correct phrase; transitive verb is used with the object. (potato is animate noun in Ojibwe - he) animate transitive verb is used with animate noun.

niwiisin manoomin - i eat wild rice - incorrect

manoomin is an object, you can't use intransitive verb with it.

nindamwaa manoomin - i eat wild rice - incorrect

manoomin is not alive, it is it, not he, so you can't use i eat him/her verb with it.

nimiijin - I eat it (inanimate transitive verb)

nimiijin manoomin - i eat wild rice - correct phrase;

transitive verb is used with the object. inanimate transitive verb is used with inanimate noun.

That's why there are four verb categories in Ojibwe:

Verbs animate intransitive (vai)

Niwáabamaa nimaamaa - I see my mom

Verbs inanimate intransitive (vii)

Nindawaa opin - I eat potatoes

Verbs transitive animate (vta)

Nindamwaa - I eat him/her

Verbs transitive inanimate (vti)

Nimijin manoomin - I eat wild rice

This way there are usually three or four different verbs for the same action in Ojibwe language, belonging to different categories. For example, there are three different verbs 'eat', three different verbs 'know', three different verbs 'see', 'hear', etc.



Verbs animate intransitive (vai)

Verbs animate intransitive (vai) – are used with an animate subject and no object:

wiisini	he eats, he is eating
niminikwe	I drink, I am drinking
aakoziwag	they are sick
baapi	he laughs, he is laughing
gibakade	you (singular) are hungry

Verbs conjugate i.e. change their form depending on person and number.

Personal pronouns are not used in conjugation. Personal prefixes and suffixes (affixes) are used instead:

Affix:

I, me	ni- (verb)
You s.	gi- (verb)
S/he	(verb)
We (exc)	ni- (verb)- min
We (inc)	gi- (verb)- min
You pl	gi- (verb)- m
They	(verb)- wag
4th person singular only them	(verb) waan
4th person plural only them/selves	(verb) wah

The main verb form of Ojibwe verbs is 3d person singular. It means that a verb itself stands in 3d person singular and is translated as: wiisini – (he) eats, minikwe – (he) drinks, etc. That's why in 3d person singular vai verbs don't take affix.

Personal prefixes change slightly depending on the sound following after them:

ni- before w, n, m;

nin- before d, g, j, z, zh;

nim- before b;

nind- before any vowel;

gi- before any consonant;

gid- before any vowel.

Note. In Minnesota subdialects in **nin-**, **nind-**, **nim-** variations of ni- prefix first /n/ is often omitted and prefix looks like **in-**, **ind-**, **im-**. Usually the first /n/ is omitted when a word is standing before the word with this prefix ends in a consonant:

"**Niminwendam,**" **indikid** - I said, "I'm glad." but:

"**Nimino-ayaa,**" **nindikid** - I said, "I'm okay."

Further to the west in Manitoba the first /n/ in the first person prefix is never omitted. But to the east in Michigan and Ontario (Odaawaa dialect) the first person prefix looks like **n-**, **nd-**. They also use long prefixes in this region: **ndoo-** (or **nda-**, **ndi-**.)

wiisini - eats

ni-wiisin I eat
gi-wiisin you eat

izhaa - goes

nind-izhaa I go
gid-izhaa you go

wiisini	s/he eats	izhaa	s/he eats
ni-wiisini-min	we (exc) eat	nind-izhaa-min	we (exc) go
gi-wiisini-min	we (inc) eat	gid-izhaa-min	we (inc) go
gi-wiisini-m	you pl. eat	gid-izhaa-m	you pl. go
wiisini-wag	they eat	izhaa-wag	they go
wiisini-wan	them eat		
wiisini-wah	themselves eat		

Note. If a vai verb ends in a short vowel /i/ or /o/, this vowel will be dropped in 1 and 2 person singulars:

wiisini (he eats) - niwiisin (I eat), giwiisin (you eat)
gawishimo (he lies) - ningawishim (I lie), gigawishim (you lie).

If a vai verb starts with /o/, this vowel will lengthen into /oo/ taking personal prefix:

onjibaa (he is from such a place) - nindooonjibaa (I am from such a place)

Conjugating the Intransitive Verbs

The six verbs given in this lesson are called intransitive verbs because they contain a subject (doer of the action) and the action itself. They have no object; that is, no person receives the action. There is just straight action, or state of being. In the paradigm shown below, we will conjugate only the verbs that end with long vowels. Do not try to conjugate the verbs ending with short vowels because they are treated slightly differently.

Again, this is why it's important to write out the long and short vowels because the grammar depends on it.

Even though the following hyphenated words are single words, they are actually sentences because they have the two main ingredients of a sentence: a subject (do-er) and predicate (action). This is another way that Ojibway is different from English.

nim-biindige

gi-biindige

biindige

nim-biindigemin

gi-biindigemin

gi-biindigem

biindigewag

biindigewaan

biindigewah

ni-giiwe

gi-giiwe

giiwe

ni-giiwemin

gi-giiwemin

gi-giiwem

giiwewag

giiwewaan

giiwewah

I'm entering

you're entering

he/she is entering

we're entering (but not you)

we're entering (including you)

you people are entering

they're entering

them entering

themselves entering

I'm going home

you're going home

he/she's going home

we're going home (but not you)

we're going home (including you)

you people are going home

they're going home

them going home

themselves going home



Verb Tenses

There are only three tenses in Ojibwe: Present, Past and Future.

Present Tense is used to express actions which happen in present, or now, or actions just past. Present tense never used to express future actions in Ojibwe. Present tense doesn't have any tense prefix.

Past Tense expresses past actions, which happened longer time ago than just now. Past tense forms by adding the past tense prefix /**gii-**/. The past tense prefix stands after personal prefixes:

wiisini - eats

nin- gii -wiisin	I ate
gi- gii -wiisin	you s. ate
gii -wiisini	s/he ate
nin- gii -wiisini-min	we (exc) ate
gi- gii -wiisini-mi	we (inc) ate
gi- gii -wiisanim	you pl. ate
gii -wiisini-wag	they ate
gii -wiisiniwaan	them eat
gii -wiisiniwah	themselves eat

izhaa - goes

nin- gii -izhaa	I went
gi- gii -izhaa	you s. went
gii -izhaa	s/he went
nin- gii -izhaa-min	we (exc) went
gi- gii -izhaa-mi	we (inc) went
gi- gii -izhaa-m	you pl. went
gii -izhaa-wag	they went
gii -izhaawan	them went
gii -izhaawah	themselves went

Future Tense expresses all future actions, even 'future in the past' actions. It is formed in two different ways:

1) Simple future is formed with the prefix **/ga-/** for 1st and 2nd person and with the prefix **/da-/** for 3d person.

2) Future with meaning of wish or want, is formed with the prefix **/wii-/**.

Future with **/wii-/** is usually translated as «want to do something» or «going to do something», and future with **/ga-/** and **/da-/** - as «will (definitely) do»:

wiisini - eats

nin- ga -wiisin	I will eat
gi- ga -wiisin	you s. will eat
da -wiisin	s/he will eat
nin- ga -wiisini-min	we (exc) will eat
gi- ga -wiisin-min	we (inc) will eat
gi- ga -wiisin-min	you pl. will eat
da -wiisin-wag	hey will eat
da -wiisinwan	them will eat
da -wiisiniwah	themselves will eat

wiisini - goes

ni- wii -izhaa	I am going to go
gi- wii -izhaa	you s. are going to go
wii -izhaa	s/he is going to go
ni- wii -izhaa-min	we (exc) are going to go
gi- wii -izhaa-min	we (inc) are going to go
gi- wii -izhaa-m	you pl. are going to go
wii -izhaa-wag	they are going to go
wii -izhaawan	them are going to
wii -izhaawah	themselves are going to

Note. Verb tenses are formed the same way for all verb categories.

Verbs transitive animate (vta)

Verbs transitive animate (vta) – are used with an animate subject and an animate object:

nindamwaa opin – I eat potato (opin/potato (singl) – animate noun)

nindamwaag opiniig – I eat potatoes (opiniig/potatoes (pl))

nimbaabaa niwaabamaa – I see my father

giwaabamaa a'aw ikwe – you (singl) see that woman

niwaabamaanaan a'aw ma'iingan – we (exc) see that wolf

giga-waabamin – see you later (gi-ga-waabam-in – I will see you)

This is the most difficult verb category. Vta verbs change their form depending on both subject and object person and number. Variety of forms could reach some hundreds or more.

There are some examples:

(**waabam** - see someone)

I see myself - **niwaabamidiz**

I see you (singl.) - **giwaabamin**

I see him/her - **niwaabamaa**

I see you (pl.) - **giwaabaminim**

I see them - **niwaabamaag**

you (singl.) see me - **giwaabam**

you(singl.) see yourself - **giwaabamidiz**

you(singl.) see him/her - **giwaabamaa**

you(singl.) see us - **giwaabamimin**

you (singl.) see them - **giwaabamag**

s/he sees me - **niwaabamig**

s/he sees you (singl.) - **giwaabamig**

s/he sees himself/herself - **waabamidizo**

s/he sees another one - **owaabamaan**

s/he sees us (excl.) - **niwaabamigoonaan**

s/he sees us (incl.) - **giwaabamigoonaan**

s/he sees you (pl.) - **giwaabamigoowaa**

s/he sees them - **owaabamaan**



Verbs transitive inanimate (vti)

Verbs transitive inanimate (vti) – are used with an animate subject and an inanimate object:

nimiijiin wiiyaas – I eat meat (wiiyaas/meat – inanimate noun)

giwaabandaan o'ow jiimaan – you see that boat

niwaabandaamin o'ow jiimaan – we (exc) see that boat

niwaabandaanan iniw jiimaan – I see those boats

Vti verb conjugation depends on subject person and number and on object number.

There are two classes of vti verbs depending on a verb stem ending, consonant (class 1) or vowel (class 2). Suffixes for these two classes differ slightly:

(**waaband** - see something)

I see it - **niwaabandaan**

you (single) see it - **giwaabandaan**

s/he sees it - **owaabandaan**

we (excl.) see it - **niwaabandaamin**

we (incl.) see it - **giwaabandaanim**

you (pl.) see it - **giwaabandaanaawaa**

they see it - **owaabandaanaawaa**

Verbs inanimate intransitive (vii)

Verbs inanimate intransitive (vii) – are used with an inanimate subject and no object:

waawiyeyaa – it is round

waabishkaa – it is white

michaa – it is big

inaande – it is of such color

bizhishigwaa – it is empty

Note. To these verbs suffix /-magad/ could be added, it has no special sense and doesn't change the sense of the verb:

waawiyeyaa-magad – it is round

inaande-magad – it is of such color

Vii verbs have much less forms, than verbs of other categories:

michaa - it is big

michaawan - they (inanimate) are big

Among vii verbs there are also so called "weather" verbs:

gimiwan - rain, it is raining

zoogipon - snow, it is snowing

zaagaate - sunny, it is sunny

gizhaate - hot, it is hot

gisinaa - cold, it is cold

noodin - wind, it is windy

waaban – dawn

gii-gimiwan bijiinaago – it rained yesterday.

da-zaagaate waabang – it will be sunny tomorrow.

Obviative

Obviative is a grammatical category, which deals with the second third person. It affects nouns as well as verbs.

First of all let's start with what specialists in Ojibwe language say about obviative:

"Ojibwe distinguish between two third persons in a sentence or a narrative by means of a mechanism called obviation. In the sentence **John saw Fred**, for example, there are two third persons - **John and Fred**. When a sentence contains two third persons in this kind of grammatical relationship, one of them is seen as the main one and is called **proximate** (as if it were somehow closer to the interest of the speaker) and the other one is seen as secondary and is called obviative. The **obviative** noun takes on an obviative inflectional suffix that distinguishes it from the unmarked proximate third person.

When two third persons perform the same grammatical function - for example, when they are jointly the subject or the object of a verb - they are both proximate or obviative, depending on their relationship to the other animate third person in the sentence...

Once a particular third person has been marked as obviative,.. all the words that agree with it have an obviative inflection. Similarly, all words that agree with the proximate noun have a proximate inflection

"Lots of languages distinguish their third person forms according to different criteria that don't apply to first and second person forms. Think about English - you have "I" and "you" and these are used without regard to the sexual gender of the speaker, right? In other words, there's no difference in the use of "I" as to whether the speaker is male or female. But think about third person -- here you have to choose a gender-specific pronoun, "he" or "she". Well Ojibwe doesn't work this way - you never have to choose a specific pronoun based on sexual gender - but Ojibwe has a different system, so-called third and fourth person - now here's how this works - a speaker chooses a particular third person to be prominent in a particular span of discourse -- the third person, and all other non-1st, 2nd persons are then made secondary, so-called obviative [fourth-person] (this is as fundamental to Ojibwe as "he" and "she" is to English." (this is an explanation written by Randolph Valentine in First-Ojibwe Forum.) Simpler the meaning of obviative could be explained as a need to distinguish between two third persons in a statement.

Examples of an obviative

Nimaamaa o taanison niimiwan (singular)

My mother's daughter is dancing

Nimaamaa o taanisah niimiwah (plural)

My mother's daughters are dancing

The reason for such need is that Ojibwe has a very flexible word order. It means that almost every word can take almost every place in a statement. In English we say "John saw Fred"; in Ojibwe it is possible to say "John saw Fred", "Fred saw John", "John Fred saw", "Fred John saw", "Saw John Fred", and "Saw Fred John"; and all with the same meaning - "John saw Fred". Nouns can freely circulate around verbs. Usually it makes no mess because Ojibwe verbs contain information about all persons involved in the action. Phrases look like 'John i-see-you', or 'i-see-you John'. But when there are two third persons verbs look like 'he-sees-him' and it's impossible to say who sees and who is seen, with such a word order. That's why obviative is in need and that's why it affects only third persons and only animate third persons, when both of them are he or she.

nimbaabaa onoondawaan ma'iingan

my father hears the wolf

nimbaabaa ma'iingan onoondawaan

my father hears the wolf

nimbaabaayan onoondawaan ma'iingan

wolf hears my father

onoondawaan nimaabaayan ma'iingan

wolf hears my father

Note. The most preferred Ojibwe word order in the second sentence however would be:

nimbaabaa owaabamigoon ma'iingan

my father is heard by the wolf.

My father here is preferred to be proximate third person. And it creates necessity to use verb in passive voice. Using passive voice to make the proximate third person (of a narrative) proximate in any case is usual in Ojibwe language. It is considered better to use passive voice if needed, than make changes between chosen proximate and obviative persons in a narrative depending on who is performing the action.

There is another situation (besides 'he-sees-him') in Ojibwe when two third persons are involved into statement and obviation is needed. These are animate nouns in possessive form, that belong to possessors standing in third person (that belong to him, her, or them). It's considered that the possessor is the main, proximate third person, even if it doesn't appear in the statement, so these nouns must appear in obviative form, as well as all their verbs and pronouns.

Paul omaamaayan jiibaakwewan

Paul's mother is cooking.

osayeyan bimosewan

his older brother is walking.

Nouns in obviative take special suffixes. Noun obviative suffix is **/-an/**, or **/-n, -yan, -wan/**.

Demonstrative animate pronouns are not used with nouns in obviative. With nouns in obviative are used only plural inanimate demonstrative pronouns regardless to real number.

nisaye a'aw - that is my older brother (a'aw - 'that' animate)

gisaye a'aw - that is your older brother

osayeyan iniw - that is his older brother

(iniw - 'that' animate obviative, or 'those' inanimate plural)

Verb Order or Form

Every verb in Ojibwe can appear in three orders, sometimes called verb forms. Each of those orders has its own set of paradigms:

Independent order, or A form is used in simple sentences and in main clauses of complex sentences.

zaaga'iganing nindizhaa

I go to the lake.

adaawewigamigong gidizhaa

you (single) go to the store.

ogii-waabamaawaan gimaaamaayan

they saw your mother (obv.)

Conjunct order, or B form is used in subordinate clauses of complex sentences and in content questions.

giwii-odamin ishkwaaw-wiisiniyan

you (singl) will play after eating (= after you eat)

gishpin gimiwang waabang, gaawiin niwii-izhaasii

adaawewigamigong

if it is raining tomorrow, I won't go to the store.

aaniin ezhi-bimaabiziyan?

how are things? (=how are you living?)

aandii ezhaayan?

where are you going?

Besides usual **B form**, or **plain conjunct**, there is also **B form with an initial vowel change**, also called **changed conjunct**, and so called **C form**, or **participle**.

Two variants of B form are used in different types of subordinate clauses. Changed conjunct is also used in content questions.

aaniin pii gaa-ni-maajaa?

when did he leave?

Difference in using between these two B forms appears because of the difference in their meanings. Though in different communities plain conjunct could be used in cases where in other communities changed conjunct is used and vice versa.

B form without initial vowel change (plain conjunct) has hypothetical meaning, it describes something that haven't happen yet, and you don't know for sure if it happens. It is very often preceded with the word 'when' in translation, or at least 'when' could be easily placed before it without any real change of its meaning.

giishpin gimiwanzinook noongom, giwii-babaamosemin mitigwaakiing

if it doesn't rain today, we will go for a walk to the forest.

B form with an initial vowel change (changed conjunct) has a 'real' meaning. Verbs in it describe real situations, not just 'if' or 'when'. In translations it is usually preceded with words: 'because', 'while', 'even though', 'whenever', 'in order to'.

Aanawi waa-gimiwang noongom, giwii-babaamosemin mitigwaakiing - even though it rains today, we will go for a walk to the forest.

Participle, or C form is a verb form which is used instead of a noun, naming an object. Participles also often work as English adjectives, qualifying nouns (sharing this role with preverbs). Since almost all equivalents of English adjectives are verbs in Ojibwe, combining with nouns to qualify them, they often turn into participles:

Niwaabamaa a'aw memengwaa mekawaadizid.

I see that beautiful butterfly.

Participle answers the question "who?", or "what?" The correct sense of it could be translated as "someone/something, who/which is doing smth", or "someone/something, who/which is smth":

Niwaabamaag degoshingig.

I see those who arrived.

Participles are very widely used in Ojibwe. Besides nouns there are also some names for people, objects, animals, e.g., "gekinoo'amaaged" (teacher), gekinoo'amaawind" (student), "bemisemagak" (airplane), "detebised" (wheel), etc., which are used as nouns, but in fact are participles and are inflected as verbs not nouns:

gekinoo'amaaged - he who is a teacher

gekinoo'amaageyaan - I who am a teacher

gekinoo'amaageyan - you (singl.) who are a teacher, etc.

Imperative order is a form of a verb which is used to give commands.

biindigen - enter!

zaaga'an - go out!

izhaadaa - let's go!

There are three kinds of imperative in Ojibwe, or three **modes of imperative** - immediate imperative, delayed imperative, and prohibitive imperative.

Immediate imperative is used to give commands which must be executed immediately.

biidoon i'iw mazina'igan - you (singl.) bring that book!

biidooyok iniw mazina'iganan - you (pl.) bring those books!

Delayed imperative expresses commands, which must be executed in some future time.

wiisinikan - eat later! (to singl.)

wiisinikeg - eat later! (to pl.)

Prohibitive imperative expresses prohibitive 'don't do' commands.

gego zaaga'nken - don't go outside! (to singl.)

gego zaaga'ankegon! - don't go outside! (to pl.)

gego doodangen - don't do it! (to singl.)

Note. To say the truth, not only Imperative has three modes, but both Independent and Conjunct Orders also have set of modes: neutral, or indicative mode (usual mode used most often), preterit mode, dubitative mode, and dubitative-preterit mode. And each of those modes has its own paradigm set. In these short notes we encounter only neutral (indicative) mode of the Independent and Conjunct Orders.

Examples of the Imperative Mode:

Singular

Pimosee(n)

Walk (sg)

Plural

Pimosee(k)

Walk (pl)

Speaker

Pimusee(tá)

Let's walk

Nagamó(n)

Sing (sg)

Nagamook

Sing (pl)

Nagamootá

Let's sing

Negative Imperative:

Singular

Keego nagamookeen

don't sing

Plural

Keego nagamookeek

don't sing you people

"Yes/no" Questions and Negations

"Yes/no" questions, which need "yes" or "no" answer are formed using special question marker - a word **ina** or **na**. It always stands after the first word in questions:

giwiisin ina?

are you eating?

giminikwe na?

are you drinking?

ginamadab ina?

are you sitting?

gigii-anokii na bijiinaago?

did you work yesterday?

giwii-izhaa na adaawewigamigong waabang?

will you go to the store tomorrow?

Negations are formed with a word **gaawiin** – «no, not» and a negative suffix /-sii/ or /-zii/ for vai and vta, /-siin/ or /-ziin/ for vti and vta, /-sinoon/ or /-zinoon/ for vii. A consonant in a suffix depends on a stem ending - 's' after a vowel and 'z' after a consonant:

gaawiin niwiisinisii

I'm not eating

gaawiin niminikwesii

I'm not drinking

gaawiin ningii-anokiisii bijiinaago

I didn't work yesterday

gaawiin niwii-izhaasii adaawewigamigong waabang

I won't go to the store tomorrow

Negative suffix is added at the end of a verb in singular. But in plural it is usually put before plural suffix for vai verbs or between singular and plural parts of a suffix of vti's and vta's:

gaawiin wiisini-sii-wag
they are not eating

gaawiin niwaaband-an-ziin
I don't see it

gaawiin niwaaband-an-ziin-an
I don't see them

gaawiin niwaabam-aa-sii
I don't see him

gaawiin niwaabam-aa-siin-aan
we (exc) don't see him



Content Questions

Content questions are questions with words: who, what, when, where, why, etc. These questions are formed in a different way than "yes/no" questions. Verbs in these questions stand in B form (or conjunct order).

Initial vowel change in B form (changed conjunct) occurs in this case:

*/a/ becomes /e/,
/aa/ becomes /ayaa/,
/e/ becomes /aye/,
/i/ becomes /e/,
/ii/ becomes /aa/,
/o/ becomes /we/,
/oo/ becomes /waa/,
/ji/ becomes /ge/,
/ga/ becomes /ge/.*

Note. Though B form with an initial vowel change is used in different regions usually in the same cases, it could be formed differently in different subdialects. This rule of an initial vowel change occurs in its complete form only in Minnesota Ojibwe. In other subdialects it is very much reduced and often replaced with other grammatical changes (preverbs e-, gaa-, etc.)

Initial vowel change affects also past and future tense prefixes: **/gii-/** changes into **/gaa-/**, **/ga-/** into **/ge-/**, and **/wii-/** into **/waa-/**. Initial vowel change affects the first syllable of a verb, making no difference of what this first syllable actually is - tense prefix, preverb or a verb itself.

aaniin ezhinikaazoyan?

what is your name (how are you called)?

aaniin ezhinikaazod? –

what is his/her name (how is s/he called)?

aandi ezhaayan?

where are you s. going?

aaniish pii gaa-dagoshing?

when did s/he arrive?

aaniin

what, how

aandi

where

aandi onji

where from

aniish pii

when

In answers A form (independent order) is used:

aaniin ezhinikaazoyan? – ojiig nindizhinikaaz

what is your name? – my name is Marten

aaniish pii gaa-dagoshinan? – ningii-dagoshin bijiinaago

when did you s. arrive? – I arrived yesterday

Note. Questions with 'where'

In Ojibwe verbs can contain so called relative roots, which **always** show initial vowel change in B form. **lzhi-** and **onji-** are most often used examples of such roots. These roots force initial vowel change of a verb in B form.

Questions with **'where'** (despite other wh-questions) don't need initial vowel change in a verb (B form without initial vowel change is used there). But in these questions mostly verbs with relative roots are used. So initial vowel change occurs in where-questions very often. Though it is not a grammatical rule for where-questions, but a result of using words with relative roots.

Note. Questions with 'when'

In different Ojibwe dialects different B forms are sometimes used in these questions. E.g. changed conjunct is used in Manitoba Ojibwe and Odawa, but at least in several Minnesota communities plain conjunct is used in this case.

**Can you
identify
the verbs in
this story?**

Bizhiw

Ningoding isa giiwenh, ayindaagoban bizhiw.

Mii imaa endazhi-nandawenjiged, anooji gegoon onitooon -
waaboozoon binewan gaye zhiishiiban gaye ningoding
onisaan.

Ningoding idash ogii-odisigoon wiiji-bizhiwan, mii dash
enajimotaagod: "Bezhiig wajiw iwidi ayaamagad, giishkaabikaa,
geget sa gichi-onizhishin inaabing waasa aki debaabaminaag-
wad. Nashke izhaan ga-waabandaan."

"Enh', ningad-izhaa," ikido a'aw bizhiw.

Mii dash wayaabang gii-maajaad bizhiw.

Apii dash gaa-zaagajiwed mii iw gii-waabandang waasa aki
debinaagwadinig.

Mii dash gaa-izhi-onabid inaabid, bekish niiskiingwenid.

Mii sa ekoozid.



The Lynx

Now, once on a time, they say, there used to live a Lynx.

There at the place where he hunted, every kind of things he killed, - hares and ruffed grouse and ducks he sometimes killed.

Now, once he was visited by a fellow-Lynx. And this was what he was told: "There is a mountain off yonder, it has steep sides, and truly a very fine view of distant country can be seen. Better go and see it."

"Yes, I will go," said Lynx.

And so on the morrow away started Lynx.

And when he came out upon the mountain, he thereupon saw afar the country that could be seen at a distance.



