

GSSCC - - DNA Special Interest group - - handout

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

Using MyHeritage DNA - - autosomal DNA results

Note - - This handout will deal only with the DNA portion of the MyHeritage site. The handout was prepared by a person who subscribes to MyHeritage, as well as having transferred raw DNA data to MyHeritage. The home page may look different for MyHeritage DNA users who do not also subscribe to MyHeritage. This handout assumes that MyHeritage DNA customers who have transferred their DNA data from another company have also paid the fee to unlock all of the tools available at MyHeritage DNA.

Good bang for your buck - - Whether you use the MyHeritage DNA test directly, or upload your raw DNA data from another site to MyHeritage for free, you can - - and should - - link a tree to your MyHeritage DNA results. This is most easily done by uploading a GEDcom of your tree from another DNA site or from your personal family tree software. We also recommend that you pay the modest fee to unlock all the DNA analytical tools at MyHeritage. The fee is currently \$29.00. This will enable you to get the most out of your MyHeritage matches. There is an excellent blog post by Diahan Southard about the benefits derived by paying \$29.00. Find that blog post at: <https://www.yourdnaguide.com/ydgblog/myheritage-dna-advanced-tools-worth-29-unlock-fee> - - and be sure to read the comments and Diahan's responses at the bottom of the post.

If you choose to order a MyHeritage kit, click on the DNA tab at the top of the MyHeritage home page and choose "Order DNA kits" from the drop-down menu. The regular cost of a MyHeritage DNA kit is \$91.00, which includes shipping. They sometimes offer substantial discounts, such as the recently expired 40% off deal. If you choose to upload your raw DNA data for free from another company, click on "Upload DNA data" in the drop-down DNA menu, and follow the easy-to-understand instructions.

Fish for DNA matches beyond the U.S. - - One of the advantages of having your DNA results at MyHeritage is that many more European DNA testers use MyHeritage than they do AncestryDNA. If your ancestors are relatively recent immigrants to North America, you may find many useful matches among the test-takers at MyHeritage. It usually takes a few days after transfer for matches to begin showing up.

Learn more about MyHeritage - - There are a number of free recorded webinars about various aspects of MyHeritage and MyHeritage DNA at Legacy Family Tree Webinars, found at: <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/?free=1>. At the bottom of the page, click on "View more" to see the entire list of free webinars.

Your linked family tree - - Click on the “Family Tree” tab, then click on “My family tree” to see the tree that you have linked to your DNA results at MyHeritage. Look for the purple DNA icon in the upper right-hand corner of your name in the tree - - it confirms that your tree is linked to your DNA results. Because I am a MyHeritage subscriber, I have small green and brown icons on many of the individuals in my tree. I’m not sure if these icons show in the trees of DNA-only users of MyHeritage. The green icon indicates you have “Smart Matches” in your tree that are identical to ancestors in other people’s trees. The brown icon indicates that there is a historical record match that may be relevant to your ancestor. When you look at your tree, or the tree of one of your DNA matches, you can view the tree in pedigree view, family view, fan chart view, or as an alphabetical list. The default is pedigree view.

Navigating the DNA tab - - From the DNA tab at the top of the MyHeritage home page, you can click on “Overview” to access your ethnicity estimate, DNA matches and DNA tools. Think of the Overview as a way to access these categories by way of a table of contents. You can also access your ethnicity estimate, DNA matches, and DNA tools directly from the DNA tab at the top of the MyHeritage home page.

Ethnicity estimate - - An abridged version of your ethnicity estimate shows at the top of the Overview page. Click on “View full estimate” to bring up a page that shows all your ethnic origins and genetic groups, as well as maps for that information. Click on one of your ethnic origin groups to bring up a thumbnail history of that ethnic group, and a short list of DNA matches who have that same ethnic group. Click on “See all DNA matches” to get a list of the hundreds of people at MyHeritage who share your same ethnic group. If you click on the music note icon, you are treated to a mysterious snippet of music [music, I assume, that is supposedly traditional to that ethnicity?]. Note - - if you have tested at more than one company, do not be surprised if your ethnicity estimate at MyHeritage varies considerably from your ethnicity estimate(s) at one or more of the other DNA testing companies.

Genetic groups - - Lower down on the ethnicity estimate page you will find your genetic groups. Click on one of the groups to see a brief description of the group and where it is found. A map of blurry blobs shows where ancestors in this group came from, and where they settled. Below the description of the group, you will find the number of kits that form the group, the number of kits in the group with trees, and the level of confidence in the assignment of you to the group. Anywhere you find a small “i” inside a circle, you can click on that icon for additional information. At the bottom of the page, you will find a timeline slider. As you slide the timeline bar to earlier, or more recent, positions on the timeline, the blobs on the map change. You have the option to “Play timeline animation” which advances the timeline automatically. The default position for the slider is 1900-1950.

On the left, below the description of the genetic group, you will see various categories of information, including the most likely places to find your ancestors, surnames and given names common to this genetic group, and a list of related groups. Sometimes this information

seems contradictory, when all the surnames listed are Acadian French, for example, but all your top DNA matches in the group are from Germany and the U.K. Click on “Expand all” to access longer lists of information in the various categories. The list of specific places is especially helpful in directing you to specific areas, not just countries, where you ancestors may have been. After expanding the categories in genetic groups, use the timeline slider to show shifts in information in the various categories, including the map, across the centuries.

At the bottom of the information on the left-hand side of a specific genetic group page, you will see a brief list of some of your DNA matches who are also in this genetic group, the number of additional matches in the group, plus a link to see all the matches in the group.

DNA matches - - The default view of your DNA matches is in decreasing order from the people with whom you share the most DNA to the people with whom you share the least amount of DNA. Your DNA matches are displayed in groups of ten. You can see the total number of DNA matches on the upper left side of the list. If you click on the filters icon on the upper right (it looks like a small funnel), you get a list of categories by which you can sort your matches. Those categories include: tree details, relationships, locations, ethnicities, genetic groups and labels. Filtering yields smaller lists of matches.

Tree details and relationships - - Provides the opportunity to sort matches by various subcategories, including those matches with a Theory of Family Relativity (more on that below), with Smart Matches, with shared surname or place, or with a family tree. Using the relationships filter, you can choose to view only close family matches, or only extended family matches, or only distant matches, or all matches. The default is all matches.

Locations and ethnicities - - The locations filter allows you to sort your matches by the country in which they reside. The ethnicities filter allows you to sort your matches not only by the ethnicities that you have in your own ethnicity report, but also to sort by ethnicities of your matches that you may not share - - although I’m not sure just how useful that might be. Note - - you can use filters in combination. For example, you could sort your matches by people who live in Ireland and have linked family trees.

Labeling your matches - - Click on the “labels” filter to create and name a label, which enables you to begin grouping your shared matches into groups representing your ancestral couples. This system is a relatively new feature and is similar to the colored dot system at AncestryDNA. If you use colored dots at both sites, I strongly recommend that you try to use the same colors and names for the same groups from one DNA site to another. You can also use the labels filter to mark favorite DNA matches with a star icon, similarly to what you can do at Ancestry.

Sorting your match display - - At the upper right, you can click on the link entitled “Sort by” in order to sort your matches in different ways. The default is to list your DNA matches in descending order by amount of shared DNA, but you can also sort by number of shared

segments, largest segment, full name, or by most recently added match. If you have already identified most of your matches, sorting by most recent match can be useful for keeping track of new matches. You can also sort your matches by colored dot groups

Other tools on the DNA match page - - Click on the magnifying glass icon to bring up a search box, where you can search by DNA match name and ancestral surname. The search will yield a list of your DNA matches that combines DNA match names with matches who have that ancestral surname in their trees. Obviously, this will only show matches who have linked trees to their DNA results. The three vertical dots on the upper right provide brief additional information under the heading, "What are DNA matches?", and some advanced tools to export your DNA match list or DNA segment information for your matches. This is useful if you decide to prepare a spreadsheet showing the beginning and ending loci for the DNA segments you share with your matches. When you use these advanced options, MyHeritage e-mails the results to you in the form of a zip file. MyHeritage urges caution as the files, once exported, are no longer subject to the privacy and security provisions at MyHeritage.

For each DNA match, you will see several symbols to the left of your match's name. Click on the square box to add that match to a colored dot group you have already created. This is also where you will see any starred matches. The lowest box is for notes. I use the notes field extensively, most often to explain how I connect to my match, or any other information about that match I need to remember. Whenever you add a note to one of your matches, be sure to click "Save" so your note does not disappear. A match without any notes will have a blank white notes box; matches with notes have a solid purple notes box.

Reviewing your matches - - You can see more detail about your match by clicking on the large purple button on the right entitled, "Review DNA Match." This brings up a side-by-side comparison. The colored dot group assignment and notes remain accessible from this view. The amount of shared DNA is prominently displayed, both in centimorgans and as a percentage, as well as a cousin estimate, the number of shared segments, and the length of the longest shared segment of DNA. Below that is a list of other people who match both you and this single shared match. Click on "show more DNA matches" to see a longer list.

Below the shared match list, you will find an ethnicity comparison between you and your selected match. Below the ethnicity comparison is the chromosome browser, which shows the shared DNA in various positions on the different chromosomes. On the shared match list, you can click on the little icon on the right-hand side of some of the people who share DNA with you and your selected match (the icon looks a little like a traffic signal), and that brings up a "one to many" display which shows where you, your selected match, and a third person on the list all have overlapping DNA.

Theory of Family Relativity - - MyHeritage offers a very helpful tool with the Theory of Family Relativity. It is similar to the ThruLines tool at AncestryDNA in that it offers suggestions about how you might connect to your DNA match. The box showing your DNA match's name will indicate if that match has a Theory of Family Relativity. Click on "view theory" to see the clues. The theory is based on shared DNA with your match and with overlap between your tree, your match's tree, often combined with trees of other people who have the same ancestors in their trees. Your own tree is always part of the pieced-together amalgamation of trees. There are often multiple paths or theories, some with higher confidence levels than others. The level of confidence is shown as a percentage underneath the little round green circles where the sections of various trees intersect. You can navigate directly to any tree section right from the graphic. You have the option to "confirm" or "reject" the theory. Confirmation of a theory will show in green print on your match's name on the DNA matches list page. Of course, you must have a tree linked to your DNA data in order to receive theories of family relativity.

DNA tools - - Chromosome Browser - - The chromosome browser enables you to view overlapping DNA segments between you and up to seven DNA matches, which can help you to determine your shared common ancestor and help you assign your matches to groups. Click on "Explore" to access the chromosome browser function. If you and your selected matches share triangulated segments of DNA, those will be shown in a box outline on the chromosome browser. There is a summary of what the browser shows below the graphic. Click on "Advanced options" to download the shared DNA segment data.

Triangulation - - Triangulated segments are segments that all of the selected DNA matches share with each other. This is important for understanding DNA match relationships because triangulated segments are more likely to be inherited from a common ancestor. Triangulation is the foundation of confirming descent from a common ancestor, and thereby assigning a specific DNA segment to that ancestor.

DNA tools - - AutoClusters - - AutoClusters is an automatic tool that organizes your DNA matches into clusters that likely descend from common ancestors. Click on "Explore" to access the AutoClusters page. The page gives an animated example of what you see when you use AutoClusters. Each of the colored cells represents an intersection between two of your matches, meaning that both individuals match you and each other. These cells are grouped together physically and by color to create a visual chart of your shared match clusters. Each color represents one shared match cluster. Members of a cluster match you and most or all of the other cluster members. Click on the purple "Generate" button to utilize the cluster tool. You will receive an e-mail with a zip file for the AutoCluster.

The zip file contains three files - - the cluster graphic, a CSV file that contains a spreadsheet version of the cluster analysis, and a "Read Me" pdf file. For best results, save the contents of the e-mail to your computer then open them on the computer, rather than viewing directly from the e-mail. The exported cluster analysis is no longer subject to the privacy and security provisions at MyHeritage.

DNA tools - - Ethnicities Map - - This tool encourages you to discover the most common ethnicities for each country, and find the top countries for each ethnicity, based on data from MyHeritage DNA users. Click on explore, then click on a country on the map. Make sure you are in the correct region in the top toolbar for the country you choose. If you select United States, you then have the option of selecting a specific state to see the top ethnicities represented by testers from that state. You can also explore this tool using ethnicity rather than country, by clicking on one of the circles on the map that displays under the “by ethnicity” link. Note: Canada is not broken out by province. This tool helps to explain our sometimes mysterious ethnicity estimates.

Viewing other DNA accounts - - If you manage DNA kits for people in addition to yourself at MyHeritage, you can easily access the DNA match list for any of the kits you manage by just clicking on the small arrow to the right of your own name at the top of the DNA match list. Then select the kit you want to work with from the list in the drop-down menu.

Managing other DNA accounts - - If you manage DNA kits for people in addition to yourself at MyHeritage, you can access other portions of their DNA data from the top toolbar, underneath the “DNA” tab. Choose “Manage DNA Kits.” The next page shows the name, type of kit and status. By clicking on the three small dots on the right-hand side for each kit, you can navigate to the ethnicity estimate or the DNA match page for that person. There are also options for reassigning or deleting that kit.

Handy hint - - If you can’t figure out how your match at MyHeritage connects to you, try searching for that DNA match’s name at AncestryDNA, to see if your MyHeritage match is also a match at Ancestry. If so, there may be a larger tree, or other information at Ancestry, that will help you to determine how you connect.