

Determining a DNA Match Connection - - handout

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First steps - - analyze your match

Group your matches using shared matches to a known second or third cousin
Group your matches at every DNA site where your DNA data resides; fish in all the ponds
Review amount of shared cMs and note longest segment and unweighted DNA
Compare amount of shared DNA to potential relationships, using Shared Centimorgan
Project chart and tool

Glean all the information you can from your DNA match's profile
Pay attention to your match's profile photo, if any; your match may use the same photo on
their Facebook page
Review your match's ethnicity estimate; clues may be hidden there
Review your DNA match's linked tree, any unlinked trees, and photo gallery

Next steps - - learn more about your match

Google your DNA match's name to find your match online
Use people-finder sites; court case transcripts; sports pages; social media
Search under full name; maiden name; with and without middle name or initial; nickname
Search under match's user name
Remain alert to possible other given names and nicknames
Use the notes field on your match's page to keep track of your analysis and progress

More strategies - - research family and friends of your match

Use FAN (Family/Friends, Associates, Neighbors) research to zero in on information about
your match
Look for your match and your match's relatives in newspaper articles
Birth/birthday news, marriage/wedding pages, obituaries, are especially helpful
See also society page articles, wedding anniversaries, family reunion news, birthdays
Don't neglect house fires, car accidents, various natural catastrophes; military news
A DNA match whose kit is managed by someone else can pose challenges; identifying your
match's manager can help to identify the match

Additional steps to take

Message your DNA match, or the manager of your match's kit
Review your match's tree, if any; be sure to look at all the unlinked trees on your match's
profile page; note how the trees are named

The tree name can be a clue, even if the tree is private and you can't see it
Look at any comments associated with individuals in your match's tree. Reminder:
comments are public; notes are private
Search your own tree for people named in your match's tree
When your match has a very brief linked or unlinked tree, do genealogy to build out your
match's tree

Look for vital records on Ancestry, FamilySearch, My Heritage to help build your match's
tree

Utilize census records to tie individuals together into families. Reminder: the most
recently-released U. S. federal census is for 1950

Review public member trees at Ancestry to glean clues from the documents and gallery
items attached to those trees

Review cemetery databases such as Find A Grave and Billion Graves for relatives of your
matches; some local genealogy societies have done cemetery transcripts for their respective
counties

Search newspaper databases such as Newspapers.com; Genealogy Bank; Old News at
MyHeritage; Chronicling America at the Library of Congress

Be sure to look at news items pertaining to divorces, property transfers and probates
Piece together information from a wide variety of sources - - use multiple people-finder
sites; online obituaries; social media sites; school websites

Use Ancestry® Pro Tools

Select your DNA match and click on shared matches

Filter to show the closest matches to your selected match, and note close family matches to
your selected match

Build a private, non-searchable research tree to plot your match's connections

Do genealogy to cluster your match with other matches

Trace your ancestors' descendants down through the generations to help connect matches

On Ancestry, use Pro Tools Enhanced Shared Matches and ThruLines®

At MyHeritage, use Theory of Family Relativity™, Cousin Finder™ and cM Explainer™

At FamilySearch and Wiki Tree, look for clues on crowd-sourced trees

Build private, non-searchable research trees to organize your shared matches into clusters

Create charts to help visualize family connections

Use third-party DNA sites such as DNA Painter and GEDmatch to help prioritize
relationships

Final steps

Confirm the precise relationship between you and your match; review the relationship on the Shared Centimorgan Project tool

Identify the MRCA (Most Recent Common Ancessor or ancestral couple)

Connect your DNA match to your tree

Update your notes on the DNA match page and tree profile page

Conclusion

You will spend a lot of time building out your ancestors' descendants on your own tree and constructing the network of matches for your DNA match

Because most or all of the related shared matches are living individuals, there will be many challenges in identifying your DNA match and your match's relatives

Mine as much information as you can from your match's profile page; do the same thing for each of your selected match's close relatives

Wait a day or two, and look at the profile again to see what you have missed

Be undaunted!

Resources

Ancestry.com - \$; Ancestry Pro Tools - \$; Ancestry Library Edition - free access to records

<https://www.ancestry.com/>

FamilySearch.org - free, requires registration

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/>

MyHeritage.com - \$

<https://www.myheritage.com/>

WikiTree - free

<https://www.wikitree.com/>

Billion Graves - free

<https://billiongraves.com/>

Find A Grave - free

<https://www.findagrave.com/>

Drawio - free

<https://www.drawio.com/>

Lucid Chart - free and \$

<https://www.lucidchart.com/pages>

Chronicling America at Library of Congress - free

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/>

Genealogy Bank - \$

<https://www.genealogybank.com/>

Newspapers.com - \$, free through Santa Cruz Public Library webpage for library cardholders; also free at LDS Family Search Centers

<https://www.newspapers.com/>

Old News at MyHeritage - \$

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-8000/newspapers?s>

Wikipedia list of online newspaper archives

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives#United_States

DNA Painter - free and \$

<https://dnainter.com/>

Shared cM Project

<https://dnainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4>

GEDmatch - free and \$

<https://www.gedmatch.com/>

Facebook - free; must be logged into Facebook in order to see other FB account holders

<https://www.facebook.com/>

LinkedIn - free; log into LinkedIn to see other account holders

<https://www.linkedin.com/>

BeenVerified - free and \$

<https://www.beenverified.com/>

FastPeopleSearch - free

<https://www.fastpeoplesearch.com/>

Radaris - free and \$

<https://radaris.com/>

Spokeo - free and \$

<https://www.spokeo.com/>

TruePeopleSearch - free

<https://www.truepeoplesearch.com/>

And many, many others

Note - - Most people-finder sites have paid versions that allow full access to information; but much can be learned from the free versions