

DNA: Finding Family

What test and what company?

- AncestryDNA autosomal test first, if you can only choose one. Use my discount price of \$79 with two special links. 1.First: <http://www.anrdoezrs.net/10102xdmjd108278125021619666>
2.Then use this link. <https://secure.ancestry.com/Store/Purchase?offerId=O-23476>
Sometimes you have to log out of your account to see the \$79 price. Let me know if you need me to email you the links.
- Test all the oldest members of your family first, as they are closer to past generations! Grandparents, aunts, uncles, oldest siblings, oldest cousins...
- FTDNA Y-DNA 37 marker can be best for a male with an unknown father, as there is a 30-40% chance of getting the paternal surname.
- If you have a lot of British Isles ancestry, put Living DNA test on your wish list. It is fairly new and will place your ancestry from 80 world regions, including breakdown of 21 in the British Isles. It is still an estimate, but could give you research direction. \$159 regular price, but watch for sales.

Prepare for results

- Firm up your known biological tree on Ancestry or create one, attaching sources. If you have unknown parentage, create a new tree that is private and unsearchable for now. Just put yourself and "Unknown dad" or "Unknown grandmother," whoever is unknown.
- When you get results, act fast. Do not contact anyone right away, until you know your relationship. Take screen shots of your top matches and print your Shared Matches. If they have a tree, print or save at least several generations from Pedigree View (Print icon on bottom left).
- If it says they do not have a tree attached to their DNA, they could have a public Ancestry tree. Go to their profile page and scroll down to see if there is a button that says "Select a Tree to Preview." Often, one of those trees has the person who tested in it, but not always.
- Do NOT rely on the company's prediction of your relationship to your matches. Ancestry *underestimates* the relationship. FTDNA *overestimates* the relationship. 23andMe is pretty accurate, usually.

- Instead, always use The DNA Detective autosomal relationship predictor chart. First, find your cM number to the match (on Ancestry, click on their username, then click the small i in a circle and it will show you the number) or from 23andMe, they give you a percentage that you match. Use this number or percentage to see probable relationships. Eliminate those that don't make sense (great-aunt might be too far an age spread...). Look at the easiest answer first, then consider others. Make notes in note section by each match.
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If you do nothing else, please upload to [GEDmatch.com](https://www.gedmatch.com)

- Download your raw DNA results from Ancestry, FTDNA or 23andMe to your computer. To find your raw results on Ancestry, from your DNA page, there is a Settings gearwheel icon on the top right.
 - GEDmatch is a free, third-party website where you upload your raw DNA results and get more matches who tested at other companies. It takes about a day after you upload for the One-to-Many feature to populate. This is one of the most useful tools.
 - Do not get caught up in the various Admixture tools on GEDmatch, as you can pretty much find one that gives you almost any ethnicity you want!
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Then upload to FTDNA Family Finder & to MyHeritage

- Uploading to FTDNA to see all matches is free now, and for \$19 upgrade you can get tools such as Chromosome Browser. This is an amazing deal! Go to familytreedna.com, then to DNA tools dropdown, then to Autosomal Transfer.
 - MyHeritage upload is free at this time. This database is smaller, but growing.
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Check for messages often at Ancestry

- Ancestry can't be relied on to forward messages from matches to your email. It is best to log on to Ancestry and check the envelope icon on top right once a day or at least once a week to see if there is a number indicating you have a new message.
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What am I looking for?

- Any surprises, such as a repeating surname you've never heard of - that could indicate misattributed parentage of someone in the past few generations of your tree. Or a match that is closely related to you whom you haven't heard of before - perhaps it is a new aunt or a new cousin who has biological roots in your family.

- More likely, your DNA results will confirm your known paper trail, help you find sources, and possibly connect you to new research partners.
- The answers are in the trees! Often, tree triangulation is the way to figure things out, even more than automated segment triangulation tools (But try DNAGedcom.com/GWorks)

Success stories! Breaking genealogy brick walls:

- Without DNA testing, my adopted brother would never have found out his birth dad's identity, as he passed away over 20 years ago thinking my brother was stillborn and he had no other children. A second cousin DNA match and other cousin matches led us to the right paternal family.
- Without DNA testing, my friend would not have found her biological lines. Her birth mom is still living, as is her 96 year-old grandma and they had a great reunion! My friend's birth mom was told she had a baby boy, when it was a girl. DNA matches allowed us to build her tree.
- Without DNA testing, I would not know that my adopted brother and I share a small amount of DNA. We are possibly 8th cousins or so.

Resources

- David Gray's People Finder is fabulous for CA, KY, OH, MN, NC, TX and VT birthdate searches, and other records. \$2.95/month for 100 lookups per day (or \$25/year for the same).
- Use FamilySearch to cross-reference Ancestry trees, and find photos of ancestors who have passed on. Look for life sketches and obituaries in notes and in memories section.
- Search aids; pipl.com (Free if you don't click sponsored links), whitepages.com, Google general search, Find A Grave and obituaries sometimes have names of living family members
- promethease.com If you are interested in health information that might pertain to your DNA: \$5 for medical literature retrieval system and more details than you'll have time to read.
- Recommended book: *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy* by Blaine T. Bettinger, 2016
- Facebook closed groups: DNA Detectives (40,000 strong); ISOGG
- For adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents, DNAadoption.com has resources.

Contact me with any questions, especially if you have unknown parentage, and I will share my step-by-step directions for mirror trees for adoptees or those with unknown parentage.

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