Using ancestry.com Tools

Jul 2021 SCCHGS Genealogy SIG

The AncestryDNA database has almost 20 million people who have tested. If you cannot find a cousin in this database, you are not trying. Ancestry has provided a number of tools to make it easier to identify your DNA matches and be able to include them in your family. **Remember: you are looking to identify the Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) with your Match**.

To confirm the relationship to a Match, you will need to find a common place for that new cousin on your Genetic Tree as well as your Genealogy Family Tree.

1. *Dots make the difference*

Sorting your Matches into groups is probably the most helpful tool you have available at Ancestry. It would be most helpful if all of the companies had such a tool. At Ancestry, you can sort into known grandparent clusters or unidentified Group1, Group2, similar to the Leeds Method. Either way, you will be able to identify a group of Matches to focus on that correspond to a family branch you are interested in researching.

Leah Larkin has a blog post on how to set up color dots to group your Matches. She has links to the dots as well as an example of her tree.

Quick Tip: Color Code Your Ancestry Tree
https://thednageek.com/quick-tip-color-code-your-ancestry-tree/

Use the method that works best for you. Choose the colors that are easiest to remember and the matching system that fits with the way you work.

Hint: Profile picture is a color dot. You can pull them from her tree here. The Home person has all of the dots in their Profile Gallery.
https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/82989698/family.

If you would rather go low-tech, just do a screen shot of the colors (or print the page) and hand-write the surnames you want to use on each color. Then when you set up the colors in AncestryDNA, you will have a guide.

No matter what method you use to organize your ancestors with color dots, have a cheat sheet available. Either print one out to have handy when working in Ancestry or have the file in a place on your computer for easy access. It will be so easy to sort those Matches and figure out on which branch of your tree to place them. This works great for brick wall research.

Blaine Bettinger has a YouTube video that can be useful for grouping,
At YouTube, search for **Sub-Clustering Your Shared Matches at AncestryDNA**
Helpful for finding unknown parentage.

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1. ThruLines is like a cheat sheet

Sorting your Matches into groups is probably the most helpful tool you have available. But, in addition ThruLines is a tool that can drop kick those Matches into specific places on your tree.

Roberta Estes has written an excellent blog that will take you step by step through how ThruLines works.

Optimizing Your Tree at Ancestry for More Hints & DNA ThruLines
https://dna-explained.com/2020/02/22/optimizing-your-tree-at-ancestry-for-more-hints-dna-thrulines/

ThruLines REQUIRES three things to be activated,
1. MUST have your DNA linked to a (your) tree
2. MUST be a Public or Private SEARCHABLE tree
3. Someone from your Ancestor's line MUST have tested at AncestryDNA

You can get to ThruLInes:
1. **DNA > Your DNA Results Summary**
2. Your Tree with ThruLines turned on

3. Your Match page with a 🍃 Common Ancestor

To aid in successful ThruLines, add all confirmed Matches to your tree and ensure that sources support the tree of your Match. Longest shared segment should be more than 10cM. And, ThruLines should indicate more than one line of descendants. Do not use other trees as a source

EVALUATE, EVALUATE, EVALUATE

The only sure way to confirm a Match is to either test at or transfer to a company that has a ChromBrowser and verify that there is segment overlay with your new cousin. In addition, you will need to ensure that there is a common place on both your Genetic Tree and your Genealogy Tree.

Definitions:

atDNA - (Autosomal DNA) Passes to you from all of your direct ancestors. We inherit about 50% from (each of) our parents. It passes down to each generation in random amounts and therefore is unpredictable but somewhat traceable for about 6 generations back.

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MRCA - **M**ost **R**ecent **C**ommon **A**ncestor - The first ancestor in common in the pedigrees of you and your DNA Match.

Y-DNA - Only carried by males. Passes unchanged father-to-son for centuries. Good for surname validation. FTDNA is the only company offering this test.

mtDNA - (Mitochondrial DNA) Passes from mother-to-child (males cannot pass this along). Passes unchanged back along the maternal line. Difficult to trace with paper research because of frequent name changes. FTDNA is the only company offering this test.

Chromosome - an organized package of DNA found in the nucleus of the cell

centiMorgan (cM) - - used to measure genetic distance on chromosome browser

ISOGG.org - **I**nternational **S**ociety of **G**enetic **G**enealogy.   http://www.isogg.org Education and information. Lots of good resources. **Free _(but donations welcome)._**

Misattributed Parentage - (**N**ot **P**arent **E**xpected) The biological father (or mother) is other than who it is presumed to be. Sperm donation, formal or informal adoption, illegitimacy inside or outside (consensual or non-consensual) of marriage, alias or deliberate change of surname. _This event can alter the biological validity of your family tree._

DNA - (DeoxyriboNucleic Acid) Hereditary material in humans and all other organisms. Found in every cell of the human body.

GEDcom - is an open specification for exchanging genealogical data between different genealogy software. GEDCOM was developed by LDS Church as an aid to genealogical research.

Resources:

International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG)
http://www.isogg.org

DNAeXplained _Roberta Estes_
http://dna-explained.com/2015/10/01/dnaexplain-archives-introductory-dna/

Kitty Cooper's Blog _Kitty Cooper_
http://blog.kittycooper.com

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The DNA Geek   *Leah Larkin*
https://thednageek.com

Genetic Genealogist   *Blaine Bettinger*
http://www.thegeneticgenealogist.com/about-genetic-genealogy/

Relationship Chart
DNAPainter.com > Tools > Shared cM Tool
https://dnapainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4

Learning Videos
Chromosomes & Inheritance
http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/chromosomes/

Sort Matches into Grandparent Buckets
Sub-Clustering Shared Matches
Blaine Bettinger

DNA Adoption
http://www.dnaadoption.com
(Not just for adoption. Great for brickwall breakthrus)

Legacy Webinars
·https://familytreewebinars.com
- Webinars free to watch for the first week. About $50 for annual subscription
- *91 on-demand DNA webinars plus many other genealogy webinars on other topics*

Facebook Groups
- Blaine Bettinger's group: Genetic Genealogy Tips & Techniques
- Jonny Perl's group: DNA Painter User Group

Count the G's - Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) and your Cousins:

Key to remembering relationships and who you are looking for is to **count the G's.**

1st Cousin (**1**C)   shares   **G**randparent
2nd Cousin (**2**C)   shares   **G**reat-**G**randparent
3rd Cousin (**3**C)   shares   **G**reat-**G**reat-**G**randparent
4th Cousin (**4**C)   shares   **G**reat-**G**reat-**G**reat-**G**randparent
5th Cousin (**5**C)   shares   **G**reat-**G**reat-**G**reat-**G**reat-**G**randparent