

DNA Test Results

Update: Useful Analytical Tools, Hilary Hartigan for Manchester Ancestors, MLFHS ©2023

Family Tree Maker (FTM)

Or the stand-alone, downloadable, software of your choice. FTM enables storage and organisation of your family tree and associated documents, files and images in a location of your choice, whether on your computer or in your cloud storage. You can back up this information at any time. FTM also synchronises with Ancestry. When you sync any genealogy program an online website please consider making the online version 'private' to protect your research and to avoid conflict with copyright and licence issues. You can add a public 'bare bones' tree to the online site so that visitors get value from a shared match.

Family Tree Maker (FTM) Colour Coding

This is not the same as the use of colour grouping in Ancestry, this is an easy way of identifying lineage in your FTM tree and can be turned on and off, or different combinations selected, as required. It is a finding tool. Do you have a cousin in your tree who you can't easily place in your family? Something that happens quite often in small communities where you know you are probably related – but is it by blood or by marriage? Is the tree 'tangled' because 3rd cousins have married? Choose an ancestor and assign a 'descendant' colour – this colour will flow down to every descendant of that ancestor in your tree. Now select the mysterious cousin and assign an 'ascendant' colour – this will work up the tree but only along the direct ancestors' lines – no cousins, aunts or uncles. If you are 'family', the two colours will collide and lead you to a common ancestor. If not, then you are probably related by a marriage somewhere and, in true village fashion in the 1950s, everyone was an 'aunty' or an 'uncle'. If the mysterious cousin proves to be descended from cousins who married, your family 'tree' might look more like a family 'circle'.

Implications for DNA – if the colours collide then you should have inherited DNA from common ancestors, though that is never a guarantee that you have inherited the same DNA - you might not appear as DNA matches with any of the online DNA testing companies.

Relationship Calculator

If this shows a relationship as 'great grand nephew of wife of 2nd great uncle' with 'no common relative', try switching the two people around – the program might then recalculate as 'second cousin once removed' and show a less complicated connection.

My Heritage (MH)

Matches on My Heritage are very well explained. Scroll down the page and just keep on going! You will find a chart showing possible relationships between you and your match – followed by "show more relationships plus diagram" – click on this. The diagram is very clear and always personalised to the match in view. 'Once removed' is worded as 'child', so a second cousin once removed is called a second cousin's child. The percentage figures indicate the probability of one suggested relationship being more likely than another.

The DNA that you share with a match is shown on a chromosome chart. My Heritage gives you an extra bit of information. Imagine that you want to look at Mary Smith who shares 50cM with you. You click on 'Review DNA match to see the list of shared matches. One shared match is John Davies. John shared 38cM with you – and shares 28cM with Mary, therefore his match with Mary is not as good as yours and that will be reflected in the likely relationship being suggested. Then click on the triangulation icon to see the chromosome browser for the match.

“DNA Tools” include a Chromosome Browser and an Autocluster Generator. Also, on your DNA Overview page there are three dots next to the “Search” magnifying glass, click to download spreadsheets of your matches and of your DNA segment matches. The DNA segments list is particularly useful: make a copy and reformat columns D, E and F to show the matches in chromosome order.

Ancestry SideView

New technology protected by Ancestry divides, or clusters, your matches into Parent 1 and Parent 2, Both, and Unassigned. You can change the titles to Paternal and Maternal when you can identify the clusters. You can now choose to look at All Matches or those of just one parent, as you wish. SideView also discovers more about Ethnicity, so look through the Ethnicity section to see your inheritance from each parent. Ethnicity, with the better technology and a larger database, is more relevant, and some mysteries can be solved by looking at the ethnicity of a 'mysterious' – but very likely – match.

DNA Inheritance is always random

We are talking about millions of genes, SNPs and the acids GATC which are the basis of your DNA. Identical siblings may match each other with 7000cMs, but non-identical siblings, cousins and other relatives may not share any DNA at all. The probability is that they will share, and siblings tend to share 2500cMs, but random inheritance means that nothing is guaranteed.

Ancestry's 20cM cut-off

You will see all your Matches down to 8cM. The cut-off only applies to Shared Matches where you only see matches above 20cMs. This can be disappointing, but you can use Groups and all the Search facilities and the filters to find smaller matches and allocate them to coloured groups. Check the Common Ancestors filter frequently and also the 'New Matches' group to catch any new good matches.

Finally...

Explore the Help Files and Knowledge Base and read the Terms and Conditions on the various sites.