

A DNA Match with No Tree? No Problem!

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Autosomal DNA for Genealogy

Autosomal DNA testing traces the DNA on both your mom's side and your dad's side and produces two kinds of results: ancestral origins and genetic matches. Companies offering this kind of DNA testing each offer their own set of reports and features:

- 23andMe
- AncestryDNA
- Family Tree DNA
- MyHeritage

You should investigate each one to see which will be right for you.

Objective: Turning Matches into Ancestors

Once you receive your DNA match results, you'll want to turn this list into ancestral connections. This can be done by looking at the online family tree of your closest and therefore best DNA matches for common ancestors, surnames, or locations that might connect your family trees. Unfortunately, many people who have tested have never done genealogical research, and therefore they do not have an online family tree. In this class, you will learn how to overcome those anonymous matches and find an online tree that includes your best match's parents, grandparents, and great grandparents so that you can move forward with your genealogical research. While this can't work in every situation, many times it can provide you the vital genealogical connection you seek.

Step #1: Identify Your Match

When evaluating which matches without trees to pursue, answer these questions:

1. Is the match a male?
2. Is the username a person's name or does it contain a person's name?

Examples of usernames are *cjones68* or *Parkster6*. In these examples, the username may contain some or all of the user's actual name. It may also include other identifiable elements such as a birth year. The example *cjones68* could be someone with first name starting with a "C" and last name "Jones" with the year 1968 associated with them. In the case of *Parkster6*, this could be a partial or full surname.

Search for it as a surname:

- Search Ancestry.com trees for the username.
- Search Facebook > PEOPLE for the username.

- ❑ Search with Google to find other websites where the user may be using that username. Put quotes around the name to make the search exact.

Tip: Use tools like Google Earth to track the locations associated with the person.

Step #2 Identify His Relations

Once you have located the real name of your match, it's time to find his parents.

- ❑ Go to Facebook and if you can find their profile, look for candidates
- ❑ Search at people finding websites: mylife.com, spokeo.com, pipl.com

Look for a *Relatives* list. For a younger person (under about the age of 30) the person's mom and dad will likely be listed first, followed by the person's siblings further down the list. The first name may give away the age of the person, such as Hal (older) and Justin (younger). Focus on the older names.

- ❑ Search potential names at Facebook (keep an eye on associated locations)
- ❑ Search Google (For example: you're looking for things like obituaries where these people are listed as relatives)
- ❑ Search people finding websites again: mylife.com, spokeo.com, and pipl.com
- ❑ Search the potential father's name at Ancestry.com and/or FamilySearch. Try different search scenarios by altering search criteria to be more and less exact.
- ❑ Try searching only Ancestry.com trees.

Try narrowing your search for the parents by the state where your match was also shown to have lived. Make note of any additional names listed that he may go by.

Finding Your Match's Grandpa

Once you have located the match's father on a site like Pipl.com, you should receive a list of "Additional Names." These are very likely relatives of the person. There you may find the name of the father's father (the match's grandfather). Search these names in the people finding websites too. When you've identified a potential grandfather's name, head back to Ancestry.com to search for the potential grandfather's name. If they are born before 1940, look them up in the U.S. Federal Census starting with 1940, then 1930, and so on. This should result in the names of great grandparents of the match.

Tips:

- ❑ Search all the *Genealogy Giants* records websites you can (Example: Ancestry, FamilySearch, MyHeritage, Findmypast. Learn more at: <https://genealogygems.com/giants>)
- ❑ Accumulate as much information as you can such as maiden names and locations where they lived.

- Keep an eye out for incorrect spellings and trying searching those as well.

Step #3: Find Grandpa in a Public Tree

Start with Ancestry and/or MyHeritage if you have a subscription. These sites have individual trees and powerful search engines that allow flexible searching.

- Search for the grandparents first. (If you don't have luck finding a tree, move on to the great grandparents.)
- Enter the grandparent's name and additional information you may have found such as a parent's last name, the first name of a child, and the approximate year and location born. To do this at Ancestry.com, go to the menu and click SEARCH > PUBLIC MEMBER TREES.
- Click through on the most promising looking tree to see if the tree is public. You can also search the FamilySearch tree for free.

Tip: Pay close attention to records with errors that include user-submitted corrections. Usernames are linked to their profile. Near the bottom of the profile page under "Ancestry Public Member Trees" you will find a link to that user's family tree if they have one. In the upper left corner click the tree's search button, and in the drop-down search box, enter the last name of the ancestor to find their location in the tree.

Find More Trees

Another way to find more trees is to search for Stories & Photos. In the menu: SEARCH > ALL COLLECTIONS.

1. On the Search page, add information about the person and only click the PHOTOS & MAPS and STORIES & PUBLICATIONS boxes. The results for these categories will include two pieces of information: LINKED TO (trees) and SAVED BY (profiles of people interested in this photo/person).
2. Click LINKED TO and you will be taken to the profile for that ancestor.
3. In the upper left corner of the profile page click TOOLS > VIEW IN TREE
4. Also, from the profile page you can click the search button next to the name of the tree (upper left corner) to search the tree for other names.

Step #4: Search the Found Tree for Surnames from Your Tree

Now it's time to search the found tree for more of your family surnames. Make note of shared locations too.

From an Ancestry profile page, click the search button next to the tree name in the upper left corner and enter a surname to search the tree.

In tree view click FIND PERSON button in upper right corner and enter a surname. A dropdown list will instantly populate with any people in the tree with that surname. Search all known surnames.

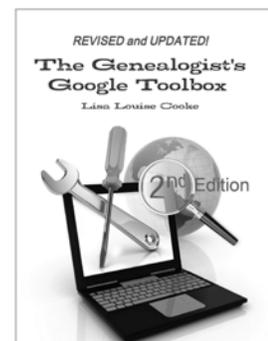
Step #5: Locate Your Common Ancestor

Keep in mind that the shared ancestor isn't necessarily shared by the Grandpa you initially found. In our class example, the common ancestor was through Grandpa's wife's family. You may or may not find the shared ancestor depending on the extent that the tree has been completed.

More Learning and Resources

Learn advanced Google search strategies:

Cooke, Lisa L. ***The Genealogist's Google Toolbox***, Genealogy Gems Publications. www.shopgenealogygems.com



Learn advanced DNA strategies:

Southard, Diahan (with Lisa Louise Cooke) ***Breaking Down Brick Walls with DNA***, Genealogy Gems Publications. www.shopgenealogygems.com

Get a wide range of Google and DNA video webinar training including using the Shared Matches Tool at Gedmatch, plus more training on finding living people:

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