

How to Organize Your Autosomal DNA Results at Ancestry.com

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Complete your family tree back as far as you can. Link the tree to your Ancestry DNA test.

Decide on categories to sort into.

- Surnames
- Ancestral couples
- Other
- Adopted persons can use Unknown 1, Maternal 1, or whatever makes sense to them

Create groups in “Add a group” feature. Can make 24 different groups, color-coded.

- You can edit the name of groups and move people around to different groups as needed
- Can also Star matches or make free text notes about matches.

View your match list.

Start with 400 cM matches and go down to 40 cM matches.

Look at the match’s tree. Skip matches with no tree.

Look for a common ancestor couple or common surname

Add the person to the Group you created for that ancestor couple or surname

Continue down list through all 3rd cousins

Go back to the top of match list and start categorizing matches with no trees

For each match, “View match” and click on “Shared matches” tab

- Shared matches are persons who match both you and this particular match
- Look at the groups the shared matches are in
- If all one group, add this match to that group
- If several groups are represented, try to logically determine which group he should go into
- If not possible, add to both groups and wait until you have more matches grouped before trying to sort it out.
- You can also contact matches with no trees and ask them to share information with you. Or Google them and try to learn their identity and create a tree for them so you can place them in your family tree.

Alternately, you could use a known 2nd cousin match, descended from a common great grandparent couple, go to the 2nd cousin’s “Shared matches” list with you, and add all Shared matches to the group for that common great grandparent couple, down to 3rd cousins or even lower. Some people may need to be moved around later, but this is another way to do it.

Special circumstances:

Matches with small trees:

- You can research the names on their tree, continue filling in the tree, until you find the common ancestor link

Matches with large trees with no surnames in common with you:

- Consider that you may have an error in your tree, or they may have an error in their tree
- May be a NPE in either tree (not parent expected)
- Categorize them using “Shared matches” technique given earlier
- Maybe write them a note and ask to share more information and try to get to the bottom of it

Situations where sorting and grouping may not be possible:

- Your father and mother are closely related or your grandparents are closely related
- Your tree has significant pedigree collapse (same ancestor couples on multiple branches)
- You come from an endogamous population such as Jewish, Amish/Mennonite, or French Canadian/Acadian
- Seek the advice of an expert in these circumstances

Other sorting methods:

- Leeds Method – danaleeds.com
- Automated Clustering
 - DNAGED.com \$
 - Genetic Affairs \$ <https://geneticaffairs.com/>
 - Dnapainter.com \$ - Does not work with Ancestry at this time
 - Basically you upload your raw data file to these sites, and the site will automatically cluster your matches for you in groups of “Shared match” groups, meaning that all of you in that cluster descend from a common ancestor couple.