



## Discovering your DNA Family

### ***A Practical Guide to Finding Family using Ancestry DNA***

Working with DNA is like a jigsaw puzzle. If you were building a jigsaw of a tropical beach you would need a methodical approach.

*Finding some corners or edges would be a start.*

*Sorting the pieces by colour would help find the sand. Separating sea from sky would be harder.*



*Eventually the pieces would start to fall into place.*

*You might find you need to take a break for a while and come back with a clear head and fresh eyes!*

Follow the links within each section for further guidance or view a list of resources [here](#).

### **Divide your Matches into Groups**

- Add [notes](#) to help you remember what you've discovered about each match.
- Identify matches from your known family to separate [Maternal/Paternal matches](#) (if possible).
- Identify groups of Shared Matches and create/apply Ancestry Colour Coded Groups – see [here](#).

### **Look for patterns within each Shared Match Group**

- Try to find "Significant Ancestors" (ancestors who appear in several trees within a group).
- People who are your matches' ancestors they are likely to be your ancestors too - or should lead you in the direction of your Direct Line Ancestors.
- If you can't find Significant Ancestors, look for other patterns – eg, surnames or locations.

### **Build your Research Tree**

- Recreate the trees of your matches within your [Research Tree](#). Use your Research Tree to work out how your matches are related to each other and who they share as common ancestors.
- See [here](#) for instructions on creating Floating Branches and [here](#) for some tips and tricks on managing your Research Tree.
- If you have matches who do not have a tree (or have a very small tree), build it for them. See [here](#) for ways to work out who your matches are, so you can research their family history.
- If you've copied a match's tree and [it doesn't make sense](#) there be errors in the tree you've built/copied, or perhaps the paper records are concealing an adoption or misattributed parent(s).

### **Connect the Floating Branches**

- In a simple world, someone from one Shared Match Group would marry someone from another. One of their children would go on to marry someone from another group and "all" you need to do is move through the generations, connecting the Floating Branches until you reach your parents.
- [Making the final connection](#) can be the hardest step – getting stuck at the "which brother is my Father?" stage is not unusual. You may need to persuade relatives to test to reach a conclusion.