



AncestryDNA - Initial Steps

by Lee Macklin (not affiliated with AncestryDNA)

Here is a very brief background on genealogy DNA tests and the steps you want to perform for the AncestryDNA test specifically. There are three types of DNA tests for the purpose of determining who you are (or are not) related to, as well as finding ancestors you weren't aware of.

First, there is the y-Chromosome (or Y-DNA) test which is the oldest. Only males can take this test and it will only show your direct line of male descendants. This type of test is good for population migration studies and surname researching.

Second, there is the Mitochondrial DNA test (mtDNA) which provides only your direct female line of descent.

Third, and by far the most popular type of test is the Autosomal DNA test. It not only provides information about your male and female line of descents, but also all your other relationships - aunts/uncles, cousins, etc. This is because the Autosomal test is looking at a far greater spectrum of your DNA than the other two types of tests.

The Ancestry DNA kit is a one time cost of \$99 (around some holidays they drop it to \$79 or even \$59). Ancestry has a very powerful feature that can often identify who the common ancestor is between you and your DNA matches. However, you need a subscription to Ancestry genealogy services to view these (includes managing your tree). The basic U.S. Discovery subscription service cost \$99 per 6 months which you can renew (or cancel any time and you won't lose any of your work up to that point). However, if you want to see international records (German, Italian, British, etc.), then you'll need the World Explorer subscription which costs \$149 per 6 months. Note, some people start with the World Explorer level then renew at the U.S. Discovery level. You can actually switch levels any time.

The AncestryDNA kit is very easy to use. Simply purchase it online and it will arrive in the mail a few days later. You then spit into a tube, seal it and drop it in the mail in a small pre-packaged box.

However, before mailing the test you need to activate your kit by going online to Ancestry and logging into your account. On the DNA tab, you will fill in the DNA kit identification number and click the Activate button. The lab will not process your DNA if you have not done this because they won't know who the DNA belongs to.

Next, and really important, you need to create your family history tree online at Ancestry AND make it public (or at least Private-Searchable). If you choose not to do this your DNA results will not display your common ancestor or exactly how you are related.

Then the last step is when your DNA results are posted (usually about 4-6 weeks), you must log back into Ancestry and LINK your DNA results to your tree. Otherwise, again you will be quite disappointed because you will have to do a lot more work to figure out how you and your DNA matches are related.