



SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN  
**GENEALOGISTS**

**DNA research methods,  
tools and groups**

The Society has extensive expertise in DNA research methodology and runs an increasing amount of courses and associated activities outlined below. Please join our **@DNASydney** Facebook group as well for information updates and follow <https://dnasydney.wordpress.com/>.

**Beginners Introduction to DNA (2-3 times a year)**

Receiving your test results is an exciting time but it can quickly become confusing. This session will look at the different types of tests available, which one is right for you and which companies do these tests. We will look at some basics to help you understand and interpret your matches and there will be plenty of time for questions so you can start finding those new cousins! This session is led by Society President Melissa Hulbert.

**First Look at AncestryDNA (2-3 times a year)**

Christine Woodlands will share her "Top 10" techniques for working with AncestryDNA. This session is ideal for those who are taking a first look at their AncestryDNA test or thinking about testing at AncestryDNA. Demonstrations and case studies will be featured in the session. Reference material will be available after the session.

**Analysing your AncestryDNA results (2 times a year)**

Information on January intake available at [this link](#).

Join Christine Woodlands and other members of the SAG DNA Discussion Group for a 15 part course designed to assist you to understand the information you can glean from your Ancestry DNA matches. The course will be made up of four modules and consist of a mixture of presentations, demonstrations, case studies and discussion groups. To get the most out of this program, participants should have tested at AncestryDNA and used traditional family history to develop their pedigree back four generations to identify as many of their great-grandparents as possible. Participants should also have a subscription to Ancestry or access to the Ancestry Institutional Edition.

**Module 1 - Introduction to AncestryDNA.** Work your way around AncestryDNA and learn what can be done with your AncestryDNA results - exploring ethnicity and DNA cousins. We'll also look at privacy settings, linking DNA tests to a family tree, sharing access to AncestryDNA tests, uploading a family tree and downloading "Raw DNA Data".

**Module 2 - Grouping your AncestryDNA matches.** Have you looked at your AncestryDNA matches and wondered how you're related to all those "cousins"? Dana Leeds introduced her method of grouping matches in 2018. Since then, many DNA enthusiasts have used the method with great success. We'll be using the features of AncestryDNA to group your "cousins" and see how that starts to break down those brick walls.

**Module 3 - Building research trees at Ancestry.** We'll explore using the power of Ancestry's hints to build trees to search for the common ancestors your genetic cousins share. We'll look at using tradition family history research with genetic genealogy to gather the evidence needed to prove relationships beyond reasonable doubt.

**Module 4 - Using the "What are the Odds?"(WATO) tool.** We'll start with looking at how to predict the relationship between your genetic cousins. This will lead onto tracking common ancestors between your DNA matches using WATO and predicting what the relationships might be between you and those DNA matches.

There are also follow up meetings of this course for participants.

## Analysing your DNA results with Chromosome Analysis

After working with your DNA results broadly for a time you are probably ready to delve into analysing your results at the chromosome level. To confirm your pedigree beyond 3rd cousins or where there is no documented paper trail (with the exception of parent/child and sibling relationships) you need to undertake detailed chromosome analysis, using segment data. This series works through the necessary steps in the DNA research methodology to identify and confirm common ancestors from segment data. It is suitable for those who have tested at a chromosome site like FamilyTreeDNA, My Heritage or 23andMe, or have uploaded their results to GEDmatch.

**Module 1 - Understanding DNA Basics.** This module covers the key concepts required for anyone starting out in DNA chromosome analysis for genealogy. We will cover defining your research goal, common terms and definitions, inheritance paths, relationship predictions, recombination and segment triangulation.

**Module 2 - Organising your DNA data and determining match groups.** This module is designed to help you understand how to manage/organise your DNA data so you know what you are working with. Understand the difference between shared matches, shared segments and 'in common with', to identify common ancestral groups. We will also discuss the importance of shared cMs for predicted relationships and briefly explore working with clusters and other grouping methods.

**Module 3 - Determining your Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) from triangulated chromosome groups.** This module will cover techniques and tools to help you combine your genetic and traditional genealogy research. Identify likely ancestor groups using 'segment triangulation'. Use that knowledge to identify possible common ancestors between you and your DNA match using 'tree triangulation'. We will also discuss different methods for building research trees and collaborating with others to increase your chances of success.

**Module 4 - Confirming your genetic research and mapping your genome.** This module will focus on using your genetic research to prove and expand your pedigree. We will consider what relationships can be 'confirmed by DNA' (including when there is no paper trail) and the Genealogical Proof Standard. Use your confirmed chromosome segment information to map your genome and use it as a visual aid to help determine the ancestral groups for your DNA matches and potentially break down brick walls.

This series is suitable for intermediate DNA researchers. To fully benefit from this series participants should already be familiar with most of the points outlined in "[Starting to work with your DNA results - the basics](#)".

### DNA Research Groups (meet 4 times a year)

SAG is home to a group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable genetic genealogists. The DNA Research Group is a forum for those who are highly experienced in using DNA research techniques and would like to explore this exciting aspect of genealogy further with a group of likeminded people. This [quick guide](#) will support your involvement in the groups and you may want to also consider our regular Beginners DNA sessions.

**DNA Research Group - Tools in practice - Skill level:** Intermediate

**DNA Research Discussion Group - Skill level:** Advanced

### Additional courses that we have run include:

"Hands on" FTDNA

GEDMatch basics

Exploring your DNA results at MyHeritage

### DNA stories/case studies are drawn from these courses and regularly presented at:

Friday Hang Out with SAG

Let's Talk About...DNA

**Registration:** <https://www.sag.org.au/events>

**Facilitators:** Melissa Hulbert, Christine Woodlands, Veronica Williams, Kerry Farmer, Melanie Dunstan and others

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