



# DNA for your ONS: Helpful Hints

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**B**ased on questions received over the last six months, here is some information which may help you with your DNA project.

## Privacy

Family Tree DNA has instituted another page of privacy settings. Below, the critical privacy and attribute selections for your participant's test kit are covered in detail.

When you log into a test kit, you land on the main page, called a personal page or a dashboard. To set attributes and privacy settings for the test kit, on the left you first click on "Manage Personal Information."

I always preset certain test kit attributes for my participants before their results come back from the lab, to make DNA testing a lot easier and simpler for them. They are also informed of these settings in layman language during the recruiting phase. For example, "your matches will be able to see your name, email address, and most distant ancestor, and you will be able to see the same for them."

Participants who are interested in learning more about Family Tree DNA options can click around their personal pages and explore, while most participants will prefer to leave the settings as established, and just click "Matches" to find their matches. This keeps the process very simple.

Once you click "Manage Personal Information" you will find six tabs across the top. You will land on the "Account Settings" tab, and there are three selections below this tab. They are:

- Personal Profile Settings
- Match and E-mail Settings
- Change Password

I leave the Personal Profile default as it stands as "Private," and click "Match and E-mail Settings."

## Match and Email Settings.

Down the page is a selection called "My Matches." The current default setting under "My Matches" is "All Matches." I change the participant's setting to "Only in My Projects."

I prefer this selection, and in their DNA report I send when their result comes back, I make them aware of how they are set for matching with a brief explanation of the reasoning behind the selection. They are also informed how to change the setting to see other surname matches, and are encouraged, after they take a look, to change the setting back to "Only in My Projects."

The DNA report I issue is a Word document that contains a lot

of standard text, such as explaining Y-DNA in layman's terms. It is upbeat and positive, with a theme of discovery. There is a section for me to fill in about their distant origin. And another section about their matches (or lack thereof) which I fill in depending on their situation. The final standard text section explains how to do basic tasks, such as reviewing privacy settings, with an explanation of the settings that have been selected for them.

The reasoning for setting their "My Matches" option to "Only in My Projects" is that in most cases matches with other surnames are not relevant. Secondly, matches with other surnames are often confusing to the participant, and if there are a lot of matches with other surnames, they may even miss seeing those matches with their own surname. Third, I avoid spending time explaining matches with other surnames beyond what is in their report. And fourth, I am not bothered with match emails about matches to other surnames. So I don't have to take the time to go look at matches each time I get an email to see if it is a relevant match. With the setting "Only in My Projects," all the match emails I get will be relevant.

At the time of surname adoption, many men had the same or close Y-DNA result. In most cases, they ended up with different surnames. On the high end, I have seen over 3,000 Y-DNA matches, with a long list of different surnames. As the database grows, everyone will have more matches with other surnames.

If you don't have a match yet with your surname – and have a match with another surname – it is easy to go down the path that this match must mean you are really an "XYZ" and not an "ABC." The real reason you don't have a match with your surname is most likely because only a small percentage of your surname has tested.

I recommend ignoring matches with other surnames, unless you know of an event such as illegitimacy where the male child took the mother's surname, or a voluntary name change, or until you have tested all the trees of your surname and still don't have a match.

There is one type of match with another surname that can have value if your tree has hit a brick wall, either in London or in Colonial America, and you don't know where the tree came from. If you have a match with a rare single-origin or limited-origin surname, that can give you clues as to where to look for research and where to test to find a DNA match.

It is your decision whether you set the participants in your project to "Matches only in My Projects" or leave them with the default of "All Matches."

## Privacy and Sharing

My next stop in setting the privacy attributes for a test kit is the “Privacy & Sharing” tab.

Under this tab, the first item I change is “Who can view my Most Distant Ancestor?” The default is only the participant, and I change this to “Share my Most Distant Ancestor with other people in projects that I've joined,” by checking the box and clicking “save.” The prior screen will now read “Who can view my Most Distant Ancestor? Project Members.”

The next item I check is “Who can view my DNA results in group projects?” Make sure it says “Anyone.” Otherwise, the person’s result will not appear on your public website for your DNA project. The default setting for new kit orders is “Project Members,” not “Anyone.”

Note that this display option is only applicable for Y-DNA and mtDNA HVR1 and HVR2 data, since mitochondrial DNA coding region and autosomal DNA results are never displayed publicly.

The rest of the defaults I leave as they are. The DNA report issued to participants explains the “Most Distant Ancestor” selection and that their DNA result is displayed with surname and most distant ancestor, and that their matches who are in the project can see their most distant ancestor on the match results page.

These are the critical settings. Please review all the other settings and options to have a good understanding of the settings and issues impacting participants. Here is an excellent blog post that covers all the privacy options in detail: <http://dna-explained.com/2015/07/27/family-tree-dna-new-privacy-settings/>.

## Most Distant Ancestor

The next step is to fill in their “Most Distant Ancestor.” Filling it in is often easier and takes less time for me to fill in, rather than educating the participant on how to fill it in. In addition, I have established a standard format for this field, to pack in as much information as possible. A standard format also makes it so much easier when I am reading down a page of Y-DNA results, especially after you get past 20 or so participants and they start getting hard to remember.

In the main tab bar we covered above, select “Genealogy,” and then “Most Distant Ancestor.”

The format I use for this field starts with a tree label. Perhaps you have created a tree label for trees if you are constructing family trees for your one-name study. If not, you can set up a simple log and assign numbers as you get unique trees to participate. The size of your ONS and the frequency of your surname will determine how many trees you expect to encounter.

An example tree label is T042, where the zero is there since over 100 trees are expected.

The next item in my standard format for “Most Distant Ancestor” is the surname. If the tree progenitor used multiple different forms in his life, then perhaps you select the surname form used the most. Or the earliest form used would be another choice, which would also be valuable to see surname evolution, such as a Raggett participant who has a most distant ancestor with the surname form Riegate.

After the surname comes the first name. Then the earliest documented event and year is followed by location from largest entity to smallest entity.

Here are some examples:

T002 Ricketts, Robert d1737 HAM Basingstoke  
T004 Rickett, George bc1817 ENG d1887 CAN ONT  
T005 Ricketts, Barzilla bc1794 USA VA Augusta Co  
T006 Ricketts, George m1775 OXF Woodstock  
T018 Ricketts, Drewy/Drury b1796 USA NC Anson Co  
T028 Ricketts, David bc1853PA Liv1880 PA Cumberland  
T040 Ricketts, Richard d1757 WIL Great Chalfield

The information shown reflects the earliest documented information about the progenitor of the family tree. This is just one example of a format that you could implement. Use any format that you prefer.

## Authorizing a Test Kit

If you have purchased a test kit for yourself or for a participant, and if you authorize the test kit, you have easy access to all attributes of the test kit, and don’t have to log in and out of the test kit to access items that are restricted.

If you purchased a test kit, either from Family Tree DNA or the Guild, you received a kit number and password.

To authorize a kit, log into your project. In the menu bar, select “My Account,” and then “Kit Authorization.” Just enter the kit number and password and click submit.

## Y-DNA or Autosomal DNA

A Y-DNA test is for males only. It tests locations on the Y-chromosome, which is passed from father to son. In most cultures, this is also the path of the surname, which makes this test very valuable for a one-name study. Ideally, you test two distant males from each family tree, starting with your own tree. When possible, test the oldest male, such as the grandfather if he is living, instead of the son or grandson. Each generation is an opportunity for a random mutation, and by reducing the number of generations from the participant to the progenitor of the tree, you reduce the possible mutations you can run across. Another priority is trees with limited surviving males. Once they are gone, you will not have Y-DNA for this tree.

Your goal would be to Y-DNA test each tree of your surname, worldwide, to determine which trees are related, and to provide information to draw conclusion about your surname when used in conjunction with surname distribution maps and early records.

The Y-DNA test has a long history, having first been offered to consumers in 2000.

The newest test is an autosomal test. At Family Tree DNA this test is called Family Finder. An autosomal test looks at SNPs across your chromosomes. In the matching process, matching segments are reported. A segment could come from any ancestor, though segments from more recent ancestors is more likely. With each generation, ancestor segments are lost. Segments can also get cut down in size. Your chromosomes come half from your father and half from your mother. If you have siblings, you will share DNA with them, though they will get some parts of your father and mother that you didn’t receive.

Family Tree DNA states that the Family Finder test is useful about five generations back. With each generation, there is declining odds that you will share segments with another descendent from a shared ancestor. Family Tree DNA states: "For genealogists, it is best to use Family Finder to prove recent relationships (one to five generations). However, after testing, you may discover distant cousins."

Autosomal testing is fun and interesting for your family tree, and you might discover matches that help you overcome a brick wall. An autosomal test will have limited application for your one-name study for two reasons. First, in most cases you are able to find a male to take a Y-DNA test. Second, the further back the common ancestor, the lower the odds that two participants would have a matching autosomal segment. An example is my Meates ONS, where all the Meates trees that go back to Ireland match with Y-DNA and share a common ancestor after the progenitor of the surname, since we all share a mutation. Using autosomal testing, none of us share any matching segments with anyone who isn't in our documented tree. A documented tree represents more recent generations.

The Family Finder test uses approximately one vial of sample. So if you have a sample on file for deceased participants, you need to be aware that you may not have any sample left after running this test.

### **Purchasing DNA Test Kits from the Guild**

The Guild provides DNA test kits from Family Tree DNA. Here are the products available to members and their participants, year round, at a discounted price:

- Y-DNA 37 marker test kit
- Family Finder test kit
- Family Finder add-on to an existing test kit, of either Y-DNA or mtDNA

When you add on Family Finder, you don't get a new test kit, except if Family Tree DNA determines that there is not enough sample on file to run the test. In that case they will send the person a new test kit.

If you want to order both Y-DNA and Family Finder for yourself or a participant, order Y-DNA first, then order Family Finder and notify [dna-kit-order@one-name.org](mailto:dna-kit-order@one-name.org) that Family Finder is an add-on.

The prices from the Guild include postage anywhere in the world. When comparing to Family Tree DNA prices, add on to their price their shipping and handling of \$9.95 USD per kit.

The Guild now has a facility for you to initiate an order, and your participant to pay. There is a page at the Guild website that tells you about the DNA kits available from the Guild and how to order. This member benefit can save you money, and help you recruit participants. Please read <http://one-name.org/help/guild-wiki/dna-kits-available-from-the-guild>.

If you have any questions about ordering a test kit, please contact Teresa Pask at: [dna-kit-order@one-name.org](mailto:dna-kit-order@one-name.org). If you have any questions about DNA for genealogy, write to me at [DNA@one-name.org](mailto:DNA@one-name.org).

### **Disclaimer:**

The above information about Family Tree DNA was accurate at the time of submission of this article. It is subject to change at any time by Family Tree DNA.

### **Want to Get Started?**

When you are ready to add DNA to your one-name study, the DNA Advisor is here to help, including setting up your project with proven marketing material. Simply write: [DNA@one-name.org](mailto:DNA@one-name.org). You will receive a completely setup project, that you can modify, along with an easy to follow 20-step *Getting Started* email and a sample recruiting email and letter. ■