

Genealogy Resources

It's part of the human condition to question our heritage and wonder where we came from. Some elements of our physical appearance or temperament are easily assigned to genetics inherited from our parents. Others, however – the parts that make us seemingly unique among our immediate family – may stem from deeper roots.

This is surely why genealogy has become such a popular pastime all around the world. The advent of the internet has made it easier than ever to track down lineage, discovering hitherto-unseen branches of a family tree. This can be hugely rewarding, in addition to being eye-opening. At its core, genealogy makes the world seem just a little smaller.

If you're new to this hobby, however, you may find it a little intimidating. There is no shortage of resource available, but many seek your credit card number in exchange for information.

It's true that genealogy can be an expensive hobby, but it doesn't need to be. If you're blessed with a curious mind and sufficient patience, you can engage in genealogy without breaking the bank.

Getting Started in Genealogy

The first step in your genealogy journey is arguably the hardest. Things may begin fairly simply, asking your parents and family members for information. Eventually, however, this well will run dry.

Failing memories can only provide so much data. It's likely that, beyond your grandparents, you will need to start to research your family tree yourself. There are numerous resources to kickstart your genealogy expedition.

- [Family Search](#) provides an informative blog that will answer any questions you may have about genealogy.
- Once you are familiar with the basics, [Gen UKI](#) goes into considerably more detail on the ins and outs of genealogy – how to start, and how to continue to unravel more of your family history.
- [The Society of Genealogists](#) offer some suggestions on how to plan your path down the genealogy rabbit hole.

- **Family Tree Magazine** is worth a subscription if you are serious about taking up genealogy, offering a steady supply of hints and tips. Their guide to the **25 best websites for beginners** is particularly helpful.

Genealogy DNA Tests

One of the great advances in 21st Century genealogy is commercially available DNA testing. Once the sole reserve of law enforcement, DNA tests can now be ordered online to check your lineage.

There are plenty of these tests available, so shop around before committing. The most popular choice is not necessarily the most effective. However, here is a summary of some of the reputable DNA tests now available online.

- **The Genealogist** is a UK-based service that provides multiple options, including tests that specialise by gender. **Genetics Home Reference** explains by Y-chromosome testing can be particularly impactful when tracing offshoots to a family tree by similar surname.
- **Family Tree DNA** offers a similar service for the US market.
- **Ancestry**, arguably the UK's biggest DNA testing resource for genealogy, provides a test that encompasses all lineage without gender discrepancy.
- **GenomeLink** discusses the opportunity to investigate DNA testing free of charge, while **Free UK Genealogy** will take a look at the results of a test without charge.

It should be noted that DNA testing for genealogy has received mixed reviews. **Science News** confirms that the results can vary wildly. It is a personal decision as to how much trust and faith you place in this form of genealogy research.

Researching Family History

The nuts and bolts of genealogy involves tracking down your family members from the near and distant past. As we will discuss in a moment, there are professional associations and individuals available to help with this.

The whole point of hobbyist genealogy is to explore this yourself, though. Before seeking help, make use of the many and varied resources that can be utilised online and off.

- **Find My Past** is a great tool for building an online family tree and filling in the branches as you learn more. **Genes Reunited** provides a similar service.
- **National Geographic** offers tips on how you can get started on discovering the identity of your ancestors.
- **Family Search** provided a blog earlier in our guide, but the site offers many more services – including the opportunity to investigate ancestry free of charge.
- **The Office of National Statistics** holds data from the UK Census. You'll also be able to find information at no charge using **FreeCen**. Users in the States will find the **National Archives**
- **Family History Daily** links out to a wide array of different genealogy sites, some of which will allow free searches.
- The **National Genealogical Society** prioritises resources in the United States, but some of the suggestions made will prove universally helpful.

Eventually, you're likely to run dry of inspiration. This is the point that you may want to consider bringing in external help. Do not be deterred easily, though. Genealogy can be time-consuming, but that's what makes it so satisfying.

Genealogy Charities and Organisations

As genealogy is largely considered a hobbyist activity, especially in the UK, charitable bodies are hard to come by. Eventually, you will likely need to start spending money or committing to painstaking personal research.

If you are prepared to bring in professional help, however, there are numerous genealogical societies based around the world. These resources will share your passion for unpicking your family tree and may be able to assist if you hit a wall at any stage.

- We previously linked to **Society of Genealogists**, but a good resource is worth repeating. Bookmark this page, post-haste – you will frequently find yourself returning.
- **The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives** are judicious and skilled researchers that have turned their passion for genealogy into a full-time career.

- If you're based in Scotland, you'll need [the Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives](#), while Irish readers will find help from [Accredited Genealogists Ireland](#).
- The [Family History Federation](#) is a resource that lists local genealogical societies in your area. For a more bespoke and one-on-one approach, consult the [Register of Qualified Genealogists](#) to find a personal expert.
- [Search Angels](#) is a non-profit body dedicated to helping individuals decipher their family tree.

Of course, it is not just professionals that may be able to help you. As genealogy has become so popular, many like-minded amateurs around the world may also be willing to offer help and advice. Be sure to investigate social media and local newsletters and listings for groups.

Careers in Genealogy

If you really take to genealogy, you may wish to consider a career in the field. Aiding others in the search for their history can be just as rewarding as uncovering your own.

Remember though, in a professional setting, genealogy is a science – not just a hobby. You'll need to acquire the appropriate accreditations and educational background to join such a society.

- [The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies](#), based in Kent, runs a range of courses that will aid you in your quest for accreditation.
- [The University of Central Lancaster](#) and the [University of Strathclyde](#) both run reputable Genealogy degree modules. In the USA, Utah's [Brigham Young University](#) offers the only recognised degree in genealogy.
- If you prefer to study online, be sure to take a look at the courses that [Pharos](#) has to offer.

[The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives](#) is the biggest employer in this field in the UK. Across the pond, [the Association of Professional Genealogists](#) details a wide array of career opportunities for anybody with appropriate qualifications.

Summary of Useful Links

We have linked to a wide variety of different sources in this article. You'll find a summary of all the external sites that we recommend below.

- Ancestry – [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)
- Assoc of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives – [agra.org.uk](https://www.agra.org.uk)
- Association of Professional Genealogists – [apgen.org](https://www.apgen.org)
- Family History Daily – [familyhistorydaily.com](https://www.familyhistorydaily.com)
- Family History Federation – [familyhistoryfederation.com](https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com)
- Family Search – [familysearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org)
- Family Tree DNA – [familytreedna.com](https://www.familytreedna.com)
- Family Tree Magazine – [familytreemagazine.com](https://www.familytreemagazine.com)
- Find My Past – [findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)
- FreeCen – [freecen.org.uk](https://www.freecen.org.uk)
- Free UK Genealogy – [freeukgenealogy.org.uk](https://www.freeukgenealogy.org.uk)
- The Genealogist – [thegenealogist.co.uk](https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)
- Genetics Home Research – ghr.nlm.nih.gov
- Genomelink – blog.genomelink.io
- Gen UKI – [genuki.org.uk](https://www.genuki.org.uk)
- Genes Reunited – [genesreunited.co.uk](https://www.genesreunited.co.uk)
- Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies – [ihgs.ac.uk](https://www.ihgs.ac.uk)

- National Genealogical Society – ngsgenealogy.org
- Register of Qualified Genealogists – qualifiedgenealogists.org
- Search Angels – searchangels.org
- Society of Genealogists – sog.org.uk