



Group Projects

FamilyTreeDNA pioneered the direct-to-consumer DNA testing industry, and has continued to innovate and further the goals of genealogists and researchers worldwide. A major part of this success comes from our unique group project system. Group projects are places where like minded genealogists can come together to work on similar research goals.

Group projects are headed by genealogists and geneticists with a specific goal in mind. These researcher heads, called administrators, are volunteers who want to recruit other test takers and researchers who can contribute to this goal through their DNA test results, research skills, or genetic analysis assistance.

FamilyTreeDNA hosts public websites for these groups that allow members to discuss ideas, analyze other member results, and pool resources. With over 10,000 group projects, there are diverse project opportunities to meet a variety of needs. Different projects sometimes have different requirements about who can join and what test types they need, but they are all free to join, and there is no limit to how many projects you can join!

Types of Projects

Geographic

Geographic projects focus on specific regions regardless of haplogroup or surname. These help to get a better idea of changes in regional population over time, migrations, and other genetic influences. This can help paint a better picture of how the region came to be populated. Some geographic projects focus solely on Y-DNA, some on mtDNA, and some on all DNA types. This means you may need to recruit a relative with ancestry from the area to take an applicable test. Your administrator can help you decide the best test type and testing candidate.

Surname

Surname projects focus on specific ancestral surnames and their variant spellings. In many cases surnames were recorded in different places with different spellings, but all descend from a common ancestor or set of ancestors. For example, the surname Brewster is variously recorded as Brewster, Bruster, Brooster, Bructer, and Le Bruester in different times and in different places. The Brewster Project covers all of these variants and works to find common ancestry.

Surnames are typically inherited through the direct male line, so these projects often require a Y-DNA test from an eligible test taker with this surname. In some cases this may mean you need to recruit a male test taker with

Haplogroup

Haplogroup projects focus on either mtDNA or Y-DNA Haplogroups or their subclades. These can provide information on ancient migration routes for your direct paternal or maternal line, all the way down to ancestors in historic times. Y-DNA Haplogroup projects almost always require a Y-DNA STR or Big Y test, as these provide haplogroup information, while mtDNA haplogroup projects require mtDNA tests.

Family Finder

Family Finder projects typically focus on a specific ancestor and their descendants. This is usually very narrow in its focus. For example, it may look specifically at John Smith b. 1750 in Manchester, England, and his descendants only, rather than the Smith surname in general.

Many genealogists manage multiple kits from various family members, so Family Finder projects can also serve as a private resource to access all of your kits from a single administrator log in instead of signing into each kit individually.

Starting your own project

If you cannot find a project to meet your specific needs, you can always apply to start a project of your own. To do so, look for the Create a Project button on the project search page. Project applications are subject to review by FamilyTreeDNA staff to ensure they do not overlap with an existing project or present a potential conflict of interest with other researchers. This helps to maintain a positive and constructive project community. You do not need to be an expert to start a project. All you need is a research goal and a willingness to learn!