

Steps to Researching Your Family History

Step 1: Record the names of your parents and grandparents.

- a) Write down any birth, marriage, and death dates and places you know.
- b) List any known siblings/cousins.
- c) Record the information on 1) [a pedigree chart or family group sheet](#) or 2) a free personal tree online. You can build and share trees with other people for free at [Ancestry](#), [MyHeritage](#), or other genealogy companies.

Step 2: Contact living relatives who can help you add to your tree.

- a) Ask known living relatives for contact information for other relatives.
- b) Use social media and the internet to reach out to your relatives.
- c) Interview older generations and ask what they know about your family tree.

Step 3: Search for your deceased ancestors in online trees.

- a) Search the free [FamilySearch Family Tree](#): the world's largest online family tree with over 1.2 billion people in the tree. It is a crowd-sourced tree with record hints and research helps.
 - i. Add the names of your parents and grandparents who are still living to your tree.
 - ii. Search for the names of your deceased grandparents and great-grandparents. They may already be in the tree with ancestors linked to them. If there are no results, you will need to add your deceased grandparents and great-grandparents manually.
- b) Search [MyHeritage](#) and/or [Ancestry](#) Public Trees.
 - i. In order to search Trees, you will need to:
 - Create a free account.
 - Some searches may require a purchased subscription OR you can visit a [Family History Center](#) or local public library where you can access subscription-based records.
 - ii. Search for the names of your deceased grandparents and great-grandparents. Other members may be researching your ancestors and may have included them in their personal tree.
- c) Search Google for your deceased ancestors.

Step 4: Search for your deceased ancestors in historical records.

- a) [FamilySearch](#) offers free resources to help you research your ancestors:
 - i. [FamilySearch Historical Records](#) has over 4 billion free records from around the world.
 - ii. There are over 5,000 local [Family History Centers](#) in the world which provide free access to subscription databases. These centers are staffed by volunteers who have family history training and can provide free help with researching your family.
 - iii. The [FamilySearch Research Wiki](#) has articles with links to records/databases that are available for various countries or areas. It also includes articles on how to do research in those countries or areas.
- b) [Ancestry](#) and [MyHeritage](#) offer historical record collections.
 - i. These sites have some free historical record collections, but most require the paid subscription. (The subscription-based records can be searched for free at many public libraries and at one of the 5,000+ [Family History Centers](#).)
 - ii. Commercial genealogy websites may provide automated hints to records and possible ancestors which can help you build your tree.
- c) Search tips:
 - i. Search census records first.
 - ii. Then search for vital records (birth, marriage, and death records) for your ancestor.