

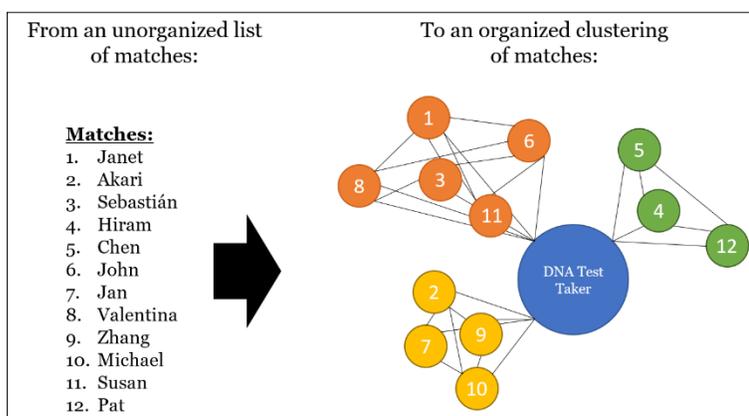
A Deep Dive Into Understanding Your DNA Results: Using Shared Matching and Genetic Networks

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Genetic Networks

A genetic network is an arranged cluster of individuals that have taken a genealogy DNA test, arranged in a group that allows the identification of new information from the grouping. Genetic networks are created using: (1) shared matching information; (2) shared segment information; or (3) both. As genetic networks are expanded, they will also likely include genealogical relatives that fit within the network but do not share matches or DNA with the person for whom the genetic network is formed.



Each of the “Big Five” testing companies (23andMe, AncestryDNA, Family Tree DNA, LivingDNA, and MyHeritage) and GEDmatch (www.GEDmatch.com) offers a genetic network tool for matches.

Using Genetic Networks

A genetic network, whether Shared Matching or Shared Segments (or both!), helps the genealogist form a group of people that provide HINTS to a shared ancestor or ancestral couple. The theory is essentially this: *it is reasonable to hypothesize (but NOT to conclude) that people in a Shared Match Cluster or a Shared Segment Cluster share the same common ancestor. Thus, if we can find the ancestral couple we share with one or more members of the cluster, we can hypothesize how we’re related to the other members of the cluster!*

The steps for utilizing a genetic network are relatively straightforward:

1. **STEP 1:** Identify a Shared Match or Shared Segment Cluster
2. **STEP 2:** Review the trees of the individuals in the cluster (if any);
3. **STEP 3:** Identify one or more ancestors shared in common between your tree and the tree(s) of one or more individuals in the cluster. If there are no identified ancestors shared in common, review the trees for surnames and/or locations you recognize;
4. **STEP 4:** Formulate a hypothesis that you are related to the other members of the cluster via the same identified one or more ancestors; and
5. **STEP 5:** Pursue the hypothesis by gathering new evidence (build trees, contact matches, test other relatives, etc.).