
COLOR CLUSTERING OF ANCESTRYDNA MATCHES

DANA LEEDS

www.danaleeds.com

leeds_dana@yahoo.com

CREATING A COLOR CLUSTER CHART: THE LEEDS METHOD

GOAL: Sort DNA matches into 4 clusters based on sets of 4 grandparent lines.

1. List all 2nd/3rd cousins who share <400 cM of DNA
2. Assign a color to first cousin on list
3. Assign the same color to all that person's Shared Matches
4. Start a new Color Cluster with next person who isn't part of a cluster
5. Assign the same color to all that person's Shared Matches
6. Repeat steps 4 & 5 until everyone is a part of at least one Color Cluster

CONSOLIDATING COLOR CLUSTERS

1. Overlap = one person assigned more than one color
2. With significant overlap, consolidate the Color Clusters

ANALYZING COLOR CLUSTER CHARTS

1. 4 columns/no overlap – likely shows 4 grandparent lines
2. <4 columns/no overlap – likely shows 3 grandparent lines or 4 grandparent lines with 2 “tied” together
3. ~4 columns/some overlap – likely shows people related in more than one way – HIDE these people since they won't help with sort
4. Many columns/lots of overlap
 - a. Error in method
 - b. Pedigree Collapse/Endogamy
 - c. Not enough 2nd cousins

SORTING YOUR EXCEL SPREADSHEET

1. Select entire worksheet > Data > Sort
2. Select “My data has headers”
3. Column > Sort by [surname or column title]
4. Sort On > Cell Colors
5. Order > [choose color] > “On Top”
6. “+ Add Level”
7. Repeat steps 3 -5 as needed
8. Click “OK”

ADDING 4TH COUSINS

1. Open a 4th Cousin’s “Shared Matches”
2. Identify Color Cluster they sort into
3. Add to proper Color Cluster

DNA MATCH LABELING

1. FREE Google Chrome Extension:
<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/category/extensions>
2. Search for “DNA Match Labeling”
3. Click “Add to Chrome”
4. You can label the dots next to each person on AncestryDNA kits you are able to view

FINDING “IN COMMON WITH” SURNAMENES

1. Create Color Cluster chart
2. Label Tree or “NO” Tree
3. List Great Grandparent Surnames of those with trees
4. Identify common surnames if found
5. Label Color Cluster columns with newly identified surnames

THE LEEDS METHOD AROUND THE WEB:

- Facebook group, Genetic Genealogy Tips & Techniques (administered by Blaine Bettinger)
- “The Leeds Method,” *DNAeXplained – Genetic Genealogy* (Roberta Estes),
<https://dna-explained.com/2018/09/26/the-leeds-method/>
- “DNAPainter: Painting Leeds Method Matches,” *DNAeXplained – Genetic Genealogy* (Roberta Estes), <https://dna-explained.com/2018/10/02/dnapainter-painting-leeds-method-matches/>
- “Organizing Matches with the Leeds Method,” *Your DNA Guide* (Diahan Southard),
<https://www.yourdnaguide.com/leeds-method/>