# Searching on Ancestry

Ancestry.ca is the home page for all of the Canadian collections. If you are a subscriber to Ancestry's WORLD Deluxe, you can also log into www.ancestry.ca.

Login using your username/password in the upper right hand corner. If you do go to the other country websites (bottom right hand corner - Ancestry.ca dropdown), you may need to sign in again.

Home Tab /Search Tab Options > Search across all source types (global) in all collections by entering First, Middle, and/or Last Name details in conjunction with other optional fields:
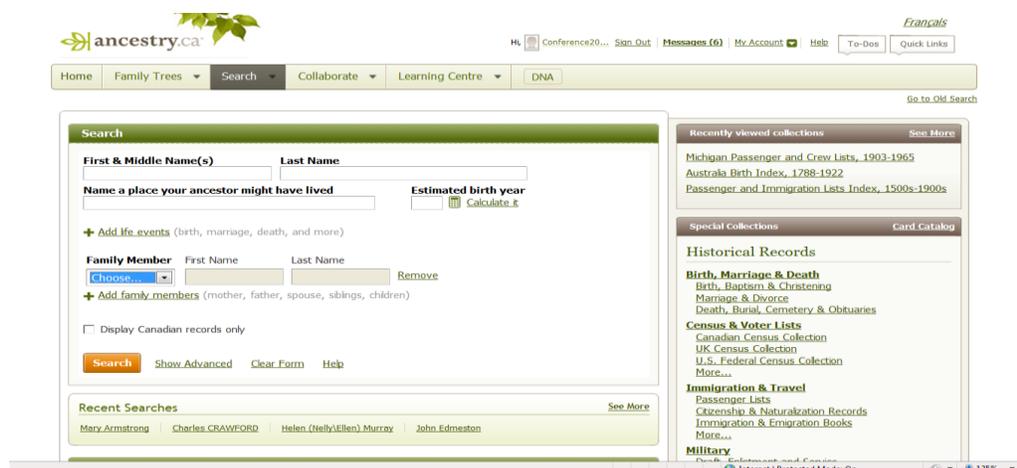
How do I use this search form?

This form asks you to fill in the four most important pieces of information that we can use to help you find your ancestor.

First and Last Name

Including both first and last names will help us find better matches.

- First names: you can include first names, middle names, and/or nicknames.
- Last names: You can enter a woman's maiden and married surnames here.

Tell us one place your ancestor might have lived

To help us find records about a person, enter any place where they might have lived during their life. When you start typing a place name, we'll offer a list of suggested

matching places. You can choose a city, county, state, province, or country name Click on a place name in the list to fill in the box.

Estimated birth year

Most records on Ancestry.ca contain a person's birth year or age. To help us find the most likely records for a person, enter their approximate birth year, or click on "Calculate it" to make an educated guess if you're not sure when they were born.

What are the best search methods to use on Ancestry?

ANSWER

The main challenge some people find at Ancestry.ca is learning how to search through the huge amount of information here. The search process begins with "casting a large net" first. Whatever you find can be refined from that point.

Basic (Global) Search

The global search is done from the home page. When a name is entered there and the Search button is clicked, every database that is indexed for names will be searched. That may be just what you need, but sometimes that type of search will result in more information than needed. While occasionally we look for information about places and historical occurrences, most of the searching done at Ancestry.ca is for individuals. The basic challenge is identification: Is the Johann Schmidt I see on this list really the one I'm looking for? One of the advantages of using a broad general search first and having more results than you initially want is that you can then select a database that is likely to contain the information you are seeking, but which you may not even have considered before.

Unplanned Differences

There are several sources of errors in the indexes we use to find original records:

- The person providing the information for the record may have been unsure of some of the details (like a cousin providing information about the parents of the deceased for a death certificate).
- The one making the record (such as a census taker or records clerk) writes what he or she thinks was said (such as recording McKalsky instead of the Polish name, Menkalski).
- The transcriber(s) misinterpret the writing due to bad handwriting or poor image quality.
- The one making the electronic index (so we can find the record) may also add typographical errors to the final index.
  Note: Errors can occur at each and all steps.

Granted, these differences are a small percentage of the information in the records, but nearly all of us will be dealing with them at some point. There are two ways of finding those differences:
a Soundex search
a Wild card search

What is the Soundex?

Soundex is a system originally used by the National Archives to index records such as censuses and some passenger arrival (immigration) records. Soundex is based on the sound of a name, rather than actual spelling. This allows names such as Smith, Smythe and Smyth to be seen as the same name, while removing the need to sort through names beginning with Sm-. A typical Soundex code begins with

the first letter of a name, followed by three numbers. For example, the Soundex code for the name Wilcox is W422. The follow letters are always disregarded: A, E, H, I, O, U, W, and Y.
The National Archives has provided the following chart for understanding Soundex code:

Number	Letters Represented	Number	Letters Represented
1	B, F, P, V	4	L
2	C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z	5	M, N
3	D, T	6	R

Normally, a researcher would use this system by converting a name to the Soundex Code and then locating the appropriate microfilm roll containing the code for that name. RootsWeb.com provides an easy-to-use Soundex converter, available by clicking here.

What are wild cards and how are they used?

ANSWER
Ancestry offers wild card searching capability as well when searching any of our online databases. wild cards are special symbols that are used in searching to represent some number of unknown letters in a word. Ancestry uses both the asterisk (*) and the question mark (?).

Wild cards can be effective query tools if you are searching for words or names with alternate spellings, but don't wish to view all the extra hits that other methods (such as Soundex) searching can create. You can also use wild cards to view all words that begin with the same stem. For example, a search for fran* will return hits on words like Fran, Franny, Frank, Frannie, Franklin or Frankie.

Additional wild card searching examples could include:
If you want to search for names that differ only by one letter, use the question mark (?) wild card. A search for Johns?n will return both Johnsen and Johnson.

You can search alternate spellings with the asterisk *, which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters. The query Johann* will search for Johann and Johannes. A query for Smel*er will search for Smeltzer and Smelzer, among others.

You can now put a wild card first, such as *son or ?athew to catch all spellings and variations.
Either the first or last character must be a non-wild card character. For example, Han* and *son are okay, but not *anso*.

Names must contain at least three non-wild card characters. For example, Ha*n is okay, but not Ha*
Wild cards work with both Simple & Advanced search, and both Old & New search. They also work with exact matches, and they will give you a lot more flexibility in how you retrieve records.

Note: wild cards do not work with Soundex matches, only exact or ranked.

ADVANCED SEARCH

Ancestry offers several methods of searching. The advanced search allows users to more accurately and efficiently locate an ancestor's information.

How to Access the Advanced Search

The advanced search option is available from most search pages on Ancestry.ca. The search option can be found in one of two places:
In most search pages the Show Advanced button will be displayed on the right side of the green search bar.
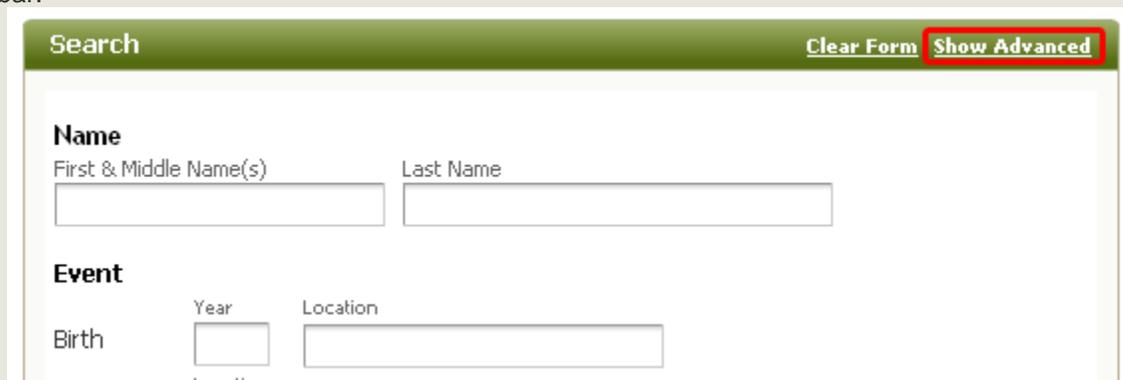
In the general Search page or the Search All Records page, the Show Advanced button is displayed lower on the page, just to the right of the orange Search button.

Note: If the Hide Advanced button is displayed within the green search bar then the advanced search is already active. You can turn it off by clicking on the Hide Advanced button.

Restricting to Exact Matches

When you have the Advanced Search enabled you will be able to choose which results you would like to match exactly what you typed in. If you would like Ancestry.ca to display only results that have the exact information that you typed in.

When you have the Advanced Search enabled you will be given a search settings option under each of the information fields. It will say either Use default settings or Restrict to exact.
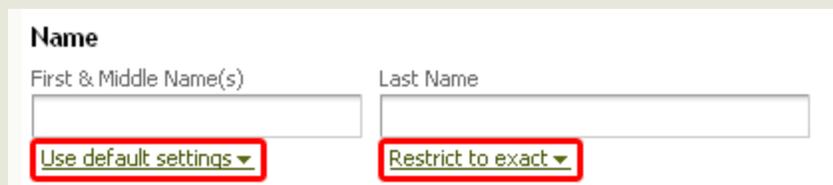
Name

First & Middle Name(s)   Last Name

[Use default settings ▾]   [Restrict to exact ▾]

If you click on the search settings option you will be given a few options:
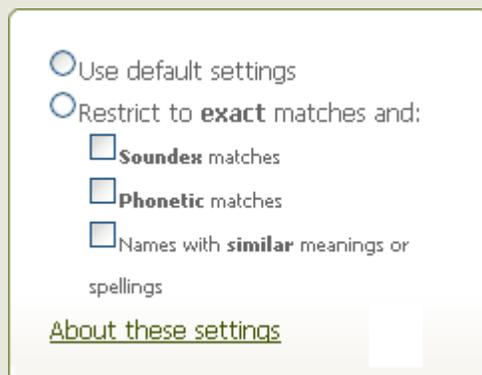
○ Use default settings
○ Restrict to **exact** matches and:
  ☐ **Soundex** matches
  ☐ **Phonetic** matches
  ☐ Names with **similar** meanings or spellings

About these settings

Use default settings

When you use default settings, we look through all information that we have recorded in our more than 29,000 data collections, and pull out any record where the information is:

- Exactly what you typed
- A Soundex match of what you typed
- A similar meaning or spelling to the one you typed

These records are also evaluated against the other criteria that you have given us, and are ordered based on how well all the elements in that record match your search.

Restrict to exact

When you select restrict to exact, only results that contain information exactly as you typed it in will appear in your results. Along with exact matches you can also choose to include any of the following results: Soundex matches: Soundex is a common algorithm used to generate alternate spellings of a surname. If you choose this option, any record that contains one of the Soundex variations for a surname might appear in your results.

Phonetic matches: There are other name matching algorithms that we can use to help identify records to consider for your results. If you choose phonetic, we will identify appropriate algorithms that apply to specific data collections and if a record has one of those names, we will use it as a possible record for your results set. For example, if you are prioritizing Jewish Collections first, we would choose the Daitch-Mokotoff phonetic algorithm.

Names with similar meanings or spellings: There are alternates and spelling variations that are commonly used such as Hashe for Hash. If you choose this option we will look for records with these alternates and consider them as possible results for you to look at.

You can also choose to restrict to exact matches for all categories by checking the box next to Match all terms exactly.
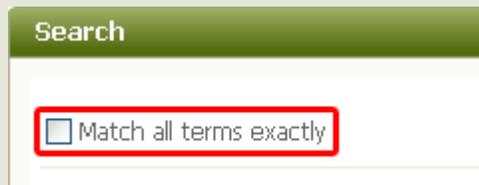
Note: This option will only give you results that exactly match all of the information that you have entered. If this option does not give you any results try unchecking it and searching again.

Changing the Collection Priority

In order to help you get results from a **specific collection** or region Ancestry.ca has included a Collection Priority option. This option is usually found near the bottom of the search window**. Select the specific country or collection you want to search from the Collection Priority drop down menu.**

If you only want to display records from this collection, you can also check the box next to Show only records from these collections. Only results from this collection will be displayed.

Restricting to Specific Record Types

This option is only available in the Search All Records window. It allows you to select which types of records that Ancestry.ca will search. To select a record type, check the box next to the desired record type.

SEARCHING BY LOCATION

How can I limit my search to a specific locality, such as a country, state, province, etc.?

There are two methods to search the Ancestry databases by a specific locality. This type of search allows you to easily eliminate erroneous results through which you might otherwise have to sift to find the ancestors you seek.

Global search

You can firstly do a Global Search of all databases using our special locality filter. To do so, please follow these steps:

- Select the Search tab at the top of the screen
- Enter the name you would like to search in the First Name and Last Name fields
- Using the Country field, select one of the countries found in the drop-down list provided
- If you have selected a specific country, you can narrow the locality further using the State / Province / County field
- Click the Search button

The search results screen will bring up results for the name you entered in the locality you selected.

Note: The Locality filter currently functions for most, but not all, databases. Some results will appear for areas other than the locality you selected. This is because some databases have not been indexed to recognize which words represent localities and which represent names or other information. Other databases, such as the Ancestry World Tree, have location names listed in multiple forms (e.g. CA, California, Cali, etc.). For this reason, the search filter is unable to distinguish between specified locations. If a database is not set up for the Locality Search, it will simply bring up results for all localities in order to ensure that you do not miss pertinent results.

Finding an Ancestry Database for a particular location

There are two main ways that you can search a database for a particular location:
Using the map
Using the Card Catalog

Using the map

Click on the Search tab
Scroll down to the box Explore by Location
Select the country by using the tabs along the top

Select the province or state by clicking the area on the map
A list of databases for that location will populate

Using the Card Catalog

Click on the Search tab
Click on the Card Catalog next to Special Collections

Scroll down until you see the Filter by Location heading in the Filter Titles column on the left side of the screen.

Click on your desired location, and if necessary continue to look drill down by country, region, state or province and a list of databases for that location will populate in the Matches field.

How can I use the Card Catalog to find one specific database?

Because of the large number of databases on Ancestry, we do not expect you to simply know where a specific database can be found. To assist you with this, we provide a Card Catalog (and database list) for quickly locating the information you need.

Finding the database list

A list of all of the databases on Ancestry can be found hovering your cursor over the Search button. You will then click on Card Catalog from the dropdown list.
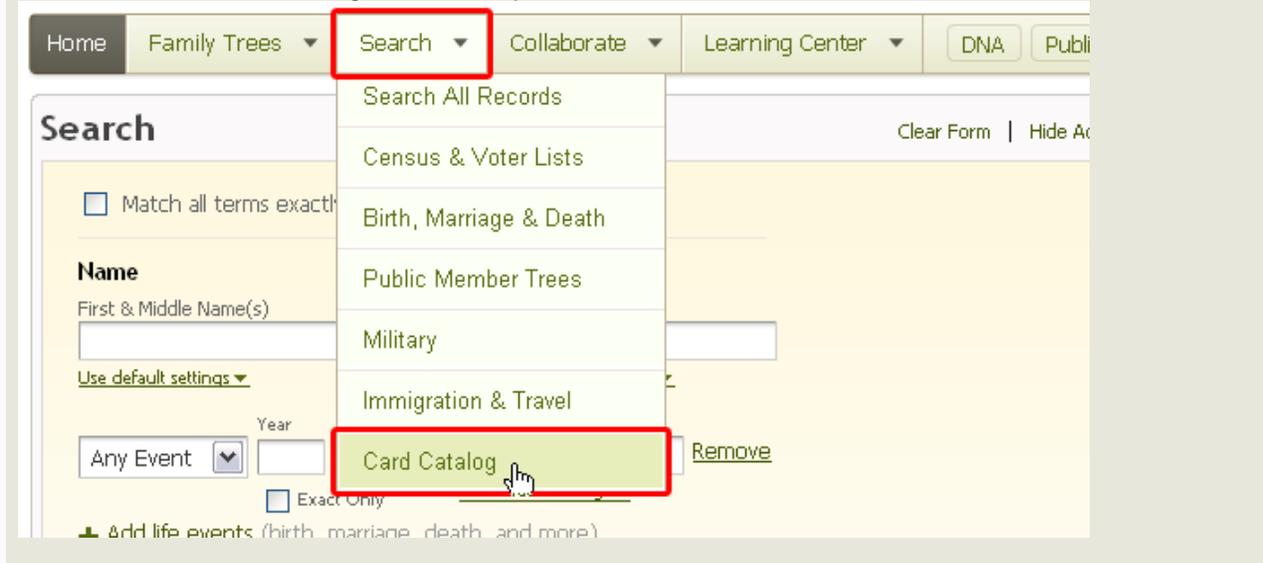
Search Titles

The simplest method of finding a particular database is to search for it. Just as our site provides the ability to search for individuals, it also allows you to search for databases. After going to the list of all databases (see above), a search template should appear at the top left corner of the page. Use this as you would a search template elsewhere to search for a database name. If you do not know the name of the database you want, enter words that are likely to be in the title, such as Kentucky, cemetery, or history.

You can also use the Keyword(s) field for other terms that may be associated with the database you want. For example "Ontario" Entering more than one term will help you narrow your results. "Ontario Marriages" For further tips on searching in general (which includes how to search Ancestry's Card Catalog), please click here.

Filter Titles

To browse a list of specific databases, go to the Filter Titles section just below the Search Titles section in the top left corner. In the Filter Titles section, you will be able to filter the databases by the collection type (such as Military records or Census and Voter Lists). You can also filter the databases down by the location, the date as well as the language that database is in. You can filter by a single choice or by multiple choices, such as filtering to Census and Voter Lists in the 1850's to narrow down the filter further.

Please note that a maximum of 25 results per page will be displayed. If a particular two- or three-letter string has more than 25 results and you do not locate a desired database on the current list of results,

please select the Next link to view additional results.
 Once you have located the database you desire, simply click the title of that individual database. You can then search or find more information about this particular database.

How do I manage my search results?

Answer
 Ancestry.ca has provided many features to help you more effectively locate the search results that you are looking for.
 This article discusses the following:
 Why am I getting so many results?
 Editing your search
 Narrow by category
 Sorting your results
 Other search result features

Why am I getting so many results?

 In order to help you find the records that you are looking for Ancestry.ca prioritizes your results, much like google does. The search feature uses an algorithm that prioritizes the results based on the information that you have entered. The most relevant results will appear at the top of your results, while the less relevant results, including alternate spellings and soundex matches, will appear farther down on your list.
 Note: To narrow your search further you can add more information by following the instructions in the Editing your search section below. You can also restrict your search to exact matches, for instructions on this, please click here.

Editing your search

 To help you easily add or remove search criteria Ancestry.ca has provided an Edit Search option. This can be found in the top left corner of your screen.
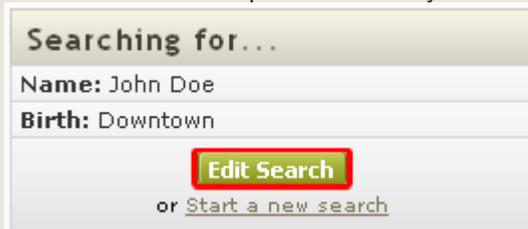
You can also press the R button on your keyboard at any time while in the search results page to refine your search.

Narrow by category

You can also narrow your results by selecting a category under the Narrow by Category option. This will show only results of the specific category selected.

Narrow by Category	
▾ **All Categories**	
Census & Voter Lists	76
Birth, Marriage & Death	3,434
Military	274
Immigration & Travel	47
Newspapers & Publications	5,000+
Pictures	6
Stories, Memories & Histories	2,181
Schools, Directories & Church Histories	248
Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills	516
Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs	92
Family Trees	650

Sorting your results

Search results are viewable in two different formats:
Sorted by relevance – This allows you to sort the individual results according relevance
Summarized by category – This option will display the results grouped into Categories and Databases.

By Relevance		View	Sorted by relevance ▾
			Sorted by relevance
			Summarized by category
Marriages and	NAME: **John Doe**		
	PARENTS: John Doe		
	Jane Doe		
	BIRTH: abt 1714		
	BAPTISM: 4 Dec 1714 - St Marylebone, Middlesex		

Other search result features

The following hot keys will help you to quickly navigate the results page:
N – New search
R – Refine search
P – Preview current record
> – Highlight next record
> – Highlight previous record
At the bottom of the search results page you can adjust the number of results that are displayed per page (up to 100). You can also switch between pages of results.

Military
★★★⯪☆
View Image

RESIDENCE: East Bridgewater, Plymout
Massachusetts
OTHER: East Bridgewater City

World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918
Military
★★★⯪☆
View Image

NAME: John Doe II,
BIRTH: 3 Mar 1891 - Great
Britain;Guinea
RESIDENCE: Boston, Suffolk, Massachu
OTHER: Boston City

Results per page: 20 ▾   1-20 of 62,841   1 2

How do I use Reference and Finding Aids on Ancestry.ca without a paid account?

ANSWER

Ancestry.ca provides a broad variety of tools and reference aids to increase the effectiveness of your family history research. Among these are online references, information on how to find additional sources, family trees, message boards, the Learning Center, and information on how to resolve technical issues. Additionally, there is a great deal of information available to assist you to find data more effectively, understand this better, and know how to follow up to locate even more. A series of articles on research techniques at Ancestry.ca can be found beginning at the link below. A description of other aids at your disposal follows as well.

http://ancestry.custhelp.ca/cgi-bin/ancestry.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=2574

Resource tabs

Usually overlooked, the resource tabs provide further information that may prove very helpful in your research. Click the Search tab at the top of most pages on Ancestry. To the right, a Browse Records menu should show different record types (by heading) and their featured databases. One of the best help sections available on Ancestry.ca can be found by clicking the Reference & Finding Aids heading under this side menu.

Also, below the search template, several small, regional maps should be shown. Below these is a large map of the United States. Clicking a regional map will change the larger map below. You can then click on a location (state, province, county, nation, etc.) to view databases for that area specifically.

Databases listed on the following page include not only those from the specified location (state, province, etc.), but also those reporting residence there. For example, clicking on the map of Europe and then clicking on Russia on the larger map shows immigration records from the United States where Russian immigrants were reported. Also shown are records from Germany where Russians were reported as leaving there.

Above the list of databases for the specific location (county, nation, etc.) you have chosen, multiple tabs should be available, from among the following: Database, Sources, and How To's. These tabs are explained below.

The Database tab should be selected by default when viewing the list of databases. If you are ever using one of the other tabs and wish to again view available databases for your chosen area, click this tab. The Sources tab describes how to access additional resources, such as:

Vital records— The addresses for sending inquiries to order copies of original records and for what period of time these may exist
Census records— The years and locations where there will or will not be records from local and national censuses
Land records— Where certain kinds of land records can be found
Court records— Where to look for what kinds of court records
Military records— What kinds of records may be archived at a local, state, or national level

Additional sources— A variety of further types of aids for your research:
- Ways to contact an office or department by direct mail, phone, email, or online for important record locations for the state or country
- historical and genealogy associations
- libraries to visit
- other websites with helpful information

The How To's tab provides useful information, which differs by region. For the United Kingdom and Ireland, instructions on how to research in the databases and other research areas at Ancestry.ca are provided. For the United States, there are direct links relative to state research and records to sections of the primary research works at Ancestry.ca (The Source, Red Book) and other national records.

Resource links

When you are viewing information by location (as described in the last section), a set of links should appear on the left side of the page. These links go directly to the following areas for the location (county, province, etc.) you previously chose:

- the Message Board specific to that region (e.g., the Alberta Message Board)
- a list of articles and columns in the Learning Center dealing with that region
- a list of CDs or books in the Ancestry online store dealing with that region

The Message Boards are generally accessed via a tab at the top of most pages on Ancestry.ca, unless you are using an institutional account where this tab has been disabled. This section of Ancestry.ca provides more than 135,000 surname, locality, and topical message boards. You can often find answers from fellow researchers and also share your own experiences or research with others.

Choosing the Locality option from the link described above or from the main Message Boards page may help you find a group devoted to one of your family names or a particular location where you are currently challenged. This is an effective way to collaborate with other amateur and professional family historians.

You may to search the Learning Center (discussed below) for the words message boards for instructions on posting effective messages.

The Learning Center also has a tab at the top of most pages on Ancestry.com in addition to the link described above. This section contains many valuable resources that will give you further instruction for your research. You can search nearly 10,000 articles that have appeared in Ancestry Magazine, Genealogical Computing, Ancestry Daily News, and syndicated columns by professional genealogists. You can click here to go to the main Learning Center page directly in a new window. Once there, you can search using terms for location, ethnic group, research technique, etc. You can use multiple terms (separated by spaces) as well. You can also browse the current issue of the Ancestry Daily News or its archives back to 1999. The "genealogy training sites" link (at the bottom of the first paragraph on the main Learning Center page) allows you to sign up for and participate in a variety of online classes.

Our effective online Knowledge Base is the only resource not labeled for direct access. In the top right corner of every page on Ancestry.ca is a Help link. When you click that link, the next page has a list of several questions most frequently asked by users of Ancestry.ca, with the Ask Ancestry tab (below the tabs labeled Home, My Ancestry, Search Records, etc.) is active by default. The Knowledge Base is the name for the database listing answers to most questions users might have.

How can I use this online Help to find answers to questions or concerns I have?

Searching for Answers

The Knowledge Base provides different options for finding the answers you seek. The three main methods of finding these include searching, sorting, and related answers. All of these are explained in further detail below. Each method has benefits and limitations; you may find that, over time, you use all methods, depending on your needs.

To perform a search within the Knowledge Base, first click the Ask Ancestry tab. At the top of the Ask Ancestry page, enter search terms in the Keyword Search field.

Performing a Search
To perform a search more effectively, consider these points:

By default, when a search is performed within the Knowledge Base, all occurrences of any of the words searched are returned as possible matches. Example: Searching with the phrase census viewer will show all articles that contain any use of "census," any use of "viewer," or any use of both terms within the same article.

To require words, a plus (+) symbol is placed in front of any term included in a search. Only articles containing that term will be returned. Example: Searching with the phrase +census +viewer will only return articles containing both the terms "census" and "viewer."

To exclude words, a minus (-) symbol is placed in front of any term included in a search. All articles including that term will be omitted from the search results. Example: Searching with the phrase +census +viewer -print will only return articles containing both the terms "census" and "viewer," but in which the term "print" does not appear.

All of the aforementioned search techniques search for different forms of any terms included, such as singular, plural, or different verb tenses. Example: Searching with the phrase +census +view will return results with articles including "census," "censuses," "censual," or "censused," as well as "view," "views," "viewed," or "viewer."

Sorting Search Results

When a list of search results is retrieved, you can sort these to more quickly find an article specifically addressing your question. Sorting options include:

Because every article is assigned a specific topic and (when applicable) subtopic, searches can be further narrowed after results are returned. After searching, if you find too many results, choose a topic and subtopic other than All from the drop-down menu. Click Search again to see new, more narrowed results. Example: After searching with the initial phrase +census +view, too many results are displayed. Searching again after choosing the topic of Computer Basics and the subtopic of Specific Error Messages will return all articles where any form of both "census" and "view" appears, provided the articles have been assigned this topic and subtopic.

The ▼and ▲icons in the column headings can be used to order answers. The down-arrow sorts in reverse alphabetical order, while the up-arrow sorts in normal alphabetical order.

Reviewing Answers

 After performing a search, click any title from the list of results shown to view the associated article. The article name (as it appeared in the search results) is displayed at the top. The Question directly below this provides clarification on the contents of the article, which directly follow in the section labeled Answer.

 Most articles will include navigation links at the top to allow you to jump more quickly to information you need. Review all contents to avoid missing important information. For example, special notes, troubleshooting steps, and links to related articles are often found at the bottom of an article.

 Verify that you follow any steps provided exactly. If you miss a step or follow it incorrectly, you may not have the same results as described, or you may even create problems for yourself that did not already exist.

 A Related Answers section appears below every article. If you find the article you are viewing does not answer all of your questions, links given here may offer the information you need.

 Information you have found can also be kept for future reference. From the left column of the Answer display page:

 Click Email Answer to have a copy of the article sent to you. You will need to enter certain information when prompted.
 Click Print Answer to use your own printer to create a copy of the article.

Helping the Knowledge Base improve

 Your feedback is important to us. Please let us know how to improve our site by providing detail about your experience using our Help services. This is one of the best ways you can assist us in maintaining quality in the service we offer. Feedback can be provided in the following two ways.

 Rating an answer
 Below an article's text is a section labeled Did This Answer Your Question? where you can indicate how well your question was answered by that article. Simply click the radio button (circle) next to your choice and click the Submit Rating button. Information is stored not only about your rating, but about any searches you performed prior to that.

 Example: A user searches for +message +board -alerts. After an article is chosen from the results and reviewed, assigning a rating of Yes increases the chance that the answer will be returned when the same search is performed. The article would also be more likely to appear near the top of a search results list. Assigning a rating of No has the opposite effect.

Contacting Member Services – 1-800-958-9073

 We encourage feedback about the Knowledge Base. You may send an email with comments or suggestions. Our Member Services department will review your comments and consider these when adjustments to the Knowledge Base are made.
 In the field labeled Feedback about, select Knowledge Base. Indicating What type of feedback you are submitting will better help us when considering future changes to the Knowledge Base.

How can I find living persons on Ancestry?

ANSWER
Ancestry.ca is perhaps best known for its resources in helping users research their family histories. We publish books, magazines, and CDs, instructional material, reference material, vital records, maps, pedigrees, etc. Though we provide this information for finding the deceased, we have information that can assist researchers in locating the living as well.

Clicking the following link will provide For a list of helpful research techniques please; click here
Searching for the living may pose unique challenges, such as laws protecting rights of privacy and highly mobile societies. Research techniques for finding living individuals are the same as those used to find ancestors or extended family. The key is to work from the known toward the unknown.

You are not limited to your own knowledge exclusively. Family and others may be willing to share what they know and have heard about a specific individual. Any details you learn about the person, regardless of how seemingly insignificant, may provide keys for identifying them in other records. Asking specific questions of others may trigger additional memories and clues to assist you.

Ancestry Collections

SSDI on Ancestry.com and Obituaries— If you are uncertain whether a person for whom you are searching is living, you will want to determine this. The Social Security Death Index (SSDI), the Obituary Collection, and various state death indexes can assist with this. Click the Search tab at the top of most pages on Ancestry and locate the Browse Records section on the right of the next page. In this area, click the links for either the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) or the Obituary Collection.

The SSDI can help you determine if the person you seek is alive. Additionally, look for obituaries of the person's parents, family, or relatives. Obituaries typically list the names of living relatives and where they live. These additional individuals and references can be great sources of additional information.

Phone Directories— Ancestry provides national telephone directories for both 1994 and 2000. On the Browse Records section once more (described above), locate and click on the Directories & Member Lists heading. The following page will list databases that contain directories of various types (such as Sioux City, Iowa Directories, 1889-90, 1892-93) and lists of members of particular organizations (such as Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900). You can search all of these databases from the search template at the top of the page, or you can use a specific database's search template by clicking on that database from the list part way down the page and then entering your criteria in the template on the following page.

Ancestry World Tree and the OneWorldTreeSM— It is possible to locate those related to the person you seek by searching for one or more parents or grandparents. The more information you gather about ancestors of that living individual, the easier locating those who have done related research will be. Contacting such submitters can often yield further information on the living people you are researching.

Research Tools

A basic description of research techniques at Ancestry can be found by clicking here.
 The Source— Two chapters in The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy (available online) describe current research, which will help identify record types available to you and how to find them. Click either link here to go to Tracking Twentieth-Century Ancestors or Tracking Urban Ancestors. The first of these describes the Social Security Administration Letter-Forwarding Service, Internal Revenue Service Letter-Forwarding Service, use of Voter Registration Records, and Public School and University Records.

 Red Book— Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources gives mailing and website addresses for vital records offices and other key information for each state. To see what is available, enter the state name you wish at the following page:
   http://www.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=3249

 Learning Center— Here are past articles from genealogy magazines, etc. Of particular note are "Finding Living People Using the Internet" by Kip Sperry and "How to Solve the Adoptee's 'Who Am I?' Mystery" by Donna Weaver. A comprehensive adoption article is also available in our Knowledge Base.

 City Directories— City directories are different from phone directories, as discussed in the article "City vs. Telephone Directories," from the syndicated columns Along Those Lines. Both types of directories can be found in public and college libraries. You will want directories for places and times appropriate.
 Message Boards— Search in and post questions about your person to the Message Boards under the tab at the top of most Ancestry.ca pages. For information on searching the Message Boards, click here.

Other Resources

In addition to the above suggestions and links, a list of more than 150 similar websites can be found on the Finding People page of "Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet," available by clicking here.
 Additional local directories are available at public and private libraries, or on the Internet as shown below:

http://www.infobel.ca/belgium/	http://reversephonedirectory.ca/
http://dexonline.ca/	http://www.canada411.ca/
http://switchboard.ca/	http://infospace.ca/

Microfilm copies of city directories from throughout the United States can also be found by clicking here.

How do I search the census databases?

All of our census databases from the US, Canada, UK and Ireland have been indexed and can be searched by name. To search our indexes (which have advanced search features such as a Soundex search filter) please follow these steps:

1. Click the "Search Records" tab at the top of the page.

2. Click the "Census" heading in the "More Records" column on the right.

3. If you wish to search all census records, enter the name you are researching and any additional search criteria and click the "Search" button.

If you wish to search a specific census database, select the census year and locality in the "Search Individual Census Databases" list at the bottom of the page and click "Go".
On the title page for that database, enter the name you are researching and any additional search criteria and click the "Search" button.

4. The results will be listed in index form. If images are available for that census database, you can view the image by clicking the "View Image" icon on the right.

Our census databases also include images that can be browsed by county, civil parish, or island. This allows you to page through the records as if searching the original census documents.

To browse the Census Images, please use the following steps:

1. Click on the "Search Records" tab at the top of the page

2. Click on the "Census" heading in the "More Records" column on the right

3. In the "Search Individual Census Databases" list at the bottom of the page, click the Census year and location you wish to browse.

4. Click "Go", and you will be taken to the title page for that census collection.

5. Scroll down below the search box. If census images are available for that year and location, you will see links for all islands, civil parishes, or counties included in that census.

6. Click the link for the island, civil parish, or county you wish to browse.

7. On subsequent screens, if you are prompted for a civil parish or an enumeration district, click the links for the locations you wish to browse.

You will now see the Census records for the locality of your choice. You will also be able to jump to a nonadjacent image within an enumeration district or township in the Census Images Online. Simply type the image number that you wish to view in the box just above the image and click "Go".

When someone has a relatively unique name, it may be advantageous to enter only the first or last name and limit the search results with the other criteria available within the database. For example, in searching in the 1930 Census for Greensbury Bivens living in Somerset County, Maryland, you can enter Green* in the first name field, nothing in the last name field, select Maryland in the State field, and enter Somerset in the County field. He is listed as Greenberry Brewans in the index.

Names such as MacDougal, O'Brien, DiAngelo and van Dyke are handled the same. Try the name with the prefix attached (O'Brien would be OBrien). If that is not successful, try the name without the prefix (Dougal, Brien, Angelo, Dyke) or a space in-between the prefix (O Brien).

Always be aware that you have to be flexible in looking for people. Names are always going to be a challenge. Two examples of names in the SSDI: Lois M ?urgess (SSN 443-56-7889) and J. F. Jr. (SSN 433-56-7234).

To find "spellings" such as these, go to the individual database you want and click Search without entering anything into either name field. The only way to find these people is to use only the first name, with additions of place of residence, birth date, death date, etc. If you know enough other details about the person you are seeking, you may even locate the record in an index without using the name at all.

Even if you know all the information about a person that is in the index, the index entries often lead to additional, possibly unknown, information when you send away for a copy of the source of the information.

You will be more successful refining your search as you get away from global searching and into individual databases. For example, let us assume you want to find an ancestor who fought in the Civil War. There are significant differences among these five Civil War search templates:

Another idea: When the list of databases is too large to easily browse, you can go to the bottom of the page and use the "Refine your search" template. (i.e. you want to find which newspapers on the very long list you have are from the Topeka area.) If you want a quick alternative instead, you can also hold the Control key and press F on your keyboard or select Edit and then Find in your Internet browser menu to find where that specific word or phrase is used on that page.

As you use these search techniques, you will increase your success in finding the records about your ancestors, their families and their contemporaries.

Don't be afraid to use all possible tools.

Contacting Customer Service - If you need to reach Ancestry for technical concerns, please click here. For all other concerns, you can **contact** us by telephone at 1-800-958-9073 (toll free). Our available hours are M-F 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST and Sat/Sun 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST. Our representatives will be more than happy to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have. If you are calling from a location outside of **Canada**, please click here to see a list of available **contact** times and phone numbers from your location.

Creative Search Strategies

- Use **WILDCARD** searches, i.e. * for endings and ? for characters

- Learn how to **misspell** the name – spell phonetically

- **Alternate spellings** of the name – Harriette or Harriet

- Use **diminutive names** – Annabelle try Anna, Belle, even Nancy!

- **Alternate forms** of the names – Elizabeth could be Betty, Beth, Eliza

- Choose another family member with a more **unusual name**

- **Substitute a middle name** for the first name

- **Transpose** the last and first name

- **Combine** both first and middle names

- Use **Maiden names** as middle names or last names

- Change the **first letter**

- Try using only a **first name** and a **location** if the area is small.

- **Titles** - Mr. Mrs. Dr. Widow Mme, Miss,

- Mc Mac O **with a space or none**

Letter	Variations	Letter	Variations
a	u, o, s, r	n	m, u, rr
b	l, lo	o	a, u, s
c	e	p	ss
d	sl	q	g
e	i, c	r	n, i
f	ss, h, t	s	r, a
g	y	t	l
h	ts, k	u	v, n, er, ee
i	e	v	u, r
j	y, g	w	m
k	h	x	rc
l	b, t	y	z, g
m	n, w	z	y

Letter	Variations	Letter	Variations
A	O, Fl	N	V, K
B	R	O	A
C	I, P	P	R, T, L
D	T, I	Q	O
E	F	R	K
F	T, P	S	L, T
G	Y, J, E	T	F
H	K, Th	U	V
I	C	V	U
J	G, T	W	M
K	R	X	
L	S, T, P	Y	G, Z
M	W	Z	Y