

12 Tips to Help You Find Census Records on Ancestry and Findmypast

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Dave Cross made a presentation to *Before BIFHSGO* of the steps he follows when searching for elusive ancestors on census records. Although Dave's presentation was largely based on searching using Ancestry's searching capabilities, many of these suggestions will likely work on other websites that provide census information.

1. Search by full name and other details as known.
2. Remove details and just search on first and last name with birthplace.
3. Try last name with birthdate.
4. Try first name with birth date.
5. Try searching just using first names of family.
6. Try first and last name with search strings (ie *oss will provide all results ending in oss and cro* will bring names beginning with cro). You need 3 letters.
7. Replace one or more letters with ? Mark, ie cro?? Will give 5 character responses starting with cro.
8. Search for other family members.
9. Search for neighbours from an earlier census.
10. Use Last name and birthplace, first with year of birth then without.
11. Use first name and birthplace, first with year of birth then without.
12. Search more than one source. I often find census records on Findmypast which I cannot locate on ancestry and vice versa.