

Twenty tips for starting your family history

1. Have a look around your house and gather together any birth/death/marriage certificates and photographs you can find.
2. Contact other family members by phone/email or even video chat to see if they have any certificates or photos and ask if they could email you a picture of these items.
3. Try and find out if anyone else in the family has already produced a family tree.
4. Contact any older relatives and chat to them about their family memories. They can often help with things like occupations or where people lived.
5. Once you've gathered together all your pieces of evidence it's time to get organised. Using a family tree chart can help, you can find lots of free ones online.

TRACING YOUR FAMILY TREE FIRST STEPS

1 Have a think about what you know
 When starting your family history it's a good idea to have a think about what you already know. There will be gaps in your knowledge – don't worry if there are – we'll have things we don't know, mysteries to solve, questions we're working the answer to.

Can your relations help?
 It might be that you have family members who can help you. Older people's memories can hold valuable clues to the past, and your relations may have family papers, photos and mementoes with clues about people's names and holidays. For instance, that you can glean for your family tree. If possible, be sure to ask your relations for help.

MY FAMILY TREE CHART

1x great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:
1x great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	1x great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:
Great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	Great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	Great-grandfather Name: Date of birth: Date of death:	Great-grandmother Name: Date of birth: Date of death:

Grandfather
 Name:
 Date of birth:
 Date of death:

Grandmother
 Name:
 Date of birth:
 Date of death:

Father
 Name:
 Date of birth:
 Date of death:

Mother
 Name:
 Date of birth:
 Date of death:

This is the family tree of
 Name:
 Date of birth:
 Spouse:
 Siblings:

Tip!
 If you're unsure of any facts, use a pencil so you can easily amend the details when you find out more.

2 Fill in the family tree chart
 Write in the details that you do know on the family tree chart above. This will give you a clear idea how much you know – and what you need to find out next.

<https://www.family-tree.co.uk/how-to-guides/which-family-tree-chart-should-i-use/> accessed Jan 2022

6. Start with yourself and fill in the family tree chart working backwards from yourself, then your parents, their parents etc.

7. Once you've filled in the chart you will have gaps, but that's ok as you now have a clear idea of what information you need to find out.
8. To find Scottish birth, marriage and death dates use the ScotlandsPeople website <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>
9. Searching the indexes on ScotlandsPeople is free but to view images of original records you need to pay using credits you have purchased.
10. Use the ScotlandsPeople YouTube videos to help you get started, such as 'How to register an account', 'Purchase credits', and 'How to search for records'
<https://www.youtube.com/c/scotlandspeople/videos>
11. Remember to keep notes to remind yourself what you are looking for, what search terms you have tried, and the results. This will save you time and money later.
12. We suggest you pick either your mother's or father's side of the family and focus on that first to avoid confusion. Don't be tempted to try and do both sides at the same time.
13. There are some free websites you can use to help you get started. And sometimes you may find other people's family trees. But do always double check the information against an original record and see the official evidence for yourself. That way you know you aren't just copying someone else's mistake.
14. The Family Search website is free. It is run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church). Their members have a religious requirement to research their ancestry. However anyone can use the website which has a range of digitised records and indexes. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>
15. Some libraries and archives have taken out subscriptions to genealogy websites like Ancestry or Find My Past. This gives you free access without having to purchase your own personal subscription. Contact your local library to find out more.

16. Join a family history society for the area you are researching. Societies often host talks or workshops and offer advice for members. Find a list of societies on the Scottish Association of Family History Societies website <https://www.safhs.org.uk/>
17. Borrow a book on family history from your local library, you can find these by searching the library online catalogue, the East Dunbartonshire Library Catalogue is <https://edlc.koha-ptfs.co.uk/>
18. Look for family history groups on Facebook, for example the professional genealogists Scottish Indexes have created a Facebook group and organise a regular online conference with Q&As and guest speakers see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/scottishindexes/>
19. Scottish Indexes have also created a Learning Zone on their website <https://www.scottishindexes.com/learning.aspx>
20. Visit our EDLC Family History webpage for more detailed information on the main sources for research <https://www.edlc.co.uk/heritage-arts/family-history>