

GEDCOM: GEnealogical Data COMmunication, a database format developed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, to make it possible to transfer genealogical data between users, computers and large databases. It is supported by most genealogical database applications.

Ancestral Quest

Importing GEDCOM Files

You can import data from other genealogy databases into your own database or into a new, empty database by means of GEDCOM. The GEDCOM file can come from another genealogy program or databases such as Ancestral File™ or the International Genealogical Index® (IGI). You might have downloaded it at a Family History Center™ or from the Internet, or received it from a relative via e-mail or on a floppy disk. The file could be one you created yourself for the purpose of splitting your database or moving data into AQ from a different genealogy program.

1. Run a virus checker on the file. Be sure your virus checker is updated frequently so it will check for all the currently-known viruses.
2. Verify that the file you received is in GEDCOM format. A GEDCOM file has the extension .ged.
3. Decide whether you want to import the data from the file into an existing database, or a create a new database and import the file into it. It is recommended that a GEDCOM file that came from someone else should be imported into an empty database first so that you can examine the data carefully and edit it as needed. If you change it, make a new GEDCOM file to import into your existing data.
4. To import the GEDCOM file into an existing database, open the database, or
To import the GEDCOM file into a new, empty database, select File, then New. Select the location for the new file and enter a file name.
5. Select File, then Import, click the Import button in the Toolbar.

If you are going to import the GEDCOM file into an existing database, that data file should be open.

If you received the GEDCOM file from someone else and want to examine it before adding it to your own data, a new, empty database should be open.

1. In the Import GEDCOM File window, select the drive and directory where the GEDCOM file is located. If the file is on a floppy and is large, you might want to copy it to your hard disk for faster processing. The GEDCOM file will have the extension .ged.
2. In the files list, select the GEDCOM file you wish to import.

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3. Click OK.

Next you will select options in the GEDCOM Import dialog box.

GEDCOM Import Options. Verify that the path and file name of the GEDCOM file (the Import source file) and the location where you want the GEDCOM file to go (the Destination) are correct.

2. Select options:

Add a source to all individuals and marriages: If you check this box, AQ will create a new source record for this GEDCOM file, and attach this source to all individual and marriage records that are imported from this GEDCOM file. You will be given the opportunity to edit this source at the beginning of the import process.

Include listing file data in notes: Any data in the GEDCOM file that cannot be imported properly into your data base will be copied to the exception report, called the listing file. Click the check box to have the same data also copied to the notes field of the applicable individuals. This is highly recommended as it is much easier to locate the errors and decide what to do with the information when it is in the person's notes. Fortunately, the longer fields and flexible date fields of AQ 11 have eliminated most of the listing file reportable errors.

Import notes: Click the check box if you want any notes in the GEDCOM file added to the database.

Import Scrapbook Items: If the GEDCOM file includes embedded multimedia objects, checking this box will cause these files to be extracted from the GEDCOM file and created on your disk. If you don't check this box, these objects will be ignored.

Import Research/To Do Items: If the GEDCOM file includes any to do or research items, check this box to have these items imported.

Reuse deleted records: Click this check box to cause any RINs and MRINs that are vacant due to previous deletions to be re-used by new individuals as they are imported. This is very helpful for users who do not do a lot of data entry which would otherwise fill these "holes" in the database.

Leave this check box blank if you are importing into an empty database, or if you prefer to have all the imported RINs and MRINs added to the end of your existing database. This can be an advantage because you will be able to instantly tell by the RIN or MRIN which data was in your own database (you checked for your highest RIN and MRIN before you started the import), and which was imported from the other source. This is especially useful when merging duplicate records.

Once the import is completed, the Windows Notepad will open, showing you the listing file created by the import process.

- If you have opted to have the listing file information put in each applicable individual's notes, you do not need to read the listing file; click Close.

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- If you did not, you will have to read through the listing file and the database, and match the error information with the individuals. You can cut and paste information from this listing file into the imported records as needed. You can resize Ancestral Quest and Notepad, so that you can see them side by side as you work, copying information from the listing file to the clipboard, then pasting this information into your database records. While this method is time-consuming, it can be preferable to automatically putting the listing file information in the notes when the program that created the GEDCOM file created an excessive amount of unwanted codes or information. For keys to use, see Editing Keys. When you are finished checking the listing file, close Notepad.

Custom Conversion of Place names: Select this option if you would like to Convert Place Abbreviations for the place names of the file you are importing. This is used to change abbreviated places (States of the United States and Provinces of Canada) to their full names. You can also convert the full place names to abbreviations. See the Convert Place Abbreviations topic for how to use this feature.

Note: During the import process, if the Surname field contains names that have been entered in all capital letters, you will be prompted as to whether you would like to convert such names to mixed case. See the Convert Names to Mixed Case discussion for more on this feature.

Working with Imported Data

If you imported a GEDCOM file into an empty file:

In Pedigree View, the first individual will be the person with the lowest RIN in the exporting database, not necessarily the person the import started with. You might see up to five generations of this first person's ancestors, and possibly arrows to indicate additional generations. If you do not see ancestors, look for descendant arrows to see others in the file. If you do not see arrows or the people you expected to see, switch to the individual's spouse. You could also look at the browse list to see if all the people you expected to be in the file are there, then select one of them and view their ancestors or descendants.

If you imported a GEDCOM file into an existing file (**use with caution**):

Do not blindly import data from a GEDCOM file into your family database. First understand what data is in the GEDCOM file, and make sure you want to include that data in your file. We strongly recommend making a backup of your database before importing a GEDCOM file, so that if you find you want to reverse the process, you can restore your data from the backup.

After completing an import, the data you just imported will not automatically link itself to any data that you already had. When you initially look at the Pedigree View screen, you will not see any of the newly imported data. You need to link the imported data to the existing data.

How to make the link

There are two ways you can link imported data to existing data:

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1. Use Merge to combine individuals who are the same both in the old existing data and in the new imported data.
2. Link an individual from the imported data to an individual in the existing data. For example, link a child to a parent, or two people as spouses in a marriage.

Examples of each are given below.

Merging

Suppose you have a great-grandfather named John Smith. You had only sketchy information on his parents. You located a source that had more information on his parents and their ancestors, so you obtained a GEDCOM file of John Smith and all of the related information. After importing it into an empty database and examining the data, you feel confident that it can be imported into your own database as is. You then import the GEDCOM file into your existing database.

At this point, you have three people—John Smith, his father and his mother—in the data file twice. Write down the RINs for all of them. Select Merge in the Tools menu or the Merge button on the toolbar, then Search, and enter the RINs for each John Smith. Click the Options button to review settings for the merge, to be sure to merge notes. Click Merge. Next merge the two RINs for John's mother, and finally, merge the two RINs for John's father. You now have no duplicates in your file and the line on the Pedigree screen will continue from you through John and on to the additional ancestry that you imported.

The above example is very simplistic. You often get more duplicates than just a few. To print a list of duplicates, select Print, Lists, Duplicate Individuals. You may need to go through an extensive Merge session to clear up all of the duplicates in your database. Such a session is often a tedious chore when done properly and carefully. Be sure to look at Help on all of the options available for merging to make this process as effortless as possible. Because of the complexity involved in merging in the contents of a GEDCOM file, the recommended procedure is to use the Database Merge. The Database merge will attempt to find and track duplicate individuals as you reconcile the family lines.

Linking

Suppose you had no information on the parents of your great-grandfather, John Smith. You located a source that had some information on his mother and her ancestors, so you obtained a GEDCOM file of the information. You have now imported that GEDCOM file into your existing database.

You have no duplicates, so instead of using Merge to connect the data, use the Family View or pedigree View. Select John Smith as the Primary Individual. Click Add Mother. Select Search for Existing to locate John's mother. Select Browse List and select her from the list. Click OK to connect her to John as his mother. All her other relationships will then also be connected to John.