Entities

An **entity** in the **Gedcom** standard is a main genealogical component such as an individual, a family, a source of information or a note. It can also be an multimedia object such as a video or a audio record.

In a Gedcom file, an entity is a record identified by an identification number and a group of tags specifying its characteristics.

The various genealogical characteristics associated with an entity are called **properties**: birth, marriage, date, place, event, text, address, etc.

> Ancestris follows the Gedcom standard as closely as possible and uses the same concepts of entity and property.

The organization of information for each entity follows the precise grammar of the standard. This grammar provides several possibilities to store the information. To see these various possibilities in Ancestris, use the **Gedcom editor**.

The 7 categories of entities

There are seven categories of entities in the Gedcom standard. An entity always belongs to one, and only one, of these seven categories.

- **Individuals**
- **Families**
- **Media**
- **Notes**
- **Sources**
- **Submitters**
- **Repositories**

Each category has its dedicated properties. However, regardless of the category to which they belong, all entities operate according to the same principles. There are described below.

In Ancestris, all entities are easily accessible from the Entity Table.

Individuals

An **individual,** or a person**,** is a human being, living or deceased. It is the primary component of any genealogy.

In the Gedcom standard, an individual is defined by the **INDI** tag, and has an identification number which could nearly be anything. In Ancestris, this ID starts with the letter **I**.

Appearance in Ancestris : 👤 👩 **Ancestris gedcom tag sexin.png** **INDI Individual**

The main properties of an individual are:

- a name, made of a first name and a lastname, and possibily made of other name elements.
- **events** such as birth, marriage, occupation, and many others.
- relationships with other individuals in the genealogy.

Events and relationships are probably the most interesting parts of your genealogy because they are the pieces of information that will let you understand the life of your ancestors and the stories they could tell you.

💬 **NAME** : name of an individual. This tag can be repeated if the individual is known under several names.

Gedcom syntax:

```
NAME Lt. Cmndr. Joseph /Allen/ jr.
```

In this example **jr.** is considered the suffix of the name. All the information was entered only in the NAME tag without using any sub-tag.

The Gedcom standard provides a detailed structure to store the name of an individual, and specify all the possible elements of a name, in particular NICK and NSFX which are placed at the end of NAME.

> 💬 **GIVN** : (given name) First name. Its value must be identical to that in the NAME tag. It is an optional tag. The different first names are separated by a comma.
> 💬 **NICK** : (nick name) A familiar name or nickname, which is used in addition to, or instead of, the last name.
> 💬 **NPFX** : (name prefix) Name prefix. An element of the name that precedes the lastname (e.g. Master, General, Doctor, etc.)

- 🗨 **SPFX** : (surname prefix) Particle before the Lastname. A complement to the name which is preceding the name, and which is not to be taken into account when sorting lastnames. Different articles / name prefixes are separated by a comma, for example in the name "de la Cruz", this value must be "de, la".
- 🗨 **SURN** : (surname) Lastname at birth, family name. Different surnames are separated by a comma.
- 🗨 **NSFX** : (name suffix) Lasname Suffix. A complement to the name, an article, which follows the last name, and which is not to be taken into account when sorting lastnames. Different name suffixes are separated by a comma. Example: eldest, son.
- 📄 **NOTE** : Note about the individual
- 📇 **SOUR** : *S*ource of information proving the existence and the characteristics of the individual.

- 👤 **ALIA** : (alias) Link with another individual entity, indicating that this current individual could be a duplicate of the other one and that one of the two should be removed eventually. It does mean that the two persons are the same person with a different name. One should use two NAME tags for that, within one single individual entity.

Family

A **family** is a couple of human beings, living or deceased, united either by a legal union (e.g. marriage) or by a de-facto union (e.g. co-living). Most often, one or more children are associated with it.

A family is therefore a structure bringing together two or more individuals (spouse, children) as well as a set of specific properties such as the various events associated with it (marriage, divorce, etc.)

In the Gedcom standard, a family is designated by the **FAM** tag and receives an ID number starting with the letter **F** in Ancestris.

Appearance in Ancestris : 👪 **FAM Family**

Media

A **Media, or Multimedia Element** is a photo, an audio or video document (a photograph, an audio recording, a film, a copy of a document, etc.) generally intended to be associated with one or more individuals or families or to be associated with a source.

In the Gedcom standard, a multimedia element is defined by the OBJE tag. It has an ID number starting with the letter **M** in Ancestris.

Appearance in Ancestris : 🔖 **OBJE multimedia element**

> **Warning ! There are two kinds of multimedia elements:** the **entity** and the **property**. These two kinds of media, although they have the same tag (OBJE), should not be confused.

- The **multimedia entity** can be used by several other entities. It is therefore meant to be **shared, collective or common**. It is truly autonomous and can exist independently of the entities that refer to it. Example: a audio file specifying your analysis of a research involving several individuals.
- The **multimedia property** is intended to qualify a single piece of information of the genealogy. It can only be used once. It is useless when taken out of its context, its connection to the information to which it relates. Example: a video of a newly born child. The multimedia property, unlike the multimedia entity, does not receive any ID number and is only valid for a single property, in a given entity. It can only exist within the entity that includes it. If the entity is deleted, the property disappears with it.

In summary, if the same multimedia object must be assigned to several individuals, several families, etc., it is more efficient to store it in the form of a object entity. Once entered, it will be possible to use it an infinite number of times. As a object property, you would have to re-enter the link to the media file as many times as you would need it.

> **Warning ! Ancestris does not make any copy of your multimedia files.** It just "refers" to the actual files. Ancestris will read them where you will need them in Ancestris. So please **do not erase them** thinking that Ancestris made a copy of them.

Note

A **note** is a text information that can be associated with other categories of entities (individuals, families, multimedia elements, etc.) or with a property anywhere in the genealogy.

In the Gedcom standard, a note is defined by the tag NOTE (5.5 and 5.5.1) or the tag SNOTE (7.0) and it has an ID number starting with the letter **N** in Ancestris.

Appearance in Ancestris : 📄 **NOTE Note** or 📄 **SNOTE note**

> **Warning ! There are two kinds of notes:** the **entity** and the **property**. These two kinds of notes, although they have the same tag (NOTE), should not be confused.
> The Gedcom 7.0 grammar now distinguishes both by using a different tag: SNOTE for the entity, NOTE for the property.

- The **note entity** can be used by several other entities. It is therefore meant to be **shared, collective or common**. It is truly autonomous and can exist independently of the entities that refer to it. Example: a text specifying your analysis of a research involving several individuals.
- The **note property** is intended to qualify a single piece of information of the genealogy. It can only be used once. It is useless when taken out of its context, its connection to the information to which it relates. Example: a characteristic of a newly born child. The note property, unlike the note entity, does not receive any ID number and is only valid for a single property, in a given entity. It can only exist within the entity that includes it. If the entity is deleted, the property disappears with it.

In summary, if the same note must be assigned to several individuals, several families, etc., it is more efficient to store it in the form of a note entity. Once entered, it will be possible to use it an infinite number of times. As a note property, you would have to re-enter the text of the note as many times as you would need it.

Source

A **source** is anything that defines the origin of a piece information. It can be a document, a book, a monument, etc.

It can also be a natural person: your great-grandmother can, for example, be qualified as a source, if she has transmitted a family history to you orally for instance.

This entity is intended to collect very precisely the various references (document title, symbol, act number, page, etc.) in order to allow any subsequent verification of the characteristics of other entities (in particular, individuals and families).

In the Gedcom standard, a source is defined by the **SOUR** tag and it has an ID number starting with the letter **S** in Ancestris.

Sources maintain a close relationship with other entities, **repositories**. A repository contains sources, and sources are located in repositories. Please refer to the **following section** for detailed considerations on how to organze sources and repositories.

Appearance in Ancestris : 📖 **SOUR Source**

> **Warning ! There are two kinds of sources:** the **entity** and the **property**. These two kinds of sources, although they have the same tag (SOUR), should not be confused.

- The **source entity** can be used by several other entities. It is therefore meant to be **shared, collective or common**. It is truly autonomous and can exist independently of

the entities that refer to it. Example: a marriage deed.

- The **source property** is intended to qualify a single piece of information of the genealogy. It can only be used once. It is useless when taken out of its context, its connection to the information to which it relates. The source property, unlike the source entity, does not receive any ID number and is only valid for a single property, in a given entity. It can only exist within the entity that includes it. If the entity is deleted, the property disappears with it.

In summary, if the same source must qualify several events of individuals, families, etc., it is more efficient to store it in the form of a source entity. Once entered, it will be possible to use it an infinite number of times. As a source property, you would have to re-enter the characteristics of the source as many times as you would need it.

Submitter

A **submitter** is a person who collects information to contribute to the construction of a genealogy file.

This person is likely to be one of the authors of the genealogy, or any genealogists likely to provide the Ancestris user with their genealogical information.

In the Gedcom standard, a submitter is defined by the SUBM tag and it has an ID number starting with the letter **B** in Ancestris.

Appearance in Ancestris : 🦢 **SUBM Submitter**

Repository

A **repository** is a place where genealogy sources can be found (documents, books, audio recordings, films, etc.). It can be a physical building (e.g. archive, cemetery), or a website (e.g. the website of the archive service).

Repository entities maintain a close relationship with source entities. A repository is likely to contain several sources, a source belongs to a repository.

In the Gedcom standard, a repository is defined by the REPO tag and it has an ID number starting with the letter **R** in Ancestris.

Appearance in Ancestris : 📦 **REPO Lieu de stockage**

Header entity

The header entity is the first record of the Gedcom file. The header contains information about the file: version of the standard (5.5 or 5.5.1), the author of the file, structure of jurisdictions in places, etc.

Its creation is taken care of by Ancestris when creating a new file. You most probably will not need to change it after creation.

In Ancestris, it can be edited using the Menu > File > Properties. Refer to the **File Properties** page for more details.

Identification number of an entity

The ID number is an identification number assigned to each entity, within the same category. In order to avoid the creation of possible duplicates, this number is obviously unique.

Moreover, this particular number always has the same form, namely a letter followed by a certain number of digits. Each category of entity being associated with a particular letter, the first letter of the ID number indicates the category to which it belongs.

The user does not have to worry about assigning a new ID number when creating a new entity: this numbering is carried out automatically by Ancestris.

Note that in the **Tools / Preferences / Editions / Identification number** menu, a check box can be activated to reuse the ID numbers left available by entities that have been deleted.

Also, you can always change ID numbers later once entities have been created. Use the **Generate ID Numbers** tool for that.