

How Many Ancestors Do You Have?

1	1 YOU	
2	2 parents	
3	4 grandparents	
4	8 great grandparents	
5	16 gg grandparents	Civil War period, 1865
6	32 ggg grandparents	
7	64 gggg grandparents	
8	128 ggggg grandparents	
9	256 gggggg grandparents	11 years before the Revolutionary War
10	512 ggggggg grandparents	
11	1,024 gggggggg grandparents	
12	2,048 ggggggggg grandparents	
13	4,096 gggggggggg grandparents	
14	8,192 ggggggggggg grandparents	
15	16,384 gggggggggggg grandparents	Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock
16	32,768 gggggggggggg grandparents	
17	65,584 gggggggggggg grandparents	
18	131,072 gggggggggggg grandparents	
19	262,144 gggggggggggg grandparents	
20	524,288 gggggggggggg grandparents	Columbus sails for the New World
21	1,048,576 gggggggggggg grandparents	
22	2,097,152 gggggggggggg grandparents	

If we calculate 25 years as a generation, someone born around 1965, would have 16 great-great grandparents living in 1865 at the end of the Civil War.

They would have 256 great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents living just before the Revolutionary War. As you can see, the number of ancestors increases dramatically with each generation.

Robert Wilbank's reported in his *Heritage/History Newsletter* (Vol. 2000, #5 – January 31, 2000): “. . . in the year 400, you would need to locate some 18.5 quintillion ancestors. . . if it worked that way. That's more than the number of people who ever lived. How can that be? Common ancestors, that's how. If we could accurately trace our family trees as far back as the beginning of time, we would see how we are all interrelated. Somewhere along the way, cousins had to marry cousins, whether they knew they were related or not.”