Old English handwriting is beautiful and fascinating. When you learn to read it, you will have great admiration for the scribes who painstakingly produced parish registers, probate records, manor records, and other manuscript sources.

Education was often haphazard and short before the nineteenth century. Though many, perhaps most, people in the eighteenth century had basic reading skills, studies have shown that in 1760 only about 40% of the population could write their names. Prior to that time, it is likely that the percentage was much lower. The professional scribes, called scriveners, were the only ones taught a strict form of writing.

The most common alphabets used from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century were Court Hands, Secretary Hands, Legal Hands, and Round Hands. Each scribe had his own idiosyncrasies in his handwriting, just as we all have. No two people, even those taught by the same person, ever wrote exactly the same.

Material and Equipment Used

1. Records were primarily written on paper, vellum, and parchment. The records on paper have deteriorated so badly that they have been lost to us. The Act of 1597 required the scribe to keep the parish register in a new book of parchment pages, and many records were copied from paper to parchment at this time. Parchment was made from animal skins, and the hair side was brown and darker than the flesh side. It is noticeable when reading the records.

2. Pens were made from sharpened goose, duck, turkey, or crow quills. As the person wrote, these pens sprinkled little spots of ink on the parchment, making many letters appear to be dotted. We refer to these spots as artifacts. Metal pen points did not come into general usage until after 1830.

3. The ink used was manufactured by the individual scribes, and sometimes they watered it down a little too much, causing the record to fade with time.

4. Many of the records have been damaged by dampness, insects, rodents, fire, and neglect.
Spelling

There was very little standardization in spelling before the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is not unusual to find a scribe spelling a surname differently within a single entry. Many scribes spelled everything phonetically, or the way it sounded. There are many dialects and accents in England, and if a vicar wasn’t familiar with the individual, he might spell his name just as it sounded to him. For example, if a Lancashire resident named Harris was speaking to a vicar from Cambridge, he might say, “My name is ‘arriis.’” The scribe could easily record it as Arris or Arrice.

Caution

Caution is the first rule in indexing Old English records. Take time to become familiar with the record by picking out words you recognize easily. Be cautious. What you think you see at first may not be what is actually written. Never jump to conclusions. Never accept a guess until you have verified it, by comparing it with other letters on the document or with alphabet samples in this guide or in other scripts. Keep an open mind, and consider all alternatives.

Comparison

This is the most important tool available to the indexer. Be sure to always compare letters and words within the same style of writing, and specifically the same scribe.

Check and Recheck

Common names, such as Elizabeth, have many variations of spelling, such as Elisabeth, Elsabeth, Elysabethe, etc. A common error is to recognize the name and then to spell it the modern way rather than as written in the records. Please index the name as it appears on the image, instead of expanding abbreviations or changing the spelling.

It is recommended that you read the name, note the spelling variation, and make a mental note that it is, for example, Elisabeth with an “s.” Then record the name, and recheck it to be certain you have recorded it exactly as the scribe wrote it.

The writers of the old records were liberal in the use of the additional letter combination “es.” They also substituted the letter “y” for “i,” and very often used “u” rather than “v” or vice versa. “I” and “j” were also used interchangeably. There is another letter
called a “thorn” that looks like a “y.” We see this frequently in the sign that says, “Ye Olde English Tavern.” Translated this should read “The Olde English Tavern” because the “thorn” is pronounced “th.” These customs are traps for the unwary transcriber.

Please index names as they were recorded on the old documents. The only exceptions at this time are for names such as “Dauid” or “Beniamin.” Names similar to these can be indexed with their appropriate letter substitutes, such as “David” or “Benjamin,” because the “u” and “i” were respectively interchangeable with the “v” and “j.”

**Problem Solving**

You can usually resolve most problems with names as you transcribe further on the image. Names repeat—couples have more than one child baptized, siblings marry, and family members are buried. Try to remember names, and become acquainted with the people in the records.

While indexing, you will most likely have only one image in your batch that contains one page of a parish register, and it is unlikely that a second event for the same family would occur on that page. Remember that you can access the previous image and the next image for most batches. The information found there might be helpful in solving a problem with a name or with a particular letter. Sometimes it is useful to try to download batches sequentially and delay submission until all are completed.

**The Alphabet**

The alphabet has remained virtually unchanged for many centuries. Originally the Roman alphabet consisted of twenty-one letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, V, and X. In about 50 B.C., the letters Y and Z were added. This knowledge helps us to understand why the early scribes used the same character for I and J. It also explains the interchangeability of the U, the V, and the W characters. In the original alphabet, there was no U or W.

**Terminology**

1. *Line of writing.* The line (real or imaginary) on which the letters rest.
2. *Waist height.* The height of miniscule letters such as a, c, e, m, n, o, r, u, v, w, and x.
3. *Ascenders.* The part of a letter that extends above the waist height. Letters that have ascenders are: b, d, f, h, k, and t.
4. Descenders. The part of a letter that extends below the line of writing. Letters that have descenders are: f, g, h, j, p, q, and Gothic s, y and z.

5. Minims. The strokes forming these letters: i, n, m, u and w.

6. Flourish. A curved or decorative stroke in penmanship. It is often mistaken for a letter when, in fact, it is not.

7. Contractions. Words shortened by leaving out one or more letters in the middle of a word.

8. Suspensions. Words shortened by leaving out one or more letters at the end of a word.

9. Superior letters. Used in words that have been shortened by leaving out letters and some of the letters are raised above the line of writing.

10. Signs and symbols (brevigraphs). These are peculiar marks which represent definite letter combinations. They are, in a sense, a form of shorthand.

Method of Study

This manual is designed to help you teach yourself. How much you learn from this manual depends on you. There are exercises on the front of the page, and the answers can be found by turning the page. It is suggested that you work out as much of each problem as possible before consulting the answer. We recommend that you print the entire exercise on a pad. Reading alone will not accomplish the desired results. The exercises teach two main lessons: They help to increase speed and skill in printing. They show the student that often the brain reads one thing and the hand prints another.

To all who use this document to learn to read Old English script:

The genealogical information found in Genealogical Research in England and Wales, Volume 3, written by Frank Smith and David E. Gardner, was very helpful in creating this document. I also acquired much of my knowledge from working with David E. Gardner as my mentor for fifteen years as we extracted records from the United Kingdom for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brother Gardner always seemed to have answers for all of my questions, and I cherish the opportunity I had to learn from him.

Helen E. (Jean) Cruickshank
A general Alphabet of the Old Law Hand.

[Handwritten text: A generall Alphabet of the Olde Law Hand.]

Most of the “A” characters are easily recognizable.

Capital A

\[A\]

Small A

\[a\]

Exercise

In the exercise below, and in all subsequent exercises, it is suggested that the student print each word on a tablet. Use the answers on the next page to help you.

\[\text{Ann the Daughter of John Somer} \quad \text{8 March 1620}\]

\[\text{Anthony Bowes formerly Anthony Baber} \quad \text{ancestor and}
\quad \text{father's father born in Todmorden} \quad \text{16th century English}\]

\[\text{Ann Wood} \quad \text{Ann Wood Daughter Denbeffon Wood} \quad \text{Died}
\quad \text{27th of April 1820 pr. 5th}
\quad \text{Samuel Bowes} \quad \text{Beverly Barons} \quad \text{Beverly}
\quad \text{in the 18th century} \quad \text{in Yorkshire, England}
\]
ANN THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN BENNET THE 8 MARCH 1620

ANTHONY BAKER SONNE OF ANTHONY BAKER COACHMAN AND OF
JANE HIS WIFE BORNE IN WIDDOW SUTTONS HOUSE IN GEORGYARD BAP 31

AGNES WOOD AGNES WOOD DAWGHTER VNTO JHON WOOD WAS
EAST CRISTENNED THE 7 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

ANTHONY STACYE YE SONE OF DAVYE STACYE YE THYRD DAY OF DECEMBER
ANNE DALE DAUGHT. OF ROBERT DALE HABERDASHER YE VI DAY OF JULYE
The “B” characters were formed with flourishing lines, but look similar to the way we make them today. **Caution**: It is possible to confuse capital and small “B” with capital and small “V.”

**Capital B**

![Capital B examples]

**Small B**

![Small B examples]

**Exercise**

```
April 1st 1827
Elizabeth Bennett, daughter of Benjamin Bennett
```

```
To the City of Savannah.

This is to certify that John Smith, a free and honest citizen, has paid his duty on
the following goods imported from the British West Indies:

- 2000 pounds of sugar
- 1000 pounds of coffee

The above goods were imported on the 1st of June, 1827.

John Smith
```

```
May 15th 1827
Elizabeth Bennett, daughter of Benjamin Bennett
```

```
To the City of Savannah.

This is to certify that William Johnson, a free and honest citizen, has paid his duty on
the following goods imported from the British West Indies:

- 1500 pounds of tea
- 500 pounds of rice

The above goods were imported on the 15th of May, 1827.

William Johnson
```
APRILE 3  BENIAMINE SUNN OF BENIAMIN

JOSEPH BILLET SONNE OF THO: BILLET Souldier
AND OF JUDITH HIS WIFE BORNE IN JOHN HERMANS
HOUSE IN BISHOPSHEAD COURTE IN GRAYS INN LANE BAPT 15

ELISABETH BLUNT DAUGHTER OF JOHN BLUNT CLOTHWORKER YE 26 OF MAYE

1617

NATHANIELL BONNELL THE SONNE OF

DAVID AND KATHERINE BONNELL WAS BORNE

THE 15 OF JULIE 1617 AND BAPTIZED THE 27

PHILLIP JACOBSONE AND MAUDLYNE THE WIEF

OF HENRY PANWELS WITNESSES
The letter “C” is very easily confused with other letters. The capital “C” is easily confused with a capital T, O, E, or D. You must read for sense. The small “c” is very easily mistaken for a Palmer-method “R” [sometimes referred to as a “flying R”] or sometimes for a “T.” Occasionally the scribe will place a sign above the small “c” that indicates it is a “c.”

### Capital C

![Capital C examples]

### Small C

![Small C examples]

### Example

```
John the son of Richard Foster was baptized 4th of October 1621
...the mark of my hand...'
...this is my hand...
...the mark of my...'

Richard Smith, servant of Edward Smith, servant of...
...this is my hand...
...the mark of my...

1642 the annex was from...
```
JOHN THE SONNE OF RICHARD CARTER WAS BAPTIZED 4th OF OCTOBER 1621

THOMAS PRIESTMAN SONNE VNTO CUTBARD PRIESTMAN WAS
CHRISTENNED THE 19 DAIE OF MAIE ANNO PREDICTO

CHARLES DEANE SONNE OF ROBERT DEANE BUTCHER AND OF FRANCES
HIS WIFE BORNE IN HIS HOUSE IN FIELD LANE LOND THE 5 OF MAY 1646
BAPTISED THEN IN THE HOUSE & RECORDED HEERE THE 30 OF MAY

RICHARD SMITH SONNE OF CHRISTO. SMITH GENT:
(DECEASD OF LATE) & OF FRANCES HIS WIFE BORNE IN
WILL FREEMANS HOUSE NEARE WARWICKE HOUSE AND
WAS BAPTISED IN THE SAID HOUSE THE 19 OF JANUARY
1642 BY WHOME WEE KNOW NOT
The letter “D” does not present any serious recognition problems, with the possible exception of the third and last capitals illustrated. The small “d” frequently has a left slant which is different from most modern hands. The scribes often made great flourishes with the ascender of the small “d.” Example: Edward = Edward.
The scribes often crossed the “l” and “d” when they were written next to one another. Example: Baldwin = Baldwin.

Capital D

Small D

Example

13
The iiiith was christene de Isabell the daughter of Roberte Darbye

September 17 Meary daughter of Willm Ginells Bapt

30 Alse Daughter of Edward Smith Baptized

Daniell Ball sonne of Danielle Ball Fruturur and of Blanch his wife

Out of Baldwins Garden in Grays Inn Lane was Bapt the 26

13 Abilone da of George and Joane Telforth

13 Deborah da of Thomas and Isabell Hall
The letter “E” is one of the problem letters. The capital “E” is often confused with the capital “C.” A rule that is useful is that if a consonant follows the capital it is probably an “E” rather than a “C.” The small “e” most usually looks like an “o” with a loop in it. Modern writers often put loops in the “o” but early writers were careful not to do this because it could be confused with an “e” if they did. Often, because of the writing equipment, or perhaps as an evolution of the modern “E,” the scribe did not complete the letter.

Capital E

Small E

Exercise

Elizabeth Wilson, daughter of Thomas and
Both are to be from or Sfrat & maria Ecton.

Eliosis Burton, eldest brother of Robert and
Confirmed that 31st of January 1610.
ELLYNE OVER DAUGHTER OF JOHN OVER YE FOURT DAYE OF AUGUSTE

ELIZABETH LACEY DAU OF HENRY LACEY GENT AND OF ELIZA: HIS WIFE
BORNE IN THE ELFES HOUSE IN BARTLETTS COURTE IN HOLBORNE WAS BAPT
THERE THE 6 OF APRILL 1646 & RECORDED HEERE 6 OF MAY 1646

ELSABETH WILBONE THE DAUGHTER OF THOMAS AND
ELSABETH WILBONE WAS BORNE THE 31 OF MARCHE 1619 AND
BAPTIZED THE 8TH THOMAS SARGEALL ELSABETH FELTON
AND CATHARYNE WOODDARD WITNESSES

ELIZABETH BURTON    ELIZABETH BURTON DAUGHTER VNTO ROBART BURTON WAS
CRISTENNED THE 31 DAYE OF MARCHE ANNO PREDICTO
The letter “F” presents some problems. When a double “F” is found at the beginning of a word, it is transcribed as a single “F.” The small “f” may be easily confused with the small Gothic “s” if the scribe was not careful about crossing the “f.” When this happens, search for the same name written in a different manner.

**Capital F**

```
F F F F F F F F F
```

**Small F**

```
f f f
```

**Exercise**

```
The first June 15 of 1562 was celebrated by the daughter of James Cavendish.
The feast that day was observed by the whole family and a large number of people.

```
Written fluid
```

```
The feast of St. John was observed on the 13th of October.

```
Written fluid
```

```
Transport the 13th of May when you are to...
```

```
Transport the 13th of May when you are to...
```
THE SAME YEARE 21 OF APLE WAS CHRISTENEDE PRYSWYDE THE DAUGHTER OF JAMES CAWDERAYE

THE SAME YEARE THE SECONDE OF JUNE WAS CHRISTENEDE FRYDESWYDE DAUGHTER OF WM JENNENT

WILLM FLUDD  WILLM FLUDD SONNE VNTO EDWARD FLUDD WAS CRISTENNED THE 23 DAIE OF MAIE ANNO PREDICTO

FRAUNCIS THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN FREEMAN IERMONGER
The basic shape of this letter is the same as the modern “G.” The extra flourishes of the character make it difficult to recognize this letter at times. The small “g” is easily mistaken for a small “y.” The descender often is almost exactly the same. Generally the scribe will swing the descender on the “g” to the left and the descender of the “y” to the right. Use comparison to identify the correct letter.

**Capital G**

![Capital G examples]

**Small G**

![Small G examples]

**Exercise**

George grimly: George grimly: Some days, George grimly: road.

George grimly: George grimly: Some days, George grimly: road.

Confirmed the 21 of April: same predictions.


Eugene, the daughter of former: Country. Switzerland.

26 George & George & Jane: Dartmouth.
GEORGE GRIMLEY  GEORGE GRIMLEY SONNE VNTO GEORGE GRIMLEY WAS CRISTENNED THE 21 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

GEORGE & GAMBLE TWINS SONNS OF WILLIAM
NICHOLAS GAMBLE TAPSTER & OF ANN HIS WIFE
BORNE IN WIDDOW LORDS HOUSE IN FETTER LANE BAPT 15

ELIZABETH THE DAWGHTER OF JEAMES GRENSMYETH HABERDASHER
THE 6TH OF DECEMBER

26 GEORGE SO: GEORGE AND JONE GARRETT
As you can see, the “H” characters are very different from the modern “H.” Study them carefully. The extra flourishing tail of both the capital and the small “H” characters extend below the line of writing. The capital “H” is often mistaken for a capital “L” with a little left over. The capital “H” is a very large letter, don’t overlook the big hump.

**Capital H**

![Capital H examples](image)

**Small H**

![Small H examples](image)

**Exercise**

Handwritten text:

> Dorothea, the daughter of John Good, to the bearer.

> Sent by the same of Ribe to the judge.

> Hester Gurney, wife of Thomas, in the whole.

> Deformed effe in 6 feet of more some partibit.

> Written and sent to John Taylor y 10th February.
DAWERETIE THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN HEWGES HABERDASHER

THE 14th OF DECEMBER

THOMAS THE SONN OF JOHN HEWES HABERDATIOR

HENRY PUMDRY SONNE OF RICH: PUMMDRY

WRIGHTER & OF DOROTHY HIS WIFE BORNE IN ROGER

VEALES HOUSE IN GRAYS INN LANE BAPT THE 15

HENRY PEAK

HENRY PEAK SONNE VNTO RICHARD PEAK WAS

MY GODSONNE

CRISTENNED THE 26 DAIE OF MAIE ANNO PREDICTO

HARRYE SONNE TO JOHN TAYLER YE 10TH FEBRURYE
I and J

The same characters were used for the capital letters “I” and “J.” Use common sense when you encounter these characters in the records. Generally speaking, if the character is followed by a vowel, it is transcribed as a “J,” if the character is followed by a consonant, it is transcribed as an “I.” Examples: John or Isaac. If the scribe substitutes as small “i” for a small “j” in the middle of a name, as in Beniamine for Benjamine, you can transcribe the name as Benjamine. The small “I” often has a definite dot above the character, but do not count on the scribe being precise in always dotting his “i’s.”

Capital I and Capital J

Small I and Small J

Exercise
THE SAME YEARE THE XXVIIth OF FEBRUARIE WAS CHRISTENEDE JOHN THE SONNE OF GILBERT

THE SAME YEARE THE XXVIJth OF FEBRUARIE WAS CHRISTENEDE ISABELL THE DAUGHTER OF ROBERTE

PHILLIP JARUIS SONNE OF JOHN JARUIS LABORER AND OF ELIZA HIS WIFE
BORNE IN MR TYTOES COURTE IN FEILD LANE MIDDIX BAPT 31

ISBELL MILLER DAU: OF THO: MILLER BODYMA. AND OF ISBELL HIS WIFE
OUT OF ROSE AND CROWNE ALLY IN GRAYS INN LANE BAPT THE FOURTH
OF JUNE 1646
**K**

The letter “K” is one of the very difficult characters to recognize in the Old English records. Think of them as being “scrunched up.” “K” is frequently mistaken for an “R” in the capitals. Study the examples carefully.

**Capital K**

![Capital K examples]

**Small K**

![Small K examples]

**Example**

[Handwritten text example]
KATHERINE BROWNNE   KATHERINE BROWNNE DAUGHTER UPON HENRY BROWNNE WAS
CRISTENED THE 21 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

KATHERYNE MORREYE DAUGHT OF THOMAS MORREYE MCER YE XXty OF DECEMBER

EZEKIEL CHEECKLEY SONNE OF WILLIAM CHEECKLEY CHANDLER & OF
SARA HIS WIFE BORNE IN HIS HOUSE NEARE MR HAYDENS IN FETTER LANE BAP 24

KATTERNE DAUGHTER OF ANDREW JOHNSON 5 MARCH 1619

SARAH ELWICKE THE DAUGHTER OF TIMOTHIE AND SARAH
ELWICKE WAS BORNE THE 11 OF APRILL 1618 AND BAPTIZED THE
19 EDWARD CLAPSTONE ALLICE ALLYNE AND SARA SMYTH WITN
The capital letter “L” does not present as many problems in the Old English as it does in more modern writing when it is often confused for a capital “S.” Sometimes the scribe will appear to cross his small double “l” confusing them with a double “t.” Often this is an abbreviation sign indicating a letter or letters are missing.

**Capital L**

![Capital L example]

**Small L**

![Small L example]

**Exercise**

Dorothy, daughter of George Sandre, yeoman,
13 y. in eternum ejus anima in pace dormit. Amen. 15. 3.

[Text in Old English]

[Signature]

August 4. 29 William Smith, son of James Smith, Baptist.
Mary, daughter of Thomas Smith, 21 January 1620.
Mary, daughter of Thomas Smith, 27 February 1620.
Peter, son of Theodore Smith, Baptist.
DOROTHY DANCEY DAU OF GEORGE DANCEY LABORRE
& OF ANN HIS WIFE BORNE IN MR TERRILLS RENTS
IN FETTER LANE & WAS BAPT THE 15

AGUST YE 29 MATHEW SUNN OF JAMES LITTELTUN BAPTIZED

MARGERY THE DAUGHTER OF THOMAS BLANDE 21 JANUARY 1620

MARY THE DAUGHTER OF CORNELIVS WOORLEY 24 FEBRUARY 1620

PETER THE SONE OF LEONARD TOWERS DRAP.
This letter is easily recognized because it appears frequently in the records. There is sometimes some confusion with the capital “W.” If studied carefully, the differences will become readily apparent. The last small “m” in the sample below is sometimes mistaken for “in” or “ni.” Be aware of all the possibilities and consider them carefully. Transcriptions should make sense.

Capital M

\[ M \] \[ M \] \[ M \] \[ M \] \[ M \] \[ MR \] \[ MR \] \[ MR \]

Small M

\[ m \] \[ m \] \[ m \]

Exercise

[Handwritten text with corrections]
MARION FRANCKLEN
FROM THE MINERIS
MARY HANSMAN DAU OF RICH HANSMAN SMITH AND OF MARY
HIS WIFE OUT OF PRITTIMANS RENTS IN PPOOLE LANE BAPT 24

MARIE EYANS THE DAUGHTER OF
CHRISTOFER AND MARY EYANS WAS BORNE
THE 13TH OF OCTOBER 1617 AND BAPTIZED THE
26 RICHARD ANDREWE ELIZABETH BULLER
AND SARAH SCOTT WITNESSES
Be careful not to mistake the last three capital “N’s” illustrated here for the letter “P.” The last small “n” illustrated is found on the end of words and is often mistaken for the small letter “y.”

**Capital N**

```
N    N
```

**Small N**

```
n n y
```

**Exercise**

```
1616  Nathaniel  of  the town  of  Salem  June  6.
Oct.  18  Baptized  the  9  peach  1616  June  6.

```

```
November

Elizabeth,  his  daughter  of  Thomas  Walter  had  baptized
```

```
November

Mary and  humble  son  of  Samuel  by  the  name  of  Samuel
```
1615 NATHANIELL GODFRIE THE SONNE OF THOMAS GODFRIE
OCTOBER WAS BORNE THE 11 DAIE OF OCTOBER 1615 AND
18 BAPTIZED THE 18 RICHARD WITT JOHN WILFORD
AND KATHERYNE DITCHEFEILDE WITNESSES

JANUARY 24 JOHN SUNN OF THOMAS NEUTUN BAPTIZED
ELIZABETH THE DAUGHTER OF GAWEN WALLER WAS BAPTIZED

NYCHOLAS SPENCER YE SONE OF THOMAS SPENCER MARCHANTALLOR YE SEVENTEEN
The letter “O” is not commonly found in the records except in the month of October. If you suspect that a character is an “O,” be sure to compare it with the “o” in October. The small letter “E” is often confused with the small letter “o.” Compare carefully to see how the scribe is writing these letters.

Capital O

Small O

Exercise
1617  GEORGE HOUGHTON THE SONNE OF GEORGE

OCTOBER  AND SUSANNA HOUGHTON WAS BORNE THE

16  16 OF OCTOBER 1617 AND BAPTIZED THE 26 OF

THOMAS SOROWALE THOMAS WILSONE

AND MAWDLYNE BUTLER WITNESSES

OCTOBER THE 4th.

MAREY BOOTHawe A FOUNDLING

OCTOBER THE 13th

JANE THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN RICHARDSON DRAP.
The letter “P” causes some problems. Remember that “p” has a descender. The small “p” is sometimes confused with a “y,” and an “x.” The capital “P” is sometimes confused with a capital “H.” The third small “p” illustrated below is easily confused with an “fl.”

Capital P

Small P

Exercise

Petit Kinfol New York City, Eulogy Chapel TY 1972

John Kinehole son of John Kinehole and

was baptized 25th of August 1650

Philip the son of Richard Turner was baptized 25th of January 1622

Thomas the son of John Richardson was baptized August 15, 1622

20th form of Communion: Discourse: Baptism
PEETER TYLER SONNE OF THO TYLER TAYLER &
of ELIZA HIS WIFE BORNE IN HIS HOUSE IN ROSE AND
CROWNE ALLY IN GRAYS INN LANE BAPT THE 10

JOHN RICHARDSON THE SON OF JOHN RICHARDSON

PHILIP THE SONNE OF RICHARD TURNER WAS BAPTIZED JULIE 25 1622

THOMAS THE SONNE OF JOHN RICHARDSON WAS BAPTIZED AUGUST 13 1622

9 WILLM SUNN OF BENIAMINE PARISH BAPTIZED
The “Q” letters are not commonly found in the records. The rule, “Q” is followed by “U,” can help in determining the letter when found. The small “q” can easily be mistaken for the small “g.”

Exercise
THE SAME YEARE THE XXVIIth OF MAYE WAS CHRISTENEDE ELENORE THE DAUGHTER OF
GEFFREYE MCHAN ESQUIRE

THE SAME YEARE THE XXVIth DAIE OF MAYE WAS CHRISTENEDE FLORENCE THE DAUGHTER OF
JOHN STANTON

FRANSYS QUADRYNG YE SAYM DAY

ANNE QUADRINGE DAUGHTER OF FRANCIS QUADRING BAPTIZED THE 4t

ROSE DAUGHTER OF JOHN QUADRING GENT
The letter “R” is one of those troublesome letters which can be confused with other letters quite easily. The capital “R” is often mistaken for a capital “K.” The small “r” is often written the same as the modern “r” except that it is upside down. The first two small “r’s” illustrated are found in the very early records of the 16th century. They generally extend below the line of writing. Sometimes when the paleography was in a state of transition, scribes would use three different types of “R’s” in one entry. Be aware of this. The small “r” is frequently mistaken for a small “c.”

**Capital R**

![Capital R](image)

**Small R**

![Small R](image)

**Exercise**

```
Robert 1st son of Robert Besse 726.
This was borne in this place in the year 69.

This is the daughter of John Besse 7th.

```

```
This was borne in this place 1st.
This is the daughter of man sone predicte

```

```
This was borne in this place 1st.
This is the daughter of man sone predicte

```

```
This was borne in this place 1st.
This is the daughter of man sone predicte

```

```
This was borne in this place 1st.
This is the daughter of man sone predicte

```
ROBERT JENNISON SONNE OF ROBERT JANISON TAYLIER &
OF MARY HIS WIFE BORNE IN HIS HOUSE IN WHITE ALLEY
IN HOLBORNE AND WAS BAPT THE 15

JUNE THE 7 SEARAH DAUGHTER OF JOHN RUTLAND BAPTIZED

RICHARD THOMPSON  RICHARD TOMPSON SONNE VNTO RICHARD TOMPSON WAS
CRISTENNED THE 26 DAIE OF MAIE ANNO PREDICTO

ROBERT BLUNT THE SONE OF JOHN BLUNT CLOTHWORKER YE FIRSTE DAYE OF APRELL 1548

RYCHERD HEATH THE SONE OF JOHN HEATH THE FIFTE DAYE OF MAYE
As a general rule, there are not too many problems with the letter “S.” However, it does appear often in at least two unfamiliar forms. The old double “ss” looks like two backward “f’s.” The ending small “s” looks like an “o” with a flourish. It reminds some people of a bird with a crest on its head, like the California quail. The small “s” which looks like a shepherd’s crook extends below the line of writing. This is a Gothic “s.”

**Capital S**

![Capital S](image1)

**Small S**

![Small S](image2)

**Exercise**

![Exercise](image3)
SARAH THE DAUGHTER OF EDMVND HARRIS WAS BAPTIZED 10

CHRISTOFER THE SON OF ROBERT HUDSON HABERDASHER WAS BAPTIZED 27

JOHN SAUEDGE SONNE OF JEROMY SAUIDGE TAYLER & OF ELIZA HIS WIFE OUT OF TYTOES COURT IN FEILD LANE MIDDX WAS BAPT 2

JOHN TWIST SONNE OF RICHARD TWIST MUTITIONER & OF JOANE HIS WIFE BORNE IN PEETER IVES HOUSE IN SMITHS COURTE AGT THE CHURCH BAPT THE 15

1615 SAMUELL SHASTA THE SONNE OF MARMADUKE JANUARY AND ANNA SHASTA WAS BORNE THE 24 OF JANUARY 28 1615 AND BAPTIZED THE 28 CHRISTOFER JENEWAIT THOMAS ARRINGTONE AND MARTHA RICHÉ WITNESSES
The “T” characters all have basically the same structure. Sometimes the last capital “T” pictured below is confused with a capital “C.” The small “t” is often mistaken for a small “l” because the scribe often failed to cross his “t.” Again you must read for sense and then compare with other names in the register.

**Capital T**

![capital T examples]

**Small T**

![small T examples]

**Exercise**

```
Thomas Thomas Thomas Thomas Thomas Thomas Thomas Thomas
```

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Robert Jones of Thomas of Thomas of Thomas of Thomas of Thomas
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```
Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Burgess
```
THOMAS THOMAS SONNE VNTO THOMAS COMPAS MAKER WAS CRISTENED THE 7 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

THOMAS THE SONE OF THOMAS MANE HABERDASHER

ROBERD SUNNE OF THOMAS TAYLER BAPTIZED

14 ELIZEBETH DAUGHTER OF THOMAS BURGIN
The capital letter “U” is not frequently found in Old English writing. The scribes usually used a capital “V” instead. The letters “U” and “V” are used interchangeably. You may substitute the correct letter when you are sure. Example: When the scribe writes “Dauid,” we can record that as “David.” The small letter “u” in Old English is similar to the modern small “u.” One of the most difficult problems to solve is to distinguish between a small letter “u” and a small letter “n.” Sometimes it is virtually impossible.

**Exercise**
ELIZABETH NEAUE DAU OF WILLIAM NEAUE GLOUER AND OF ELIZA
HIS WIFE OUT OF THE MAG PYE YARD IN FETTER LANE BAPT THE 24

MARGRET FLY DAU OF ROGER FLY CUTTLER AND OF ELIZA HIS WIFE OUT OF
HIS HOUSE IN TYTOES COURTE IN FEILD LANE WAS BAPT THE 13
In Old English the letter “V” is used interchangeably with the letter “U.” Be aware that “David” could be spelled “Dauid,” or “Ursala” could be spelled “Vrsala.” In each of these names, you may substitute “U” to make the names pronounceable. The small “v” is frequently called a small “b.” If you will compare the two letters, you will note great differences.

Capital V

Small V

Exercise

\[ \text{Exercise content goes here} \]
SARA JANISON DAU OF VALENTINE JANISON
TAYLER OF MAUDLIN HIS WIFE BORNE IN MRS. RANDON
HER HOUSE IN CHANCERY LANE & WAS BAPT THE 13

RICHARD THE SONE OF ROBART HATHRILL BAPTIZED 19 SEPTEM 1619

THOMAS SVNE OF JOHN DAVIS BAPTISED 14 NOVEM 1619

WILLIAM SVNE OF CURTIS DINGLEY 2 FEBRV 1619

SARAYE THE DAUGHTER OF VMPHARAY ROBINSON GROCER
MARTCFHE THE 3th 1610

AVYS GODFFREYE YE DAUGHT OF THOMAS GODFFREYE YE XXIX OF NOVEMBER
This letter is often difficult to recognize in the records. For some reason, indexers fail to think of “W” as a possibility. The letter appears with great frequency in words such as “William” and “was,” etc. Many people try to read the small letter “w” as “no.” The capital letter “W” is sometimes mistaken for a capital “M.”

**Capital W**

**Small W**

**Exercise**

William's name was often misspelled as “Wiliam” in old documents.
MAWDLEN WHEELER

MAWDLEN WHEELER DAWGHTER VNTO THOMAS WHEELER WAS CRISTENNED THE 14 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

WILLM MOTT

WILLM MOTT SONNE VNTO ROBART MOTT MARYNNER WAS CRISTENNED THE 21 OF APRILL ANNO PREDICTO

WILLIAM WINFEILD SONNE OF WILL WINFEILD YEOMAN DECEASED & OF ANN HIS WIFE OUT OF ROSE & CROWNE ALLY IN GRAYS INN LANE WAS BAPT THE 26

ELIZABETH WEBSTER DAU OF EDWARD WEBSTER TAYLER OF ELIZA HIS WIFE BORNE IN HIS HOUSE
The capital “X” is not often used, except when Christofer is spelled Xpofer, or Christian is spelled Xtian, etc. The small “x” is used frequently in the records, particularly in Roman numerals. It is often confused with the small “p.”

**Capital X**

![Capital X](image1)

**Small X**

![Small X](image2)

**Forms of X**

![Forms of X](image3)

**Forms of P**

![Forms of P](image4)

**Exercise**

```
Deborah, the daughter of Eleazar, and of
Deborah, [had] a man [E]viated the 11 of
[December, 1664]
```

```
Eunuch of Sarah, Sam, & [had] a son
```

```
Gregory, son, 1665
```
DEBORAH THE DAUGHTER OF THOMAS AND OF
DEBORAH FLAXMAN BAPTIZED THE 11 DAYE OF
DESEMBER ANNO DOMANY 1664

CLEMEN PKAR. (Parkar) YE DAUGHT OF JOHN PKAR. THE XXty OF NOVEMBER
HENRYE RUSSELL THE SONE OF JOHN RUSSEL YE XXVJ OF NOVEMB

XPOFER DOBBYSONE BAPT THE SAME DAYE
The letter “Y” is relatively easy to recognize. Occasionally, the small “y” may be confused with the small “g.” Remember that the letter “Y” is often used in place of the letter “I” in many of the records. Be alert for this possibility. Don’t forget that “Y” has a descender that goes below the line of writing.

Capital Y

![Capital Y example]

Small Y

![Small Y example]

Exercise

The letter “Y” is relatively easy to recognize. Occasionally, the small “y” may be confused with the small “g.” Remember that the letter “Y” is often used in place of the letter “I” in many of the records. Be alert for this possibility. Don’t forget that “Y” has a descender that goes below the line of writing.
THE SAME YEARE ANDE DAYE WAS CHRISTENEDE HUMFRYE THE SONE OF JOHN STANTON

THE SAME YEARE THE XVJth OF MCHE WAS CHRISTENEDE JOAN THE DAUGHTER OF HENRY YEATE

MARYE DAUGHTER OF FRANCIS MYCHELL 2 MARCH 1616

ELY A FEMALE CHILD FOUND (AT MR TARUERS DOORE IN ELY RENTS IN HOLBORN)

THE 21 OF APRILL 1646 AND BAPTISED OUT OF WIDDOW LARGES HOUSE

IN ELY RENTS THE 23 OF APRILL 1646

WYLLYAME GODFFREY YE SONE OF THOMAS GODFFREY CLOTHWORKER YE 7 DAYE OF DECEMB

WYLLYAME KENDALL YE SONE OF THOMAS KENDALL YE TWENTY FYVE OF APRELL
The capital “Z” is seldom used and, when found, can usually be recognized. The small “z” is found readily in “Elizabeth” and “baptized” and because these words are recorded frequently the letter is always available for comparison.

**Capital Z**

![Capital Z](image1)

**Small Z**

![Small Z](image2)

**Exercise**

![Exercise](image3)
ZARA SPENCER YE DAUGHT OF THOMAS SPENCER MCHANTAYLER YE XVJ OF JANVARYE

ELIZABETH DAUGHTER OF ROBART HUTHRILL 10 NOVE 1616

ELIZABETH HUDSONE DAUGHT OF JAME HUDSONE CLOTHWORKER YE 12 OF FEBRUAIRE

ELIZABETH HUDSONE DAUGHT OF THOMAS HUDSONE MERCER YE 26 OF FEBRUAIRE