

Information about letters

Observations of the original document.

The letter may be difficult to access because there are no paragraphs or spaces that break up the text. It may look busy and complicated.

Swishing tails of the h, x, y and & may make it look difficult to read.

Information that may help you to access the document.

1. Spelling in English was not standardised until the 18th century.
Vowel sounds could be written in a variety of different ways depending on how the writer said the word. A writer would often spell the same word in different ways in the same document.
2. y may be used for i eg myne – mine
3. The use of a single consonant when we now use two eg al – all
The use of two consonants when we now use one eg allways - always
4. When s is used it looks like an f without the cross bar. A final letter s was written differently.
Can you find an example of each?
5. Roman numerals. When roman numerals ended with i the final i was written as a j.
Can you find an example?
6. u and v were regarded as the same letter. By the late 17th century it was standard that v was used as a consonant and u for the vowel.
Can you find an example?
7. i and j were interchangeable. Originally j was a graphic variant of i.
i and y were also interchangeable. The dot is called a diachritic, similar to an acute accent, used to distinguish the stroke of an i from the vertical down strokes(minims) of adjacent letters like m or n.
i is one minim n is two minims m is three minims
In cursive handwriting it can be difficult to separate the minims.
One strategy is to count the downward strokes and then work out the combination of letters that they might represent.
Eg *mum minimum*
8. Capital I as the first person singular pronoun was introduced by printers- after a period when I, j, l, y and Y had all been used for this form.