Petition Spelling: Teacher's Guide

Instructions

Find the following misspelled words in the petitions. Identify the words and correct the spelling. This activity can be used to explore phonetic spelling, the lack of standardized spelling in the 18th and 19th centuries, and it can provide a key to accents. Some of the "misspelled" words reflect the manner in which petitioners "sounded out" the words. It is important to note that without standardized spelling, the same word could be spelled different ways in a single petition. In John Morison's petition, number 6 on this sheet, "privilege" was spelled two different ways. Other spelling "mistakes" reflect what the scribe *heard* the petitioner dictate.

Challenge students to find more misspelled words in these and other petitions in this collection. Ask them to identify reasons why the words were spelled that way.

Petition	***Word***	***Correct Spelling***
1. John Julian	elegal	illegal
2. Lewis Joseph	schoner	schooner
3. Louis Joseph	Milacete	Maliseet
4. Noil Bernard	Eist	East
5. William Morison	Cheef	Chief
6. John Morison	privalige	privilege
7. Simon Francis Xavier	fewter	future
8. Elizabeth Mackay	Ars	Heirs
9. Elizabeth Mackay	Bildens	Buildings
10. Elizabeth Mackay	Eath	Eighth