Reading Old Handwriting requires patience and persistence. It is a tedious process, but it is of utmost importance to transcribe the original documents. [http://copland.udel.edu/~tdoherty](http://copland.udel.edu/~tdoherty)

Always Begin With a Good Copy

Transcribe slowly - evaluate with care
Be aware of the context of the sentence
Transcribe with a friend or relative – it’s more fun than a day at the beach!
Indexes and abstracts are transcribed, e.g. Ancestry’s census + many vital records – but you should find and use the originals
Use on-line tutorials – see "Transcribing" near bottom of center frame (class web site)
Transcribing Handwriting

- Learn the scribe’s handwriting style
  - compare same letters/words in document
  - copy pages before and after page you want
  - local sources to identify misspelled place
  - common phrases often repeated
- Scribes abbreviated (paper was dear)
  - names: Jno=John, Jos=Joseph
  - “=” used to extend a word to next line
  - mostly chronological: get bearings by mo/yr

1798 New Castle Co DE Probates,
Benjamin Reynolds, administrator for both
George Spain* & Joseph Reynolds

* George Spain married Elizabeth Reynolds 16 Nov 1793

Use original documents to compare signatures