

## Letter 4: Background

In September 1684 William Dunlop was in London. His brother had died on a trading voyage to the West Indies and in this letter to his father, William tells of his attempts to find out what had happened to his brother and to his possessions. In the three years after his writing and ciphering lessons in Dordrecht his handwriting has deteriorated further.

In the days before standard punctuation, note how William Dunlop breaks up sentences by beginning new sentences with *Sir* or *so sir*.

Some legal terminology perhaps requires an explanation:

<b>Legal term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Letter Will</i>	a written will
<i>Cationer</i>	cautioner (a guarantor, a person standing surety for debts or the carrying out of a legal agreement)
<i>Letter of Acturny</i>	letter of attorney

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## Letter 4: Image

London 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 1609

5 Yours of ye 2<sup>th</sup> of this Instant Received am verij glad to hear  
 that your all in good health sine I com thither I have done as much in  
 this affair as can be done who yesterday went along w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Chislie &  
 Ellis & gave my oath that I should pay all my Brothers Debts & that  
 this letter will to my knowledge was the true Will of my Brother John  
 & they took Chislie & Ellis Cationers for my paying of the said  
10 debts being hire the form s<sup>r</sup> I have done nothing w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Donaldson  
 advise who is a verij knowing man & a kind who carried me along to his lauer  
 who does our busines so s<sup>r</sup> I have nothing now to doo but deliver up the  
 papers to thir tuo Gentlemen & a letter of deturning & Recove of them accor  
 ding to your Comma<sup>nd</sup> in your letter (of ye above written date) to me Now  
15 s<sup>r</sup> this busines is putt in such order that when ever Captane Bonnet arrives  
 who is daily expected thir tuo Gentelman will be in a Capacitij to perform it  
 payment donayd as you wer hire your self s<sup>r</sup> I assure you thir can be no  
 further account given you as gett of my Brothers death then what you have  
 heard for ~~fact~~ s<sup>r</sup> thir is no ship com from thos places wher my Brother  
 was as gett this fason nother is thir any wor reported his death hire bott  
20 that Duncan Glen whos Report as to my Brothers death is hire by many  
 believed, bot in sum other things its thought he may have spoken amise for  
 Mr. Donaldson informs me that when ever any person dyes aboard or ashore  
 thos long Voyages the Captan presently seizes his goods & if he be an honest  
 man carries all befor the mast & befor witnesses books thim that he may  
25 make a true account at home Coming to his friends which s<sup>r</sup> he tells me he  
 doubts not but D<sup>r</sup> Bonnet may doo the like for he has had dealing w<sup>th</sup> him  
 thos many years We cannot gett tryall of any of D<sup>r</sup> Bonnets eunors nother  
 if he be married hire in London bot however s<sup>r</sup> when ever he arrives it  
 will be presently knowne to Chislie & Ellos

## Letter 4: Test

1. London 13th Sept[ember] 1684
2. S[i]r
3. Yours \_\_\_\_\_ am very \_\_\_\_\_
4. that your all in good health \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday \_\_\_\_\_ Mr Chislie &
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Oath \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. & they \_\_\_\_\_ Chislie & Ellis \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_ S[i]r I have done \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_ & a kind who \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. peapers \_\_\_\_\_ w[i]t[h] a Letter of Acturny \_\_\_\_\_
13. ding to your Command \_\_\_\_\_ Now
14. S[i]r this business is putt \_\_\_\_\_ Captane Bennet arrives
15. \_\_\_\_\_ thir tuo Gentelmen will be in a Capacity to perseu if
16. \_\_\_\_\_ as you wer hire your self S[i]r I \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_ of my Brothers death than what you have
18. heard for s[i]r \_\_\_\_\_
19. was as yett this seson \_\_\_\_\_ bott
20. that \_\_\_\_\_ is hire by many
21. believed \_\_\_\_\_ amise for
22. \_\_\_\_\_
23. thos long Voyadges \_\_\_\_\_ & if he be ane honest
24. man \_\_\_\_\_ the goods befor the Mast & \_\_\_\_\_
25. \_\_\_\_\_ home Coming to his friends which s[i]r he tells me he
26. doubts not bot P[ete]r Bennet \_\_\_\_\_
27. thos many years \_\_\_\_\_ of any of P[ete]r Bennets ouners nether
28. \_\_\_\_\_ bot houever s[i]r when ever he arrives it
29. will be \_\_\_\_\_

## Letter 4: Transcription

1. London 13th Sept[ember] 1684
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4. that your all in good health sinc I com thither I have done as much in
5. this affair as cane be done who yesterday went along w[i]t[h] Mr Chislie &
6. Ellis & gave my Oath that I should pay all my Brothers Debts & that
7. this Letter Will to my knouledge was the treu Will of my Brother John
8. & they tooke Chislie & Ellis Cationers for my paying of the forsaide
9. debts being hire the form S[i]r I have done nothing w[i]t[h]out Mr  
Donnaldsons
10. advise who is a very knouing man & a kind who Caried me along to his Lauor
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17. further account given you as yett of my Brothers death than what you have
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19. was as yett this seson nether is ther any ever reported his death hire bott
20. that Duncan Glen whos Report as to my Brothers death is hire by many
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22. Mr Donnalsen informs me that when ever any person dayes aboard or ashore
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24. man Carries all the goods befor the Mast & befor wittneses books them that  
he may
25. make a true account at home Coming to his friends which s[i]r he tells me he
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w[i]t[h] hem
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28. if he be married hire in London bot houeever s[i]r when ever he arrives it
29. will be presently knoun to Chislie & Elles