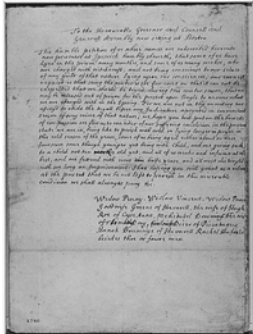


## Teaching with Primary Sources Lesson Outline

**Grade Level:** High School (9-10)

**Standard(s) or Objectives:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5: Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

### Library of Congress or Morris Special Collections Resources:



**Petition for bail from accused witches, ca. 1692.**

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mcc/003\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/003)))

### Topic Background:

Many American colonists brought with them from Europe a belief in witches and a fascination with alleged conspiracies with the devil. During the seventeenth century, people were executed for witchcraft throughout the colonies, especially in Massachusetts. Many of the accused were women, prompting some recent historians to suggest that charges of witchcraft were a way of controlling women who threatened the existing economic and social order. In 1692 the famous Salem, Massachusetts, witchcraft trials took place, and that summer hundreds of people in the colony were arrested.

Excerpted from: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mcc/003\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/003)))

### Source(s) Used:

The source used for this assessment is an appeal from ten women "besides thre or foure men" who were confined without trial in the Ipswich jail for many months. The petitioners--some "fettered with irons," some pregnant, and all "weake and infirme"--request that they be released on "bayle" to stand trial the following spring so that they do not "perish with cold" during the winter months.

Excerpted from: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mcc/003\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/003)))

### Answer Key:

Question 1: D  
Question 2: A

## Petition for bail from accused witches, ca. 1692

[Excerpt from prisoners at Ipswich]

...some of us have lye in the prison many months, and some of us many weekes, who are charged with witchcraft, and not being conscious to our selves of any guilt of that nature lying upon our consciences; our earnest request is that seeing the winter is soe far come on that it can not be expected that we should be tryed during this winter season, that we may be released out of prison for the present upon Bayle to answer what we are charged with in the Spring...we hope you will put on the [?] of compassion soe far as to concider of our suffering condicion in the present state we are in, being like to perish with cold in lying longer in prison in this cold season of the yeare, some of us being aged either about or nere fourscore some though younger yet being with child, and one giving suck to a child not ten weekes old yet, and all of us weake and infirmo at the best...all most destroyed with soe long an imprisonment.

### Questions:

- 1) How does the text in the last four lines contribute to the accused witches' plea for bail? (CCSS-RH9-10.5)
  - a. These lines depict numerous children being held within the jail.
  - b. These lines declare the accused witches innocent of witchcraft.
  - c. These lines focus on the ill health of numerous young women.
  - d. These lines portray the women as either old or as mothers.
  
- 2) Which statement is most helpful in understanding the central idea of the plea letter? (CCSS-RH9-10.2)
  - a. "winter is soe far come on that it can not be expected that we should be tried during this winter season."
  - b. "some of us have lye in the prison many months"
  - c. "being like to perish with cold in lying longer in prison in this cold season of the yeare"
  - d. "all of us weake and infirmo at the best"