FINDING CASE LAW

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................................ 1
Locating Sources ..................................................................................................................................................... 1
Outline of Sources ................................................................................................................................................... 1

I. Reporters .................................................................................................................................................... 1
   A. Federal Reporters ................................................................................................................................... 1
      1. Supreme Court of the United States ................................................................................................. 1
      2. United States Courts of Appeals ...................................................................................................... 2
      3. United States District Courts ............................................................................................................. 2
      4. Early Federal Cases ........................................................................................................................... 2
   B. State Reporters ....................................................................................................................................... 2
      1. West’s Regional Reporters ................................................................................................................ 2
      2. Other Reporters .................................................................................................................................. 3

II. Case Citations .............................................................................................................................................. 3
   A. Interpreting Case Citations ..................................................................................................................... 3
   B. Other Abbreviations ................................................................................................................................ 4
      1. Prince’s Bieber Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations ............................................................................ 4
      2. Black’s Law Dictionary .......................................................................................................................... 4
      3. The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation .................................................................................... 4

III. Finding Cases ............................................................................................................................................... 5
   A. By Legal Topic .......................................................................................................................................... 5
      1. West Key Numbers and Digests ........................................................................................................ 5
         a. Key Numbers ......................................................................................................................................... 5
         b. Print Digests .......................................................................................................................................... 5
         c. Custom Digest in WestlawNext ....................................................................................................... 7
      2. Lexis Topics ........................................................................................................................................... 8
         a. Identity and Select Topics .................................................................................................................. 8
         b. Narrow Results by Jurisdiction ........................................................................................................ 8
   B. Secondary Sources .................................................................................................................................. 9
      1. Legal Encyclopedias ............................................................................................................................ 9
         a. National Encyclopedias ....................................................................................................................... 9
         b. State Encyclopedias ............................................................................................................................ 9
      2. American Law Reports (ALR) ............................................................................................................ 9
      3. Hornbooks & Treatises ....................................................................................................................... 10
   C. Searching the Full Text of Cases ........................................................................................................... 10
1. Advantages & Disadvantages
   a. Advantages
   b. Disadvantages

2. Full Text Search
   a. WestlawNext
   b. Bloomberg Law
   c. Lexis Advance

D. Citators
   1. Shepard’s Citations (LexisNexis)
   2. KeyCite (WestlawNext)
   3. BCite (Bloomberg Law)
   4. Other Citators
Introduction

This guide identifies resources for finding cases and interpreting case citations. While all U.S. cases are available online, this guide also identifies traditional print case law resources.

Locating Sources

General legal research services such as WestlawNext, Bloomberg Law, and Lexis Advance contain databases of all U.S. case law. Within each service it is possible to search all federal and state cases at once. It is also possible to select cases to search by jurisdiction and by subject matter. Traditionally, the larger the database, the higher the cost to search. While this is not a consideration with a law school academic account, it is often an important factor when conducting research while working over the summer or as an attorney. It’s therefore a good habit to search databases that contain only the range of cases you need and no more. Not only will this save database fees, it will also save you time.

Sources available in print in the Law Library will have the location and call number (if applicable) listed. Books, journals and other materials, in both print and online, can be found by searching JACOB, the Law Library Catalog:  http://jacob.law.gwu.edu/

GW Law Library databases are linked at:  http://www.law.gwu.edu/library/research

Outline of Sources

I. Reporters

Reporters publish court decisions that are designated by courts for publication, usually by court rule. Federal reporters contain decisions from federal courts (including district courts), and state reporters contain opinions from state courts (usually only appellate level courts). Regional reporters, published by Thomson Reuters/West, contain decisions from designated regions of states.

Reporters are published in print as multivolume sets; the cases included in the reporters are also available in online databases such as WestlawNext, Bloomberg Law and Lexis Advance.

Each print reporter has a volume number printed on the spine. Some reporters have been published in different series, with the volume numbers restarting with each new series. Print reporters are kept current by advance sheets (before new bound volumes are available). A single case may be printed in several different reporters; the volume and page numbers will be different.

When a case is printed in multiple reporters, the parallel citations are included in the online version of the case. Each online service also supports viewing the case with the pagination from different reporters.

A. Federal Reporters

1. Supreme Court of the United States

The official and unofficial reporters for U.S. Supreme Court decisions are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>United States Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Official opinions of the United States Supreme Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor; Advance Sheets at Reference Desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online: HeinOnline (PDF)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S. Ct.  
**Supreme Court Reporter**
Thomson Reuters/West's annotated version of the U.S. Reports.
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1882-1984 and 1984-date)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

L. Ed., L. Ed. 2d  
**United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers’ Edition**
LexisNexis’s annotated version of the U.S. Reports.
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

2. United States Courts of Appeals

F.  
**Federal Reporter**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1880-1924)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

F.2d  
**Federal Reporter, Second Series**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1924-1988)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

F.3d  
**Federal Reporter, Third Series**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1988-date)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

F.App’x  
**Federal Appendix**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (2001-date)

3. United States District Courts

F. Supp.  
**Federal Supplement**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1932-1988)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

F. Supp. 2d  
**Federal Supplement, Second Series**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1988-date)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

F.R.D.  
**Federal Rules Decisions**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (1941-1988 and 1988-date)
Online: WestlawNext (HTML and PDF)

4. Early Federal Cases

F. Cas.  
**Federal Cases**
Covers U.S. circuit and district court cases from 1789 to 1880.
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

B. State Reporters

1. West’s Regional Reporters

A., A.2d, A.3d  
**Atlantic Reporter, First, Second and Third Series**
CT, DE, DC, MD, NH, NJ, PA, RI, and VT
N.E., N.E.2d  
**North Eastern Reporter, First and Second Series**  
IL, IN, MA, NY, and OH  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First and Second)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

N.W., N.W.2d  
**North Western Reporter, First and Second Series**  
IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, SD, and WI  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First, Second and Second)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

P., P.2d, P.3d  
**Pacific Reporter, First, Second and Third Series**  
AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, KS, MT, NV, NM, OK, OR, UT, WA and WY  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First, Second and Third)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

S.E., S.E.2d  
**South Eastern Reporter, First and Second Series**  
GA, NC, SC, VA and WV  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First and Second and Second)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

So., So. 2d, So. 3d  
**Southern Reporter, First, Second and Third Series**  
AL, FL, LA and MS  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First, Second and Third)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

S.W., S.W.2d, S.W.3d  
**South Western Reporter, First, Second and Third Series**  
AR, KY, MO, TN and TX  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor (First, Second and Third)  
Online: [WestlawNext](https://www.westlawnext.com) (HTML and PDF)

2. **Other Reporters**

Cal. Rptr.  
**California Reporter**  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

Cal. Rptr.2d  
**California Reporter, Second Series**  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

Cal. Rptr. 3d  
**California Reporter, Third Series**  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

N.Y.S.  
**New York Supplement**  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

N.Y.S.2d  
**New York Supplement, Second Series**  
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor

II. **Case Citations**

A. **Interpreting Case Citations**
Sample citation:
**Mattel, Inc. v. MCA Records, Inc., 296 F.3d 894 (9th Cir. 2002)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mattel, Inc. v. MCA Records, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Cir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Party names**
In the trial court, the first name listed is the plaintiff (the party bringing the lawsuit). The name following the v. ("versus") is the defendant. If the case is appealed, the name of the appellant, the party appealing, is commonly listed first and the name of the appellee is listed second. If the defendant in the trial court case files the appeal, the defendant’s name may be listed first in the appellate case.

**Volume number of reporter**
Case citations are based on the print edition of the reporters. The volume number of the reporter is printed on the spine of the reporter and precedes the abbreviation of the reporter name in the citation.

**Reporter**
The reporter name is abbreviated in the citation. See the list of reporters earlier in this guide for abbreviations.

**Page number**
This is the page number on which the decision begins in the print reporter. When citing to a specific page number in a decision, pincites are added after the first page number.

**Court**
If a reporter contains decisions for multiple courts or jurisdictions, include an abbreviation for the court issuing the decision.

**Year.**
This is the year in which the case was decided.

**B. Other Abbreviations**

The following sources may help to determine the meanings of other abbreviations and acronyms:

1. **Prince’s Bieber Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations**
   - Location: 1st Floor, Reserve and Ready Reference, *KF246 .B46 2009*
   - Online: [Lexis Advance](http://lexisadvance.com) (5th edition)

2. **Black's Law Dictionary**
   - Location: 1st Floor, Reserve and Ready Reference, *KF156 .B53 2009*
   - Online: [WestlawNext](http://westlawnext.com)

3. **The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation**
   - Location: 1st Floor, Reserve and Ready Reference, *KF245 .B58*
III. Finding Cases

A. By Legal Topic

Traditionally, cases are indexed by legal topic in digests, with different digests printed for different jurisdictions. Each publisher has its own outline of legal topics. A digest is an index of cases by legal topic that includes a brief description each case. The print digests are organized by legal topic and then jurisdiction. Online databases also provide access to digests. Unlike print digests which contain selected jurisdictions, online databases allow the researcher to select specific jurisdictions and topics to search; they allow the researcher to search multiple topics at once.

1. West Key Numbers and Digests

   a. Key Numbers

   Thomson Reuters/West produces an outline of legal topics, with each legal topic assigned a Key Number. A Key Number is composed of a topic and number that together refer to a specific subtopic within a broader legal topic. For example:

   110 Criminal Law K33 Ignorance or mistake of fact
   Criminal Law is the broader legal topic; ignorance or mistake of fact is the specific subtopic.

   Each case is indexed with Key Numbers and headnotes. The headnotes appear at the beginning of the case and are a short summary of how the legal issue was resolved in the case. They are not part of the court decision, but a description added by the editors of the reporters.

   The outline of legal topics used in Thomson Reuters/West publications is the same for each United States jurisdiction and is used across Thomson Reuters/West legal publications. Therefore, finding a Key Number in a New York case will allow the researcher to find cases from California on the same topic by using the same Key Number. Likewise, secondary sources like American Jurisprudence 2d or the American Law Reports contain cross references to Key Numbers.

   i. Outline of Key Numbers in WestlawNext

      To access the outline of Key Numbers in WestlawNext, click the Tools tab from the home page and then click West Key Number System. Move the mouse over a topic and a lower case i will appear. Clicking that will display a scope of note the range of topics included, as well as the topics excluded, for a particular Key Number.

   ii. Outline of Key Numbers in Print

      West’s Analysis of American Law: With Key Number Classifications
      Location: 1st Floor, Ready Reference, KF435 .W48 2013

   b. Print Digests

      When using digests, it is important to conduct research in the set that is most likely to produce relevant results. In looking for cases from a particular state, it is often more efficient to use a state digest, if available, than one that indexes cases from the entire United States. An outline of Topics and Key Numbers appears at the beginning of each digest. Use the Descriptive Word Index volumes to find Topics and Key Numbers.


i. Local Jurisdictions (D.C., Maryland, Virginia)

These digests are located in the Stockton Reading Room on the 2nd floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digest</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West’s District of Columbia Digest</td>
<td>1658-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Maryland Digest 2d</td>
<td>1658-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Virginia and West Virginia Digest</td>
<td>1681-date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii. Federal Courts

The following digests are located on the 2nd floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digest</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Digest (red)</td>
<td>1754-1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Federal Practice Digest (green)</td>
<td>1939-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Federal Practice Digest, 2d (blue)</td>
<td>1961-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Federal Practice Digest, 3d (red)</td>
<td>1976-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Federal Practice Digest, 4th (blue)</td>
<td>1989-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Federal Practice Digest, 5th (red)</td>
<td>2013-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Supreme Court Digest</td>
<td>1754-date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. State Courts

The following digests are located on the 2nd floor.

Regional Digests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digest</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West’s Atlantic Digest, 2d</td>
<td>CT, DE, DE, ME, MD, NH, NJ, PA, RI, VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s North Western Digest, 2d*</td>
<td>IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, SD, WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Pacific Digest*</td>
<td>AK, AZ, CO, HI, ID, KS, MT, NV, NM, OK, OR, UT, WA, WY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s South Eastern Digest, 2d*</td>
<td>GA, NC, SC, VA, WV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Southern Digest**</td>
<td>AL, FL, LA, MS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Law Library recently stopped updating these digests in print. Rely on WestlawNext, the American Digest, or the appropriate state digest. ** Ceased in 1988. Rely on WestlawNext, the American Digest, or the appropriate state digest.

State Digests

The following digests are located on the 2nd floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digest</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West’s California Digest</td>
<td>1950-2012</td>
<td>Current to 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Florida Digest, 2d</td>
<td>1935-2008</td>
<td>Current to 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Digest and West’s Illinois Digest, 2d</td>
<td>1818-2011</td>
<td>Current to 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s New York Digest, 4th</td>
<td>1978-date</td>
<td>Currently Updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Ohio Digest</td>
<td>1949-2011</td>
<td>Current to 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West’s Pennsylvania Digest, 2d</td>
<td>1938-2012</td>
<td>Current to 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv. All Jurisdictions: The American Digest
The American Digest contains all federal and state cases and is located on the 2nd floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Digest</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Century Edition</td>
<td>1658-1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Decennial</td>
<td>1897-1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Decennial</td>
<td>1907-1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Decennial</td>
<td>1916-1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Decennial</td>
<td>1926-1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Decennial</td>
<td>1936-1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Decennial</td>
<td>1946-1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Decennial</td>
<td>1956-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight Decennial</td>
<td>1966-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth Decennial, Part 2</td>
<td>1981-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Decennial, Part 1</td>
<td>1986-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Decennial, Part 2</td>
<td>1991-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh Decennial, Part 1</td>
<td>1996-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh Decennial, Part 2</td>
<td>2001-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth Decennial, Part 1</td>
<td>2008-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Digest, 13th Series</td>
<td>2010-date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The General Digest volumes are cumulated into a Decennial digest.

v. Finding Parallel Citations

National Reporter Blue Book
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor
Provides citations from the official reports of cases and the corresponding citations to a state’s West regional reporter. Parallel citations are provided automatically by WestlawNext, Lexis Advance and Bloomberg Law.

vi. Specialized Digests

West’s Bankruptcy Digest
Location: Law Library SL3, KF1515.3 .W48
Covers decisions from U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, bankruptcy decisions of U.S. District Courts, U.S. Courts of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States, as well as bankruptcy points of law from state courts.

United States Federal Claims Digest
Location: Law Library SL3, KF125.C551 U49
Covers decisions by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims reported in West’s Federal Claims Reporter.

c. Custom Digest in WestlawNext

All of the features of the print digests and reporters are available in WestlawNext. WestlawNext allows the researcher to create a Custom Digest on the fly tailored to the researcher’s needs. To create a Custom Digest, identify and select Key Numbers to search, then filter the results by jurisdiction or topic.
i. Identify and Select Key Numbers

Step 1: From the WestlawNext home page, click the Tools tab and then click West Key Number System to view the outline of Key Numbers.

Step 2: Browse the outline for Key Numbers and identify relevant Key Numbers.

Step 3: To select Key Numbers to search, first select Specify content to search at the top right of the page.

Step 4: Select Key Numbers to search using the checkboxes next to each topic.

Step 5: Click View Headnotes at the top of the page to run your search for all cases matching the selected Key Numbers.

ii. Narrow Results by Jurisdiction

Step 6: At the top of the results page, review the selected jurisdiction. The default jurisdiction is All State & Federal.

Step 7: Click Change next the selected jurisdiction. Use the checkboxes to select jurisdictions to search. Note: Only three boxes can be checked at any time.

Step 8: Click Apply to narrow the results to the selected jurisdictions.

2. Lexis Topics

Lexis Advance allows the researcher to browse topics and find cases (as well as any other type of material that fall under the topic). The underlying search is performed differently, however, than Lexis.com (i.e., classic Lexis) and WestlawNext.

a. Identity and Select Topics

Step 1: At the top of the Lexis Advance home page, click Browse Topics.

Step 2: Select a major legal topic from the list of topics.

Step 3: Expand the hierarchy of topics by clicking the arrow next to a topic.

Step 4: Click on a topic to search. At this point a box will appear allowing the researcher to Get topic documents (i.e., run the search) or Add this topic to the search (i.e., allowing the researcher to continue adding multiple topics to the search). Note: If adding multiple topics to the search, the researcher must also add search terms to the search box at the top before running the search.

Step 5: Run the search and review the list of results.

b. Narrow Results by Jurisdiction

Step 6: Narrow the results using the Narrow by... pane on the left and selecting the relevant Jurisdiction.

Step 7: Sort the list using the Sort by menu at the top right of the page. The researcher can sort by jurisdiction, court, date, document title, and relevance.
Step 8: At the top right of the results list, click **Overview** to display a brief description of the case in light of the legal topic selected.

B. Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are another important way to find cases. The explanations found in secondary sources can help the researcher gain a better understanding of a topic and help the researcher identify relevant issues. Secondary sources also include cross references to important cases, as well as Topics and Key Numbers, to assist the researcher.

1. Legal Encyclopedias

Legal encyclopedias can be used to obtain background information on legal topics. They provide citations to leading cases on a topic. All of the encyclopedias listed below are arranged by topic with detailed indexes; many provide tables of cases, statutes and regulations. Encyclopedias published by Thomson Reuters/West include cross references to Topics and Key Numbers, which can be used to locate case law in reporters and on WestlawNext.

a. National Encyclopedias

**Corpus Juris Secundum (C.J.S.)**
Location: Lower Level 1 Legal Reference, KF154 .C67
Online: WestlawNext

**American Jurisprudence, 2d (Am. Jur. 2d)**
Location: Lower Level 1 Legal Reference, KF154 .A42
Online: WestlawNext and Lexis Advance

b. State Encyclopedias

i. **Maryland**

**West's Maryland Law Encyclopedia**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor, Stockton Reading Room
Online: WestlawNext

ii. **Virginia**

**Michie's Jurisprudence of Virginia and West Virginia**
Location: Law Library, 2nd Floor, Stockton Reading Room
Online: Lexis Advance

iii. **Other States**

Many other state-specific legal encyclopedias are available. In WestlawNext, click the State Materials tab, select a state, and then review the sources listed under Secondary Sources. Materials can also be found by searching JACOB.

2. American Law Reports (ALR)

American Law Reports contains articles called annotations which analyze specific legal issues and topics, and which summarize court decisions from a variety of jurisdictions. Each annotation
includes the full text of a case illustrating the legal topic. Use the appropriate ALR Index to find annotations on a particular topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALR Index</td>
<td>1948-date</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132.2 .J53 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR Federal Quick Index</td>
<td>1967-2012</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A68 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online: WestlawNext and Lexis Advance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALR Series</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>1919-1948</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR 2d</td>
<td>1948-1965</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR 3d</td>
<td>1965-1980</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR 4th</td>
<td>1980-1991</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR 5th</td>
<td>1991-2005</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR 6th</td>
<td>2005-date</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR Federal</td>
<td>1967-2005</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR Federal 2d</td>
<td>2005-date</td>
<td>Lower Level 1, KF132 .A66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online: WestlawNext and Lexis Advance

3. Hornbooks & Treatises

Hornbooks and treatises can be useful for finding cases. Hornbooks generally provide brief overviews of subject areas with citations to, or discussions of, leading cases on a topic. Treatises are usually multivolume and provide more in-depth discussion and analysis of legal issues, along with citations to relevant cases. Many treatises are available online in WestlawNext, Bloomberg Law and Lexis Advance. In print, treatises are often updated by pocket parts or looseleaf pages. Treatises and hornbooks usually include tables of cases referenced in the text.

WesternNext:
From the WestlawNext home page, click Secondary Sources and then select Texts & Treatises.

Bloomberg Law:
From the Bloomberg Law home page, click Search & Browse and choose Books & Treatises.

Lexis Advance:
It is not possible to browse titles of sources by topic in Lexis Advance. An alternative is to click Browse Topics and, after selecting a topic to search, click Get Source Documents. Then filter by secondary sources by clicking Second at the top of the list of results.

C. Searching the Full Text of Cases

WestlawNext, Bloomberg Law and Lexis Advance allow the researcher to find cases by entering search terms. While this may seem like the easiest way to find cases at first, particularly when everyone is accustomed to searching Google for everything on the web, this is not always the best way to find cases, especially for law students and those new to particular legal topics.

1. Advantages & Disadvantages
   a. Advantages
Full text search gives the researcher the flexibility to use very precise search terms and the ability to select specific jurisdictions to search. For example, a researcher can select a database of cases from a particular jurisdiction (e.g., California Courts of Appeals in WestlawNext) or by topic (e.g., Federal Bankruptcy Courts in WestlawNext).

b. Disadvantages

Full text search traditionally requires the researcher to know very precise search commands (AND, OR, NOT, !, *, %, ATLEAST, etc.) and to think of as many synonyms as possible for a particular legal topic. It can be difficult for users unfamiliar with the terms of art for a particular topic to construct an effective search. For example, a user searching for the topic of “cancelled debt” would not be searching comprehensively if he did not also search variations of that phrase (e.g., “cancellation of debt”) as well as synonyms (e.g., “discharge of debt,” or “debt discharge,” or “discharge of indebtedness,” etc.). Looking at an index of Topics and Key Numbers may be better in this situation.

2. Full Text Search

While it is easy to search all federal and state cases combined as a default, it is a good idea to avoid this habit and to instead search only the jurisdictions actually needed. Traditionally, the larger the database of cases searched, the more expensive the search charges. It also saves time in not having to review results from irrelevant jurisdictions. Think about the research question and identify the jurisdiction and courts in advance of running the search.

a. WestlawNext

From the WestlawNext home page, click Cases. A list of case databases, federal and state, appears. You can further narrow by federal court, federal circuit, by state, and so on. Once you have selected what you want to search, enter your search terms in the search box at the top and click the orange Search button.

b. Bloomberg Law

From the Bloomberg Law home page, click Search & Browse and then select Court Opinions. Use the menu at the top to select the jurisdictions needed. Enter search terms in the Keywords box. For guidance on search operators (AND, OR, NOT, etc.) click Search Help to the left of the search box.

c. Lexis Advance

Lexis Advance does not allow the researcher to select jurisdictions to search in advance of running the search. To search Lexis Advance for cases, enter words in the search box at the top and click Search. At the top of the list of results, select Cases. Then narrow by Jurisdiction, Court, or other means using the links on the left of the page.

D. Citators

A citator allows the researcher to determine the status of a case, statute or regulation. A citator is a citation index of legal resources that allows the researcher to find all citing references to a particular case, statute, regulation or other legal document. To determine whether a case is still good law, a researcher can look up the case in a citator and find a list of all other cases (and other legal
materials) that cite to it. Citators include signals that tell the researcher how the case was treated (e.g., negative treatment, positive treatment, neutral, etc.).

Example: In your research, you come across Katz v. United States, 369 F.2d 130 (9th Cir. 1966). You need to determine whether this case is still good law. Entering the case into a citator will find any later cases that cite to it, along with signals telling you the treatment. The citator has a red warning flag and indicates that this case was reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court in Katz v. United States, 389 U.S. 347 (1967).

1. Shepard’s Citations (LexisNexis)

The oldest citation service is Shepard’s Citations which is published by LexisNexis. Checking a citation in Shepard’s is called Shepardizing. While Shepard’s is published in print, the Law Library no longer subscribes in print. Access is available online through Lexis Advance. Click Shepardize at the top right of any case to view the Shepard’s Report, the index of citing references.

2. KeyCite (WestlawNext)

KeyCite is the citator available through WestlawNext. Though named similarly to Key Numbers, KeyCite is unrelated to Key Numbers. Unlike Shepard’s, KeyCite was never published in print, and only exists online through WestlawNext. To check a citation using KeyCite, click the flag next to the case name at the top of the case to view Negative Treatment. Click Citing References to view all citing references to the case.

3. BCite (Bloomberg Law)

BCite is the citator available through Bloomberg Law and is the newest citator. To check a citation using BCite, review the BCite Analysis box displayed on the right when viewing a case.

4. Other Citators

There are other specialized citators for specific areas of law. These citators exist for specialized areas of law with a large number of materials. For example, specialized tax citators usually do a better job of tracking all of the IRS administrative materials than general legal citators.