

Reference Desk “Cheat Sheet” for New Law Librarians

New to the reference desk? Use this “cheat sheet” to locate popular materials under pressure!

Librarian-Created LibGuides. LibGuides should be your first step if a patron asks you for a source in an unfamiliar area of law. LibGuides are electronic research guides that librarians create for themselves and their patrons. To find LibGuides, just use Google! Search the area of law plus the word LibGuide or research guide. For example, a Google search of “tax LibGuide” yields Libguides created by librarians in Los Angeles, New York, and Florida, among others.

	Subscription Databases	Free Online
Secondary Sources (U.S.):		
Black’s Law Dictionary	<u>WestlawNext</u> : follow the secondary sources link on the home page and then look in the far right column for the link to Black’s. There is also an app.	
Legal Encyclopedias	Both national encyclopedias are available (American Jurisprudence 2d and Corpus Juris Secundum) are available on WestlawNext; American Jurisprudence 2d is available on Lexis Advance. You can also browse by jurisdiction to search state encyclopedias.	
Legal Periodicals	<u>HeinOnline</u> (With a historical focus, this is also the best source for citation checkers, as all journals are in PDF form.) <u>WestlawNext</u> (Secondary Sources -> Law Reviews & Journals) <u>Lexis Advance</u> (Secondary Materials -> Law Reviews and Journals) <u>EBSCO’s Legal Collection</u>	
Non-Legal (Interdisciplinary) Periodicals	Familiarize yourself with your non-law databases. There are many subject-specific databases, but two of the best general databases are EBSCO’s Academic Search Complete (thousands of full-text journals) and Scopus (great for quantitative studies on social science subjects.)	
Treatises	Do a catalog search by state and by topic. <u>WestlawNext</u> (Secondary Sources -> Texts & Treatises) <u>Lexis Advance</u> (Secondary Materials -> Treatises) <u>BloombergLaw</u> (All Legal Content -> Practice Area)	
Practice Guides and Form Books	Many states have series of practice and form books. Check the catalog and familiarize yourself with the commonly-used books from your state. (May be found using words like “handbook” or “guide.”) Westlaw (Can often be found by finding your state in the state heading, then checking Forms and Secondary Sources.) Lexis (Forms heading, or Secondary Materials -> Practice Guides) (For forms, also check court websites; many have forms which can be printed out.)	
Primary Sources (U.S.):		
Federal Statutes	<u>WestlawNext</u> : U.S.C.A.; Historical Statutes at Large; Public Laws; Bills <u>Lexis Advance</u> : U.S.C.S.; Statutes at Large; Public Laws; Bills <u>Bloomberg</u> : U.S.C.; U.S. Public Laws and Statutes at Large <u>HeinOnline</u> : U.S. Code ; Statutes at Large; Early Federal Codes and Compilations of Statutes <u>ProQuest Congressional</u> : U.S. Code; Public Laws; Bills; also portal to access ProQuest Legislative Insight (compiled legislative histories include bill versions and related bills)	<u>FDsys</u> : U.S. Code; Public & Private Laws; Bills <u>Congress.gov</u> : Public and Private Laws; Bills
State Statutes	<u>WestlawNext & Lexis Advance</u> : ann. codes for all 50 U.S. States and Territories, including historical; Session Laws and Bills <u>Bloomberg</u> : unannotated codes for all 50 U.S. States and Territories; Session Laws <u>HeinOnline</u> : State Statutes Historical Archive; State Session Laws	State legislatures generally provide the current state code and often bills, both current and historical, on their websites

<p>Cases/Dockets (a “docket” = the formal record of all the proceedings/filings of a case).</p>	<p><u>WestlawNext</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies depending on court, but can go all the way back to 1658. Cases available to download in PDF. Dockets (and PDFs of filings – complaints, etc.) are sometimes available in the “filings” tab (once you’ve selected a case). <u>Lexis Advance</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies depending on court, but can go all the way back to 1730. Cases available to download in PDF. <u>Bloomberg Law</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies depending on court, but can go all the way back to 1789. Cases available to download in PDF. Also, Bloomberg Law provides access to PACER, and, therefore, access to all federal dockets. It also provides very comprehensive coverage of state dockets. Follow the “dockets” link on the home page to search by keyword, jurisdiction, etc.</p>	<p><u>Fastcase</u>: free to licensed attorneys, subscription based otherwise. State and Federal cases. Coverage varies. Available to download as PDF. <u>Google Scholar</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies. <u>Court/Clerk of Court’s websites</u>: Many courts provide recent case opinions online. Many Clerk of Court’s websites provide access to dockets (although not necessarily the actual filings) through public records searches.</p>
<p>Foreign, Comparative, & International:</p>		
<p>Research Guides & Other Resources</p>	<p><u>Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations</u> (http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/): useful for deciphering citations to foreign journals and case law reporters <u>GlobaLex</u> (www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex): freely available guides to International and Foreign Law research written by scholars; updated <u>Foreign Law Guide</u>: subscription-based source for identifying sources of foreign law by nation; includes legal history and overview of judicial systems of individual countries NYU’s <u>Guide to Foreign & International Legal Databases</u>: http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/research/foreign_intl/ Harvard’s <u>Foreign & International Law Gateways</u>: http://guides.library.harvard.edu/foreignintlgateways Georgetown’s <u>Foreign & Comparative Law Guide</u>: http://www.law.georgetown.edu/library/research/guides/ForeignandComparativeLaw.cfm</p>	
<p>Secondary Sources</p>	<p><u>WestlawNext</u>: Legal Journals Index - indexes articles from legal journals published in and covering topics related to the UK & Europe; International Journals and Treatises from select countries <u>LexisAdvance</u>: selected secondary sources <u>Bloomberg</u>: secondary sources limited to UK <u>HeinOnline</u>: Index to Foreign Law Periodicals (English keyword searching of over 450 foreign law journals); International & Non-U.S. Law Journals (100’s of titles in full text); Kluwer International Law Journal Library; Phillip C. Jessup Library</p>	<p><u>WorldLII</u>: free access to selection of foreign law journals</p>
<p>Primary Law</p>	<p><u>WestlawNext</u>: selected decisions from Australia, EU & UK, Hong Kong, Korea; statutes from EU & UK, Hong Kong, Korea <u>Westlaw China</u>: Includes English "Case Headnotes" and legislation/regulations <u>Bloomberg</u>: selected decisions, regulatory, and legislative information from Canada, EU & UK, Hong Kong, UAE, and Cayman Islands</p> <p><i>Some databases for foreign law commonly subscribed to by academic law libraries:</i> <u>HeinOnline</u>: Foreign & Int’l Law Resources Database (includes Hague materials, selected foreign codes, and decisions from European Courts of Justice); Canada Supreme Court Reports and Revised Statutes of Canada; Israel Law Reports; World Constitutions <u>Justis.com</u>: U.K. Cases and Legislation <u>vLex Global</u>: case law, legislation, forms, and secondary materials from a wide range of countries</p>	<p><u>WorldLII</u>: portal to online sources of foreign law organized by country <u>World Law Guide</u> (www.lexadin.nl/wlg/): links to websites of high courts in many countries where primary sources of law can be found</p>