

Reference Desk “Cheat Sheet” for New Academic 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>Westlaw Edge</u> : Start typing “Black’s Law Dictionary” into the search bar. The content page for the dictionary will auto populate.	
Legal Encyclopedias	Both national encyclopedias (American Jurisprudence 2d and Corpus Juris Secundum) are available on Westlaw Edge; American Jurisprudence 2d is available on Lexis Advance. You can also browse by jurisdiction to find state encyclopedias.	
Legal Periodicals	<u>HeinOnline</u> : (Articles are in PDF form and are generally available back to the first volumes of the journals). <u>Westlaw Edge</u> : (Secondary Sources -> Law Reviews & Journals) <u>Lexis Advance</u> : (Secondary Materials -> Law Reviews and Journals)	
Non-Legal (Interdisciplinary) Periodicals	Familiarize yourself with the non-law databases that may be available through your main university libraries. Consider configuring <u>Google Scholar</u> so that the contents of your main library databases are searchable through that interface. There are many subject-specific databases, but two of the best general databases are <u>EBSCO’s Academic Search Complete</u> (thousands of full-text journals) and <u>Scopus</u> (great for quantitative studies on social science subjects.)	
Treatises	Do a library catalog search by topic. Find treatises by subject using library LibGuides (see above). <u>Westlaw Edge</u> : (Secondary Sources -> Texts & Treatises) <u>Lexis Advance</u> : (Secondary Materials -> Treatises) <u>Bloomberg Law</u> : (All Legal Content -> Practice Area)	<u>Georgetown’s Treatise Finders</u> (https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/home/treatise-finders)
State Practice Guides and Form Books	Many states have practice and form book series. Check the catalog and familiarize yourself with the commonly used books for your state. (Words like “handbook” or “guide” are frequently used). <u>Westlaw Edge</u> : (Search for “Forms and Secondary Sources” within the state materials of your particular state.) <u>Lexis Advance</u> : (Search for “Treatises, Practice Guides & Jurisprudence” and “Forms” within the secondary source section of state materials for your particular state)	Courts may have certain commonly used forms available on their websites.
Primary Sources (U.S.):		
Federal Statutes	<u>Westlaw Edge</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 Law</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>govinfo</u> : U.S. Code; Public & Private Laws; Bills <u>Congress.gov</u> : Public and Private Laws; Bills

State Statutes	<p><u>Westlaw Edge and Lexis Advance</u>: annotated codes for U.S. States and Territories, including historical; Session Laws and Bills</p> <p><u>Bloomberg Law</u>: unannotated codes for all 50 U.S. States and Territories; Session Laws</p> <p><u>HeinOnline</u>: State Statutes Historical Archive; State Session Laws</p>	State legislatures generally provide the current state code and often bills, both current and historical, on their websites
Cases (and docket information)	<p><u>Westlaw Edge</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies depending on court, but can go all the way back to 1658. Some 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).</p> <p><u>Lexis Advance</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies depending on court, but can go all the way back to 1730. Some cases available to download in PDF.</p> <p><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 most federal dockets. It also provides select coverage of state dockets.</p>	<p><u>Google Scholar</u>: State and Federal cases. Coverage varies.</p> <p><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>
Foreign, Comparative, & International:		
Research Guides & Other Resources	<p><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</p> <p><u>Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations</u>: useful for deciphering citations to foreign journals and case law reporters</p> <p><u>NYU Law School’s GlobalLex</u>: freely available guides to International and Foreign Law research written by scholars</p> <p><u>Harvard Law School’s Foreign and International Law Gateways</u> (http://guides.library.harvard.edu/foreignintlgateways)</p> <p><u>Georgetown’s Foreign & Comparative Law Guide</u> (http://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/ForeignandComparativeLaw)</p>	
Secondary Sources	<p><u>Westlaw Edge</u>: Legal Journals Index - indexes articles from legal journals published in and covering topics related to the UK & Europe; select secondary sources (mostly UK and other common law jurisdictions)</p> <p><u>Lexis Advance and Bloomberg Law</u>: selected secondary sources (mostly UK and other common law jurisdictions)</p> <p><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>	
Primary Law	<p>Databases such as the <u>Foreign Law Guide</u> and <u>GlobalLex</u> (discussed above) can assist with identifying and locating sources of primary law.</p> <p><u>Westlaw Edge, Lexis Advance, and Bloomberg Law</u>: selected primary law materials ((mostly UK and other common law jurisdictions).</p> <p><u>Westlaw China</u> (includes English case headnotes and legislative/regulatory information).</p> <p><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</p> <p><u>Justis.com</u>: U.K. Cases and Legislation</p> <p><u>vLex Global</u>: case law, legislation, forms, and secondary materials from a wide range of countries</p>	<p><u>Legal information institutes</u>: <u>WorldLII</u>; <u>CanLII (Canada)</u>; <u>BAILII (UK & Ireland)</u>; and <u>AustLII (Australia)</u>, etc.</p> <p><u>EUR-LEX (European Union)</u></p> <p><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>