

Legal Research I: Government Structure & Sources of Law
Finale: Scavenger Hunt

1. Analyze the issue:

- a. What is the legal topic and subtopic of the question/issue?
For example; family law/divorce/separation agreement

- b. What words (and their synonyms) would you search or look up in an index to find an answer?
For example: wife, husband, spouse, significant other, and partner.

- c. Would the area of law be most likely addressed by the judiciary (cases), the legislature (code) or the executive (regulations)?

- d. Would the area of law be federal, state or local?

2. Use secondary sources as needed for clarification or background?

- a. Locate at least TWO secondary sources that may be helpful.
Examples include: encyclopedias, ALRs, treatises, law reviews. Include a citation for each source.

- b. Locate at least ONE relevant primary authority.
Examples include: Maryland Code, COMAR, Maryland Reports. **HINT: Often secondary sources cite to primary law. Look at the footnotes!**

Topics

1. A resident of a three-story condominium in Annapolis has hung a large campaign sign from her balcony railing. The condo association has demanded that the sign be removed. The resident believes that her right to free speech allows her to hang the sign regardless of the condo's regulations. What can you find in Maryland law that might help her argument?
2. Mary was in a car accident. The car that hit her was a company-owned care. The driver might have been drunk. Can Mary sue the company that owns the car?
3. Andrew complained to his landlord two months ago that the heat wasn't working properly. The landlord didn't fix it at all. Heat is covered by Andrew's rent. Andrew does not want to pay rent until the heat is fixed, either that or just move out. His lease isn't up until June. What options might Andrew have under Maryland law?
4. Nathaniel is getting divorced. He feels his soon-to-be ex-wife is going to demand alimony, because she's never worked and thinks Nathaniel should be supporting her forever. Can Nathaniel be made to pay until she dies? She inherited a pile of money from her grandfather. Nathaniel quit college when they got married so he could work to support them both. He thinks she may have more money than he does and wants to know if he can ask for alimony. What can you find in Maryland law that relates to this situation?
5. Rob and Lydia Rowe have one child, a daughter Elizabeth, age 7. Rob has been transferred by his company to an overseas office for a short time. Lydia has just been diagnosed with a serious medical condition, the treatment for which requires her to be in the hospital for extended periods. The local social services program is concerned that Elizabeth is not getting proper care. Rob and Lydia do not want to give up Elizabeth permanently. What options might they have under Maryland law to deal with this situation?
6. Anne's ex-daughter-in-law won't let me see her see her grandchildren. Anne wants visitation rights. Can she get that under Maryland law?
7. John just bought a brand new car last week. He thought it was fine when he picked it up, but now the steering is all funky. He thinks maybe it's really a lemon. John took it to his mechanic, who says it'll cost about \$3000 to fix it. Is there anything in Maryland law that says the repairs should be covered by the dealer or the car maker? How much will they cover? What does John have to do to get them to fix it?
8. Kathleen's uncle passed away and left a pretty big estate. His son, Kathleen's cousin, is the administrator of the estate. Kathleen knows her uncle left her some money because he told her so, but the cousin hasn't given it to her yet. How soon can she expect to get it? The cousin says he can keep some of Kathleen's inheritance as a "fee" for being the administrator, can he do that? Kathleen wants to get a really good idea of what her cousin has to do and what he is owed in this situation.
9. A storm blew over a tree in Annabel's yard, knocking down the fence between Annabel and her neighbor. The neighbor is the one who put the fence up in the first place. Who is responsible for the fence repair? Are there any circumstances that might affect this responsibility?