

Legal Research Explained, 4th

By Deborah E. Bouchoux, Esq. (2017), 401 pages, ISBN: 9781454882336. \$44

Subject: Legal research textbook.

Useful for: Useful for those assigning a legal research book to their students, and the students, themselves. This book is directed at, and written for, legal research students.

Format: Chapters with index.

Reviewer's Comments:

Legal Research Explained, Fourth Edition consists of five distinct sections, each containing numerous chapters which thoroughly explore the section titles. It provides concrete explanations of essential legal research topics and explicates how to best achieve legal research goals. While the primary audience of this text is students who are entirely new to legal research, I feel that advanced legal researchers could also benefit from numerous portions of the later sections.

In reading this book, I was first captured by the conversational, and almost confidential, tone throughout. Rather than a formal textbook, the language draws the reader in and acknowledges the real-world complexities and frustrations that can arise with legal research. It also specifically addresses Lexis and Westlaw, which was refreshingly direct in its applicability to a student audience. Finally, it includes clearly written and well-developed assignments on each topic.

The five sections of this book are set up in a pedagogically straightforward manner, as follows: I) Primary Authorities; II) Secondary Authorities and Special Research Issues; III) Using Electronic and Computer Resources; IV) Citing and Validating the Authorities; and V) Putting It Together: An Overview of the Research Process. Section I does an excellent job of not only explaining the overarching importance of primary authorities, but also ties this research into understanding early core class topics, such as holdings. I found this meaningful in emphasizing to students the important role that legal research plays throughout law school. Section II defines the basic secondary sources, and also more specifically provides excellent guidance in researching many specific topics, including: international law, legislative history, and executive and administrative materials. Using a multitude of figures and tip boxes, Section III provides practical explanations of many electronic resources, including West and Lexis. The only potential drawback of this section is the natural updates and platform changes that may render some images obsolete. I found Section IV particularly helpful in providing basic Bluebook and AWLD citation instruction and explanation, and also emphasizing the importance of effectively using citators. Section V does an excellent and logical job of concluding the text with an explanation of the overall research process and how to begin.

On the whole, this book is an excellent choice for a supplementary legal research instruction text. I would both recommend it and use it myself in an introductory legal research course.

Reviewed by: Rena Seidler, Indiana University McKinney School of Law, in 2019.