

Legal Research in a Nutshell, 13th edition.

By Kent C. Olson. (2018), 365 pages, ISBN: 9781640208049. \$49.

Subject: General legal research; Legal research textbook

Useful for: Students seeking a primer on legal research basics or legal research instructors looking for an introductory textbook.

Format: Chapters, indexed by resource and subject matter. Appendices list state legal research guides and major treatises by subject, and a companion website provides illustrations.

Reviewer's Comments:

Legal Research in a Nutshell is a brisk, fairly comprehensive guide to legal research from West Academic's popular Nutshell series. This book is aimed at legal novices, offering clear, simple explanations of leading research sources and databases. Like its name implies, it packs a lot of content into a small and manageable package.

The book is organized into ten chapters, starting with a general overview of the research process and secondary sources, then exploring other facets of legal research such as caselaw, statutes and constitutions, legislative history, administrative law, and court rules and practice materials. The book closes with two chapters on researching international law and the law of foreign countries. The book also includes two handy appendices: one listing state legal research guides and one listing major legal treatises by subject matter. These may be useful to even experienced researchers desiring a "cheat sheet" to quickly find materials outside their usual realm of expertise.

A weakness of this book is that it omits illustrations in order to save print space. Without illustrations, however, it can be hard to keep track of all of the different databases discussed. A useful companion website with images and links to resources is available online, but students will likely need some prompting to use the website in conjunction with the book.

RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

Legal Research in a Nutshell is designed as a research guide, not as a textbook, and as such it does not include classroom-oriented materials like practice questions. Regardless, its accessibility and broad scope may make it useful to instructors looking for an introductory text. This versatile guide has something to offer to students, teachers, and even experienced professionals.

Reviewed by: David Haendler, Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law, in 2020.