

Sources of American Law: An Introduction to Legal Research, 5th Edition.

By Beau Steenken & Tina Brooks. (2021) 203 pages, ISBN: N/A. Free Download; \$10.83 in print.

Subject: Legal research textbook

Useful for: Useful for students who want to understand the structure of American law, and gain an introduction to legal research.

Format: Chapters with exercises and links to relevant CALI activities at the end of each section; separate Teacher's Manual also available with answers and notes.

Reviewer's Comments:

In preparing for teaching first year law students, I routinely need to remind myself of how much information gets packed into that first year and how often students know very little going in. An understanding of the American legal system is a necessary foundation for building legal research skills. [Sources of American Law](#) provides an overview of not just legal materials but also covers how legal materials connect to United States legal system and core American legal principles. The text explains the different kinds of authorities that exist in American law and how students can understand and use them.

Each chapter incorporates exercises for students to practice the skills discussed in that section. Answers, along with explanations, for the exercises can be found in the Teacher's Manual. In addition to the in-text exercises, the chapters also helpfully include links to recommended CALI lessons where available.

Written explanations are paired with screenshots and diagrams to illustrate concepts. Consistent with its approach in combining print and online content, the screenshots are captioned with links to Youtube screencasts so that students can see a recorded demonstration of the legal research process in action.

This Fifth Edition of the book provides updated screenshots and references to the latest legal technology and sources to align with the current editions of Lexis+, Westlaw

RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

Edge, The Bluebook, and other core legal materials. The recommended CALI lessons were also updated. The core content and structure of the text remained the same as the Fourth Edition. However, the Fourth Edition marked a significant revision from the Third Edition, which was the last version reviewed here. Electronic research is introduced earlier in the text and is discussed in greater detail. Additionally, citators and updating the law was split into its own chapter.

Reviewed by: Grace Lo, Stanford Law School, in 2022