How to Cite to Legal Sources
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This handout is an introduction to the proper citation of some common legal sources for the purpose of writing a short paper. Since this handout is only an introduction, you will need to consult one of the following print or online sources for more details and more examples, especially if you are writing a long paper or thesis:

- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 17th ed. 2000) (available in the S.J. Quinney Law Library);
- ALWD & Darby Dickerson, *ALWD Citation Manual* (2d ed. Aspen Publishers 2003) (available in the S.J. Quinney Law Library);

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

"In all types of legal writing . . . it is customary to cite an authority or authorities to show support for a legal or factual proposition or argument." *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* 4 (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 17th ed. 2000). If you read a court opinion, you will notice that there are citations seemingly after every sentence. In general, every time an authority is referred to, a citation to that authority is required.

"The basic purpose of a legal citation is to allow the reader to locate a cited source accurately and efficiently." Id. Unlike some academic citation systems (e.g. the MLA or APA systems) that use a brief parenthetical citation in the text along with a list of works cited at the end of the paper, legal citations are traditionally given entirely in the text of the work. For historical reasons, in papers or memorandums these citations commonly appear in the text of the work instead of as footnotes, but the footnote form is widely used in scholarly articles or treatises. Endnotes are almost never used. Note that

CASES (COURT OPINIONS)

The First Time You Cite to a Case

When you first cite to a case (court opinion), you need to give a full citation to the case. A full citation will generally include the following elements, in order:

1. Full name of the case (in italics or underlined),
2. Volume number of the reporter where the case appears,
3. Abbreviation for the reporter where the case appears,
4. Page number where the case begins,
5. Page number where the specific information you are quoting or referring to appears, and
6. A parenthetical indicating the court that decided the case and the year the case was decided.

The names of court reporters are always abbreviated in citations. For a list of abbreviations, please see the sources listed at the beginning of this handout.

Here is an example of a citation to a case:

Olpin v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 270 F.3d 1297 (10th Cir. 2001).

Here is an example of a citation when a specific part of the case is quoted or referred to (in this case, referring to the part of the Olpin case on page 1301 of the reporter):

Olpin v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 270 F.3d 1297, 1301 (10th Cir. 2001).

Later Citations

You need to cite to a source every time you refer to it. This is one way that the legal citation format differs from other citation formats. However, after you have given a full citation to a case, if you refer to it later on, you will only need to give a partial citation to that case. There are some different ways that this can occur. You must read the parenthetical information after each of these citations to understand the differences between them:

Id.

(Use this if your previous citation was to the same page that you're citing to now. For example, if you previously referred to page 1301 of the Olpin case and your next reference is to something else on that same page.)

("Id." must be underlined or italicized. Don't forget to underline or italicize the period. "Id." is an abbreviation for "idem," Latin for "the same thing.")

Id. at 1305.

(Use this if your previous citation was to one page of a source but you are now referring to a different page of that same source. For example, if you previously referred to page 1301 of the Olpin case, but you are now referring to something on page 1305 of that case.

Olpin, 270 F.3d at 1307.

(Use this if, after citing to one source, you then cited to a different source, and now you want to cite to the first source you used. For example, if, after you cited to the Olpin case you cited to a book and a law review article, you would use this citation form to refer back to the Olpin case.)
You don't need to give the full citation to the *Olpin* case, but you do need to give the partial name of the case, the volume of the reporter, the abbreviation of the reporter, and the page number that you're now referring to.

**STATUTES**

The First Time You Cite to a Statute

Statutes are laws passed by legislatures. They are generally printed in a "code," which is a collection of statutes arranged by subject. Unfortunately, there is no uniform format for citing to codes simply because they have so many different titles and arrangements. If you are citing to a state or foreign code, you will have to look in one of the citation guides listed at the beginning of this handout to see the proper format. Also, if you are referring to a statute that has been repealed or amended, please see one of those citation guides for the appropriate format.

Here are some examples of how to cite to the federal code, the *United States Code*. A full citation will generally include the following elements, in order:

1. Title number (the *United States Code* is divided into 50 different "titles" or subjects),
2. Abbreviation for the title of the code,
3. Section number, and
4. Parenthetical indicating the year of the edition or supplement the text of the law you are referring to appears in.

Here is an example of a citation to a statute appearing in the edition of the *United States Code* published in 2000 (a new edition of the *United States Code* is published every six years):


Since Congress passes and amends laws far more frequently than every six years, annual supplements to the *United States Code* are published. Here is an example of a citation to a statute appearing in the supplement to the 2000 edition of the *United States Code*:


Later Citations

Unlike cases, there is no system of abbreviations that you can use for later citations to a statute that you have already cited. If you refer to a statute and the source you last cited to was that same statute, you can use "Id." (remember to italicize or underline it) instead of giving a complete citation to that statute. Otherwise you will have to give a complete citation to that statute.

**U.S. CONSTITUTION**
Here are some examples of how to cite provisions of the United States Constitution that are currently in force (if you wish to cite an amended or repealed section of the Constitution, please see one of the guides listed at the beginning of this handout):

U.S. Const. art. IV, § 1.

(This is a reference to the "Full Faith and Credit" clause of the constitution.)

U.S. Const. art. III, § 2, cl. 2.

(This is a reference to the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction.)

U.S. Const. amend. XXVI, § 1.

(This is a reference to section 1 of the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, allowing 18 year olds the right to vote.)

Other than "Id.," there are no short citation forms for referring to provisions of the U.S. Constitution that you have previously cited to. Remember that "Id." (underlined or italicized) can only be used if you are citing to the same source that you last cited to.

**LAW REVIEW ARTICLES**

Law reviews are the scholarly, academic journals of law. When you first cite to a law review article, you will need to give a complete citation to that article. Here are the elements of that complete citation:

1. Name of the article's author or authors,
2. Title of article (in italics or underlined),
3. Volume number of the journal where the article appears,
4. Abbreviation for the name of the journal,
5. Page number where the article begins,
6. Page number where the specific material you are referring to appears, and
7. Year of publication (you can omit this if the journal uses the year instead of a volume number).

The names of legal journals are always abbreviated in citations. For lists of abbreviations of journal titles, please see the sources listed at the beginning of this handout.

Here is an example of a citation to a law review article:


Here is an example of a citation to a specific part of a law review article (note that this law review uses the year of publication in place of a separate system of volume numbering):
Later Citations

For law review articles, unlike statutes or constitutions, there is a short citation form that you can use for subsequent citations to the same article so that you don't have to repeat the full citation to an article. If you wish to cite to the same source that you last cited to, you can use the "Id." form, indicating any change in page numbers. For instance, if you cited to the Wasby article and now wish to cite to it again, you can follow this example:

Id. at 25.

(This example indicates that you are still citing to the Wasby article, but you are now referring to something on page 25 of the article.)

If you wish to cite to a source that you have previously cited to, but in the meantime you have cited to other sources, you can use the notation "supra" (Latin for "above"). Make sure that the "supra" is either underlined or italicized. Here are two examples:

Wasby, supra.

(This example would be to refer to the same citation that you previously gave to the Wasby article.)

Wasby, supra, at 27.

(This example would be to refer to the same Wasby article that you cited to previously, but this time you're referring to a different page than you cited to previously.)

BOOKS or TREATISES

Books or treatises (often, multi-volume scholarly works on a particular aspect of law) are cited in a manner similar to that of law review articles. Here are the elements that are needed to give a complete citation to a book:

1. Volume number (if a multi-volume work),
2. Name of author or authors,
3. Title of book (in italics or underlined),
4. Page number or section number referred to, and

Here are some examples:


(The preceding two examples are for one volume works, so there is no volume number before the authors' names.)


(These two examples are both for multi-volume sets.)

**Later Citations**

You can format subsequent citations of books or treatises already cited in the same way that you would for law review articles, using either "Id." or "supra."