TIPS FOR FORM & ACCURACY RESEARCH:  
STARTING POINTS FOR JOURNAL FORM & ACCURACY ASSIGNMENTS

Check the Library’s “Location Guide and the online catalog for the current location of sources mentioned in this pathfinder.

PURPOSE:

This pathfinder can be used to check the form and accuracy of citations. Highlighted are the finding aids, indexes and research tools that are most frequently consulted for this type of work. If you have questions that have not been answered in this pathfinder, please see a reference librarian.

For further reference, see Jacobstein, Mersky, Dunn, eds., Legal Research Illustrated (8th ed. 2002) KF240. L44

OUTLINE:

I. INTERPRETING CITATIONS

II. LOCATING SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SOURCES
   A. Online Catalog

III. LOCATING PERIODICALS
   A. Online Catalog
   B. Westlaw & Lexis
   C. Major Periodical Indexes
   D. Periodicals Published Before 1980
   E. Current Index to Legal Periodicals (CILP)

IV. LOCATING GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
   A. Federal Documents
   B. State Documents

V. ONLINE PRE-EMPTION CHECK SEARCHING
   A. Setting up a pre-emption check in Lexis or Westlaw

I. INTERPRETING CITATIONS
A. Legal Abbreviations

To check the form of an abbreviation or acronym in a citation, begin by looking in these specialized dictionaries:

*Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations* on Lexis:

**Step 1: Select Practice Areas – Librarian**

![Lexis Nexis Librarian Page]

Welcome to the Lexis Nexis Librarian Page, designed to meet the unique needs of librarians by providing a single, time-saving location to perform common research tasks. Conduct quick reference queries, track recent news relating to the librarian profession and more... it's all just a "click" away.

**Quick Reference Searches**

- Get a Legal Definition (e.g. Corporation)
- Check a Legal Abbreviation (e.g. FRM)
- Search Bibliographical Sources (e.g. Go to such)
- More

**Step 2: In the ‘Check a Legal Abbreviation’ box, type your citation, click on ‘Go.’**

![Bieber's Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations]

Bieber’s provides the full title for the abbreviation you entered, e.g.,

frd = Federal

Other Helpful Sources on Legal Abbreviations

- **Acronyms, Initialisms and Abbreviations Dictionary** Reference P 365 .A28
- **Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations** Reference KF 246 .B46 (see online version, above)
- **Index to Legal Citations and Abbreviations** Reference KD 400 .R33
- **Introduction to Basic Legal Citation** [http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/](http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/) (Note: unclear if this site is using the 19th edition of *The Bluebook*)
- **Guide to Federal Government Acronyms** Reference JK 464
- **World Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations** Reference K89 .K38

OR consult the “Tables of Abbreviations” in these publications:
To create an abbreviation, begin by looking in these sources:

- Mary Miles Prince, Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Citations  Reference KF 246 .P73
- The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation  Reference KF 245 .B58

II. LOCATING TEXTS AND PRIMARY SOURCES

To check the accuracy of a citation, you must locate the source from which the citation derives, then you must verify the volume and page number.

A. Check Online Catalog

You can search for known sources by titles or authors, by keywords and phrases, or a combination of elements using the online catalog.

For most focused results, use the ‘Advanced Search’ tab. However, since the interface of the online catalog frequently changes. Please check with a reference librarian for assistance in doing an advanced search.

III. LOCATING PERIODICALS

A. Check Journal Titles in Online Catalog

The Library maintains many periodicals in print, with older volumes in the microfiche collection. To determine if a particular journal is part of the Library’s collection, search the online catalog by “Journal Title.” For assistance about searching the online catalog, please ask a reference librarian.

B. Westlaw & Lexis

Westlaw and Lexis also provide access to the full text of periodicals. Both services are quite forgiving with citation formats; in other words, if you type in the full title instead of bluebook format, you will still pull up the document. The first page of the document provides complete bluebook citation format. Keep in mind that “Star Pagination,” also applies to journals.

*Westlaw* and *Lexis* are very similar. For assistance using *Westlaw* or *Lexis*, please check with a reference librarian.

C. Major Periodical Indexes

Complete citation information can be found in periodical indexes, which list articles by author, title and subject. The two main legal print periodical indexes are the *Index to Legal Periodicals (ILP)* and the *Current Law Index (CLI)*. Legal Resources Index/LegalTrac and *Index to Legal Periodicals Database* are online journal indexes available through the SU and COL databases. These can be accessed through the Law Library’s web site (www.law.syr.edu/library). These are not full text databases. They are indexes to citations only. Check the online catalog under Heading –Journal Title for information about our holdings of a citation retrieved through the journal indexes.

For assistance in using the print indexes, please check with a reference librarian.

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<th>FORMAT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>1886 – present</td>
<td><em>Index to Legal Periodicals</em> Index Table Reference</td>
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<td>1980 – present</td>
<td><em>Current Law Index</em> Index Table Reference</td>
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<td>Lexis</td>
<td>1/78 -</td>
<td>Legal Resource Index (LAWREV;LGLIND)</td>
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<td>Westlaw</td>
<td>1980-</td>
<td>Legal Resource Index (LRI)</td>
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| Internet databases | 8/81 – 1980-     | *Index to Legal Periodicals* (SU Campus access only)  
|              |                  | *LegalTrac* (SU Campus access only)          |

SU students may access these databases from home by creating a proxy connection; follow the instructions for remote access at: http://library.syr.edu/services/work_off_campus/remote_access/index.php
D.  Periodicals Published Before 1980

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<td>Internet databases</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td><em>Hein Online (College of Law access only)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.law.syr.edu/library/index.aspx">http://www.law.syr.edu/library/index.aspx</a>&lt;br&gt;Click on Law Databases and select Hein Online</td>
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*Hein Online* is a fully searchable, electronic collection of prominent legal journals, focused on the pre-1925 historical era, with complete runs of important titles.

- Browse journals alphabetically by title, author or article title.
- Search titles, authors and full-text.
- Exact page images are displayed, with full ability to cut-and-paste.

*Hein Online* is accessible from the law library web site: Electronic Resources – Full Text Legal Databases page. Please speak with a librarian if you require assistance in using this tool.

The *Index to Legal Periodicals* is an annual print index, with monthly supplements, that indexes law reviews and legal journals by broad subject headings. You can also search by case or statute name.

E.  *Current Index to Legal Periodicals (CILP)*

*CILP* is the most current legal periodical index. It accesses over 500 legal publications including complete tables of content of all journals indexed; articles are indexed within 100 relevant subject headings. The *CILP* service on the Law Library web site is restricted to Syracuse University College of Law faculty, students, and staff. E-mail Electronic Services Librarian Robert Weiner (rjweiner@law.syr.edu) for user name and password.
In addition to the sources described above, check the online catalog for topic specific and non-law periodical indexes.

**IV. LOCATING GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS**

**A. Federal Documents**

Current United States legislative documents may now be easily retrieved through the Internet through Thomas, GPO Access, and a subscription service from *LexisNexis Academic*. They can be accessed via the Law Library web site at: [http://www.law.syr.edu/library/electronic-resources/federal-resources.aspx](http://www.law.syr.edu/library/electronic-resources/federal-resources.aspx). Both *Lexis* and *Westlaw* contain numerous databases containing government documents and legislative history. In addition, the Congressional Information Service Collection is a comprehensive print collection of legislative histories for...
United States Public Laws dating 1970-. Indexes are in print and documents are on fiche. The collection is located on Floor 2.

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<td>Paper Index</td>
<td>1970 – present</td>
<td><em>CIS Annual Legislative Histories</em> Unclassified Floor 2</td>
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<td>Microform</td>
<td>1970 – present</td>
<td><em>CIS Documents Microfiche Unclassified</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Westlaw</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Check the online directories for help in locating databases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lexis</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Thomas: <a href="http://thomas.loc.gov/">http://thomas.loc.gov/</a></td>
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SU students may access this databases from home by creating a proxy connection; follow the instructions for remote access at: [http://library.syr.edu/services/work_off_campus/remote_access/index.php](http://library.syr.edu/services/work_off_campus/remote_access/index.php)

Thomas is a good source for current federal legislative documents and links to related sources. Documents may be viewed in the browser or in PDF, which presents the format of the original and should be used for citation checking purposes.
LexisNexis Academic offers an electronic version of the CIS index as well as historical and current congressional materials. Selective full-text access to recent legislative histories and other congressional materials, including hearings and bills, is available.

LexisNexis Congressional: Legislative History volumes provide comprehensive outlines of legislative histories, 1970-.

Citations are provided for documents housed in the microfiche collection.

For more about LexisNexis Congressional, check the library's pathfinder on Federal Legislative History.
### B. State Documents

For most states, current documents may be found on the Internet. Collections may reside on a state library home page, a state assembly or senate homepage, an agency site, or an academic law library site. Westlaw and Lexis also provide access to state bills and bill tracking records as well as cases, statutes and administrative codes.

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<td>Check the current print or online directory for state information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexis</td>
<td>varies by state</td>
<td>Check the current print or online directory for state information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Print  | Varies         | State Yellow Book  Reference JK 2403 .S755  
The Book of States  Reference JK 2403 .B6 |

*Findlaw* is an excellent starting point for state document research. It provides links to district, state and county courts as well as state directories, municipal codes and a search engine for each state’s government web sites.

On *Findlaw*, select your state from the alphabetical list and click on “Government Information” to access links to documents sources.
V. ONLINE PRE-EMPTION SEARCHING

A. Setting up a Pre-emption Check in *Lexis* or *Westlaw*

Both *Lexis* and *Westlaw* offer helpful tools for the journal student note writing process. Each program can be set up to send an e-mail whenever there is a new source available or an update to an existing source on your topic. This way, students can receive an e-mail alert when something on their topic is published, allowing them to do an instant pre-emption check.

*Lexis*

Using the *Lexis* Alert tool, you can track updates to your note topic from any source. To set up an Alert, select the source and execute your search under your topic. Please note that *Lexis* does not allow you to set up Alerts for natural language searches. Once you have conducted your search, click Save as Alert at the top of the results page. From there, you can enter your e-mail address to receive the alerts, print the alerts, or view the alerts when you log into *Lexis*. You can also change how often you would like to receive alerts by changing the time intervals under the frequency option.

*Westlaw*

On *Westlaw*, you can set up a KeyCite Alert to track updates on cases, statues, law review articles, and other legal sources. To set up a KeyCite Alert, click on the Alert Center in the upper right hand corner of the main page after logging into *Westlaw*. Under the KeyCite Alert option, click “create” and enter a citation for a source on your topic. From there, you can limit what types of updates you would like to receive and edit the delivery settings.

If you have any questions or need assistance setting up an alert for a pre-emption check, please ask a reference librarian. In addition, you can check with your *Lexis* or *Westlaw* representative for additional assistance in constructing your alert notifications.