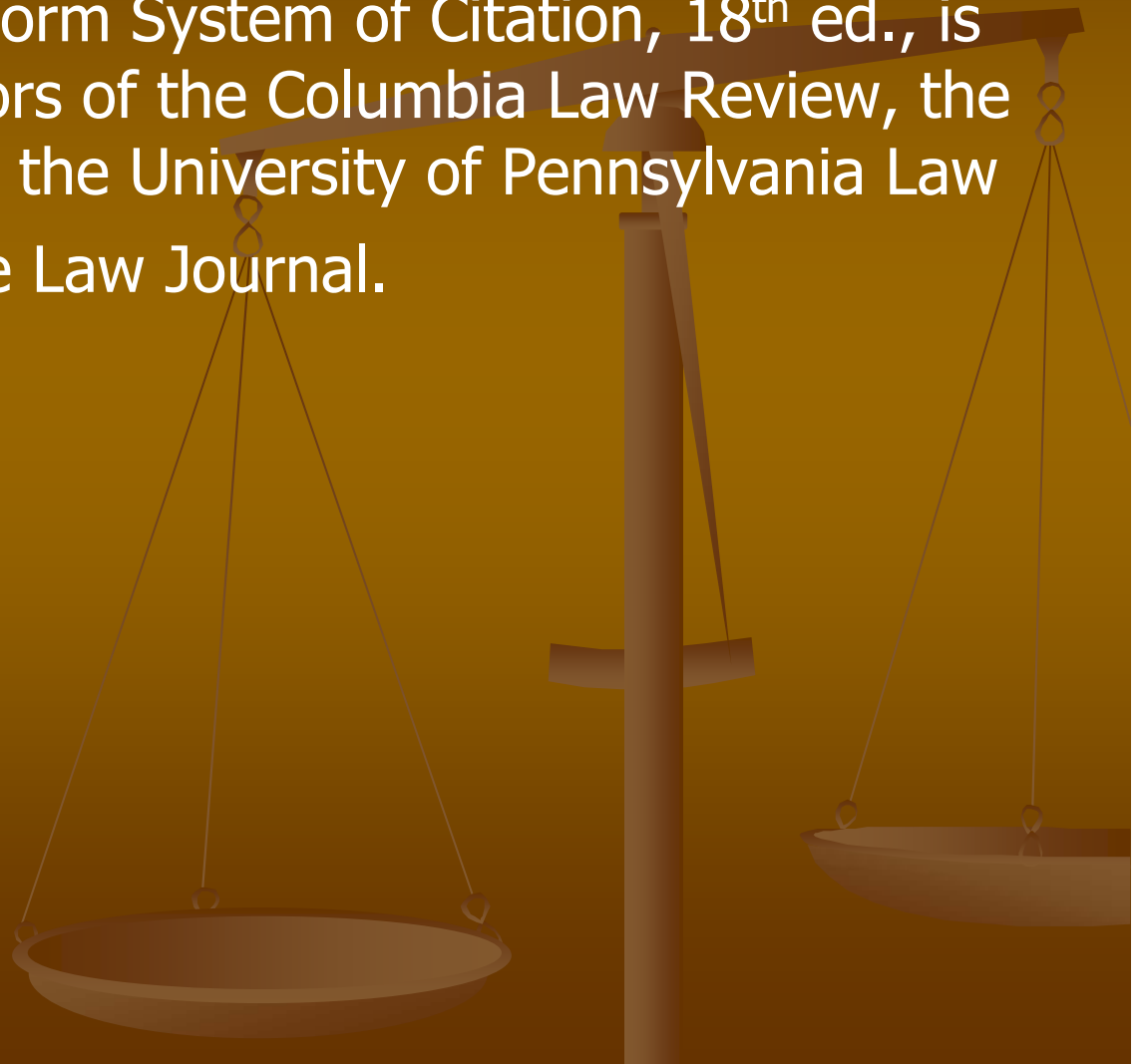


# Basic Bluebook Citation for Cases



# What is the Bluebook?

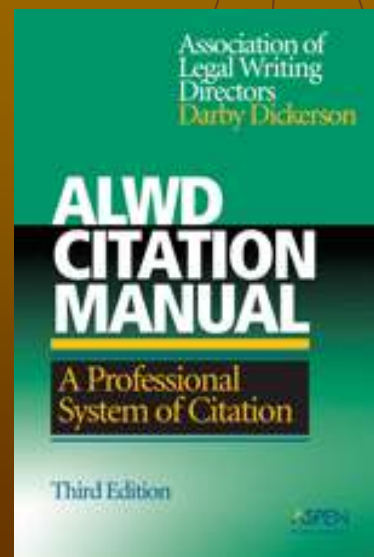
The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, 18<sup>th</sup> ed., is compiled by the editors of the Columbia Law Review, the Harvard Law Review, the University of Pennsylvania Law Review, and The Yale Law Journal.



# Other Citation Formats

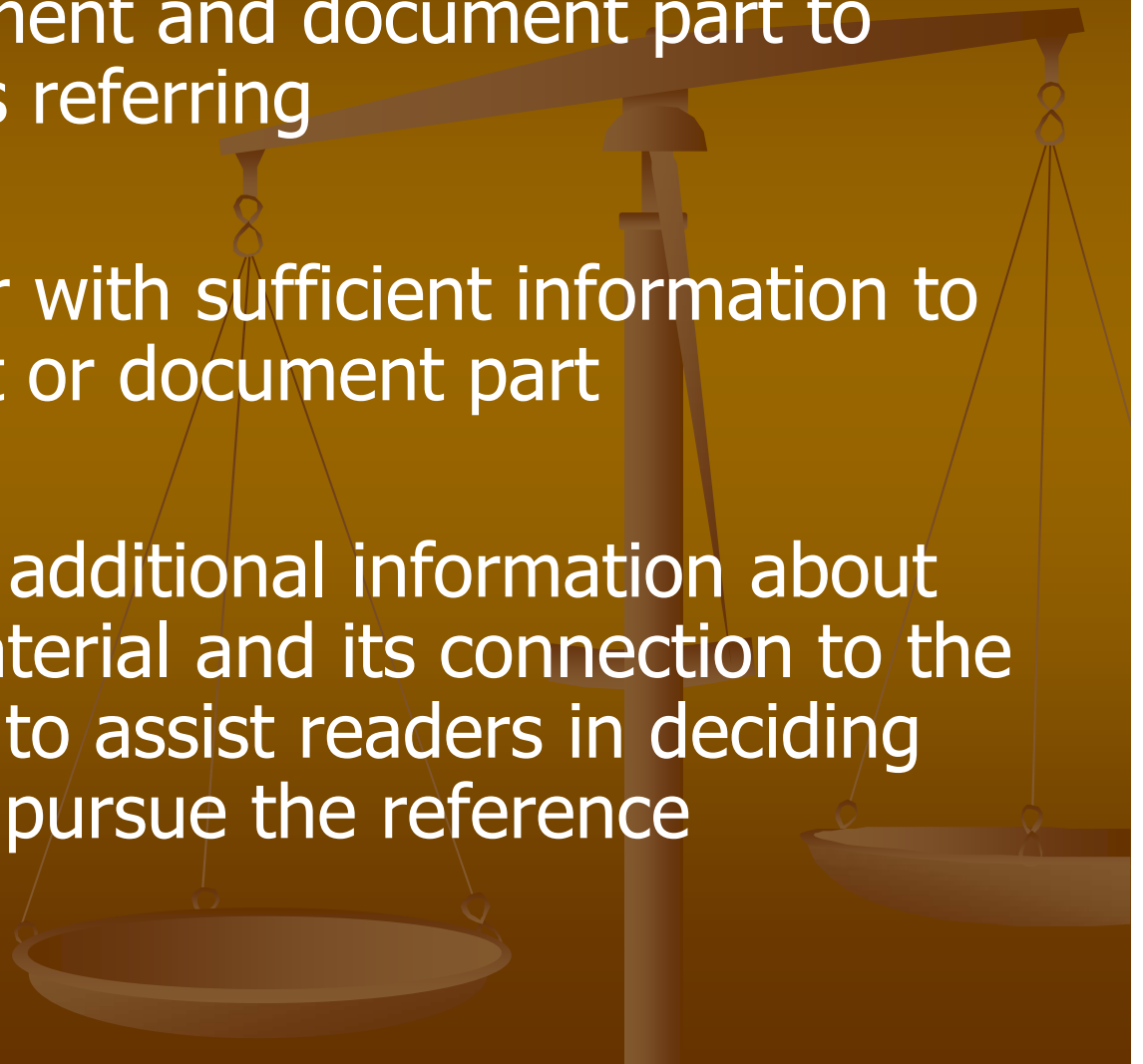
*ALWD Citation Manual: A Professional System of Citation* (3d ed. 2006)

ALWD (pronounced all-wood or owl-wood)



# Purpose of Citation

- Identify the document and document part to which the writer is referring
- Provide the reader with sufficient information to find the document or document part
- Furnish important additional information about the referenced material and its connection to the writer's argument to assist readers in deciding whether or not to pursue the reference



# Importance of Citations

Judges care about citations and how briefs are drafted.

"Plaintiffs' . . . complaint . . . could have been drafted in crayon on the back of a napkin." *Castro v. City of Chicago*, 1998 WL 801814, at \*2 (N.D.Ill. Nov. 13, 1998).



# Bluebook Introduction

For generations, law students, lawyers, scholars, judges, and other legal professionals have relied on *The Bluebook's* unique system of citation in their writing.

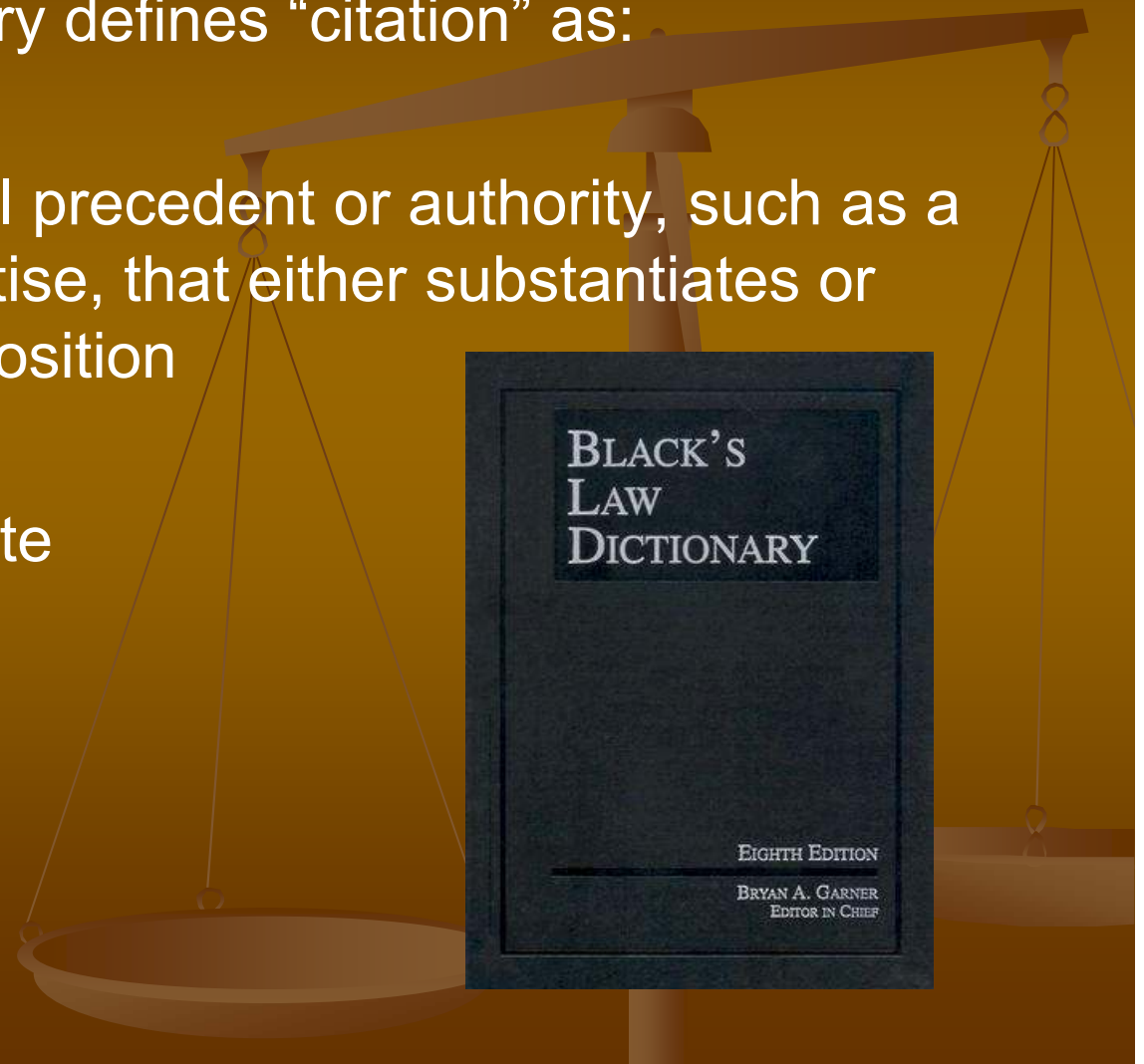


# What is a citation?

Black's Law Dictionary defines "citation" as:

A reference to a legal precedent or authority, such as a case, statute, or treatise, that either substantiates or contradicts a given position

Often shortened to cite



# Cases: Background

A court opinion is the court's written statement explaining its decision in a "case" or "opinion" often written by an appellate court.

Judicial opinions are printed in bound law reporters or reporters.





# Law Reporter

A law reporter (or “law report”) is a published volume of judicial decisions by a particular court or group of courts.

Law reports may be either official (published by the government) or unofficial (published by a private publisher).

Court citations frequently include the names of both the official and unofficial reports.



# Components of a Citation

*Brown v. Helvering*, 291 U.S. 193 (1934)

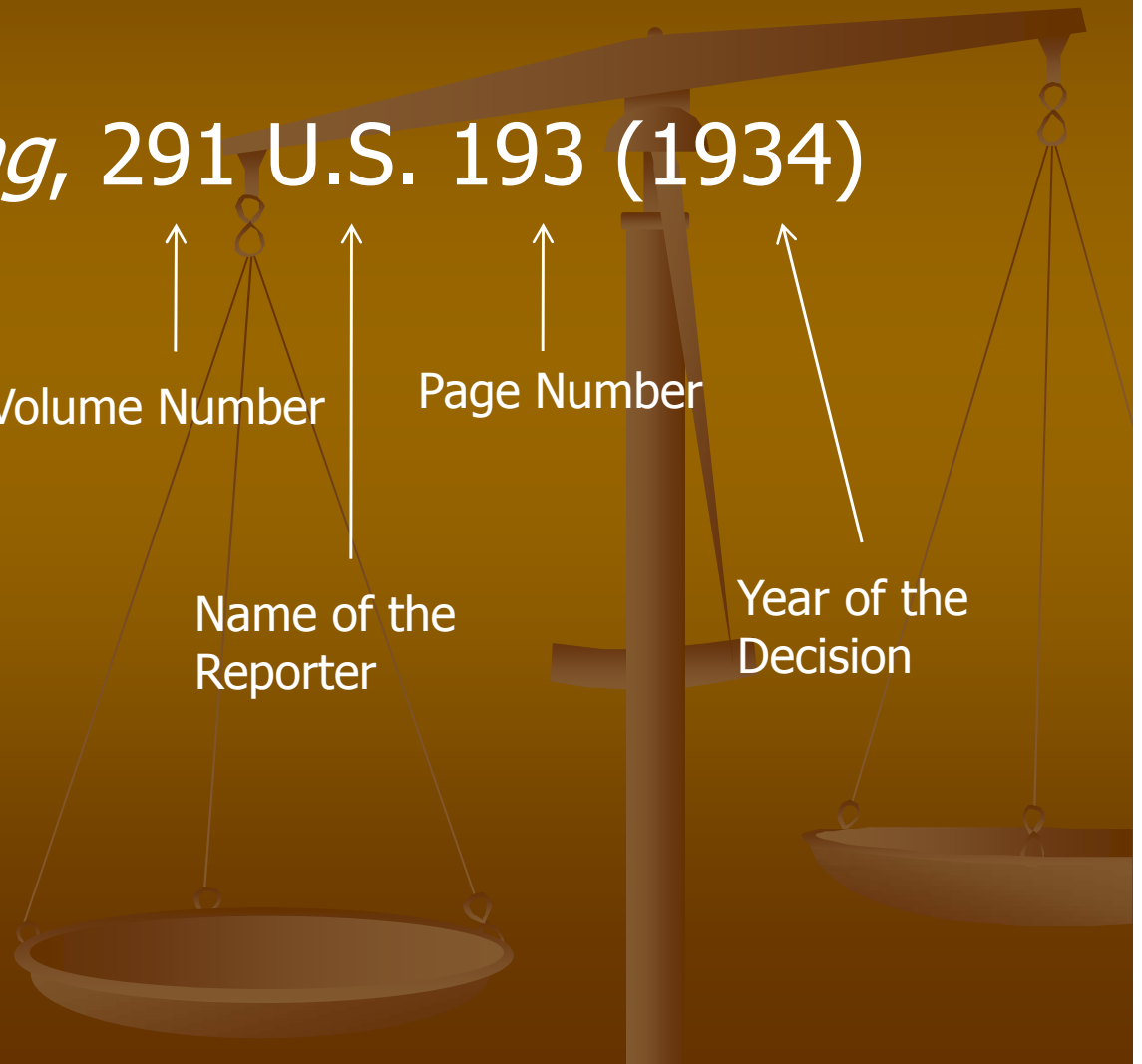
Names of the Parties

Volume Number

Page Number

Name of the Reporter

Year of the Decision



# U.S. Supreme Court Cases

The opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court are published officially in a set of case books called the United States Reports.

In the citation *Morgan v. United States*, 304 U.S. 1 (1938), “304 U.S. 1” is the abbreviation from the U.S. Reports.

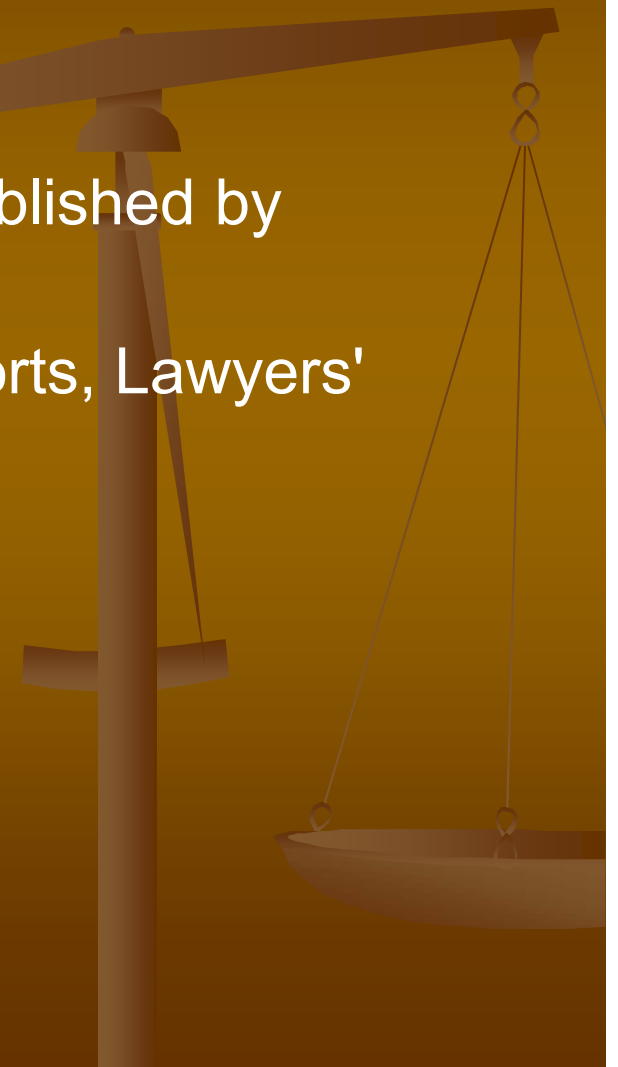


# Commercial Publishers

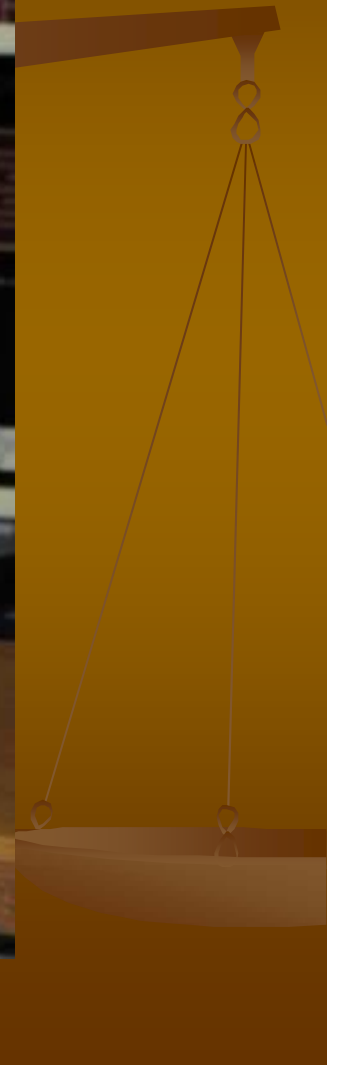
Supreme Court cases also appear in:

The Supreme Court Reporter (S.Ct.) published by Thomson-West and;

The United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers' Edition 2d (L.Ed.) published by Lexis



# Supreme Court Reporter (S.Ct.)



# United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers' Edition (L.Ed., L.Ed.2d)



# What is a parallel citation?

A parallel citation is an additional reference to a case that has been reported in more than one reporter. Legal writers generally use a parallel citation only where a local court rule or local custom demands that they do so.

*Bluebook* citation reads: *Morgan v. United States*, 304 U.S. 1 (1938)

The same reference including parallel citations reads: *Morgan v. United States*, 304 U.S. 1, 58 S.Ct. 773, 82 L.Ed. 1129 (1938)

The main citation is to the *U.S. Reports (U.S.)* and the parallel citations are to the *Supreme Court Reporter (S.Ct.)* and to the *Lawyer's Edition (L.Ed.)*



# What is the Federal Reporter?

The Federal Reporter (“F.2d” or “F.3d”) is case law reporter containing opinions from the U.S. courts of appeals and the court of Federal Claims.

**Example:** *Mejdrech v. Met-Coil Systems Corp.*, 319 F.3d 910 (7th Cir. 2003)

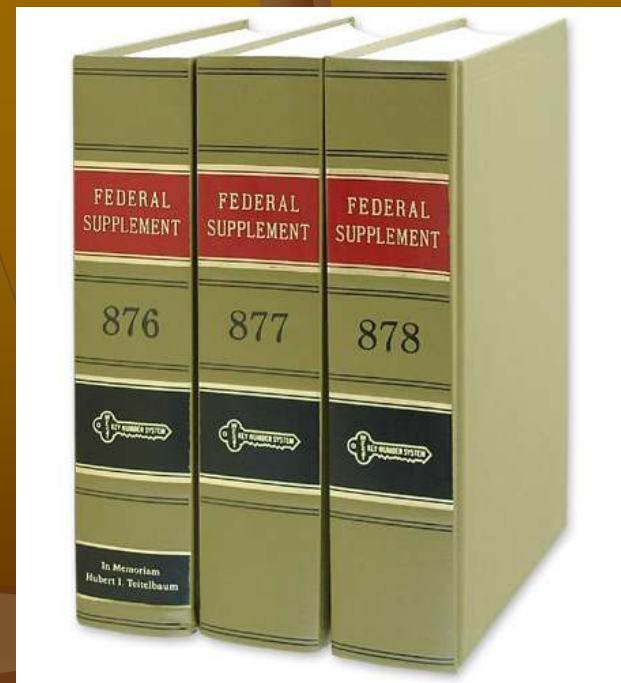




# What is the Federal Supplement?

The Federal Supplement Reporter (“F.Supp.” or “F.Supp.2d”) is case law reporter containing select opinions from U.S. District Courts.

**Example:** Potts v. Dyncorp Intern. LLC, 465 F.Supp.2d 1245 (M.D.Ala. 2006)



# State Cases: Regional Reporters

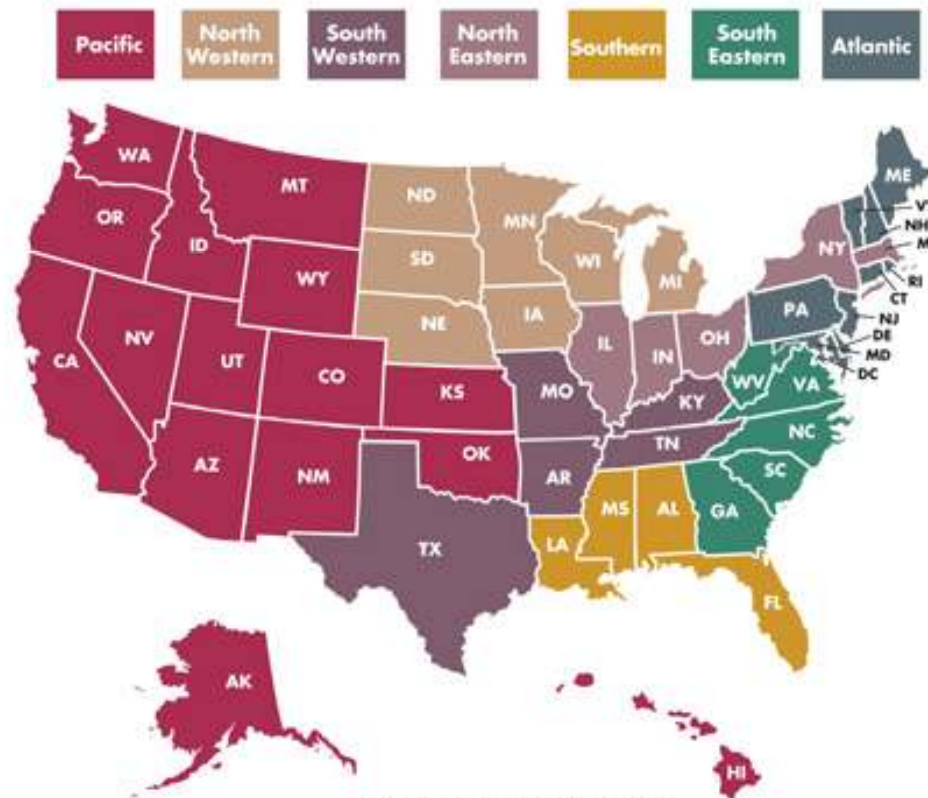
State cases are published in regional reporters. West's National Reporter System is a set of reporters that divides the 50 states and the District of Columbia into seven regions:

- South Western Reporter (S.W.2d, S.W.3d)
- Atlantic Reporter (A.2d)
- North Eastern Reporter (N.E.2d)
- North Western Reporter (N.W.2d)
- Pacific Reporter (P.2d, P.3d)
- South Eastern Reporter (S.E.2d)
- Southern Reporter (So.2d)



# Map of Regional Reporters

## Regional Reporters (State Cases)



*National Reporter System Map*  
showing the states included in each reporter

# Minnesota State Cases

## Minnesota Supreme Court:

*Minnegasco, Inc. v. County of Carver*, 447 N.W.2d 878  
(Minn. 1989)

## Minnesota Court of Appeals:

*Great W. Cas. Co. v. Christenson*, 450 N.W.2d 153  
(Minn. Ct. App. 1990)

Minnesota State Capitol



# Wisconsin State Cases

Wisconsin Supreme Court:

*Aicher v. Wis. Patients Comp.*, 613 N.W.2d 849, 865  
(Wis. 2000)

Wisconsin Court of Appeals:

*Sudgen v. Bock*, 641 N.W.2d 693 (Wis. Ct. App. 2002)

Wisconsin Supreme Court



# Party Names



Do not include first names of parties, unless they are the name of a corporation:

Cite as: *Smith v. Jones*

Do not cite as: *John Smith v. Paul Jones*

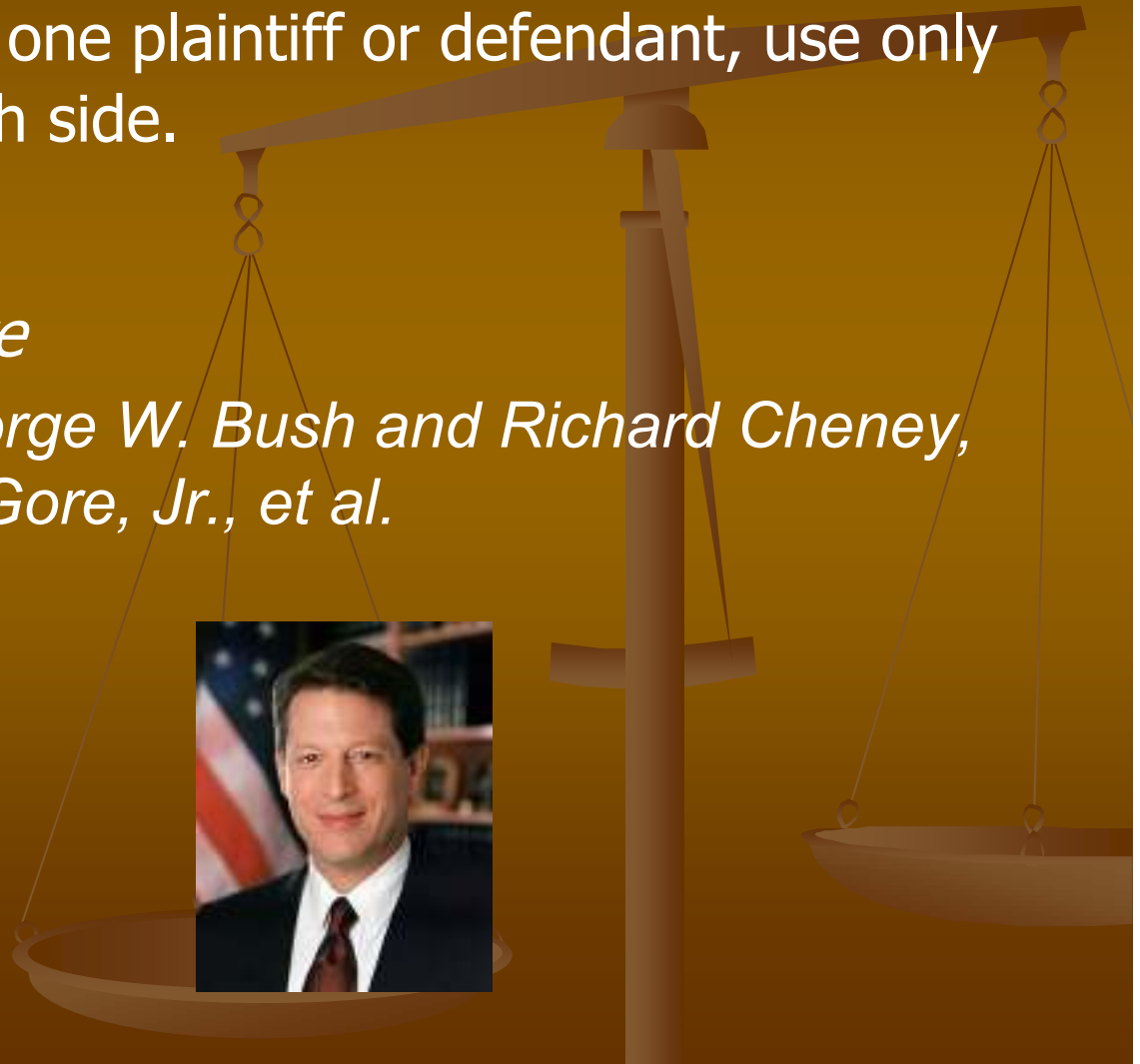
Cite as: *Baker v. John Smith Inc.*

# Party Names

If there is more than one plaintiff or defendant, use only the first party on each side.

**Cite as:** *Bush v. Gore*

**Do not cite as:** *George W. Bush and Richard Cheney, Petitioners v. Albert Gore, Jr., et al.*



# Abbreviations in Case Names

Check the Bluebook for common abbreviations

Common Abbreviations:

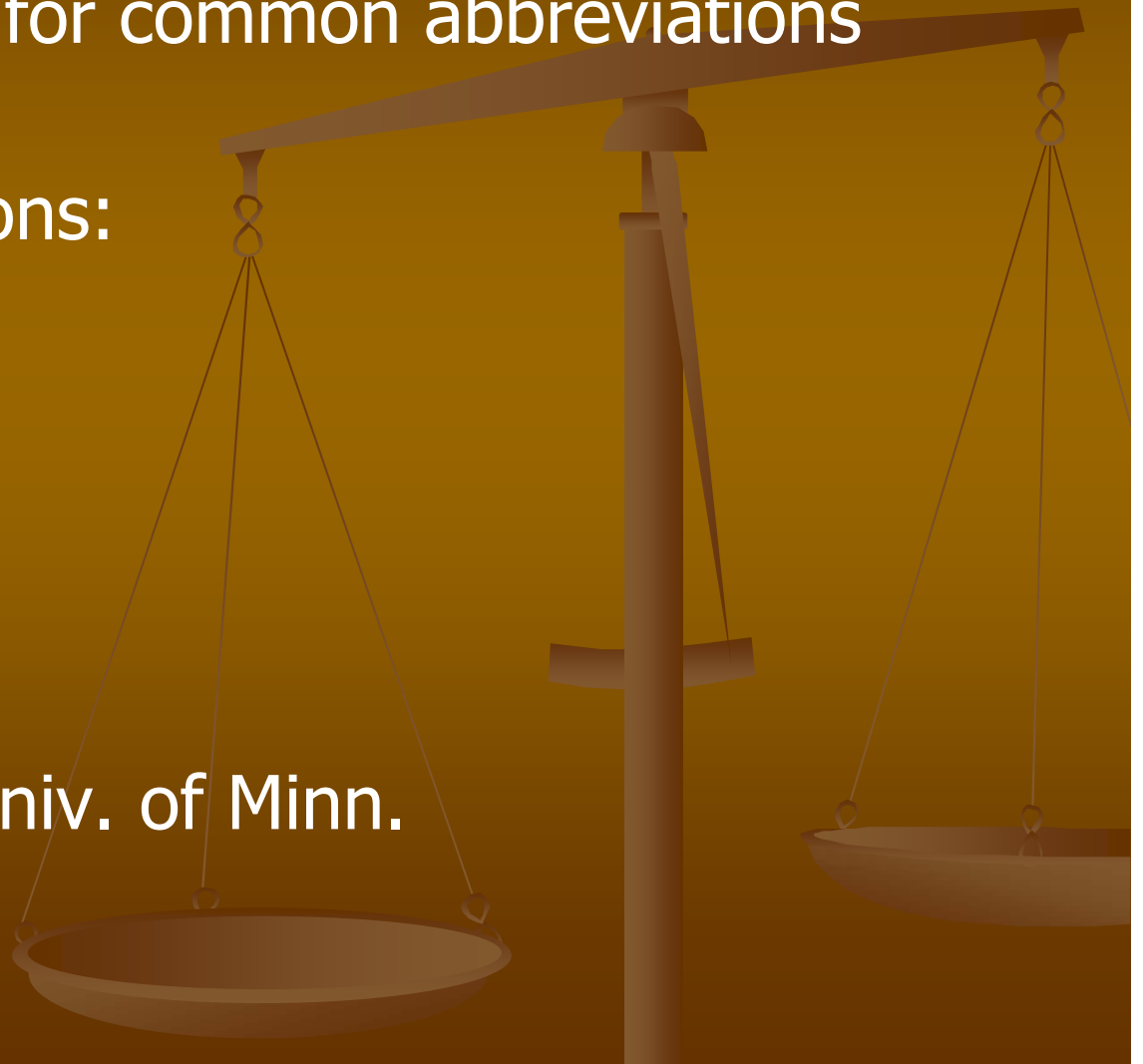
University = Univ.

Association = Assn.

Corporation = Corp.

Minnesota = Minn.

Example: Jones v. Univ. of Minn.





# Case Names

Use "v." and not "vs."

Use *italics* (not underlines)

Correct: *Bush v. Gore*

Incorrect: *Bush vs. Gore*

Incorrect: Bush v. Gore



# Dates

Generally, include only the year of the decision.

**Example (reported case):**

*Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98 (2000)



If the case is unpublished, include the month, day, and year.

**Example (unreported case):**

*Castro v. City of Chicago*, 1998 WL 801814 (N.D.Ill. Nov. 13, 1998).

# United States



Under the Bluebook, use "United States" when the United States is a party

Do not use "U.S." or "United States of America"

"United States" is never abbreviated when the United States is a party in a case name. However, it may be abbreviated as part of another party's name, like any other word in T.11. In textual sentences, "U.S." may be used as an adjective, but it should never be used as a noun. For example: *United States v. Church of Scientology W. U.S.*, 973 F.2d 715 (9th Cir. 1992).

## Short Cite: Consecutive Citations

Give the long cite when a case is first cited in a document. On references to the same case immediately following that case (or “consecutive citations”) use the short cite format with “*Id.*”

Full cite: *McDonald v. Eubanks*, 731 S.W.2d 769, 770 (Ark. 1987).

Short cite still citing page 770: *Id.*

Short cite now citing page 771: *Id.* at 771.

## Short Cite: Non-consecutive Citations

If the long cite has been previously given but the cite does not immediately follow the cite (e.g. new cites are given), use the short cite format for non-consecutive citations.

**Long Cite:** "The Fourth Amendment protects people, not places."  
*Katz v. United States*, 375 U.S. 76, 82 (1965).

**Short Cite (non-consecutive citation):** "The Fourth Amendment protects people, not places." *Katz*, 375 U.S. at 82.

# What is a pinpoint citation?

A pinpoint citation is the page on which a quotation or relevant passage appears, as opposed to the page on which a case or article begins.

For example, the number 217 refers to the page number in the pinpoint citation for *Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 186, 217 (1962)

Also called jump cite; pincite

*McConnell v. Federal Election Commission*, 540 U.S. 93 (2003) is a U.S. Supreme Court case 300 pages in length. Imagine trying to find a quote in a 300 page case without a pinpoint cite. Aaaargh!



# Pincite



More examples:

**Long cite:** "The Fourth Amendment protects people, not places." *Katz v. United States*, 375 U.S. 76, 82 (1965).

**Short cite (consecutive):** "The Fourth Amendment protects people, not places." *Id.* at 82.

**Short cite (non-consecutive):** "The Fourth Amendment protects people, not places." *Katz v. United States*, 375 U.S. at 82.

The first page of the opinion is on page 76 and the page where the quotation appears is on page 82.

# More Examples: Cases

## **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit:**

*Kennedy v. Nat'l Juvenile Det. Ass'n*, 187 F.3d 690 (7th Cir. 1999)

## **U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota:**

*Haghighi v. Russian-American Broad. Co.*, 945 F. Supp. 1233 (D. Minn. 1996)

U.S. District Court in Minneapolis





# Unpublished Cases

Cases published in law reporters are “reported” or “published” cases.

Unpublished cases may also appear on court websites or Westlaw and Lexis, the leading online legal research services.

Courts may have local rules that prohibit attorneys from citing to unpublished cases.



# Web Resources



<http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/>

Introduction to Legal Citation; Lots of Examples

<http://www.legalbluebook.com/>

Official Bluebook Site (online subscription available and FAQs)

<http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/meta-elements/pdf/researchguides/citations.pdf>

Good Resource for Citations