

Citing Cases

The Rule

Bluebook Rule 10 covers how cases should be cited in legal documents. Table T.1 includes the official names and legal citation abbreviations for federal and state reporters, and federal and state statutory compilations.

Jurisdiction Tables and Abbreviations: Table T.1

One of the keys to citing cases properly is knowing where to find the proper legal citation abbreviations. In the *Bluebook*, all abbreviations are listed in the tables, which begin on page 215. **Table T.1 is the most important section of the *Bluebook's* tables.** This table provides the reporter names, reporter abbreviations, and citation conventions for all federal and state courts.

The following chart summarizes Table T.1, including where to find reporter and reporter abbreviation information for all federal and state courts.

CITATION TYPE	INFORMATION INCLUDED	LOCATION
Federal Courts	Citation conventions for cases from general federal litigation courts, including U.S. Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal and District Courts are listed within the rest of federal courts (such as specialized federal courts, including the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. Tax Court). New law students should first become familiar with	T. 1.1 (pp. 215-218)

the U.S. Supreme Court (p. 215), Circuit Courts of Appeal (pp. 215-216) and District Courts (p. 217).

State Courts and Laws	Citation conventions for cases from all levels of courts for all U.S. states and territories.	T. 1 pp. 228- 274 (U.S. States); T. 1.4 pp. 274 -277 (Other U.S. Jurisdictions)
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Since you will use the information in Table T.1 often throughout your legal career, you should take the time to become familiar with its content. While most of the information in Table T.1 is straightforward, there are a couple of tips that will allow you to use the table more effectively:

1. **Where a jurisdiction's cases are published in more than one reporter, the official reporter is always listed first and unofficial reporters are listed in order of citation preference.** For example, Table T.1 (p. 183) lists four reporters that publish Supreme Court cases: *United States Reports*, *Supreme Court Reporter*, *Lawyer's Edition* and *United States Law Week*. *United States Reports* is the official Supreme Court reporter because it is listed first among the four choices; the three remaining reporters are considered unofficial reporters. (You would cite to the unofficial reporters only if the official reporter has not published the opinion.) Further, unofficial reporters are listed in order of preference: in this example, you would cite to the *Supreme Court Reporter* before you cited to the *Lawyer's Edition* (assuming, again,

that there is no citation in *United States Reports*).

2. **The *Bluebook* lists a regional reporter as each state's official reporter.** These opinions are often issued from a state's highest court. A state's high court opinions are also published in the state's official reporter. These concepts are explained in detail in the following section, "State Cases."

State Cases

State cases can be cited in two ways: using a regional reporter, and using a state reporter.

Citing a State Case in a Regional Reporter

Most of the time, you will cite a state case using a regional reporter citation. All seven regional reporters are published by the West Group.

The following table shows how the regional reporters and states correspond to each other.

Regional Reporter	State Coverage
Atlantic	Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont
North Eastern	Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio
North	Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Western

Pacific Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada,
New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

South Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia

Eastern

South Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, Tennessee

Western

Southern Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi

To cite to a case in a regional reporter, list the following six elements in order:

1. Name of the case (underlined or italicized);
2. Volume of the reporter;
3. Reporter abbreviation;
4. First page where the case can be found in the reporter;
5. Abbreviation for the state court where the case was decided (within parentheses);
and
6. Year the case was decided (within parentheses).

Consider, for example, the following citation:

Beachy v. Becerra, 609 N.W.2d 648 (Neb. 2000)

The elements are as follows:

Element

Result

Name of the case	<i>Beachy v. Becerra,</i>
Volume of the Reporter	609
Reporter abbreviation	N.W.2d [second series of the <i>North Western Reporter</i>]
First page of case	648
State court abbreviation	(Neb. [abbreviation corresponds to the Nebraska Supreme Court])
Year of decision	2000)

Note: According to the Bluepages (B1; p. 11) , case names can be underlined OR set in italics. Please check with your Legal Research & Writing or U.S. Legal Discourse instructor to determine whether underlining or italics is the proper citation format.

Citing a State Case in a State Reporter

If you are submitting legal documents to a state court, you may have to cite cases using state court reporters in addition to regional reporters. As a result, the full state court citation for the Beachy case would not be

Beachy v. Becerra, 609 N.W.2d 648 (Neb. 2000)

but rather

Beachy v. Becerra, 299 Neb. 299, 609 N.W.2d 648 (2000)\

In the second citation example, the Beachy case lists the official Nebraska Supreme Court reporter (abbreviated "Neb.") as the first citation. (The

abbreviated name of the state court's official reporter is always the same as the abbreviated name of the state's highest court. *See* "Jurisdiction Tables and Abbreviations," above.) The second half of the second citation example lists the regional reporter citation as a parallel citation. Consult your state court's local rules to find out whether the parallel citation is necessary.

Note: When completing assignments for Legal Research & Writing or U.S. Legal Discourse, you should check with your professor to determine whether he or she will require you to list the official state court citation, the regional reporter citation, or both.

Federal Cases

U.S. Supreme Court: Official Citation

When citing Supreme Court cases, you must cite to the official Supreme Court reporter, United States Reports. To cite to a case in the United States Reports, list the following five elements in order:

1. Name of the case (underlined or italicized);
2. Volume of the United States Reports;
3. Reporter abbreviation ("U.S.");
4. First page where the case can be found in the reporter;
5. Year the case was decided (within parentheses).

Consider, for example, the following citation:

New York Times Co. v. Tasini, 533 U.S. 483 (2001)

The elements are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>New York Times Co. v. Tasini,</i>
Volume of the Reporter	533
Reporter abbreviation	U.S.
First page of case	483
Year of decision	(2001)

U.S. Supreme Court: Unofficial Citations

United States Reports is an official publication of the United States Government, and is printed by the Government Printing Office. Due to the time lag between the Court releasing a decision and the Printing Office's publication of that decision, however, it is possible that you may have to cite a Supreme Court case that does not yet have an official United States Reports cite.

In these instances, you would cite the opinion using the unofficial *Supreme Court Reporter* citation as a **first** option, or the unofficial *United States Supreme Court Reports — Lawyer's Edition* as a **second** option. The volume and page numbers for each unofficial reporter will be different than those found in the official reporter.

For example, the recent case *Reed Elsevier, Inc. v. Muchnick* is not available in the U.S. Reports yet. So it must be cited from the *Supreme Court Reporter*.

Thus, the unofficial *Supreme Court Reporter* cite for the *Reed Elsevier* case is

Reed Elsevier, Inc. v. Muchnick, 130 S.Ct. 1237 (2010)

The elements of the *Supreme Court Reporter* cite are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>Reed Elsevier, Inc. v. Muchnick</i>
Volume of the Reporter	130
Reporter abbreviation	S.Ct.
First page of case	1237
Year of decision	(2010)

The unofficial *United States Supreme Court Reports — Lawyer's Edition* cite for the *Reed Elsevier* case is

Reed Elsevier, Inc. v. Muchnick, 176 L.Ed. 2d 18 (2010)

The elements for the unofficial *United States Supreme Court Reports — Lawyer's Edition* cite are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>Reed Elsevier, Inc. v. Muchnick</i> ,
Volume of the Reporter	176
Reporter abbreviation	L.Ed. 2d

First page of case	18
Year of decision	(2010)

U.S. Court of Appeals

Unlike the Supreme Court, decisions from the nation's federal courts of appeal are not compiled in an official reporter; there is none. Instead, all federal courts of appeals decisions are cited in West's *Federal Reporter*.

To cite to a case in the *Federal Reporter*, list the following six elements in order:

1. Name of the case (underlined or italicized);
2. Volume of the Federal Reporter;
3. Reporter abbreviation ("F.", "F.2d" or "F.3d");
4. First page where the case can be found in the reporter;
5. The abbreviation for the circuit that issued the decision (within open parenthesis);
6. Year the case was decided (within closed parenthesis).

Consider, for example, the following citation:

Universal City Studios, Inc. v. Corley, 273 F.3d 429 (2d Cir. 2001)

The elements are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>Universal City Studios, Inc. v. Corley</i> ,

Volume of the Reporter	273
Reporter abbreviation	F.3d [third series of the <i>Federal Reporter</i>]
First page of case	429
Circuit abbreviation	(2d Cir.
Year of decision	2001)

U.S. District Court

Like the federal courts of appeals, decisions from the nation's district courts are not compiled in an official reporter; there is none. Instead, all district court decisions are cited in West's *Federal Supplement*.

To cite to a case in the *Federal Supplement*, list the following six elements in order:

1. Name of the case (underlined or italicized);
2. Volume of the Federal Supplement;
3. Reporter abbreviation ("F. Supp." or "F. Supp. 2d");
4. First page where the case can be found in the reporter;
5. The abbreviation for the district court that issued the decision (within open parenthesis) (p. 98);
6. Year the case was decided (within closed parenthesis).

Consider, for example, the following citation:

City of Millville v. Rock, 683 F. Supp. 2d 319 (D.N.J. 2010)

The elements are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>City of Millville v. Rock</i> ,
Volume of the Reporter	683
Reporter abbreviation	F. Supp. 2d [second series of the Federal Supplement]
First page of case	319
District abbreviation	(D.N.J.
Year of decision	2010)

Specialized Federal Courts

Specialized federal courts, such as the U.S. Bankruptcy Court or the U.S. Tax Court, have slightly different citation rules. Check the Table T.1 for guidance on how to cite to materials from such courts.

Unpublished Cases

Only a small percentage of cases are published or reported, *i.e.*, found in printed reporters. Many more cases are available from Westlaw, Lexis or other databases. When citing an unpublished case, refer to rule 10.8.1.

To cite to an unpublished case, list the following elements in this order:

1. Name of the case (underlined or italicized);
2. Docket number;
3. Database identifier;
4. The abbreviation for the court that issued the decision (within open parenthesis);
5. The full date of decision (within closed parenthesis).

Consider, for example, the following citation:

United States v. Bennett, No. 05-CR-6050 CJS, 2005 WL 2709572 (W.D.N.Y. Oct. 21, 2005).

The elements are as follows:

Element	Result
Name of the case	<i>United States v. Bennett</i> ,
Docket number	No. 05-CR-6050 CJS,
Database identifier	2005 WL 2709572
District abbreviation	(W.D.N.Y.
Full date of decision	Oct. 21, 2005)

Short Citation Forms

All of the citation examples listed in this Guide have been cited in their long form. You use the long form of a legal citation whenever a case is being cited for the first time. (Although it has not been addressed in the examples above, the long

form of a legal cite also must include a specific page number whenever you (a) refer to something specific in a case or (b) quote a case.)

On the other hand, you may use a short form citation if you are citing the case after its first mention. Essentially, the short case citation form lists the following elements:

1. the name of the case;
2. the volume of the reporter;
3. the abbreviated name of the reporter; and
4. the exact page where the information, legal concept or quote is located.

For example, if you were citing to a reference in the Universal case that was published on page 435, the short form citation would be

Universal City Studios, Inc. v. Corley, 273 F.3d at 435

or

Universal, 273 F.3d at 435

Note: Please consult with your legal writing instructor to determine which short form citation is appropriate to use in your exercises.