

SELECTED TYPES OF LAW BOOKS
IN THE
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Compiled by
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What are the different types of law books in the Horace W. Sturgis Library collection?

American Law Reports (A.L.R.)

American Law Reports (A.L.R.) contain annotations, which review a legal topic in depth and analyze court cases from all jurisdictions on the subject. It can be used as a text or as a finding aid for cases in all jurisdictions on a topic.

The Bluebook

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation is a citation guide that is an authoritative reference for American legal citations. The *Bluebook* 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.

Casebooks

Casebooks are textbooks, which consist of leading cases in various areas of law, and are used in the instruction of law students. The cases reported may be excerpts or full text. They do not include analysis of the cases. Casebooks contain both federal and state cases. Examples of casebooks are as follows:

Cases and Materials on Children in the Legal System by Wadlington, Whitebread, & Davis, 1983. In REF Stacks ([KF479 .A7 W33 1983](#)).

Debtors and Creditors : Cases and Materials / by Epstein & Landers, 1978. In REF Stacks ([KF1501 .A7 E65](#)).

Case Reporters

Reporters contain opinions written by courts to explain how and why certain legal rules were used to resolve the dispute in a particular lawsuit. These rules constitute the "common law" and are followed by courts deciding later cases with similar facts and issues so that consistency may be maintained.

Cases decided in the U.S. Supreme Court are reported in the *United States Reports* (U.S.) and reprinted in the *Supreme Court Reporter* (S.Ct.) and

United States Reports, Lawyers' Edition, first and second series (L.Ed. and L.Ed.2d).

Cases from the intermediate U.S. Courts of Appeals, also called U.S. Circuit Courts, are printed in the *Federal Reporter*, first, second or third series (F., F.2d and F.3d). The *Federal Supplement*, first and second series (F.Supp., F. Supp.2d), contain cases from the U.S. District Courts.

State appellate court opinions are printed in official state reports. The opinions are printed in West's regional reporters, which include the Atlantic (A. and A.2d), North Eastern (N.E. and N.E.2d), North Western (N.W. and N.W.2d), Pacific (P., P.2d, and P.3d), South Eastern (S.E. and S.E.2d), South Western (S.W. and S.W.2d), and Southern (So. and So.2d) Reporters. California, Illinois, and New York are printed in the California Reporter (Cal. Rptr. and Cal. Rptr.2d), Illinois Decisions (Ill. Dec.), and the New York Supplement (N.Y.S. and N.Y.S.2d). The official reporters for the state of Georgia are the Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Georgia (Georgia Reports) at KFG45.G46 and the Reports of Cases Decided in the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia (Georgia Appeals Reports) at KFG48.G4.

Codes

Codes consist of statutes, regulations or ordinances, which are mandatory, meaning that courts must follow them. Codes are accessed through an index that references to a numbered section. The codes are updated by supplements or pocket parts or in looseleaf format.

There are federal and state codes. There are three federal codes: the official *United States Code* (U.S.C.), and the two unofficial codes including the *United States Code Annotated* (U.S.C.A.), and the *United States Code Service* (U.S.C.S.).

Regulations of federal agencies are contained in the *Federal Register* and the *Code of Federal Regulations* (C.F.R.).

The state of Georgia has an official code, the *Official Code of Georgia Annotated*, and two unofficial codes, *West's Georgia Code Annotated*, and the pre-1981 Harrison's *Georgia Code Annotated*. These codes contain the laws made by the state's legislature. They may also have city or county ordinance codes and codes of state administrative agency regulations. Most state and some local laws can be found on the Web.

One of the following federal code versions will be used if the jurisdiction is federal: *United States Code* (U.S.C.), *United States Code Annotated* (U.S.C.A.), or *United States Code Service* (U.S.C.S.). The U.S.C. is available on the Web at <http://www.uscode.house.gov/>, although other sites containing the U.S.C., e.g. <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>, may provide easier ways to locate a particular statute. For pending and new federal laws, you'll probably need to check THOMAS (Library of Congress), the government Web site for legislative information, at www.thomas.loc.gov at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html>

Court Rules

Court rules are rules of procedure governing civil and criminal practice before the courts. Although procedural law can also be found in statutory and administrative codes, court rules are generally more detailed and can vary from court to court.

Digests

Digests are indexes to reported cases and are helpful in finding cases. Thomson West publishes federal digests, state digests, and regional digests that correspond to the regional reporters. The *Decennial Digests* cover all jurisdictions in 10-year increments. The most commonly used digest system is West's American Digest System, which divides the law into many topics. Each topic is subdivided into principles or points of law, which are each assigned a "key" number. Each key number has paragraphs from cases, which summarize the points of each case, and citations to where each case can be found. Usually the research will start directly with the topic in the digest or in the Descriptive Word Index to the digest. This index uses words that direct to the topic and key number. The digest also contains a Case Table, which can be used to look up a citation if only the name of a case is known.

Legal Encyclopedias

Legal encyclopedias provide an overview of a topic. The two legal encyclopedias are *Corpus Juris Secundum* (C.J.S.) and *American Jurisprudence 2d* (Am. Jur. 2d). Many states also have encyclopedias of state laws. Georgia has the *Encyclopedia of Georgia Law*. Begin with the index and look for different synonyms of your term. The text will contain many footnotes leading to further sources.

Legal Reference Books

Examples of legal reference books that may be helpful in regard to general legal research include:

The Bluebook : A Uniform System of Citation, compiled by the editors of the Columbia Law Review, the Harvard Law Review, the University of Pennsylvania Law Review, and the Yale Law Journal, 17th Ed., 2000. In REF Stacks ([KF245 .U54 2000](#)).

Fundamentals of Legal Research / by Mersky & Dunn, 2002. In REF Stacks ([KF240 .J3 2002](#)).

How to Find the Law / by Cohen & Berring, 1983. In REF Stacks ([KF240 .C538 1983](#)).

Legal Information : How to Find It, How to Use It / by Olson, 1999. In REF Stacks ([KF240 .O365 1999](#)).

Legal Treatises, Hornbooks, and Nutshells

Legal treatises, hornbooks, and nutshells are secondary sources of law that provide overviews of individual legal topics, such as contracts, criminal law and criminal procedure, civil procedure, torts, property, taxation, and other subject areas.

Generally the word treatise means a book or article that treats or focuses on a single subject, "one that provides in a systematic manner and for an expository or argumentative purpose a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved and conclusions reached." WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, UNABRIDGED 1385 (1986). Many legal dictionaries do not define the word treatise but it does have a special meaning as a legal reference text; many are multi-volume works.

Hornbook is a scholarly, usually one volume, handbook of law in a particular area of law.

And a nutshell is usually a one volume paperback publication that provides an overview of a specific area of law.

Legal Treatises

Legal treatises are publications that present a highly organized, detailed explanation of a specific area of law (sample topics include contracts, torts, criminal law and property). Treatises are published as single-volume or multi-volume sets or as loose-leaf binders, and may be updated frequently with supplements and pocket parts. Following are examples of treatises:

A Treatise on the Constitutional Limitations Which Rest Upon the Legislative Power of the States of the American Union, 1972. In REF Stacks ([KF4600 .C6](#)).

Hornbooks

Hornbooks - uniquely authoritative and intellectual - are the finest resource in primary legal education. Hornbooks are legal texts written for law students by scholars in the field of law using plain prose. The books are well referenced and indexed. They condense an area of law into a single volume and give a clear overview of the law's evolution, a discussion of courts' interpretation of the law and an explanation of the application of the law today. This presentation of "Black letter law" makes hornbooks an attractive study aid. A hornbook published by West Group identifies itself as such on its cover. West's "Black Letter" series, Aspen's "Examples and Explanations" series and Lexis' "Understanding the Law" legal text series are similar to hornbooks. There is no clear line of demarcation between treatises and hornbooks but as a general rule a hornbook is not as detailed as a treatise and provides fewer references to other sources. Accordingly, hornbooks are not considered persuasive by courts and should be used only for background purposes. Hornbooks are usually the first place to get started in studying the law. They are usually one volume publications related to subjects covered in law school courses. The following title is an example of a hornbook:

The Law of Domestic Relations in the United States / by Clark, 1968. In REF Stacks ([KF504 .C55](#)).

Nutshells

Nutshells provide an overview of a specific area of law. The analysis of law in a nutshell is more concise as compared to a treatise or hornbook. Nutshells provide an excellent introduction to a particular area of law. The following title is an example of a nutshell:

Children and the Law in a Nutshell / by Ramsey, 2003. In REF Stacks ([KF479.Z9 R36 2003](#)).

Legal Research in a Nutshell / by Morris L. Cohen, 4th Ed., 1985. In REF Stacks ([KF240 .C54 1985](#)).

To find a treatise, hornbook, or nutshell on a subject for a particular state, search the online catalog of the library or a law library in the state to locate the publication information.

If you are looking for additional titles or for treatises, hornbooks, or nutshells in subject areas not listed, ask a reference librarian for assistance.

Looseleaf Treatises

Legal looseleafs are treatises that include text, statutes, regulations, and opinions of courts and administrative agencies on specific important topics that need continuous updating. The updating can be weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, and/or annually. Examples of legal looseleaf books include *U.S. Law Week*, *Criminal Law Reporter*, *Standard Federal Tax Reporter*, *Employment Practices Guide*, *Consumer Credit Guide*, and many other titles.

Shepard's

Shepard's Citations Service is a legal citation validation service which is available from LexisNexis. Shepard's service is available both in print and online. This citator service validates research and provides assurance that the citation references are both accurate and on-point. Shepard's can also identify cited cases that discuss specific issues of interest and if one case has been cited by another. Shepard's is the most common citator. There is also Westlaw's KeyCite, which is available online on Westlaw.

Statutes

Statutes are laws enacted by the legislature and published as "slip laws," session laws, and statutory codes. Statutes can be found by citation, by subject, or by popular name. There are federal and state statutes. All the statutory codes are available on the subscription fee-based services of Lexis and Westlaw, as well as several free web sites, such as GPO Access (federal only), Findlaw, and Cornell Legal Information Institute.

For further assistance, visit the Reference Desk in the Horace W. Sturgis Library or call the Reference Librarians at 770-423-6325.