

Guide to...

Guide to finding law cases

1. How to find Law Cases

Case law is based on the decisions and judgements of cases, which have been reported, or written up in a law report series. Some cases may be “unreported” but appear on the legal databases, having been written up by the legal databases own editorial team. Cases are generally only reported if they have a significance in the interpretation of the law. Only a small proportion of cases from lower courts are reported, for higher courts the proportion increases, while those from the House of Lords cases will all be reported. Law report series, such as the **All England Law Reports**, can cover a variety of subject matter, while others cover a specific area such as **Environmental Law Reports**.

2. How to find a case by party name, without a full citation

Try looking under party name/s Firstly decide if the case is likely to be recent or older - then use the following resources:

- **For very recent cases, within the last year**

Current Law Monthly Digest – *print version in the library* -

This includes details of cases, legislation and journal articles, and is organised into broad subject areas, a cumulative index helps you find cases by party name or subject.

- **Modern cases**

Current Law Case Citators – *print version in the library* -

These are in several volumes covering the periods 1947-1976, 1977-1988, 1989-1995 etc.

The current year appears in unbound monthly parts, each month has a case index that cumulates for the previous months for that year, mentioned above.

The Citators provide an alphabetical listing of cases by name, which have come to court during the time covered by the volume, and list any cited cases with full details. You will find references to where the case has been reported, a summary of the case, (found in the **Yearbook**,) and a ‘history’ of the case where it has been applied, considered, distinguished or over-ruled.

Tip: Always start with the most recent and work backwards in time.

- **Older cases**

Current Law Case Citator – *print version in the library* -

Cases heard before 1947 which have been cited in court since 1947 can also be found in the Case Citator.

The Digest– *print version in the Chelmsford library*

Look up the name of your case in the Consolidated Table of Cases. This will refer you to a volume number. Check in the front of the volume for the case name, this will refer you to an item number. Turn to the item number and you will find a summary of the case with full citations at the end. Cases start from 1664, covering England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Commonwealth and the EC

The English Reports– *print version in the Chelmsford library e-version available on UK Westlaw*

These are one of the main sources for cases before 1865.

The last two volumes in the series provide an index by case name.

All England Law Reports Reprint Series– *print version in the library*. These cover the period 1558-1935.

3. Electronic resources for finding cases by party name

A Case Citator service can also be found on the three main law databases - **Westlaw (from 1865)** on **LexisLibrary (from 1502)**, and **Lawtel (from 1980)** with full text linking to the law report or transcript, where available.

Both **Westlaw** and **Lawtel** carry details of unreported cases. Full text case reports from all England Law Reports, All England European Cases and All England Commercial Cases can be found on **LexisLibrary**, while The Law Reports, Weekly Law Reports can be found on **Westlaw**

All the databases carry law reports for specific subject areas. Use the search screen for cases, to find cases by party name. Individual guides are available for each database.

4. Resources for finding cases on a subject

This can be done very effectively on the three legal databases, see the individual database guides for the best routes to use.

Halsbury's Laws of England is an encyclopaedia of law covering both cases and legislation. The volumes are arranged in broad subject areas and have individual indexes and there is a comprehensive subject index for all the volumes. Use the loose-leaf updating service to ensure that your information is current. Available online on the **LexisLibrary** database, under **Commentary**

The Digest is organised by subject with a detailed subject index. It is particularly useful for historical material and for material from the Commonwealth.

Case material in **Current Law Monthly Digest** and the **Yearbooks**, is arranged in broad subject categories, with an extensive subject index .

5. Finding journal articles about cases

LexisLibrary provides access to full text journals both from the UK and worldwide. The **Westlaw Legal Journals Index** provides extensive references to articles found in English and European legal journals, many with links to full text. . Westlaw International gives access to full text journals from UK and worldwide. **Lawtel** also provides and index to journal articles.

Social Science databases such as **Academic OneFile** and specific e-journal titles can be accessed via the Digital Library available from the University Library website. For further details of places to look check the subject pages of the Digital Library. Some journals are available in print format in the library, these can be checked from the library catalogue.....

6. Help

Pilot - Our online information literacy tutorial provides students with the skills and tools to find and manage information effectively.

www.libweb.anglia.ac.uk/pilot/index.html

Lunchtime in the Library - Each semester the library runs a series of study skills drop-in sessions in conjunction with Student Support Services. These cover topics such as essay writing, evaluating information, and referencing. Details of our upcoming sessions can be found at www.libweb.anglia.ac.uk/helpdesk/train.htm.

AskUS - If you need help or advice about using any of our Library services, you can use the online enquiry form, or our new online chat service It is available on the Library website at

www.libweb.anglia.ac.uk/helpdesk/enquiry.htm.

Enquiry Desk - If you are in the library you can visit the Enquiry Desk for information about our services or help using the library resources.

Appointments - If your enquiry is lengthy or detailed you can make an appointment to see a member of the library's law team. Your subject team is:

Cambridge: Karen Ready (karen.ready@anglia.ac.uk) and

Thelma May (thelma.may@anglia.ac.uk)

Chelmsford: Deborah Stebbing (deborah.stebbing@anglia.ac.uk);