

Citing Cases

The following information regarding The Bluebook Citation format is an adapted version of the style and formatting guidelines found in *The Bluebook*, 20th ed. (2015). This sheet is to serve as a ready-reference; more information can be found in the handbook sections provided.

Basic Information About Citing Cases

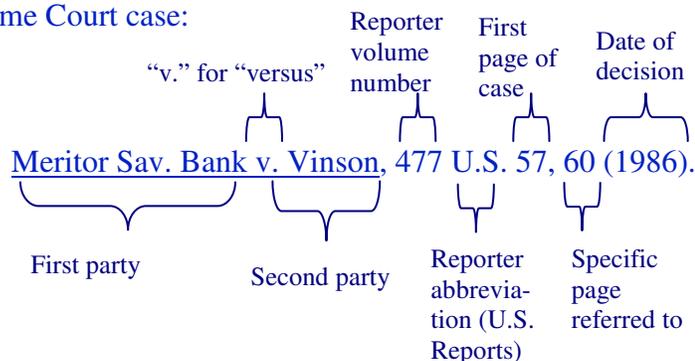
WHAT INFORMATION DO I INCLUDE IN A FULL CITATION? (Rule 10)

A full case citation includes five basic components:

1. The name of the case;
2. The published or unpublished source in which the case may be found;
3. A parenthetical indicating the court year and decision;
4. Other parenthetical information, if any; and
5. The subsequent history of the case, if any.

HOW DO I INCLUDE ALL THE INFORMATION IN THE CITATION?

Citation of a U.S. Supreme Court case:



Note: In this example, the deciding court is not listed in the parenthetical information. This is because the deciding court in this instance was the U.S. Supreme Court, and this information is clear from the reporter name. However, any other jurisdictions would be listed in the same parenthetical as the year of the decision, like in the following example:

Thompson v. Hanson, 174 P.3d 120, 125 (Wash. Ct. App. 2007).

Case Name

The case name that appears at the beginning of published opinions typically contains too much information for most citations. These are some rules for citing only what is necessary.

1. Omit all parties other than the first listed on each side of the “v.”

Example: Dow Jones & Co. v. Harrods, Ltd.

Not: Dow Jones & Company, Inc., Plaintiff, v. Harrods, Limited and Mohamed Al Fayed, Defendants

2. For names of individuals, use only last names, omitting first names, middle names, and initials.

Example: Spiller v. Ware

Not: Martin D. Spiller v. Elliot A. Ware and Randle S. Scott

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Guidelines for listing case names:

- Omit all other parties besides the first listed in the case name.
 - For names, only use last names.
 - Omit unnecessary phrases.
 - Abbreviate words where possible.
 - Abbreviate case names that include procedural phrases.
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Reporter and Pinpoint Citation

A **reporter** is a series of books collecting the published cases within a given jurisdiction or set of jurisdictions.

Cite a reporter by listing:

1. The volume number of the reporter in which the case is published;
2. The abbreviated name of the reporter; and
3. The page on which the case report begins.

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 • For example, if the citation is Envtl. Def Fund v.
 • EPA, 465 F.2d 528, then that tells us that the case
 • can be found in volume 465, on page 528 of Federal
 • Reporter, Second Series.

A **pinpoint citation**, often called a **pincite**, is necessary to point the reader to specific the page(s) within the case. Pincites are placed after the page on which the case begins, separated by a comma and a space. A pincite may consist of a page range or multiple pages that are not consecutive. To cite a footnote, give the page on which the footnote appears, “n.,” and the footnote number, with no space between “n.” and the number.

Example 1: Green v. Georgia, 442 U.S. 95, 97.

Example 2: Shah v. Leonard, 784 F.2d 1209, 1215-16.

Example 3: United States v. Baxter, 492 F.2d 150, 150.

Example 4: Ells v. Anandaiah, 769 F.2d 195, 196, 199 n.4.

Court and Year of Decision

In general, case citations should indicate parenthetically the deciding court followed by the year of decision (immediately following the page reference, separated by one space). However, when citing decisions of the United States Supreme Court or the highest court of any individual state, do not include the name of the deciding court.

Examples:

1. The United States Supreme Court: Cite United States Reports (U.S.) if the opinion appears therein; otherwise cite to Supreme Court Reporter (S. Ct.).

⇒ Meritor Sav. Bank v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57, 60 (1986).

⇒ Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., 134 S. Ct. 2751, 2782 (2014).

2. Federal Courts of Appeals: Cite Federal Reporter (F., F.2d, F.3d) and indicate the name of the court parenthetically.

⇒ Envtl. Def. Fund v. EPA, 465 F.2d 528, 533 (D.C. Cir. 1972).

⇒ United States v. Jardine, 364 F.3d 1200, 1203 (10th Cir. 2004).

3. Federal District Courts: Cite to Federal Supplement (F. Supp., F. Supp. 2d, F. Supp. 3d) and indicate the name of the court parenthetically.

⇒ W. St. Group LLC v. Epro, 564 F. Supp. 2d 84, 91 (D. Mass. 2008).

⇒ Harris v. Roderick, 933 F. Supp. 977, 985 (D. Idaho 1996).

4. State Courts: Cite the regional reporter for the region in which the court sits, if the opinion appears therein; otherwise cite the state's official reporter. Indicate the state parenthetically, unless it is unambiguously conveyed by the reporter title. Do not indicate the department or district of intermediate state courts.

⇒ Bates v. Tappan, 99 Mass. 376 (1868).

⇒ People v. Armour, 590 N.W.2d 61 (Mich. 1999).

Pending and Unreported Cases

In practice, you will frequently need to cite a case or slip opinion that has not been or will not be assigned to a reporter for publication. Some examples are:

1. LEXIS and Westlaw cases: Cite to the LEXIS or Westlaw electronic report of the case when one is available. The proper format is as follows:

1. Case name;
2. Case docket number;
3. Database identifier and electronic report number;
4. Star page number; and
5. Court and full date parenthetical.

Example: Albrecht v. Stranczek, No. 87 C 9535, 1991 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 5088, at *1, *3 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 15, 1991).

2. Slip opinions: When a case is unreported, but separately available as a slip opinion, give the docket number, the court, and the full date of the most recent disposition of the case.

Example: Groucho Marx Prods. v. Playboy Enters., No. 77 Civ. 1782 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 30, 1977).

3. Opinions only available online, but not in an electronic database: Some cases, particularly ones that are pending, can only be accessed through the court's website. In this situation, the webpage URL may be included.

Example: Kaye v. Trump, No. 5128, slip op. at 1 (N.Y. App. Div. Jan. 29, 2009), http://www.nycourts.gov/reporter/3dseries/2009/2009_00452.htm.

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: Note: Different courts and publishers use different
: formats for case docket numbers. Cite to the case
: docket number exactly as it appears.
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Other Relevant Information

To add information indicating the weight of the cited authority to a citation, insert an additional parenthetical with this information following the date parenthetical. Always indicate when you are citing a concurring or dissenting opinion.

Example: Garcia v. San Antonio Metro. Transit Auth., 469 U.S. 528, 570 (1985) (5-4 decision) (Powell, J., dissenting).

An explanatory parenthetical may be added to explain briefly the proposition for which the case stands.

Example: Green v. Georgia, 442 U.S. 95, 97 (1979) (per curiam) (holding that exclusion of relevant evidence at sentencing hearing constitutes denial of due process).

A full citation should include prior or subsequent history of the case. Use an abbreviated explanatory phrase to introduce the prior or subsequent history, which is underlined or italicized.

Example: Gucci Am., Inc. v. Gold Ctr. Jewelry, 997 F. Supp. 399 (S.D.N.Y.), rev'd 158 F.3d 631 (2d Cir. 1998).

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