



J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Your first stop for information and research needs!

Westlaw Campus Research – Search Tips & Exercises

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General Tips:

Off-Campus Access: Use your *My JSRCC* (Blackboard) username and password to log in from off-campus.

Turn off the pop-up blocker tool from your browser so that you can print, save or email a document.

New search: To start a new search, click on the **Law tab** on top of the screen.

Basic Search: use the basic search option to perform a **natural language** search. You will retrieve a **maximum of 100 documents**. Results will be displayed in **relevance order**. If you want to limit your result to recent documents, simply add a date restriction.

Advanced Search: create a more precise search by connecting your terms with the **AND, OR,** and **NOT** Boolean search operators or use the connector symbols listed below. You will retrieve **ALL documents** that match your terms and other criteria. Results will be displayed in **publication date order** with the most recently published documents displaying first.

Key connectors:

“ ” - use quotes for **exact phrase searching** – e.g., *“felony murder”*

& , AND - use the AND connector to **retrieve both terms** – e.g., *narcotics & warrant; narcotics and warrant*

space, OR - use the OR connector to **retrieve at least one term** – e.g., *drugs narcotics; drugs or narcotics* – it is best to use this connector with terms that are synonyms or have similar meanings.

%, NOT - use the NOT connector to **exclude terms** – e.g., *“felony murder” not manslaughter*

! - use the exclamation point as the truncation symbol to **retrieve all forms of a root word** including the plural or singular of a word – e.g., *teen!* will retrieve *teen, teens, teenage, teenager, teenagers*

***** - use the asterisk as the wildcard symbol to pick of **variant spellings** within or at the end of a word – e.g., *wom*n* will retrieve documents containing *woman* or *woman*

Field connectors:

To find words in the title type **ti** and the word in parenthesis - e.g., *ti(adoption)*

To search for an author's name, type **au** and the name in parenthesis – e.g., *au(sonja larsen)*

Proximity connectors:

/s - in the same sentence

+s - preceding within sentence

/p - in the same paragraph

+p - preceding within paragraph

/# - within number of terms

+# - preceding within number of terms


Search Examples:

eminent /s domain (This search retrieves documents that contain the word *eminent* in the same sentence as the word *domain*.)

"patriot act" /p wiretap! (This search retrieves documents that contain the phrase *patriot act* in the same paragraph as any word with the root *wiretap*.)

brand /5 strategy (This search retrieves documents that contain the word *brand* within 5 words of the word *strategy*.)

Copy with Reference: to copy and paste part of a document, choose **Copy with Reference** from the Westlaw **Tools** option at the bottom right of the screen. It will copy the citation together with the highlighted part.

 **Scope Information** is a powerful feature in the database listings. You'll find a lot of useful information, including the table of contents for some databases, such as Amjur, and search tips.

American Jurisprudence (Amjur)

Amjur contains over 400 separate titles on a broad range of legal topics describing the entire field of American legal doctrine. This is a good place to start your research because you can review background or overview information on a particular topic and learn about the leading cases and governing statutes.

Exercises:

1. Browse the table of contents.
2. Search for articles on the *Miranda Warning* using the exact phrase connector.
3. Email an article to yourself.
4. Copy and paste a section of an article to Notepad using the **Tools > Copy with reference** option.

American Law Reports (ALR):

Tip:


ALR does not have a table of contents, but does include an index. To find the index, type **ci(index)** from the **Advanced Search** screen.


Exercises:

1. Find the ALR Index.
 2. Retrieve all ALR articles that include the terms *affirmative action* OR *nonmoving party* in the *title of the article*.
 3. Find articles by the author, *Sonja Larsen*.
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Journals and Law Reviews:

Tip:

Journals and Law Reviews does not have  scope information on the initial *Search / Select Database(s)* menu screen. To view a title list of journals and law reviews available in Westlaw:

1. Click on **Content List** from the *Search These Sources* menu located near the upper left side of the screen.
2. When the *Content List* screen appears, click on **National Journals and Law Reviews**.
3. When the next *Content List* screen appears, click on the  icon next to **Journals and Law Reviews PRO (LAWREV-PRO)**.
4. When the *Scope* screen appears, scroll down to view the title list of journals and law reviews.

Exercises:

1. Find a list of journals and law reviews included in Westlaw
 2. Look for articles about *grounds for deportation* in *University of Richmond Law Review* (use the **abbreviation** for this review and place it in **quotes** to find the **exact phrase**).
 3. Look for a review of the book *Undaunted Courage* in *Military Law Review* (use the **abbreviation** for this review and place it in **quotes** to find the **exact phrase**).
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Case Law

Case law typically means the written opinions or decisions of appellate court judges. Case law can be crucial to understanding any given legal issue because a particular law can determine how lower courts decide on similar legal issues in the future. West publishes appellate court opinions in print reporters as well as online. Trial court opinions are not available through Westlaw online.

Exercises:

1. Find case *121 sct 525*.
2. Find case *Bush v. Gore*.
3. Research question: *Is flag burning constitutionally protected free speech?* From the **Basic Search** screen, perform a **Natural Language** search in **All Federal Cases**. Restrict the date to cases **after 1944**.
4. From the **Advanced Search** screen, use **connectors** and select **All State Cases** to find cases on: *wrongful death due to fraternity hazing*.
5. From the **Advanced Search** screen, use **connectors** and select **State Cases > Virginia** to find cases on: *Is the consent from a biological father needed for adoption?*

KeySearch

KeySearch automatically creates queries for you based on the topics you select from a topical hierarchy. Select **KeySearch** from the menu on the left.

Exercise:

1. Browse the topic tree and choose a topic of your interest.
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United States Code Annotated

Exercise:

1. To browse the U.S. Codes, click on **Table of Contents** next to *United States Code Annotated*.
 2. Next, click on **Statutes Index** from the menu located near the top upper right side of the screen to browse the Statutes.
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State Statutes – Annotated Code of Virginia

Exercise:

1. From the **Advanced Search** or **Basic Search** screen, select **State Statutes > Virginia** to find the statute 63.2-1205 on *adoption*.
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Code of Federal Regulations

Exercise:

1. To browse the Code of Federal Regulations, click on **Table of Contents** next to *Code of Federal Regulations*.
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KeyCite

Once you find a relevant case, statute, administrative decision, or regulation, you can use *KeyCite* to view its history to help determine whether it is good law and to retrieve citing references.

Tips:

To access *KeyCite*, retrieve the case or document either by citation or title. *KeyCite* will be displayed on the left frame of the screen. Symbols used in *KeyCite*:

- **Red flag:** no longer good law
- **Yellow flag:** has negative history, but has not been reversed or overruled.
- **H:** has some history
- **C:** has citing references

To limit citing references to a particular state in *KeyCite*, first click on **Citing References** in the *KeyCite* frame to the left. Next, click on the **Limit KeyCite Display** button near the bottom left of the document screen. Then limit your search by **Jurisdiction** from the *KeyCite Limits – Document Type* menu on the left.

Exercise:

1. Find the citation history of case 98 S.ct2733. Limit your search to **Virginia Jurisdiction**.