English Legal Research

Finding English Cases

Prior to 1865, there was no official series of law reports. Even today, the UK government does not publish an official reporter. However, both its Courts and the Bluebook suggest citing to the English Reports for pre-1865 cases whenever possible. After 1865, cite to the official Law Reports. Other reporters, such as the Weekly Law Reports and the All England Law Reports, may be used if a case has not been reported in the Law Reports. See a full timeline with hyperlinks to the resources here.

Case reporters

Historical reporters


English Reports, Full Reprint, 1220-1873. Morris Call Number KD270 1220 E53, Hein Online, CommonLII, LLMC Digital, Westlaw, Westlaw UK

Hein Online Collection of pre-1865 reporters. Hein Online.

LLMC Collection of English reporters. LLMC.

Revised Reports, 1200s-1860s, selective coverage. Morris Call Number: RB R32.

Law Journal Reports, 1822-1949, Morris Call Number: RB L38, HeinOnline; Westlaw UK


Current reporters

The Law Reports, required series of reporters published by the Independent Council of Law Reporting. Coverage begins in 1865. Series include: Appeals Cases, Kings/Queens' Bench, Chancery, and Family. Morris Call Numbers: KD 275 et seq. Online via the ICLR Online Library. In addition to the official Law Reports, ICLR publishes the Weekly Law Reports, the Industrial Cases Reports, the Business Law Reports, the Public and Third Sector Law Reports, and the Consolidated Index to leading law reports.


BAILII (British and Irish Legal Information Institute), Good coverage of cases from the late 1990s forward and important cases from core areas from earlier dates.

BAILII, Coverage of Case Law on BAILII.

Current Law Yearbooks. Covers English case law from 1957. This tool summarizes all cases, legislation, and other developments on a particular subject that occurs during a particular year. It also contains a topical list of journal articles and books at the back of the volume. There are occasional cumulative indexes - for example, the 1976 volume indexes 1947 to 1976. Morris Call Number: KD296 .C82

Westlaw collection of various court reports.
Lexis Plus collection of various court reports.

Case Finding

Halsbury's Laws of England. An authoritative encyclopedia of law in England and Wales with 52 main volumes arranged by subject, several indexes, and updating services; it is particularly useful to find the most important cases, legislation, and commentary in a particular area of law. The major English legal Encyclopedia - it covers all areas of English law and is a useful starting point for virtually any research project. Halsbury's Laws includes a consolidated index. This index will refer you to a volume and paragraph number. Halsbury's Laws includes a consolidated index. This index will refer you to a volume and paragraph number. Halsbury's contains many citations to cases. Morris Call Number: KD310 .H34, Halsbury's Laws of England Online.

The Digest, summarizes 400,000 cases and organizes them topically. It can be searched by case name or it can be searched for cases revolving around a particular topic. Please note that the Digest index can be difficult to use. Morris Call Number: KD296 .E5.

Citators


LawCite (http://www.lawcite.org/) is an international case citator. The LawCite database is generated on an entirely automatic basis with no editorial input and includes a fairly complete collection of all common law cases cited in the past decade plus most of the important uncited decisions before this. Please note that this is an Alpha Version. It is still being built and refined and is being released for public comment only.