How to Find Legal Cases

Finding a specific case:


Since you have the case citation, looking up the case is straightforward: The case will be found in volume 347 of the series of books titled “United States Reports” beginning at page 483. You also know that the case was decided in 1954 by the United States Supreme Court. (Note: citations for the United States Supreme Court are the only case citations that do not make a notation of the court deciding the case in the parenthetical statement for when the case was decided.)

Assume you are looking for the case *Spir Star AG v. Kimich*, 310 S.W.3d 868 (Tex. 2010).

You know from the citation that the case is found in volume 310 of a series of books titled “South Western Reporter” and specifically, the third series of this set of books, beginning on page 868. The case was decided by the Texas Supreme Court in 2010.

You can find a case in LexisNexis Academic (EPCC library online database) by clicking on the “Look up a Legal Case” link:
Next, enter either the citation or the names of the parties.

For example: if you enter the citation for *Brown v. Board of Education* like this:

![Look up a Legal Case](image)

Next, enter either the citation or the names of the parties.
You will get a search return of:

BROWN ET AL. v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA ET AL.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES


December 9, 1952, Argued
May 17, 1954, Decided

If you do not know the citation, you can enter the case name:

You will get a search return like this:

You will need to look at each of the returned cases to in order determine which one is the one that you are seeking. (In this example, #1 is the Texas Supreme Court decision, #2 is the order of the Texas Supreme Court granting the petition for review, and #3 is the decision of the Texas Court of Appeals (Houston) that was appealed to the Texas Supreme Court.)
Some cases you can practice finding include:

- Marbury v Madison
- Terry v Ohio
- Plessy v Ferguson
- 406 U.S. 441
- 325 S.W.3d 212

A note on citations:

Both the MLA and APA citation manuals adopt “The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation” citation method for legal materials. “Introduction to Basic Legal Citation” has been written by Peter W. Martin and can be found at [http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/](http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/). This work is an excellent summary of the basic citation style for legal materials, and is very helpful to those seeking to follow the proper legal citation format.