Getting Started with Campus Research

Westlaw Basics

The Thomson Reuters Westlaw™ legal research service is comprehensive, easy to use, and up-to-date. Campus Research® on Westlaw® will help you search legal materials accurately and efficiently. You have access to all of the Westlaw content included in the library’s subscription. This introduction to Campus Research shows you how to search the law-related sources, browse documents in a search result, and use filters to narrow a search result. For additional assistance, click Help or Campus Help Guide at the bottom of any page to see helpful reference materials.

Researching a Legal Issue

Your Westlaw research session begins on the Westlaw home page. At the home page, you can use the search box at the top of the page to find a document by citation or name or search for documents. You can also browse content using the links in the Browse section.

Using Simple Descriptive Terms

Searching Westlaw is logical and efficient. You can use plain language and simple terms to describe your issue. Some examples are:

- Can a municipality be held liable for civil rights violations by its employees
- Minimum contacts to establish jurisdiction
- What constitutes cruel and unusual punishment
- Death penalty for juveniles
- Expectation of privacy by passenger in car

Begin your research with these three easy steps:

1. Type search terms describing your issue in the search box at the top of the page (Figure 1).
2. Leave the default jurisdiction or click the arrow to display the jurisdiction selector (Figure 2).
   - Select up to three jurisdictions and click Save.
3. Click Search.

Students who need help using Campus Research should ask a librarian for assistance.

Library staff who need setup assistance and ongoing technical support can call 1-800-440-9378.
Westlaw will examine all core legal content for the jurisdiction you choose. Core content includes cases, statutes and court rules, regulations, federal administrative materials, U.S. Supreme Court briefs, and secondary sources. The search result is organized by content category, with the most relevant documents listed first.

**Retrieving Legal Documents by Citation**

Most legal authority, such as a court decision, statute, or administrative regulation, has a citation; that is, a unique reference to the document. If you have a citation, type it in the search box at the top the page and click **Search** (Figure 3).

For example, to retrieve the 2010 Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which has a citation of 130 S.Ct. 876, type 130 sct 876 in the search box and click **Search**.

To retrieve a statute, for example, section 2614 of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which has a citation of 29 U.S.C.A. § 2614, type 29 usca 2614 in the search box and click **Search**. To retrieve a state statute such as section 56.21 of the California Civil Code, which has a citation of Cal. Civ. Code § 56.21, type cal civ code 56.21 and click **Search**.

![Figure 3. Retrieving a case by citation](image)

**Retrieving Case Law Documents by Name**

You can also retrieve court decisions by party name. To retrieve a case by party name, type one or more parties’ names or the case title in the text box and click **Search**. For example, type roe v. wade or citizens united v. federal election commission.

**Using Boolean Terms and Connectors**

At the Westlaw home page, you can search for documents by typing a Boolean terms and connectors search query. The Boolean search method allows you to enter a query that consists of key terms from your issue and connectors specifying the relationship between those terms. For more information about using the Boolean terms and connectors search method, click **Help** or **Campus Help Guide** at the bottom of any page.

**Using Advanced Search for Legal Content**

To access a template in which you can build a Boolean terms and connectors search query, click **advanced** on the home page. Type your terms in the appropriate text boxes, click the arrow under **Jurisdiction** if you want to change the jurisdiction, and click **Search**.
Viewing a Search Result

Result Page

After your search is run, an overview of the search result is displayed. Click a content category in the left column to display the result page for that category. For example, click Cases to view the cases in your result (Figure 4).

- Core content categories and available filters are listed in the left column.
- Documents in the category you selected are listed in the center column.
- A sampling of related documents from the Secondary Sources and Supreme Court Briefs content categories are listed in the right column (if applicable).

Narrowing a Search Result

After you select a content category at the result page, you can narrow your search result using filters under Narrow in the left column (Figure 4). To select more than one filter to apply at the same time, first click Select Multiple Filters, then select the filters you want to add and click Apply Filters. To undo all filters you have added, click Undo Filters under Narrow.

Searching Within Results

You can narrow a search result by searching for terms within the result. Type your Boolean terms and connectors query in the Search within results text box under Narrow in the left column and click Search. Both your original search terms and the terms used to narrow your result are highlighted in different colors in the documents. To undo a search within a result, click Undo search within in the left column.

Filtering Search Results

You can also narrow a search result by selecting other filters under Narrow. Filters vary by document type. For example, the filters available for cases include jurisdiction, date, reported status, topic, judge, attorney, law firm, key number, party, and docket number. Select the filters you want and click Apply Filters. To undo all filters you have added, click Undo Filters.
Browsing Documents in a Search Result

To view a document in your search result, click the document's title. Each document contains highlighted search terms for easy browsing and links to cited documents.

![Image of a case law document in a search result](image)

Figure 5. Tool bar for a case law document in a search result

On the document toolbar for a case (Figure 5), you can do any of the following:

- To view the result list, click **Return to list**.
- To view the next or previous document in the result, click the **Results** arrows.
- To view the portions of each document that contain your search terms, click the **Search term** arrows.
- To jump to a specific portion of a case, click the **Go to** arrow and choose an option such as **West Headnotes** from the menu.

- To search for specific terms within the document, click the magnifying glass icon (🔍) to display a text box. Type the terms you want to find in your document and click **Search**.
- To change display options, such as font and type size, click the **Display Options** icon (-AA-).