

WEST CASE REPORTERS AND DIGESTS RESEARCH GUIDE

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PURPOSE:

This Pathfinder is an introduction to West Publishing Company's *National Reporter System*, an integrated case reporting, editing and indexing system. The West System includes West case reporters for all federal and state courts as well as West Digest subject indexes to the reported cases. Editorial enhancements enable users to locate cases by subject by using key numbers from the West Digest system.

OUTLINE:

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL REPORTER SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL REPORTER SYSTEM

West's National Reporter System provides comprehensive coverage of all reported United States cases.

A. Federal Reporters

- *Supreme Court Reporter* (S. Ct.)
 - All reported federal Supreme Court cases (1882-present)

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1882 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	1790 – present	Yes

- *Federal Reporter* (F.)
 - Reports U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals cases (1880-present)
 - Reports U.S. Court of Claims cases (1930-32; 1960-1982)
 - Reports U.S. District Courts (1880-1932)

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1880 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	1891 – present	Yes

- *Federal Supplement* (F. Supp.)
 - Reports U.S. District Courts cases (1932-present)
 - Reports U.S. Court of Claims cases (1932-1960)

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1932 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	1789 – present	Yes

B. Regional Reporters

- *Atlantic Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1938 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *North Eastern Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York and Ohio.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1936 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *North Western Reporter*

- Reports state court cases from Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1942 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *Pacific Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1931 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *South Eastern Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1939 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *South Western Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1928 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

- *Southern Reporter*
 - Reports state court cases from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1941 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	varies by state	Yes

C. Individual State Reporters, including:

- *New York Supplement*
 - Reports cases from all New York State courts.

FORMAT	COVERAGE	LOCATION
Paper	1888 – present	Unclassified Floor 4
Westlaw	1885 – present	Yes

D. Special Reporters, including:

- *Federal Rules Decisions* (1940 – present) **Unclassified Floor 4**
- *West's Bankruptcy Reporter* (1980 – present) **KF 1515 .A2 W47**
- *West's Education Law Reporter* (1982 – present) **KF 4110 .A2 W47**
- *West's Military Justice Reporter* (1978 – present) **KF 7667 .A5 C641**
- *U.S. Claims Court Reporter* (1982 –1993) **KF 125 .C52**

FEATURES OF WEST CASE REPORTERS

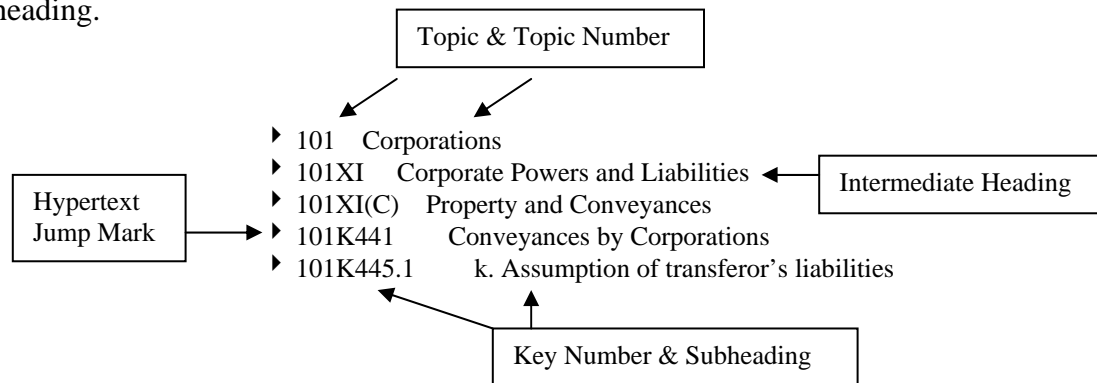
- All West case reporters are kept current by advance sheets:
 - Advance sheets are issued periodically to publish current cases before new bound volumes are available.
 - Pagination of advance sheets will be the same as the bound volume (citation will stay the same).
- West case reporters include parallel citations to the official reporters (where available)
 - West's reporters are generally available sooner than the official versions.
 - They include the full text of the opinion, exactly as it appears in the official reporter.
 - Includes references to pagination of official reporters.
- Editorial enhancements, such as Headnotes, assist in locating on-point cases.
 - Headnotes are points of law and legal issues that are summarized by West editors.
 - Headnotes are assigned "key numbers": a broad topic (e.g. "Innkeepers") and a number designating the specific legal issue.
 - Each time a point of law is addressed, it receives the same key number.
 - Headnotes precede the cases in West reporters.

WEST'S KEY NUMBER SYSTEM

- West classifies all United States law into over 440 broad topics.
 - A complete list of topics can be found in any current West digest volume or advance sheet.
 - Also consult *West's Analysis of American Law* **Reference KF 240 .W47**
 - Each topic is given a topic number. For example, the topic "Innkeepers" is given number 213.
- Within broad topics, specific legal issues have been isolated and assigned key numbers.

- There are approximately 100,000 key numbers used in West’s Key Number System.
- A key number is a number paired with a topic. For example, the subtopic “Duty to furnish accommodations” within the topic “Innkeepers” is given the key number 9.
- Therefore a full key number citation would be “Innkeepers B 9” or 213K9 (K represents the key).
- West also has an online Key Number Service that allows you to search cases by topic or topic and key number.
 - Resulting case headnotes will begin with a topic from the Key Number Classification and end with a key line. Lines between (if any) are intermediate headings.

Every line has a hypertext jump mark ▶ allowing immediate access to that particular topic or subheading.



- West's Key Number System is used in West's Digest System (discussed below) and in the case headnotes in West's case reporters.

WEST'S DIGEST SYSTEM

- The West Digest system provides subject access to case law.
- Each West digest consists of compilations of case headnote summaries organized by key number.
- West digests correspond to units of the National Reporter System:
 - *American Digest* (Decennial Digest) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *United States Supreme Court Digest* **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *Federal Practice Digest 4th* (1989 – present) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *Federal Practice Digest 3d* (1976 – 1988) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *Federal Practice Digest 2d* (1961 – 1975) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *Modern Federal Practice Digest* (1939 – 1961) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *Federal Digest* (all cases prior to 1939) **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *New York Digest, 2d, 3d, 4th* **KFN 5057 .A32**
 - *Other States Digests* **Stack 1**
 - *West's Bankruptcy Digest* **KF 1515.3 .W47**
 - *West's Military Justice Digest* **KF 7667 .A53 C641**
 - *United States Federal Claims Digest* **KF 125 .C522**

ACCESS TO THE DIGESTS & KEY NUMBERS

A. Using the Digest

- Descriptive Word Index
 - Located in separate volume(s) at the end of each digest set.
 - Alphabetical subject index to key numbers
 - NOTE: The index is difficult to use unless you are very familiar with legal terminology. Subjects are classified using legal terminology, not everyday language (e.g. use "real estate," not "land," or, "innkeepers" not "hotels.") Check a variety of subject headings to insure that you are locating all appropriate key numbers for your legal issue.
- Topic Outline

- Each topic in the digest is preceded by a detailed outline of that topic, which includes all key numbers for the topic.
- After locating key numbers using the “Descriptive Word Index,” browse the “Topic Outline” to locate additional relevant key numbers.
- Table of Cases
 - Located in separate volume(s) at the end of each digest set.
 - Alphabetical list (by party) of cases in the digest.
 - Includes the complete citation for a case, and a list of the key numbers that have been assigned to the case's headnotes.
 - Also helpful is the “Defendant-Plaintiff Table” (separate volume), which provides citations with parties reversed - helpful if you know the name of the defendant but not the plaintiff.
- Words and Phrases
 - Located in a separate volume, or part of volume, at the end of each set of digest volumes.
 - Citations to cases that have defined terms of legal import.

B. Other Access Points to Key Numbers

- If you have a case that is on point, find the case in a West reporter, check the key number(s) assigned to the relevant headnote(s), and then look up the key number(s) in the West digest for your jurisdiction(s).
- Other West publications include references to key numbers:
 - *Corpus Juris Secundum* (West's legal encyclopedia) **Reference Unclassified**
 - *Black's Law Dictionary* (West's legal dictionary) **Reference KF 156 .B53**
 - *USCA* **Unclassified Floor 4**
 - *McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York Annotated* **Reference Unclassified; KFN 5030 .A43 R99**