TOPIC DEVELOPMENT

Now that you have chosen a topic, . . .

Use the power of WestlawNext to begin and simplify your research process!

I. Use the WestlawNext Search box to find all resources on your topic.

Create a search query for your topic and enter that query into the WestlawNext search box with the proper jurisdiction selected. Your search results will automatically be segregated in the left column by cases, statutes, regulations, secondary sources, and more. Once you select one of these categories of documents, your result list will then be automatically listed in relevance order (you can often change your result list to date order, which allows you to see the most recent documents at the top of your list). Review your result lists to develop your topic.

II. Run a search of your topic in a particular resource, such as:

1. Secondary Sources: Legal Encyclopedias and Treatises
   - Use secondary sources to read what others have said about your topic, generally. Access them from the WestlawNext home page by clicking on Secondary Sources and then selecting . . . .
   - American Law Reports (ALR): ALR provides extensive commentary with analyses of cases from all jurisdictions. Each ALR article is a complete legal memorandum on a particular legal issue.
   - Texts and Treatises: With Texts and Treatises, you can easily access multiple secondary sources by name, by area of law or by state, including:
     - American Jurisprudence 2d (Am Jur): Am Jur is a comprehensive encyclopedia of state and federal law containing more than 400 separate titles on a broad range of legal topics. Read about your legal topic and look for relevant primary authority.
     - Corpus Juris Secundum (CJS): CJS is a legal encyclopedia covering state and federal legal topics. Again, look for relevant primary authority and look for West Key Numbers (see West Key Number System below).

2. Cases
   - Use Headnotes to find other relevant cases. West attorney-editors analyze the legal issues in every case published in West's National Reporter System and summarize each issue in a headnote. Use headnotes to:
     - Access all other cases that discuss similar points of law. When you find a relevant case, review the headnotes to find the points of law that are important to your issue. Click on the link that tells you how many other cases cite to your case for that same headnote – a great way to expand your research!
   - Retrieve and use relevant West Topic and Key Numbers. With a relevant case displayed, the headnotes also are assigned to the West Topic Key Number system. Click on the related Topic Key Number link to see a list of cases with similar legal issues in the jurisdiction of your choice.
     - TIP: You can also access the West Key Number System and get a list of relevant cases in your jurisdiction by clicking on Tools on the WestlawNext home page → clicking on West Key Number System → either checking boxes next to relevant topics and then run a search of your topic in the search box above or running a search through all content using the same search box above.
   - Use Citing References to find all documents that cite to your case.
     - TIP: Narrow your result list in the left column to tailor your list to only the authority you want – a big time saver!
3. Statutes and/or Regulations

- Develop your topic by researching relevant statutes and regulations.
- Use Notes of Decisions to see relevant cases on your topic in your jurisdiction.
- Use Citing References to find other relevant authority that has cited your statute or regulation.
- Use Context & Analysis to read what other resources, such as law reviews, say about your statute or regulation.
- Use 50 State Surveys to compare and contrast statutes or regulations among jurisdictions. To access from the WestlawNext home page, click on Statutes & Court Rules → click on 50 State Statutory Surveys in the right column → run a search for the type of statute or regulation you want either by area of law or through all content → select your statute or regulation to see a commentary of the statute or regulation followed by links to all state jurisdictions on your statute or regulation.

Use the power of WestlawNext to alert you to mentions of your topic, case, statute, etc.!

I. Create a WestClip Alert on your topic so that you are made aware of future mentions of your topic – a big time saver throughout the writing period.

   a. On the upper right-hand side of your screen select Alerts;
   b. Select WestClip, click on Create;
   c. Name your clip something that will remind you later of what this alert is about;
   d. Add your respective databases/content area; and
   e. Enter your topic in Terms & Connectors language
      • (TIP: call 1-800-REF-ATTY and have a reference attorney help you);
   f. Choose your delivery settings, e.g., how often you want WestlawNext to run the search of your topic, how you want results delivered to you, the format of your results, any notes you want to include, and when you want the alert to end; and
   g. Click Save.

II. Create a KeyCite Alert to automatically monitor the status of a case, statute, administrative decision or regulation and send you updates when its KeyCite result changes, giving you the most current KeyCite information for your research.

   a. On the upper right-hand side of your screen select Alerts;
   b. Click on Create, select WestClip;
   c. Enter your citation, click on Go;
   d. Select Full History or No History, whether you want to include Citing References, edit your delivery settings; and
   e. Click Save.

III. Create a Newsletter where all of your KeyCite Alerts and WestClips results will be delivered to avoid multiple emails.

   a. On the upper right-hand side of your screen select Alerts;
   b. Select Newsletter, click on Create;
   c. Name your Newsletter;
   d. Select the Alerts you would like to be added;
   e. Choose your delivery settings; and
   f. Click Save

NOTE: When you folder all of your WestlawNext documents, you will automatically see the current KeyCite status symbol next to each document.

For assistance using WestlawNext, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-9378).

For free materials, visit lawschool.westlaw.com.