

BLUEBOOK BREAKDOWN

NAVIGATING BLUEBOOK:

If you're looking to cite American legal documents, The Bluebook is the ultimate citation authority. While other citation manuals exist, such as those published by the Association of Legal Writing Directors and the University of Chicago, The Bluebook is widely recognized as the gold standard. Additionally, while some states and courts have created their own citation systems, you can find most of them in The Bluebook's "Bluepages." The Bluebook is a comprehensive reference book comprised of four main sections:

1. The "Bluepages" contain condensed information on basic legal citation for everyday use.
2. The full rules on citation and style include twenty-one basic standards of citation, as well as specific guidelines for citing various legal documents.
3. Sixteen tables provide information on proper authorities to cite and lists of abbreviations.
4. An index in the back helps find applicable rules.

CITATION GUIDELINES (WITH EXAMPLES):

Citing Court Cases:

1. The name of the case;
2. The official source in which the case can be found (**DO NOT CITE OYEZ**);
3. A parenthetical indicating the court and year of the decision.

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421, 430 (1962).

Citing the U.S. Constitution & U.S. State Constitutions:

1. Abbreviated title of the constitution;
2. Which subdivision of said document are you referring to;
3. If you are referencing a state or territorial constitution, abbreviate the state's name instead of the letters "U.S."; and
4. Must use large and small capitals.

U.S. CONST. art. I, § 9, cl. 2.

N.M. CONST. art. V, § 1.

Citing International Constitutions:

1. Cite all foreign constitutions by name.
2. If the document is not referred to as a “constitution,” include “Constitution” in brackets after the name;
3. If the country is unclear from the constitution's title, include the country abbreviation in a parenthetical at the end of the citation; and
4. The date of ratification.

Bundesverfassung [BV] [Constitution] Apr. 18, 1999, SR 101, art. 29 (Switz.).

Federal (US) Statute:

1. The official name of the act;
2. The published source in which the act can be found; and
3. The year the source was published.

Department of Transportation Act, Pub. L. No. 89-670, § 9, 80 Stat. 931, 944-47 (1996).

State (US) Statute:

1. The abbreviated name of the code;
2. The cited section number(s); and
3. The year of the cited code edition (not the year the act was passed).

Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.20.020 (2014).

Unenacted (Federal) (US) Bills:

1. Name of the bill (if relevant);
2. The abbreviated name of the chamber;
3. The number of the bill;
4. The number of the Congress;
5. The section (if any); and
6. The year of the publication.

Protection from Personal Intrusion Act, H.R. 2448, 105th Cong. § 2(a)(1997).

Unenacted (State) (US) Bills:

1. The number of the bill;
2. The number of the legislative body (or year, if they do not number);
3. Parenthetically indicate the name of the state, abbreviated; and
4. The year of publication.

H.B. 753, 443rd Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2021).

Legislative (Federal)(US) Hearings:

1. Entire subject matter title as it appears on the cover;
2. The bill number (if any);
3. The committee name;
4. The number of the Session; and
5. The year of the publication.

Transforming the Federal Government to Protect America from Terrorism: Hearing Before the H. Select Comm. on Homeland Sec., 107th Cong. 23-35 (2005) (statement of John Ashcraft, Att’y Gen. of the United States).

Legislative (Federal)(US) Reports:

1. Name of the chamber;
2. Number of the Congress connected by a hyphen to the number of the report;
3. The page being cited;
4. The year of the publication; and
5. Must use large and small capitals.

S. REP. No. 95-797, at 4 (1978), as reprinted in 1978 U.S.C.C.A.N. 9260, 9263.

(Federal) (US) Regulations:

1. C.F.R. Title Number;
2. The abbreviation of the set of regulation(s) cited;
3. A section symbol and specific section cited; and
4. The date of code edition cited.

7 C.F.R. § 319.76 (2019).

Unpublished Manuscripts:

1. Author;
2. The title or description;
3. The page or pages (if applicable);
4. The most precise writing date available; and
5. Where the work is located.

Victoria E. Anderson, Company Outing: How Consensual Relationship Agreements Adversely Affect Homosexual Employees 12 (Mar. 15, 2004) (Unpublished comment, on file with the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Labor and Employment Law).

Letters, Memoranda, & Press Releases:

1. Identify the nature of the document and give the writer and addressee (if any), and institutional affiliation;
2. The title or description;
3. The page or pages (if applicable);
4. The most precise writing date available; and
5. Where the work is located.

Letter from Anna Dimitrijevic, Bluebook Ed. Chair, Harvard L. Rev. (Feb. 1, 2020) (on file with the Harvard Law School Library).

Non-legal Books:

1. The full name(s) of the author(s) as written in the publication;
2. The title of the book;
3. The page that you are referencing;
4. Parenthetical indicating the year of publication; and
5. Must use large and small capitals.

J.R. MCNEILL & WILLIAM H. MCNEILL, THE HUMAN WEB: A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF WORLD HISTORY 319 (2003).

Pamphlets:

1. The full name(s) of the author(s) as written in the publication;
2. The title of the publication;
3. The page that you are referencing;
4. A parenthetical indicating the year of publication; and
5. Must use large and small capitals.

WOMEN'S BUREAU, U.S. DEP'T OF LAB., LEAFLET No. 55, A WORKING WOMAN'S GUIDE TO HER JOB RIGHTS 4 (1978).

Works in Collection:

1. List the author's full name in normal type;
2. The title of the shorter work in italics, followed with "in" in italics, the volume number (if any) and the name of the volume as a whole in capitals;
3. Note the page in which the short title begins; and
4. Parenthetically note the editors and year.

John Adams, Argument and report, *in* 2 LEGAL PAPERS OF JOHN ADAMS 285, 322-35 (L. Kinvin Wroth & Hiller B. Zobel eds., 1965).

Consecutively Paginated Journals:

1. The author;
2. The title of work (italicized);
3. The volume number;
4. The periodical name (capitalized);
5. The first page of the work;
6. The page in which specific material show up; and
7. The year (enclosed in parenthesis).

David Rudovsky, Police Abuse: Can the Violence Be Contained?, 27 HARV. C.R.-C.L.L. REV.465, 500 (1992).

Nonconsecutively Paginated Journals:

1. The author;
2. The title of work (italicized);
3. The periodical name (capitalized);
4. The date of issue; and
5. The page(s) in which specific material shows up.

Barbra Ward, Progress for a Small Planet, HARV. BUS. REV., Sept.-Oct. 1979, at 89,90.

Student Written Work:

1. The author;
2. The designation of piece (notes, comments, projects, etc.);
3. The title of work (italicized);
4. The volume number;
5. The periodical name (capitalized);
6. The page(s) in which specific material show up; and
7. The year (enclosed in parenthesis).

Ellen London, Comment, A Critique of the Strict Liability Standard for Determining Child Support in Cases of Male Victims of Sexual Assault and Statutory Rape, 152 U. PA. L. REV. 1957, 1959-63 (2004).

Book Review:

1. The Author;
2. The title of work (italicized);
3. The volume number;
4. The periodical name (capitalized);
5. The page(s) in which specific material shows up;
6. The year (enclosed in parenthesis); and
7. "book review" (enclosed in parenthesis).

Bruce Ackerman, Robert Bork's Grand Inquisition, 99 YALE L.J. 1419, 1422-25 (1990) (book review).

Newspapers:

1. The Author;
2. The title of work (italicized);
3. The publisher's name (capitalized);
4. The date published; and
5. The page(s) in which specific material shows up.

Andrew Rosenthal, White House Tutors Kremlin in How a Presidency Works, N.Y. TIMES, June 15, 1990, at A1.

The Internet:

1. The name of the author(s) (if applicable);
2. The title of the specific attributable page of the website, such as a posting or comment (underlined or italicized) (if applicable);
3. The date (if applicable); and
4. The Uniform Resource Locator, or URL.

Eugene Kontorovich, Italy Adopts Supreme Court's View of ICJ Authority, Volokh Conspiracy (Oct. 28, 2014, 10:41 AM),
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/10/28/italy-adopts-supreme-courts-view-of-icj-authority/>.

The Internet (with Pagination):

1. The name of the author(s) (if applicable);
2. The title of the specific attributable page of the website, such as a posting or comment (underlined) (if applicable);
3. The publisher (if applicable);
4. The page number;
5. The date (if applicable); and
6. The Uniform Resource Locator, or URL.

John Roman, Michael Kane, Emily Turner, & Beverly Frazier, Instituting Lasting Reforms for Prisoner Reentry in Philadelphia, Urban Institute, 8 (June 27, 2006),
https://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411345_lastingreforms.pdf.

Interviews:

1. Format of interview ("Interview with" or "Telephone Interview with");
2. Name, title, and institutional affiliation of the interviewee;
3. If in-person: Include the location of the interview; and
4. The date of interview (enclosed in parenthesis).

Interview with Sylvia Burwell, President, American University, in Washington, D.C. (Oct. 22, 2021).

Forthcoming Publications:

1. The Author;
2. The designation of piece (notes, comments, projects, etc.);
3. The title of work (italicized);
4. The page(s) in which specific material shows up;
5. The periodical name (capitalized); and
6. The forthcoming date (enclosed in parenthesis).

Sarah Greenberger, Comment, Enforceable Rights, No Child Left Behind, and Political Patriotism: A Case for Open-Minded Section 1983 Jurisprudence, 153 U. PA. L. REV. (Forthcoming in Jan 2005).

International Treaties:

1. The full name of the compact or treaty;
2. All parties to the treaty;
3. Subdivisions of the treaty cited;
4. The date of signature (not ratification); and
5. The source where the treaty was published.

Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, Japan-U.S., art. X., Apr. 2, 1953, 4 U.S.T. 2063.

United Nations Official Records:

1. Include the Official Records title;
2. The subdivision of the organ (if any);
3. The session and meeting number;
4. The pincite (if necessary);
5. The U.N. document symbol; and
6. The date.

U.N. GAOR, 56th Sess., 1st plen. Mtg. at 3, U.N. Doc A/56/PV.1 (Sept. 12, 2001).

International Court of Justice:

1. Case Name; The parties' names (if any);
2. The characterization of the opinion;
3. The volume and name of the publication where the decision can be found;
4. The page or case number;
5. The pincite (if necessary indicated with “¶”); and
6. The date.

Reservations to Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide, Advisory Opinion, 1951 I.C.J. 15 (May 28).

European Court of Justice:

1. Case Number;
2. The parties' names (if any);
3. The year of the decision; and
4. The official report of the court.

Case T-198/98, *Micro Leader Bus. v. Comm'n*, 1999 E.C.R. II-3989.

International Criminal Court:

1. Case name (include only one party per side, and only use last names);
2. The case number; type of ruling (include only the last name of judges);
3. The paragraph number (if necessary); and
4. The date.

Prosecutor v. Katanga, ICC-01/04-01/07/3436-Anxl, *Minority Opinion of Judge Wyngaert*, ¶ 320 (Mar. 7, 2014).

Foreign Courts:

1. Case Name;
2. The case number;
3. Parenthetically note the court name and year; and
4. Parenthetically note the country of origin.

Ko Maung Tin v. u Gon Man, 14 Ann. Dig. 233 (High Ct. 1947) (Burma).

COMMON ERRORS:**Spacing:**

When it comes to spacing, close up all adjacent single capitals in academic writing---avoid doing this with longer abbreviations. Keep in mind that numbers, both ordinal and cardinal, are treated as single capitals.

When it comes to practitioner writing, such as briefs and court documents, abbreviations in reporter names can now be closed up to reduce the number of words used. For instance, the reporter "S. Ct." can be written as "S. Ct." or "S.Ct."

Capitalization:

Capitalizing the initial word, any word directly following a colon, and all other words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions of four or fewer letters. In text, only capitalize nouns referring to specific people, groups, offices, or bodies.

Signals:

To convey your message clearly, avoid using contradictory signals in the same sentence. Instead, use separate sentences to express different ideas. However, when citing in a citation clause after a sentence's part and set off by commas, you can use contradictory signals in the same sentence.

Page Ranges:

When citing multi-page sources, keep the last two digits and drop the rest, and use an en dash or hyphen between the inclusive page numbers. However, this does not apply to citing multiple sections of statutes or regulations.

“Quoted In” versus “Quoting”:

To indicate that a case or authority is either quoted in or quotes another authority, use "quoted in" or "quoting." When using "quoted in," the phrase follows the citation, is separated by a comma, and is underlined or italicized. If using "quoting," the phrase is used in a parenthetical in plain type and is not underlined or italicized.

Numerals and Symbols:

Spell out numbers zero to ninety-nine in text and footnotes, but use numerals for 100 and higher. Use numerals when listing a series of numbers greater than and less than 100. When a number starts a sentence, spell it out regardless of value. To represent ordinals, we use "1st" instead of "1st" superscripts. For citations using ordinals that end in two or three, use "2d" and "3d," not "2nd" and "3rd."

FOOTNOTES:

When citing sources, it is important to insert a footnote at the end of the sentence after the punctuation. The citation should be typed into the footnote section found at the bottom of the page. Footnote numbers at the bottom of the page are full-sized and followed by a period.

To avoid confusion, we use "Id." when the immediately preceding citation is the same source as the one in the current footnote. "Ibid." is similar to "Id.," but it is used when the immediately preceding citation is exactly the same as the current citation, including the referenced page numbers. However, never use "Ibid." if you are referencing the same source at a different page. "Id." and "Ibid." can be used in conjunction with one another.

We use "Supra" to reference previously cited material from a footnote that does not immediately precede the current footnote. "Supra" may also be used to reference the same source at a different page. Additionally, "See" is used to refer the reader to specific pages, paragraphs, figures, or footnotes. "See" can be used with either "supra" (to reference prior material) or "infra" (to reference following material).

PARENTHETICALS:

1. Use parentheticals to promptly explain the relevance of an authority to the point made in the text. Parenthetical information is recommended when the relevance of a source is not readily apparent:
 - a. Introductory Signal (See, E.g., Accord, See also, Cf) (Underlined);
 - b. Name of the case (underlined);
 - c. Appropriate citation; and
 - d. Brief explanation or quote to explain the usage of the source (in parenthesis).

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**Do not highlight your parenthetical.*

2. There are different types of parentheticals, including explanatory, descriptive, and illustrative parentheticals. Each type has its own unique purpose and structure.
3. Parentheticals should be placed at the appropriate point in the sentence or paragraph to provide context and support for the text.
4. They should not disrupt the flow of the writing or be too lengthy.
5. When using parentheticals, it is important to ensure that the information provided is clear, concise, and relevant to the text. Extraneous information should be avoided.
6. When using parentheticals to support arguments, it is important to provide accurate and relevant citations to legal authorities.
7. Start the parenthetical with a lower-case present participle and end without punctuation. Exceptions include using a capital letter and closing punctuation when directly quoting a full sentence, and using a shorter parenthetical for complex phrases.
8. When using multiple parentheticals, they should be listed in a specific order.

INTRODUCTORY SIGNALS:

In legal writing, introductory signals are essential for the reader to understand the relationship between the cited sources. Short form citations are used to refer to a source already cited in the text. To indicate a previously cited source that is the same as the source immediately preceding it,

use "Id." On the other hand, "Supra" is used to indicate a previously cited source that is not the same as the source immediately preceding it.

When distinguishing between cases, use "cf." while "see" is used to indicate that a case supports another case. In cases where other sources provide similar information as the primary citation, use "Also." For sources that provide additional information related to the primary citation, use "See also."

In contrast, use "but see" to indicate a source that contradicts the primary citation. Finally, to indicate the nature of an opinion, use "concurring" or "dissenting." When a decision is made by the court without an identified author, use "per curiam." Remember to avoid contractions and write out numbers when using these introductory signals in your legal writing.