

# THE JARGON OF LEGAL RESEARCH

**BOUND VOLUME** – a hardcover book

**CASES or CASE LAW** – the law of reported judicial opinions (as distinguished from statutes passed by legislatures or administrative law passed by executive branch agencies)

**CITATOR** – a set of books and online sources that provide the subsequent judicial history and interpretation of reported cases or lists of cases and legislative enactments construing, applying or affecting statutes

**CITED** – used a verb, means to mention or quote another case as in “The *Johnson* case cited the *Milagros* case for this point of law.”

**CITED CASE** – a case that is referred to by other cases

**CITING CASE** – the case that refers to the cited case

**CODE** – a compilation of STATUTES. In a code, the laws in force and the judicial decrees having the force of law, are rewritten and arranged in a classified order. Repealed and temporary acts are eliminated and the revision is reenacted by the legislature.

**CODIFICATION** – the process of collecting and arranging systematically, usually by subject, the laws of a state or country.

**CROSS REFERENCE** – a directive to another term or synonym in an INDEX

**CUMULATIVE** – including what came before. For example, a cumulative update pamphlet published in June would contain all materials from January through June. An un-cumulated June pamphlet would only contain June materials.

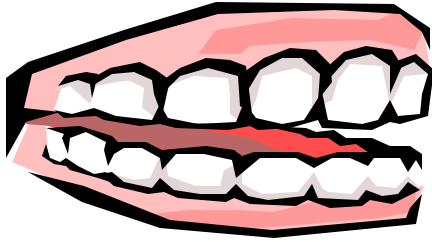
**CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT** – an update that includes the materials previously published in other updates. (see cumulative)

**DECISION or COURT DECISION or OPINION** – an expression of the reasons why a certain decision (the judgment) was reached in a case.

**DESCRIPTIVE WORD INDEX** – a single book or set of books in a DIGEST that contains a list of topics, subjects, or synonyms with cross-references, with citations and references to the body of the digest where the topics are found or discussed

**DIGEST** – a private publisher’s collection of brief summaries of court holdings on points of law from cases, which are arranged by subject and subdivided by jurisdiction and courts

**FINDING AID** – Something that helps you find what you are looking for in the main volumes of a set of materials and in primary legal materials (such as cases or statutes). An example of a FINDING AID is a DIGEST. In addition, the term “finding aid” is also used in a narrower sense to refer to indexes within a set of materials that help you to find materials within the set. For example, even though a DIGEST is a finding aid for primary legal materials such as statutes and



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caselaw, a DIGEST also has finding aids, such as a DESCRIPTIVE WORD INDEX, an index called "WORDS AND PHRASES," and a TABLE OF CASES, that direct you to materials within the DIGEST itself.

**HEADNOTE or NOTE**– a brief summary of a legal rule or significant facts in a case, written by a private publisher (not the judge or the court), that precedes the printed opinion in unofficial reporters.

**INDEX** – a list of terms under which things are categorized in a main volume or set of materials, with citations and references to the body of the publication where the terms are found or discussed. For example, a subject index is an alphabetical list of subjects which refer to the page, section number or other number where materials grouped under that subject can be found. In single volume books, an INDEX may be found at the end of the book. In multivolume sets of books (such as STATUTES and DIGESTS), the index is often in a separate paperback book or books, or may be in multiple hard-cover books. Some DIGESTS have several kinds of INDEXES, such as a DESCRIPTIVE WORD INDEX, an index called "WORDS AND PHRASES," and a TABLE OF CASES. These are also all called FINDING AIDS because they help you find what you are looking for in the main volumes of the set and in the primary legal materials (such as cases or statutes).

**KEY NUMBER** – a permanent number given to a specific topic or "point" of case law. The Key Number is a building block of the major indexing system devised for American case law, developed by the publisher West Group.

**NEGATIVE TREATMENT** – a term used in SHEPARDIZING, meaning that a subsequent case did not like the case you are looking up, i.e., it overruled it, criticized it, distinguished it, etc.

**OFFICIAL REPORTER** – reprints of court opinions in books as directed by statute, i.e., the court pays to publish these opinions.

**ON POINT, or CASE IN POINT or CASE ON ALL FOURS** – a judicial opinion which deals with a fact situation similar to the one being researched and substantiates a point of law to be asserted

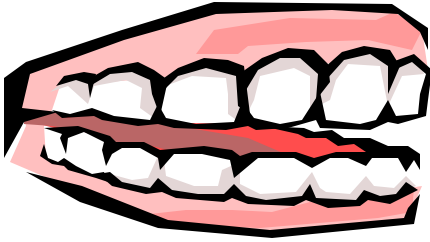
**PAMPHLET** – a paperback update

**PARALLEL CITATION** - a citation reference to the same case printed in two or more different reporters

**PINPOINT CITE** – a citation that contains the page number where the case is cited

**POCKET PART** – a paper update to a hardcover book, found in the back cover of the book, inserted in a "pocket" – a slit made in the inside back cover of the book

**POPULAR NAME TABLE** – a single book or section of a book in a STATUTE index that contains an alphabetical list of the common or short names of statutes – usually it is part of the index to a set of statutes



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**POSITIVE TREATMENT** – a term used in SHEPARDIZING, meaning that a subsequent case did liked the case you are looking up, i.e., it followed it, explained it, etc.

**REPORTS or REPORTER or COURT REPORTS** – published judicial cases arranged according to some grouping, such as jurisdiction, court, period of time, subject matter, or case significance

**SHEPARD'S** - a trademark term of Shepard's Citations, Inc. (now owned by Lexis), which refers to the materials used to update cases and statutes

**SHEPARDIZE** – a trademark term of Shepard's Citations, Inc. (now owned by Lexis), which means to use its methods and materials to update cases and statutes

**STATUTES** – laws passed by legislatures and then grouped into like subject areas

**STRING CITE** – a parenthetical list of cases in a brief or opinion that all support the same point of law

**SUPPLEMENT** – an update to published legal materials

**SYLLABUS** – summary of an opinion, usually written by a private publisher, not the court

**TABLE OF CASES** – a single book, set of books or section of a book in a DIGEST that contains a list of cases, arranged alphabetically by case names, with citations and references to the body of the publication where the cases are found or discussed

**TOPIC or SUBJECT**– a term under which similar cases or statutes are grouped in a subject classification scheme (a hierarchical outline of subjects and subtopics). This term is used rather than other possible synonyms. There are usually cross-references from the synonyms to the chosen term in an INDEX. For example, Master and Servant rather than Employment

**UNOFFICIAL REPORTER** – court reports published by private publishers.

**WORDS AND PHRASES** – a single book or set of books in a DIGEST that contains a list of terms defined by a court in an opinion, with citations and references to the body of the publication where the cases are found or discussed.