

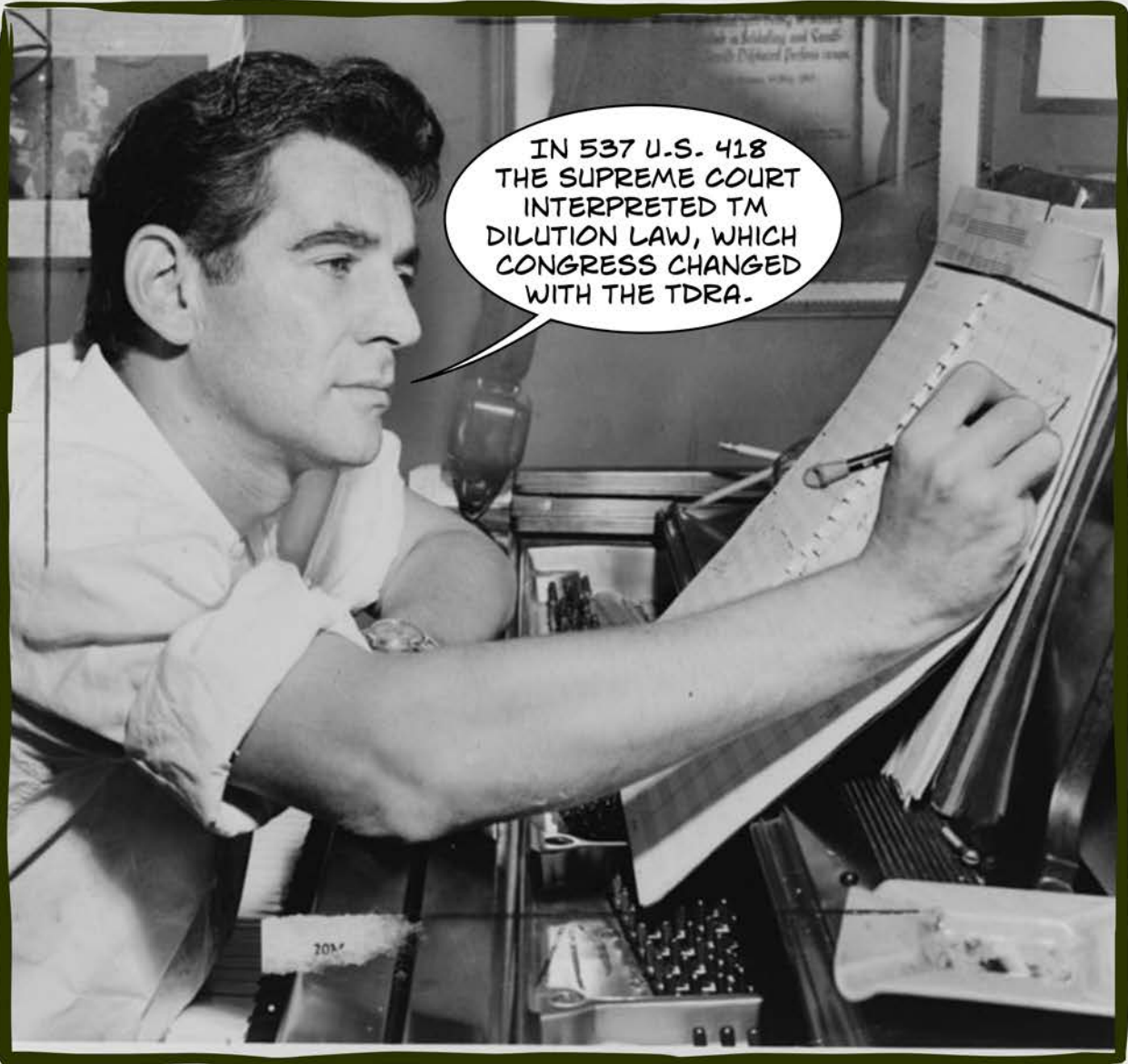
ABC's of Legal Research



A FREE-TO-USE EXPLORATION OF TOPICS IN LEGAL RESEARCH,
ASSEMBLED BY ROGER SKALBECK & ALEX HUTCHINGS, TWO PROFESSORS
WHO TEACH LEGAL RESEARCH AT RICHMOND SCHOOL OF LAW. NO © - 2023
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A

IS FOR ANNOTATION



IN 537 U.S. 418
THE SUPREME COURT
INTERPRETED TM
DILUTION LAW, WHICH
CONGRESS CHANGED
WITH THE TDRA.

Collections of statutes are often referred to as "annotated codes." With these, an annotation represents a citation to a source such as a court case that explains how it has interpreted the statute..

B

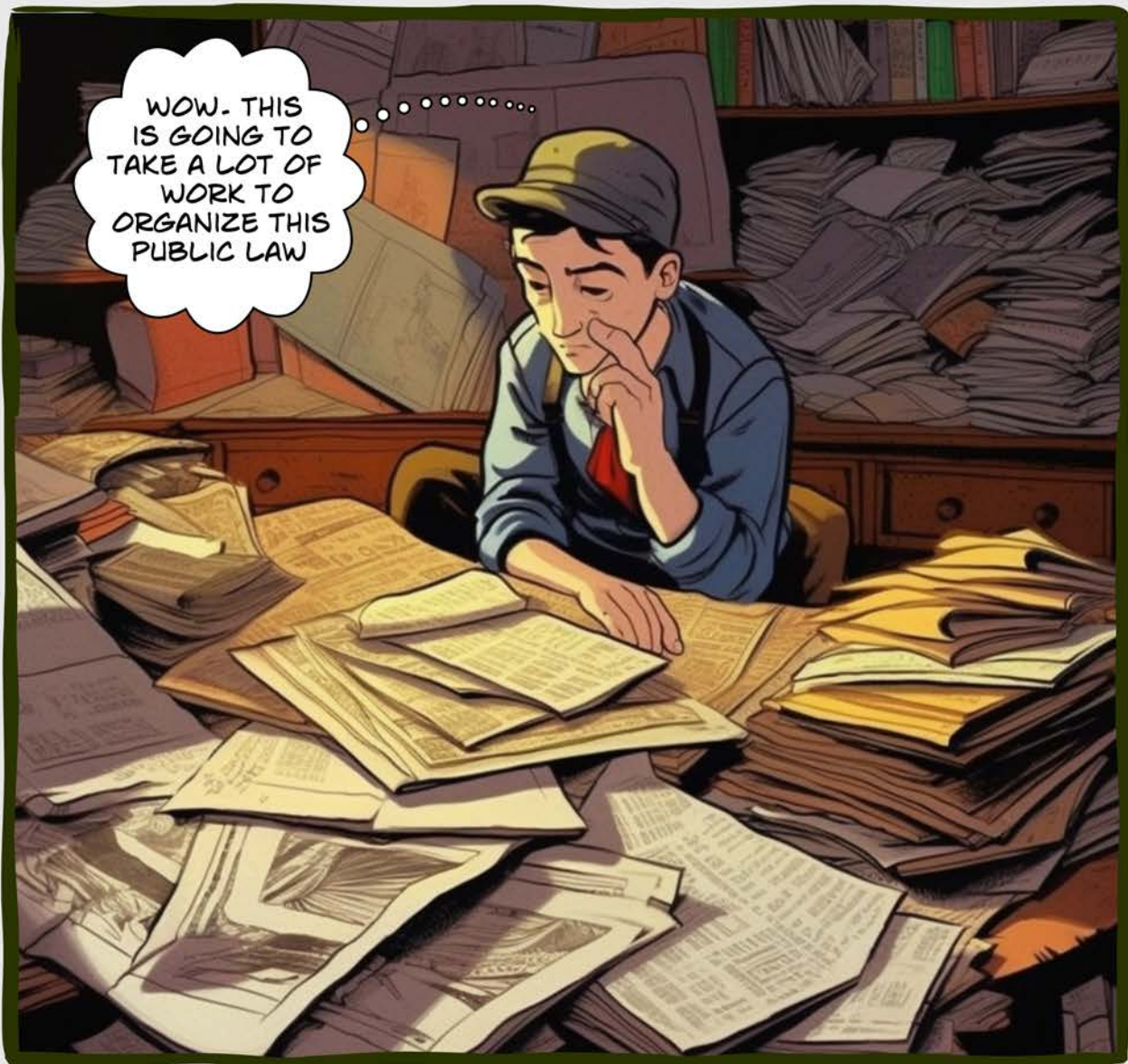
IS FOR BINDING AUTHORITY



*A source such as a statute or court case you **MUST** follow is called a "binding authority." Sources you **MAY** follow are merely "persuasive."*

C

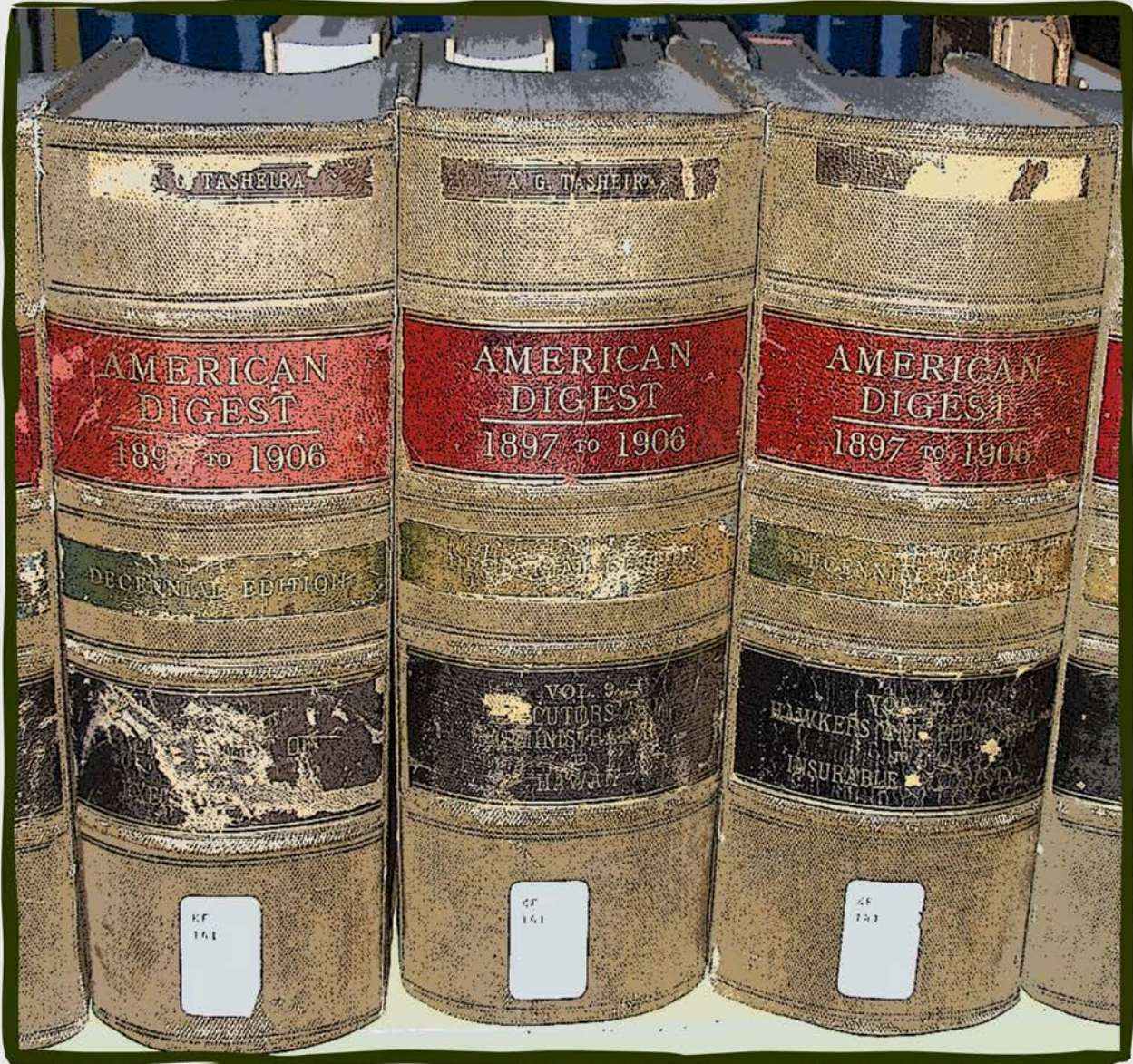
IS FOR CODIFICATION



In law, codification is the process of collecting and restating the law of a jurisdiction in certain areas, usually by subject, forming a legal code, i.e. a codex (book) of law.

D

IS FOR DIGEST



Case digests are multi-volume sets arranged in alphabetical order by subject and are used to find case law on very specific legal topics.

E

IS FOR E-DISCOVERY



E-Discovery is an element of legal proceedings such as litigation, where the information sought and reviewed is in electronic format.

F

IS FOR FREE LAW PROJECT



Free Law Project is a nonprofit organization using software, data, and advocacy to make the legal ecosystem more equitable and competitive. They create and maintain products like Courtlistener and ReCap.

G

IS FOR GOVINFO



GovInfo, a service of the United States Government Publishing Office (GPO), provides free public access to official publications from all three branches of the Federal Government at : www.govinfo.gov

H

IS FOR HORNBOOK



A one-volume treatise summarizing the law in a specific field. With the earliest hornbooks, the text was covered with a layer of animal horn for protection, so thin that it was see-through.

IS FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW



Law formed by treaties and custom between sovereign nations.

J

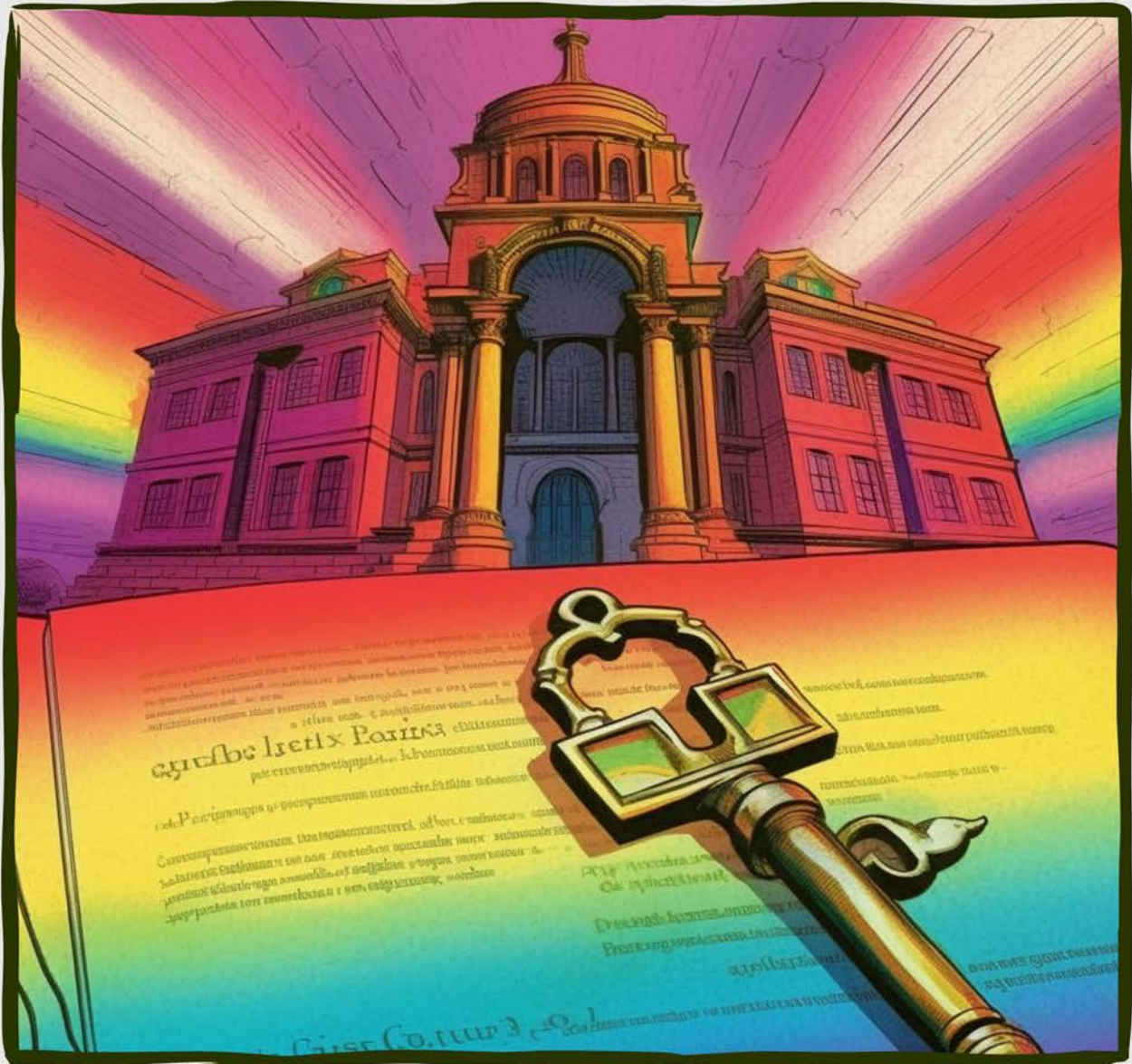
IS FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW



Judicial review is a process under which executive, legislative and administrative actions are subject to review by the judiciary.

K

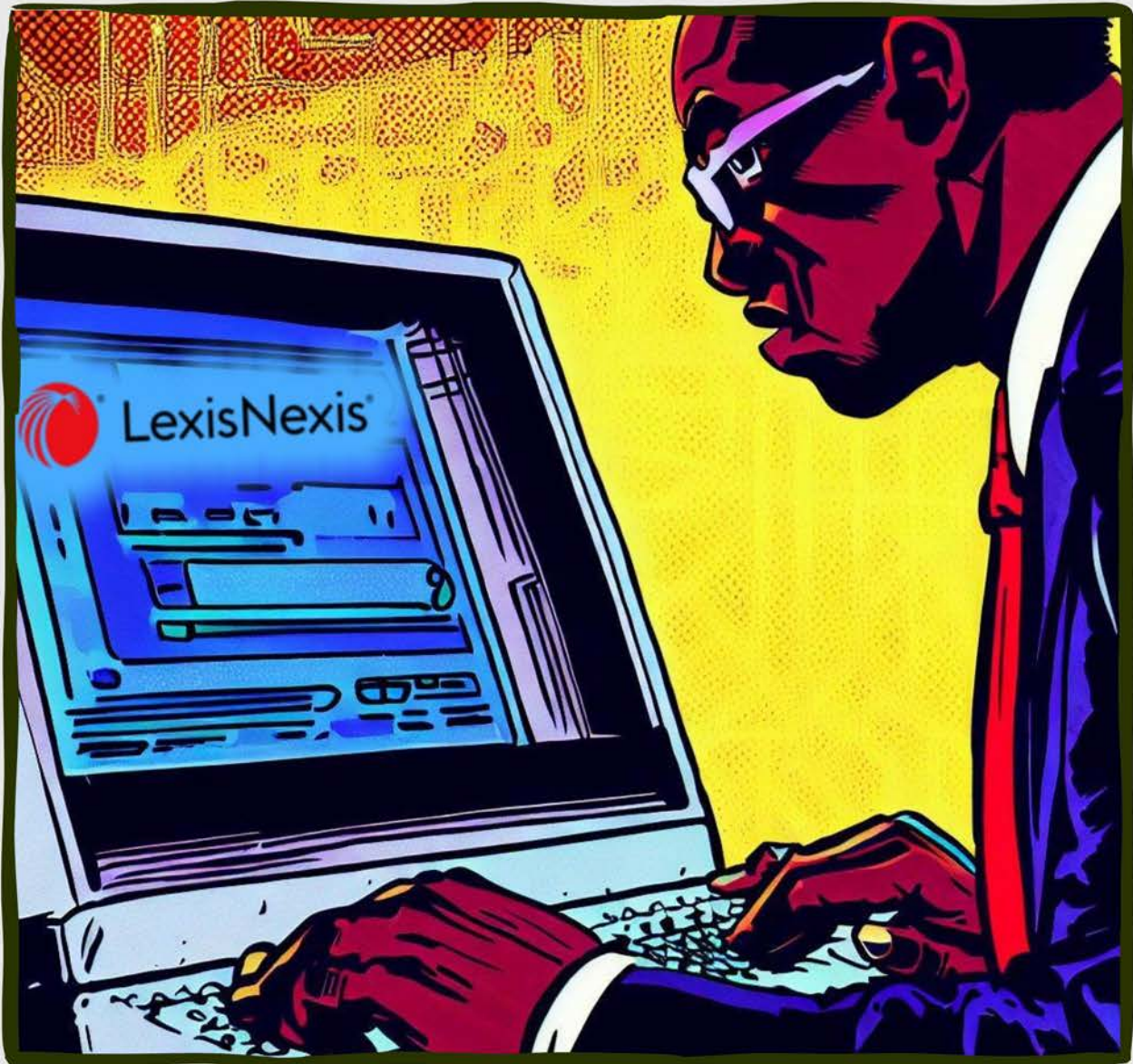
IS FOR KEYCITE



KeyCite is a case citator from Westlaw that provides a list of authorities citing a particular case, statute, or other legal authority. The citations help explain when sources remain "Good Law."

L

IS FOR LEXIS NEXIS



LexisNexis publishes numerous authoritative legal publications, and their database is a dominant source for primary and secondary legal materials. LexisNexis also produces the Shepard's legal citator.

M

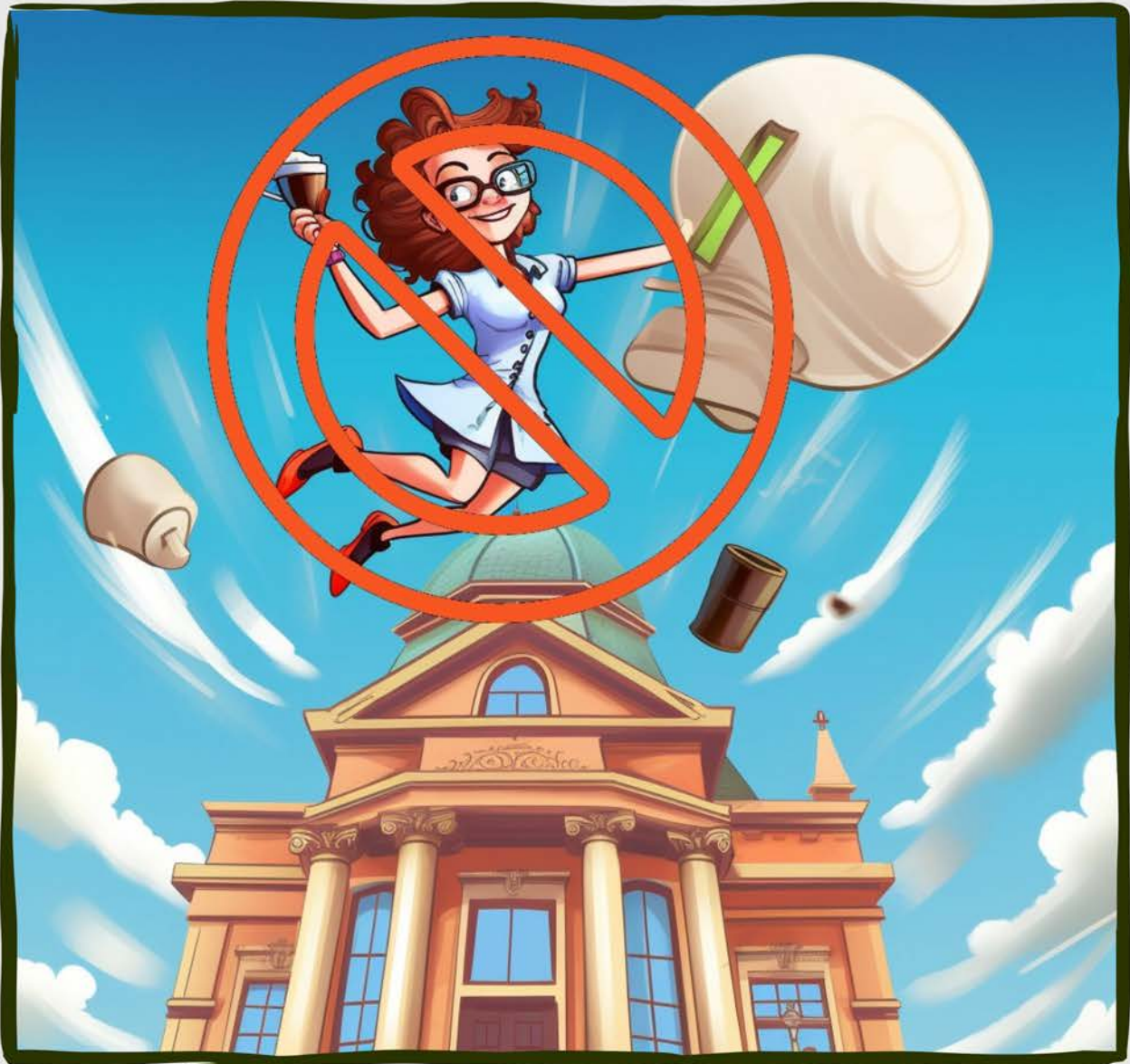
IS FOR MAJORITY OPINION



An opinion joined in by more than half the judges considering a given case. Frequently, U.S. Supreme Court decisions will be split into separate opinions, including: majority, concurring and dissenting.

N

IS FOR NEMO EST
SUPRA LEGES.



*This is a legal maxim derived from Latin that means:
"no one is above the law."*



IS FOR OFFICIAL
DOCUMENTS



Many official government publications are online in PDF format. GPO uses digital signatures to provide evidence of authenticity and integrity and safeguard against unauthorized changes to files.

P

IS FOR PERSUASIVE AUTHORITY



Authority that carries some weight but is not binding on a court, often from a court in a different jurisdiction. Secondary sources, such as law reviews, are persuasive and never binding.

Q

IS FOR QUASI JUDICIAL



Areas of administrative law -- such as workers' compensation law -- are often considered quasi-judicial, as procedures are typically binding and subject to judicial review, but are not judicial in nature.

R

IS FOR RESTATEMENT



A set of treatises on legal subjects that seek to inform judges and lawyers about general principles of common law. There are now four series of Restatements, all published by the American Law Institute.

S

IS FOR SHEPARDIZE



Shepardizing is the process of checking to see if a court case or statute is still "good law," using a system first developed as Shepard's Citator in 1873. This is a service integrated with the Lexis database.

T

IS FOR TREATISE



A treatise is an extensive and exhaustive encyclopedia-like book on a specific legal subject, providing a "deep dive" into a single subject.

U

IS FOR UBIQ



Before the advent of the Internet and graphical browsers, attorneys could access Lexis-Nexis using the UBIQ terminal.

V

IS FOR VLEX



vLex is a legal intelligence platform that provides access to a broad range of legal sources in the UK, Europe and United States, vLex recently merged with Fastcase.

W

IS FOR WESTLAW



Westlaw is an online legal research service and proprietary database for lawyers and legal professionals available in over 60 countries. They provide primary law and extensive content they license and publish.

X

IS FOR XYY-CHROMOSOME DEFENSE



A defense asserted as the basis for an insanity plea, where a male defendant argues his criminal behavior is due to genetic abnormality of having an extra Y chromosome. Most courts reject this.

Y

IS FOR YEAS AND NAYS



A voice vote is a vote in which those in favor or against a measure say "yea" or "nay," respectively, without the names or tallies of members voting on each side being recorded.

Z

IS FOR ZOTERO



Zotero is a free, easy-to-use tool to help you collect, organize, annotate, cite, and share research. The project JURIS-M is based on Zotero, and it aims to address citation needs specific to the law.

*Roger Skalbeck and Alex Hutchings
creating the ABC's of Legal Research*

