

PROFESSIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH

Secondary legal resources such as legal encyclopedias, treatises, legal periodicals, and law reviews are not binding like judicial opinions and statutes. Nevertheless, they can provide well-reasoned statements of the law and be used as persuasive authority. They are also a good starting point for research in an unfamiliar area. This quick reference guide introduces you to some of the secondary sources on Westlaw that will help you learn about new areas of the law.

Why Use Secondary Sources?

Secondary sources are vital legal research tools, even though courts are not obligated to follow them. These resources benefit your research in a variety of ways:

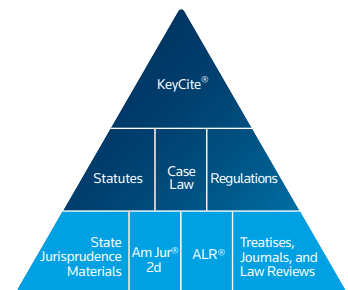
- **Secondary sources provide a starting point for your research.** If you are unfamiliar with a topic, secondary sources can quickly reveal major concepts, commonly used terms, and procedures used by practitioners in that area.
- **Secondary sources reference significant citations.** These materials help you to find citations to important case law and statutory authority, as well as citations for journals and law review articles.
- **Secondary sources are sometimes persuasive authority.** Some secondary sources are so widely respected that they can be cited as persuasive authority in arguments to the court.

Category:

Research Fundamentals

For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378)

or click **Help** on Westlaw® for a live help session.



The Westlaw Research Pyramid

Using the Westlaw Research Pyramid

Start your research with secondary sources to build a good foundation.

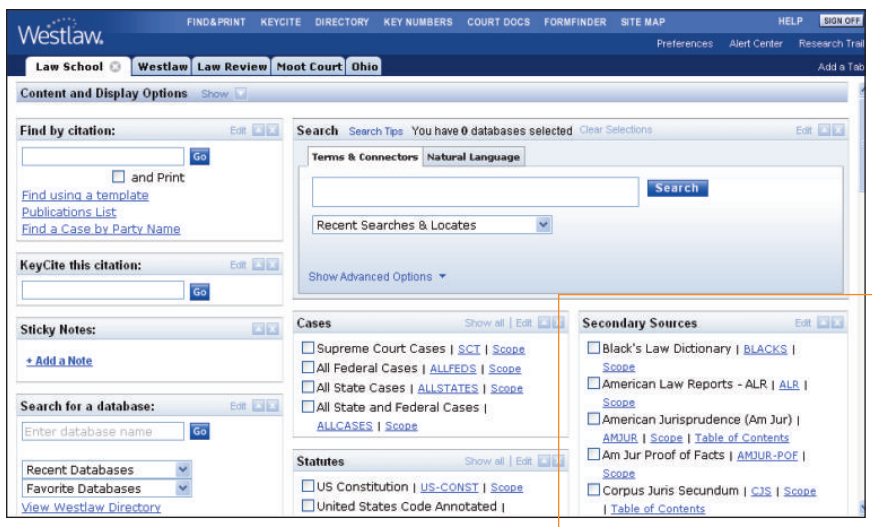


Figure 1. Law School page

Which Secondary Sources Should I Use?

The following resources are available on Westlaw:

CORPUS JURIS SECUNDUM® AND AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE 2D (AM JUR® 2D)

These are legal encyclopedias with easy-to-read explanations of legal principles derived from cases and statutes. They contain many citations to cases, statutes, and law review articles. This guide describes some of the most useful features of Am Jur 2d.

AMERICAN LAW REPORTS (ALR®) ANNOTATIONS

ALR contains encyclopedic essays (annotations) on particular legal topics discussed in key cases. These annotations contain many citations to cases, statutes, and secondary materials. This guide describes some of the most useful features of ALR.

LAW REVIEWS

Law reviews provide scholarly journals published by most accredited law schools, and excellent sources of case citations. They also contain thorough discussions of current issues and trends in the law.

What Is ALR?

ALR contains attorney-written annotations that cite, summarize, and analyze the case law on a particular legal issue or fact situation. An ALR annotation (Figure 2) typically contains an article outline, references to law review articles and other analytical materials, jurisdictional tables of case and statute citations, and substantive text.

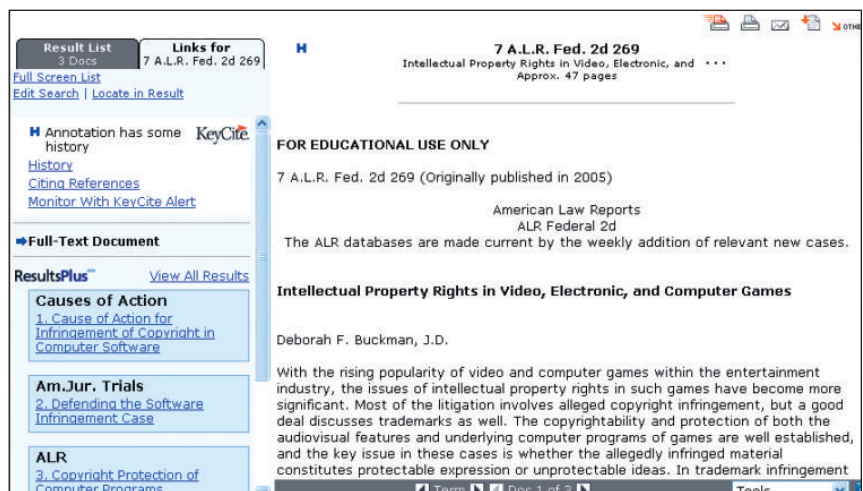


Figure 2. ALR annotation

How Do I Search ALR?

You can search the American Law Reports database (ALR) using either the Terms and Connectors search method, e.g., **ti(trademark & infringing!)**, or the Natural Language search method, e.g., **defamation by credit reporting agency** (Figure 3). You can also go directly to an annotation cited in another document or referenced in KeyCite® by clicking its hypertext link.

In addition, KeyCite identifies cases and secondary sources that cite an ALR annotation. KeyCite history also indicates whether the ALR annotation has been superseded by subsequent annotations.

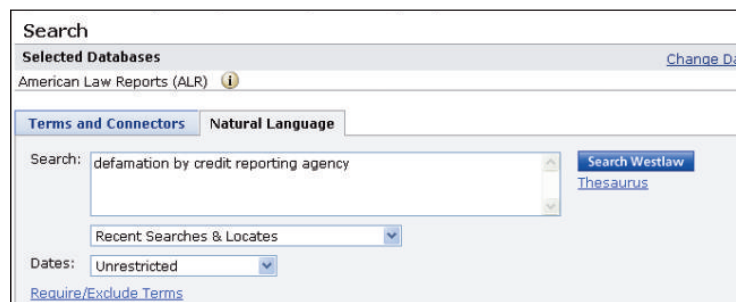


Figure 3. ALR Search page

What Is Am Jur 2d?

Am Jur 2d, a comprehensive encyclopedia of state and federal law covering a broad range of legal topics, provides background information, applicable primary law, and references to other secondary materials. An Am Jur 2d article on Westlaw (Figure 4) typically contains links to a topic summary and correlation table, references to related legislation and secondary sources, and substantive text that explains underlying legal principles and leading cases.

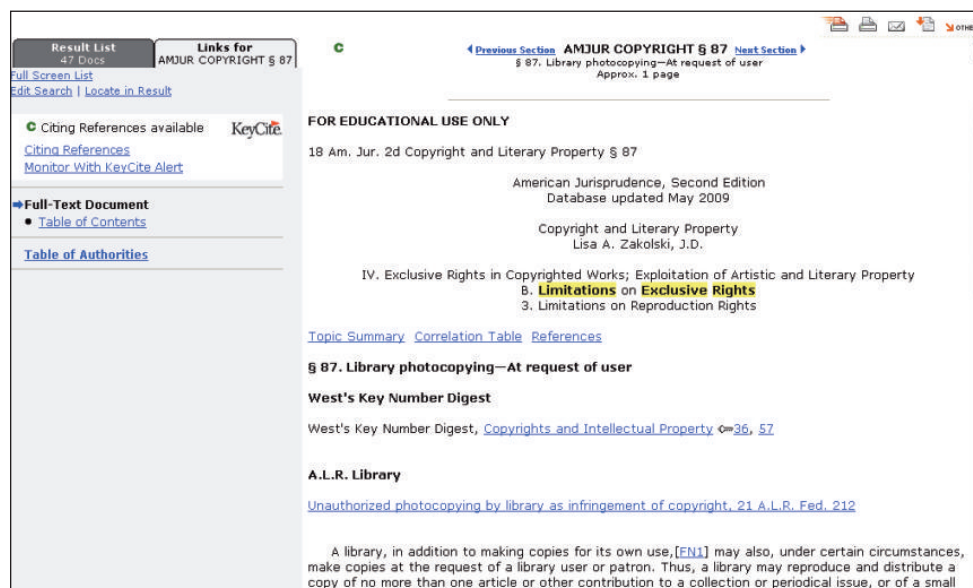


Figure 4. AMJUR article

How Do I Search Am Jur 2d?

You can search the American Jurisprudence 2d database (AMJUR) using either the Terms and Connectors search method, e.g., **pr(limitation /s "exclusive right")**, or the Natural Language search method, e.g., **when does parody constitute fair use under copyright act**.

Alternatively, you can browse its table of contents by clicking **Table of Contents** at the Search page (Figure 5). To browse the table of contents, click the plus (+) and minus (–) symbols. To expand or retrieve multiple sections, use the options available at the bottom of the page (Figure 6).

You can also go directly to an Am Jur 2d section cited in another document or referenced in KeyCite by clicking its hypertext link.

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American Jurisprudence 2d (AMJUR) ⓘ
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Figure 5. AMJUR Search page

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Figure 6. Table of contents for AMJUR

For assistance using Westlaw, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).
For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.