



Legal research, like every other aspect of legal practice, is changing rapidly in the face of new technologies. Research instruction used to focus on how to find useful information starting from nothing. Now, we are awash in information. The challenge has become one of narrowing large quantities of information to the subset of information necessary to solve a legal problem.

This book explains research from the standpoint of managing large quantities of information using pre- and post-search filtering processes. This fourth edition contains updated information to keep your research instruction current. The most significant changes are summarized below.

- The coverage of Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg Law has been updated to reflect these services' latest functionality.
- The text includes more emphasis on state law research.
- Chapter 2, on the American legal system, includes new material on how citations communicate weight of authority. It also describes the D.C. and Federal Circuits because many students do not understand the difference between these two courts.
- Chapter 8, on secondary sources, has been reorganized. The descriptions of traditional legal secondary sources are separated from the search explanations. This allows students to learn about the characteristics of various secondary sources before focusing on how to search for them. The search explanations include charts with snapshots of search options for specific sources. The chapter focuses on online research but includes a short section on print research at the end of the chapter.
- Chapter 9, on case research, incorporates a research example illustrating how to use topic outlines and headnotes to research cases. It also includes more information about state reporters and explains how to read case citations to determine weight of authority. Print digests are no longer covered because so few libraries carry them.
- Chapter 11, on statutory research, incorporates a state statutory research example illustrating results using different search techniques. The explanation of research into procedural rules appears earlier in the chapter. Coverage of print research is limited.
- Chapter 12, on legislative history and administrative regulations, remains focused on federal law. The descriptions of print and online sources of compiled legislative histories are combined together. For

federal regulations, the text focuses on updating with the eCFR and no longer discusses the List of Sections Affected. Additionally, the explanation of regulatory citators is included with the discussion of commercial services and no longer appears in a separate section.

- The Teacher's Manual and accompanying PowerPoint slides (available to faculty online from Aspen Publishing) include updated instructional materials that can be used in class for a workshop approach to instruction. The Teacher's Manual also includes a detailed list of changes from the third edition.

Although the text has been updated, the structure and philosophy remain unchanged. Part I of the text addresses research process. It explains how a researcher defines a research question. It then shows how to pre-filter content before beginning a search based on the goals of the research and any knowledge the researcher already possesses about the research question. The text next explains techniques for conducting research and criteria for post-search filtering of search results to target the most useful information.

Part II of the text contains information about individual sources of authority. This part explains the most essential information about each source. It also describes sources and search strategies unique to each form of authority. Part III contains research flowcharts students can use to plan their research strategy for different types of research projects.

This book contains all the information a student needs to learn the fundamental principles of legal research. Because it is a concise book, however, it can also be used to complement other texts or instructional materials on legal research and writing.

Research is fundamentally a problem-solving process. My goal with this book is to provide a problem-solving framework that students can use to learn about research. Beyond that, I hope to convey a process that students can adapt to their future needs as they become proficient in research and as new technologies continue to change the way we do legal research.

Amy E. Sloan  
January 2023