

Preface

Legal citations serve multiple purposes. Naturally, they record the sources selected by writers to support their statements concerning the law. They provide readers with the information they'll need to access those sources. They give credit to the original authors of text and ideas. But they also underscore the weight, the relevance, and the influence that a particular source possesses. And they even tell us something about the legal writers who drafted them — including how current, how extensive, and how careful their research was — and consequently, the degree to which the writers' work will be perceived as trustworthy, complete, accurate, and ethical.

The *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* exists to assist legal writers in building citations to serve those purposes. From its inaugural publication in 2000 (under the title *The ALWD Citation Manual*), this book has prioritized the forms of citations used by the overwhelming majority of today's legal writers. In the twenty-six ensuing years, the *ALWD Guide* has found ways to improve its content and structure, while continuing to serve its users and their legal writing needs.

Goals and Features

The *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* has the following goals:

- To explain to beginners the purpose of citation, the audience's expectations, and the context in which attorneys craft legal citations;
- To help beginners learn the conventions of legal citation, both for constructing their own citations and for understanding citations written by others;
- To explain the functions of the specific components for citations to various types of legal sources;
- To give its users a text that makes sense and that provides a step-by-step guide to constructing accurate citations;
- To offer legal writing and research professors a text that is easy to use, well organized, and self-contained;
- To arrange its contents so that legal professionals can easily find what they need to construct the citations used in practice-based documents; and
- To identify and make easy to find the small changes needed to modify citations for the constraints of scholarly writing in academic journals.

The *ALWD Guide* places its greatest focus on the primary and secondary sources most often cited in practice-based and academic writing. Each primary or secondary source rule begins with a **Fast Formats** page that previews and refreshes understanding of essential components for both full and

short citations. Rules for case law, statutes, and restatements feature **Snapshots** of actual pages, illustrating where to find essential components. The *ALWD Guide* features abundant **Charts** with abbreviations and other essentials *within* the rules they relate to. **Sidebars** help students understand the “why” of legal citations and steer them away from common errors or misconceptions. At the beginning of each source’s rule, templates diagram the order and relationship of essential components. Each primary and secondary source rule features component-by-component explanations and illustrations, including the use of **red triangles ▲** to illustrate required spacing of components within the citation.

As was the case in the seventh edition, the eighth edition takes pains to ensure that writers do not confuse the citation formats of academic writing with those used by lawyers in practice. Each academic formatting rule number ends with the suffix ^{FN}. The academic rule and its examples are further marked with unmistakable visual cues; they are set off by a vertical red line and accompanied by a warning icon.



The *ALWD Guide* also aims to demystify certain features of legal citation. For example, it addresses curious features, such as star pagination; confounding features, such as whether, when, and why to provide a parallel citation or a public domain citation; confusing features, such as the geographic coverage of a regional reporter; challenging features, such as determining whether to append subsequent history to a case citation, and if so, in what manner; and overlooked features, such as how to cite to interviews conducted on a video-conferencing platform.

Changes to the Eighth Edition

The most obvious change in the eighth edition is the reorganization of the rules. To orient users, we have provided a chapter-mapping document online that compares the new rules to where they were in the seventh edition. This reorganization was necessary for a few reasons. First, time and again professors told us that they started teaching citation from the back of the book using former Parts 4 and 5, which explain citation placement and use, the use of signals for support, how to construct parentheticals, when to quote, and how to alter quotations properly. So, it made sense to move the rules that formerly comprised Parts 4 and 5 to the beginning of the book.

Second, as Carolyn grew into a seasoned professor, enjoyed the national dialogue on citation scholarship, and had enlightening conversations with colleagues, she realized that what was most essential about legal citation — that it conveys important information to the reader — was being lost by an overemphasis on perfect mechanics and format. This led to a new **Rule 1** that discusses the functional place of citation in law, explains the needs and expectations of various legal readers, and describes the many contexts in which legal citation appears (or not). Most importantly, it emphasizes the choices that legal writers

make when it comes to citation by reframing legal citation as a series of rhetorical decisions by the legal writer, instead of rigid, severe rules imposed on them. **Rule 1** serves as an ideal introduction to the rules moved to the front of the book, which highlight the writer's choices about quotations, placement, and parentheticals. New sidebars and revised language in other rules focus students' attention on the choices they have when citing and what factors will influence their decisions. In this way, students can better understand that it is alright to adapt citations for a new source or odd problem not addressed in the *ALWD Guide* and feel confident with the way in which they choose to address those situations. Understanding the place of citation in the legal world is much more important to learn than whether a comma is italicized or not.

Third, the organization of some rules did not make sense anymore. In the past twenty-plus years since the *ALWD Guide's* first edition, the way in which we access and store information has radically and rapidly changed. Each new edition of the *ALWD Guide* has added more sources (e.g., video conferencing, texts, cloud storage, social media) while at the same time other sources were becoming practically obsolete (e.g., CD-ROMs, live radio). Looking at the current state of information, it became clear that many sources were not where a user of the *ALWD Guide* would expect and that a reorganization of where sources appeared in the rules would help the end user and enhance consistency. Moving the sources that change the most rapidly (i.e., technology) to rules in the last part of the book provides an added bonus: In future editions, as more sources appear or disappear, fewer rules' numbering will be affected as the sections in **Part 4** expand and contract.

Beyond the reorganization, **Appendix 8**, Cross-References for Law Reviews, has been updated to correspond to the new edition of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*. **Parts 1–4** and **Appendix 6**, Federal Taxation Materials, have callouts that cross-reference the information in the text of the *ALWD Guide* to the corresponding rule in the twenty-second edition of *The Bluebook*. Consequently, law review students can confidently use the *ALWD Guide* no matter the law review's stated preference of citation manual.

Appendix 5, Periodicals and Looseleaf Services, which lists full abbreviations for periodical titles, is still available online for free. One of the more difficult tasks of law review staff is to understand and apply the myriad rules surrounding how to craft lengthy periodical abbreviations. That makes **Appendix 5** a time saver for stressed law students. Allowing all interested individuals access to it for free is our way of giving back. See **Appendix 5** on the CasebookConnect Resource page for the *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation*, Eighth Edition, or on the book's product page under Student Resources and Professor Resources at www.AspenPublishing.com.

Appendix 2, Local Court Citation Rules, is also still online for free as a thank you for the support we received while updating it. Once again, we asked practitioners, judges, and professors from each of the fifty states to weigh in on the local rules of practice for their jurisdiction that are contained in **Appendix 2**. We made significant updates to those local rules as a result. As part of our civic

duty, we wanted the collective knowledge of local practices to benefit everyone. It also helps us to update this rapidly changing information in a timely fashion. See **Appendix 2** on the CasebookConnect Resource page for the *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation*, Eighth Edition, or on the book's product page under Student Resources and Professor Resources at www.AspenPublishing.com.

Rule 32, Court Documents, Transcripts, and Appellate Records (citing court documents in your own case), has two significant updates. First, we added a section regarding the separate statement of facts for a motion for summary judgment. We explained how exhibits, separate statements of facts, and motions for summary judgment work together. We gave specific instructions on how to cite exhibits within the separate statement of facts and then how to cite to the separate statement of facts within the motion for summary judgment. Second, we also added a section on how to create tables of authorities and cite within them.

Rule 36, Forthcoming, Unpublished, and Archived Works, now has rules on citing to material in archives.

We continued to reevaluate the nature of the sources relied on by today's legal writers. We extensively revised a number of rules by visualizing the multitude of ways that people access information now, crafting several new examples and illustrations to account for those, and adding detailed explanations of how to construct legal citations for each new source. For example, **Rule 35**, Videos, Audio Recordings, and Artwork, was completely overhauled to account for the many places videos appear in modern life. Prior Rule 33 (email, listservs, shared drives, and other short electronic messages) was split into **Rule 40**, Interpersonal Communication Using Technology, which captures people's interpersonal communication through technology, and **Rule 41**, Tangible Storage Devices and Cloud Storage Platforms, which gathers sources from a number of rules that have to do with physical media storage (e.g., CD-ROMs, DVDs) and cloud storage (e.g., Dropbox, Microsoft Teams).

Finally, **Rule 42**, Generative Artificial Intelligence, is a new rule that discusses the difference between citation and acknowledgment and when and how to do both when using generative AI. To craft this rule, Carolyn formed the Generative AI and Citation Brain Trust, which was comprised of forty legal writing professors, law librarians, and practitioners. (See the **Acknowledgments to the Eighth Edition** for a list of members.) These experts on legal citation and AI met with her over summer 2025 to discuss the current advice from citation manuals on citing to AI, the problems with the existing advice, and the content and structure of what would become **Rule 42**. Although the final decision as to what to include in the *ALWD Guide* remained with Carolyn, the Brain Trust's advice and guidance was essential.

The Role of Generative AI

We want to recognize the role generative AI played in shaping the eighth edition of the *ALWD Guide*. At various points in the revision process, we used

ChatGPT, Notebook LM, Otter.ai, CoPilot, Lex, and Lexis+ Protégé to get ideas, locate examples of sources, and refine ideas. Human effort was applied in each of those instances and included prompting, iterating, reading, revising, and editing. To be clear, Carolyn always drafted the first draft of new rules and wrote the revisions for old rules on her own before asking AI for feedback.

Here are a few ways in which we used AI. Sometimes, we needed to understand what various parts of the country called certain attorney practices; for example, what were all the terms that attorneys used to describe the numbers a court assigned to each document filed in a specific case? Attorneys in one part of the country might call those numbers “docket numbers” — distinct from the docket numbers assigned to each case filed — whereas some might call them “ECF numbers,” and still others call them “file numbers.” Having AI suggest terms that fit the definition given to it in the prompt gave us a starting point for research that we might never have considered with a practice limited to a specific area of the country. At other times, AI was used to suggest titles and subtitles for rules that better captured the categories of sources contained in them. It suggested various ways to organize new subrules within existing rules. It helped brainstorm new sources of information that might need to be included in the *ALWD Guide*. Again, those suggestions were never adopted wholesale, and human discernment played a key role in the final decisions as to what made it into the eighth edition. Because AI is excellent at grammar, it helped with the mechanics of writing: to rephrase an awkward sentence, to give feedback on the flow of a new rule, and to suggest ways to tighten up a newly drafted section that seemed long or repetitive.

One of the most helpful AI contributions was assistance in locating source material for examples. For instance, we needed an example of when a lower-case *l* was used in a statute. Before AI, we would need to comb through pages of statutes looking for one that had a subsection *l*, with no guarantee we would locate one. With prompting, AI suggested an example, and we looked it up, but it did not exist. After further iteration, it made more suggestions. On researching the statutes, one of those suggestions not only had a subsection *l*, but subsection *l* had a sub-subsection number 1, which was the perfect example to demonstrate the contrast between *l* and 1 in a citation. The entire process took ten minutes — hours less than it would have taken the human author before AI.

We also used AI to facilitate the human author’s creation of plausible examples of sources that were difficult to physically explore. The vast majority of sources in the examples in the *ALWD Guide* are real sources, but to be clear, there are a handful of times when a source in an example might not exist, but its inclusion as an example is not accidental or a “hallucination.” Archival sources, for example, by nature, are not easily physically accessible. Online archives are searchable from across the world, but archived sources kept in boxes in libraries (or in private underground vaults like in the salt mines below Hutchinson, Kansas) are less so. AI helped to locate archives and the types of sources contained in them. Then we verified through reliable sources (not AI)

the existence of the archive and the types of sources in the archive. Then, we would craft a citation to a source that *could* exist in the archive without traversing back and forth across the country to verify it *did* exist. In other words, after learning from AI that a particular law clerk worked with a particular Justice at the same time the Justice worked on a particular case, we could verify that information with a reliable source, and then we could craft a citation to a memo that this law clerk *could* have written to that Justice about that case that *could* be stored in a particular archive housing the Justice's papers. Because the purpose of examples in the *ALWD Guide* is to model where certain components belong in a citation, and there are a multitude of real sources in the *ALWD Guide* to which most readers would never have access to check the citation, we felt this use of AI justified.

The *ALWD Guide* reflects Carolyn's knowledge and engagement, and she takes full responsibility for its content. We hope that our use sparks thoughtful discussion of the role AI can play when used wisely by experts in their respective fields.

We are confident that the *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* will meet your needs for a legal citation reference work. Should you find any errors or omissions, or if you have suggestions for our next edition, please send them to the Association of Legal Writing Directors, alwd@alwd.org, or to Carolyn Williams, carolyn.williams.2@und.edu.

CVW and ALWD