



ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY LAW LIBRARY

Finding Florida Case Law in Print in Six Easy Steps

- I. Make sure you have a case citation. If you do not have a case citation, you want to perform a Digest search (see handout “West’s Digest Descriptive Searching in Nine Easy Steps”).
- II. Split the case citation into its parts either on paper or in your head to ensure you know what primary source to look in to locate the case. An example of a citation breakdown for *Tyne v. Time Warner Entm't Co., L.P.*, 901 So. 2d 802 (Fla. 2005) is: Parties (*Tyne v. Time Warner Entm't Co., L.P.*) Reporter volume number (901), Reporter Abbreviation (So. 2d), Full (Southern Reporter 2nd), First Page of the opinion (802), Court and year (Fla. 2005). If you do not know the full name of the reporter abbreviation you can locate the name by looking up the abbreviation in *The BlueBook* or *Prince’s Bieber Dictionary of Legal Citations*.
- III. Find the correct reporter for your case citation in your law library. If you want to locate the case cited in step II, you will need the *Southern Reporter, Second*. Keep in mind older Florida cases will be in the *Southern Reporter* and *Florida Reports* while more recent cases can be located in the *Southern Reporter, Second* and *Florida Cases*. Federal trial court cases will appear in the *West’s Federal Supplement, Second*. Federal Appellate cases from the Court of Appeals are available in the *West’s Federal Reporter*. Supreme Court Cases have originated in the state of Florida. Locate United States Supreme court cases in *United States Reports, Supreme Court Reporter, Lawyers’ Edition*, and *Lawyers’ Edition, Second*.
- IV. While in front of the appropriate reporter, locate the correct reporter volume number for your case citation. If you again use the example citation from step II, you will find your case in volume 901. The volume numbers are located on the spine of the volume. Next open volume 901 to page 802 and you will see the first page of the opinion.

- V. After you locate the case, quickly scan it to ensure that it is on point for your legal analysis. You do not want to photocopy a case that is not on point. Once you establish the case is pertinent, photocopy the entire case so that you can take the time to read, digest and analyze the text. Having a photocopy of the opinion also allows you to highlight and make notes in the margin of the case.

- VI. Return the book to its appropriate location on the shelf. Do not leave it on a table or in the photocopy room.