

West's Digest Descriptive Word Searching in Nine Easy Steps

- I. Read over your factual situation or legal issue.
- II. Create and write down a research vocabulary word list from the facts and legal issue.
- III. Add synonyms and antonyms of your initial list to your research vocabulary word list.
- IV. Locate the descriptive word index. It is an index at the end of the multi volume set.
- V. Look up each word on your research vocabulary list in the index. Some words on your list will not be in the index. When you locate a research word write down the topic and the key number that is listed next to the word. Always look in the pocket parts for the descriptive word index if one is available to ensure that you have the most up to date topics and key numbers. If none of the words from your list are available in the descriptive word index you will need to go back to your legal problem and create an even more thorough list.
- VI. Use the West Topics and Key Numbers related to your search terms to find the volume or volumes of the West's Digest multi volume set. Topics are listed in the digest volumes alphabetically. Your West Topic may not be one of the words listed on the spine of the volume it is in. Yet, your West Topic is in the particular volume when it alphabetically falls between the two words that are listed on the spine.
- VII. Use the selected appropriate volume to locate your West Topic alphabetically in the book and turn to the first page that lists your key number for the West Topic. Under the West Topic and Key Number you will find head notes and case citations relevant to the particular West Topic and Key Number.
- VIII. Always update the case information you retrieve from your search by looking in pocket parts for the volume, available paperback supplements, and Shepardizing all relevant cases.
- IX. Use the current case citations to locate the cases in the appropriate reporters.