

# HOW TO USE THE DIGEST

The Digests are located on shelf “g”, which is in the southwest corner of the library.

There are a variety of digests; we carry the *Supreme Court, Federal, Bankruptcy, Pacific, California, General*, and the *Decennial Digests*. These digests coincide with a specific level of court, the federal digest has federal court cases, and the Pacific digest has Pacific region state Supreme Court cases.

The digests are the equivalent to an index for the reporters. Cases can be found using the digest. Use the table of cases to look up names of parties involved in a case for a citation. Use words and phrases, or the descriptive word index to look up cases by topic or subject. These will lead you to West key number citations in the digest. West Key numbers are subtopics arranged by numbers under a heading.

Each digest set is very similar in their usage and directions.

## Table of Cases

The table of cases is used to find citations to the reporters by finding the name of parties involved. An example of parties is *Nixon v. Sirica*, Nixon is one party to the case and Sirica is another party to the case. By looking up either Nixon or Sirica in the table of cases volume you may find the citation 487 F2d 700.

## Descriptive Word Index

The descriptive word index lists various topics, and subjects under which they have organized cases in topical order. Using these volumes allows a patron to search for cases not knowing the parties or case but having a subject to find specific decisions. Cases may be listed under one specific

subject heading or under various subject headings, so when searching subject areas be sure to exhaust all possible subject searches to find a case.

An example of this is looking under search & seizure, illegal drugs, narcotics, and arrest for cases dealing with illegal drug seizures during arrest. While this may not be a complete search it shows how to search for cases using the descriptive word index part of the digest. The words searched by subject list cases by subject abbreviations, then subdivide by key numbers.

Once a subject has been located the page will list areas to search. These subjects will list abbreviations in bold a key symbol and a number. Look up the abbreviation in the front of the book to find out what it stands for. Then located the full name of the subject on the spine of the digest above. When the subject is located match the number that follows the key symbol.

Subjects like search & seizure abbreviated (Searches) may have up to 1000 key numbers by subdividing the number in to narrower subjects with the use of decimal numbers 1.1, 1.2 or parenthesis (1)(2).

## West Key numbers

West Key numbers are numerical subtopic designators within a subject. For example searches & seizures 183 titled “*Knowledge of rights; warnings and advice*”. Case citations listed below 183 deals with searches & seizures; and knowledge of rights; warnings and advice.

## Words and Phrases

The words and phrases volumes allow persons to search for cases by certain word or phrases in or used by the case. An example of this would be a search for cases that used the phrase “*writ of habeas corpus*”, or “*unlawful detainer*”. These word and phrases will point to certain cases where the words were used or subject areas.

## Other materials which have West Key Citations

State and federal laws, regulations, codes, & cases may refer to key numbers. The NRS, Pacific reporter, US Code, *American Jurisprudence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition are examples of materials that have key number.

A good place to look for brief descriptions of subjects, topics, items, or forms that you don’t understand is an encyclopedia, such as *American Jurisprudence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. This encyclopedia is located on short shelf “K”, next to the large pillar in the Reference section of the library. Another choice is *Corpus Juris Secundum*, which is located on short shelf “L” in the Reference Section of the library.

If you do not understand a word or a phrase, look that word or phrase up in a dictionary. The library has several dictionaries, such as *Black’s Law Dictionary*, that is available at the Reference Desk, or the set entitled *Words and Phrases*, Permanent Edition. *Words and Phrases* is located on short shelf “K” in the Reference Section of the library.

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