When doing legal research you are going to use both primary resources, such as the laws themselves, regulations and/or court opinions, and also secondary sources, which explain, describe and discuss the primary sources. Both types of sources are important: primary sources are fundamental since they are the basis of a legal topic, and secondary sources are necessary to obtain a thorough understanding of the topic.

Finding books

There are many useful print books and EBooks in Grace Library’s collection. Search the Grace Library Online Catalog, which has a link available at the library home page www.carlow.edu/library in order to find both. The catalog uses the subject term “Law and legislation” and “trials, litigation, etc.” to describe laws and court cases (respectively), and it is recommended that you use those terms along with a keyword topic to find a better results list (ex. Internet—Law and Legislation). For additional ebooks, click on the link for EBooks (Electronic Books) on the library home page.

Selected Reference Books

The sources listed below are often the best places to start doing legal research because they succinctly and impartially describe legal issues. They may even help you decide on a legal topic, if you have not done so already.

   CALL NUMBER Ref. KF 4547.4 V55 2010
Scholarly, balanced essays explain the context, facts, issues, reasoning, and significance of the most famous Supreme Court decisions.

   CALL NUMBER Ref. KF 154 W47 2005
A 13-volume, encyclopedic work on all aspects of American law. Use the index in volume 13 to look up topics, specific legal cases—for instance, there is a large section in the index devoted to “Business and Commerce.”

   CALL NUMBER Ref. KF 154 O96 2002
This is an encyclopedic treatment of all aspects of American law. It is useful when looking for specific individuals or for overview articles that give context to legal decisions in a particular area of the law.

   CALL NUMBER Ref. KF 385 A4 U15 2011 v. 1-3
A historical and legal perspective is used to examine over 700 court cases in these volumes.

**CALL NUMBER** Ref. KF 4118 R87 2009

For legal research about public education in the United States, this book is designed to provide basic knowledge. Citations to court cases can be found in the index, which is thoughtfully laid out.


**CALL NUMBER** Ref. KFP 390 A29 P46 [year]

Updated yearly, for questions pertaining specifically to our state’s education law, this is the place to start. It provides direction for researchers who need to learn about statutory and regulatory provisions governing education in Pennsylvania.

**Finding Internet sources**

If you decide that you would like to search the Internet for legal information, a good place to start is the *Helpful Web Resources* web page. Go to the Grace Library Homepage, click on *Helpful Web Resources* link located under the *Library Info* section to access a list of subjects. Click on *Law* and you will find links to several web sites that have different kinds of legal information. To start, consider these stand-out sites:

*Congress.gov and THOMAS*

*Congress.gov* is the replacement for *THOMAS*, which indexes federal legislative information such as Congressional bills. Today, *Congress.gov* covers legislation back to 2001 and *Thomas* covers legislation as far back as 1989, but in the future all of *THOMAS’s* information will be available on *Congress.gov*.

*Legal Research Engine (Cornell Law School)*

There are four search boxes that you may use on this site: research guides, legal web sites, Academic blawgs [sic], and the last search box combines all three resources. This is an excellent alternative to doing a Google search to find Internet information because the sites returned in the result list will all be trustworthy.

*Pittsburgh Legislative Information Center*

When you are looking for information on local laws and legislation, this site is a good starting point. Part of the search query is a drop box that specifies the year or a more recent period, which is helpful.

**Finding articles**

To access the following databases, start at the library home page, [www.carlow.edu/library](http://www.carlow.edu/library) and click on the *Find Articles* link to find a list of all databases. You will find the following under the grouping called *All Subject Areas* or under *Business*.

*Academic Search Premier*

A general database that covers a wide range of publications, including hundreds that discuss law and legal matters. At the main page of the database, search “law and legislation” or “litigation” as a subject term in one search box and use your topic as a key word in a second search box. Consider also checking off the “full text” option as a limit so that all of the content you find is available to print out.
**ABI Inform & Business Source Elite**

Specific to business (accounting, marketing, management, human resources, finance, etc) this database will provide discussion and analysis of the law not only in popular, trade, scholarly periodicals but also working papers, wire feeds, and reports.

**Accessing Databases and EBooks from Outside the Carlow Network**

If you would like to access any of Grace Library’s databases or EBooks from a computer that is not connected to the Carlow network, type **www.carlow.edu/library** and click on the *Off Campus Access* link that is located in the right hand menu on the homepage. Log into the system using your Active Directory username and password (the same username and password that you use to log into lab computers). Additional instructions are available on the off campus web page to help you access library databases from off campus.

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