



## Understanding CASE LAW Citation

Decisions by appellate courts (and some trial courts) are printed in books called "Reporters." Each set of Reporters contains opinions from a particular court or group of courts. The reporters are:

The case reporter series that the Begley library owns is located in Reference located behind the Information desk:

- ◆ regional
- ◆ state
- ◆ subject matter
- ◆ federal

**Supreme Court Reporter**, abbreviated S. Ct.

REF KF101.A322

**New York Supplement**, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> series, abbreviated NYS 1<sup>st</sup> and NYS 2<sup>nd</sup>

REF KFN5047.9.N69  
REF KFN5047.9.N7

A **citation** is a reference to a reported case and has 5 components:

- ◆ The parties involved
- ◆ The volume number of the reporter series
- ◆ The reporter series (abbreviated)
- ◆ The page number on which the case starts
- ◆ The year of the court's decision

For example:

|                                 |                |                        |               |                         |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Brown v. the Board of Education | 347            | U.S.                   | 483           | (1954)                  |
| <i>Parties involved</i>         | <i>Volume#</i> | <i>Reporter Series</i> | <i>Page #</i> | <i>Year of Decision</i> |

Abbreviations for reporter series can be found in

- ◆ **Black's Law Dictionary** REF KF156 .B53 2004
- ◆ **The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation** REF KF245 .B58
- ◆ **Bieber's Dictionary of Legal Citations** REF KF246 .P73 1997

**Parallel citations** are cases published in more than one reporter, thereby creating several citations for the same case.

To locate cases online, access the Begley library website at <http://www.sunysccc.edu/library> —> **Find Articles** —> **List of All Databases A-Z** —> **Lexis Nexis Academic** —> select "get a case" —> enter case information.

**Lexis Nexis lists all parallel citations for a case at the top of the first page of the case.**

**The New York Blue and White Book** contains parallel citation tables for New York Supplement and Appellate Divisions reports.

REF KFN5047.9 .N8

For further information, try

- ◆ **Finding the Law** REF KF240.B45 1999
- ◆ **Legal Research: How to Find & Understand the Law** REF KF240.E35 2005