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Accessing Databases

Go to the website for the campus library
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important to note that this would also exclude articles that focus on pistols but happen to mention the word "rifle" (even though it is unrelated to the key findings). Think carefully before applying an operator to ensure that you are not missing relevant research.

- You can use multiple

hand side of the page to see if the school has access to that publication.

- Some articles are available as PDF documents, in which case a link saying “PDF Full Text” appears.
- If there is no PDF Full Text option, click the “Check Lake Forest College” option.
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Enter the **full name of the case** into the search box (for example, _____).

Select the correct case. Cases are hyperlinked in blue.

- The same case may be listed multiple times if it was decided at multiple levels of the judiciary. Cases rise through the court system when the losing party appeals a decision, and certain cases can move back and forth between federal and state courts.
- Under the blue hyperlink, the court which issued that specific decision is written in gray.

Shepard's Signal. The Shepard's Signal appears by the case name in the list of results or on the right-hand side when you click on the case. The Shepard Signal indicates whether a case is still "good law" or has since been overturned by a higher court, overridden by legislation, or otherwise altered.

- _____ . This indicates that the case is now bad law. If you click on the Shepard's Signal, it will explain why and provide links to controlling cases.

Case Summary. The case summary provides a quick overview of the decision, including the key holdings and procedural posture (case history). However, it was not written by the court in question. Rather, it was written by other lawyers who read the opinion and wrote a summary for the Nexis database. As such, the terminology used therein should NOT be cited as originating from the court.

Headnotes. Headnotes are actual quotations from the court, but they are cherrypicked from various sections of the opinion by reviewing lawyers who deem them to be particularly notable. Thus, it is important to consider the context in which those quotations arose. To find where the headnote appears in the actual opinion, click on the blue HN_ hyperlink to the upper left.

Opinion. This contains the court's decision and reasoning.

- Page numbers are bolded and appear in brackets with an asterisk. [***574**]
- For appellate courts that have multiple presiding judges (like the United States Supreme Court), watch for when the majority opinion switches to a concurrence or dissent.

Cite. Avoid the “Export Citation” feature and cite by hand. Scroll to the top of the page and find the name of the case in bold, followed by a series of numbers and letters.

For Supreme Court cases, cite as follows:

- The name of the case in italics
- Comma