Secondary legal resources such as legal encyclopedias, treatises, legal periodicals, and law reviews are not binding like judicial opinions and statutes. Nevertheless, they can provide well-reasoned statements of the law and be used as persuasive authority. They are also a good starting point for research in an unfamiliar area. This quick reference guide introduces you to some of the secondary sources on Westlaw and in the law library that will help you learn about new areas of the law.

**Why Use Secondary Sources?**
Secondary sources are vital legal research tools, even though courts are not obligated to follow them. These resources benefit your research in a variety of ways:

- **Secondary sources provide a starting point for your research.** If you are unfamiliar with a topic, secondary sources can quickly reveal major concepts, commonly used terms, and procedures used by practitioners in that area.

- **Secondary sources reference significant citations.** These materials help you to find citations to important case law and statutory authority, as well as citations for journals and law review articles.

- **Secondary sources are sometimes persuasive authority.** Some secondary sources are so widely respected that they can be cited as persuasive authority in arguments to the court.
Which Secondary Sources Should I Use?

Your law library provides the following resources, several of which can also be searched electronically on Westlaw:

- **Corpus Juris Secundum** and **American Jurisprudence 2d** (Am Jur 2d): Legal encyclopedias with easy-to-read explanations of legal principles derived from cases and statutes. They contain many citations to cases, statutes, and law review articles.

- **American Law Reports** (ALR®) annotations: Encyclopedic essays (annotations) on particular legal topics discussed in key cases. These annotations contain many citations to cases, statutes, and secondary materials.

- **West’s® Nutshell Series**: Concise treatises on more than 120 legal subjects, such as products liability, evidence, and taxation.

- **West’s Hornbook Series**: Comprehensive treatises covering well-settled principles in major subject areas.

- **Law reviews**: Scholarly journals published by most accredited law schools, and excellent sources of case citations. They also contain thorough discussions of current issues and trends in the law.

This guide describes some of the useful features of two of West’s most respected secondary sources, ALR and Am Jur 2d.

What is ALR?

ALR contains attorney-written annotations that cite, summarize, and analyze the case law on a particular legal issue or fact situation. An ALR annotation typically contains an article outline, references to law review articles and other analytical materials, jurisdictional tables of case and statute citations, and substantive text.
How Do I Search ALR?

In print
Annotations in ALR are indexed under a variety of factual terms and concepts. In addition, the index contains the Table of Laws, Rules, and Regulations, which lists authorities such as statutes, rules, regulations, and uniform laws and refers you to the ALR annotations that discuss them.

On Westlaw
You can search the American Law Reports database (ALR) using either the Terms and Connectors search method, e.g., (trademark & infring!), or the Natural Language search method, e.g., defamation by credit reporting agency. You can also go directly to an annotation cited in another document or referenced in KeyCite by clicking its hypertext link.

In addition, KeyCite identifies cases and secondary sources that cite an ALR annotation. KeyCite history also indicates whether the ALR annotation has been superseded by subsequent annotations.
What is Am Jur 2d?
Am Jur 2d, a comprehensive encyclopedia of state and federal law covering a broad range of legal topics, provides background information, applicable primary law, and references to other secondary materials. An Am Jur 2d title typically contains navigation aids such as general and expanded outlines and indexes, research references to related legislation and secondary sources, and substantive text that explains underlying legal principles and leading cases.

How Do I Search Am Jur 2d?
In print
The General Index to Am Jur 2d is arranged by legal and factual terms. In addition, Am Jur 2d provides tables that show you where specific statutes, regulations, uniform laws, and other authorities are cited in the text.

On Westlaw
You can search the American Jurisprudence 2d database (AMJUR) using either the Terms and Connectors search method, e.g., pr(limitation /s “exclusive right”), or the Natural Language search method, e.g., when does parody constitute fair use under copyright act.
Alternatively, you can browse its table of contents by clicking Table of Contents at the Search page. To browse the table of contents, click the plus (+) and minus (−) symbols. To expand or retrieve multiple sections, use the options available at the bottom of the page.
You can also go directly to an Am Jur 2d section cited in another document or referenced in KeyCite by clicking its hypertext link.