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 WestlawNext 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 find citations to important case law and statutory authority, as well as citations to journal 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.

To find secondary sources on WestlawNext, click Secondary Sources on the All Content tab at the home page. The Secondary Sources page is displayed (Figure 1).

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**WestlawNext is available on the Web at lawschool.westlaw.com.**

**Category:**
Research Fundamentals

**For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).**

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**Using the Westlaw Research Pyramid**

Start your research with secondary sources to build a good foundation.
Which Secondary Sources Should I Use?
The following resources are available on WestlawNext:

**Corpus Juris Secundum® and American Jurisprudence 2d (Am Jur® 2d)**
These are 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. This guide describes some of the most useful features of Am Jur 2d.

**American Law Reports (ALR®) Annotations**
ALR contains encyclopedic essays (annotations) on particular legal topics discussed in key cases. These annotations contain many citations to cases, statutes, and secondary materials. This guide describes some of the most useful features of ALR.

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

**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 (Figure 2) typically contains an article outline, references to law review articles and other analytical materials, jurisdictional tables of case and statute citations, and substantive text.

![Figure 2. ALR annotation](image-url)
How Do I Search ALR?

At the Secondary Sources page, click American Law Reports (ALR) under By Type to display the American Law Reports (ALR) page (Figure 3). To run a search, type a search in the American Law Reports (ALR) text box at the top of the page and click Search. 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 article on WestlawNext (Figure 4) typically contains links to a topic summary and correlation table, 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?

At the Secondary Sources page, click Texts and Treatises, then click American Jurisprudence 2d at the Texts and Treatises page to display the American Jurisprudence 2d page. To search all of Am Jur 2d, type a search in the American Jurisprudence 2d text box at the top of the page.

You can also limit your search to specific parts of Am Jur 2d using its table of contents (Figure 5). To browse the table of contents, click the links. To run a search, select Search all content, or select Specify content to search and select the check boxes next to the parts you want to search. Then type your search in the tabbed text box at the top of the page and click Search.

![Figure 5. Table of contents for Am Jur 2d](image)

For assistance using WestlawNext, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).
For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.