

How to Find the Best Law Report

When citing cases, you will need to look at the law report hierarchy and find the best report to cite. This guide will break down the process.

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Important Points to Remember

Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations

The Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations will show you what your Law Report abbreviation should be. If the Cardiff Index does not have a listed abbreviation for the law report, then you would write the law report out in full.

See how to use the **Cardiff Index** through this guide: <http://tinyurl.com/4kcnmc9u>

Cases Before 2001

All cases before 2001 must have one law report citation only.

Case name Law Report Citation.

Donoghue v Stevenson [1932] AC 562.

Cases After 2001

All cases after 2001 must have the neutral citation and the law report citation and can be found in Lexis or Westlaw. It should appear in this format:

Case name Neutral Citation, Law Report Citation.

Begum v Special Immigration Appeals Commission [2020] EWCA Civ 918, [2020] 1 WLR 4267.

Punctuation

OSCOLA uses very little punctuation. For example, you may see law reports like the Weekly Law Report abbreviated as W.L.R. or All E.R. on Westlaw, Lexis, etc., however, this is not how it should look in OSCOLA formatting.

It should be **WLR** or **All ER**.

WLUK

WLUK should ONLY be cited if it is the ONLY law report listed. If there are other law reports listed, you will need to check the Law Report Hierarchy to see which report would be the best to use in your citation. Westlaw is a business trying to sell you a product so they normally put WLUK near the top but that is not the best report.

The Process

1. Find the case you would like to cite using Lexis or Westlaw. For example:

[Begum v Special Immigration Appeals Commission](#)
Court of Appeal (Civil Division) · [2020] EWCA Civ 918 · 16 Jul 2020

⊖ **Negative Judicial Consideration**

Subject: Immigration; Administration of justice; Civil procedure

Keywords: Appeals; Deprivation of citizenship; Extraterritoriality; Fairness; Human rights; Ill treatment; Leave to enter; National security; Natural justice; Public interest; Special Immigration Appeals Commission; Stay of proceedings; Syria

Case Analysis | [2020] EWCA Civ 918 | [2020] 1 W.L.R. 4267 | [2020] 7 WLUK 207 | [2020] Imm. A.R. 1364 | Times, August 11, 2020 |

Judgment

Summary: A British citizen who had aligned herself with ISIL forces in Syria and sought to appeal against an order depriving her of her British citizenship was granted leave to enter the UK in order to pursue her appeal, notwithstanding serious national security concerns. The Special Immigration Appeal Commission had acknowledged that it was not possible for her to play any meaningful part in her appeal while detained by the Syrian Democratic Forces, so that her appeal could not be fair and effective.

Notice the list of law reports next to the Case Analysis.

2. Look at the **Law Report Hierarchy** - do any of the Law Reports listed for this case appear in the hierarchy?

If yes, then start at the top of the hierarchy and work your way down - use the Law Report that is highest on the hierarchy.

If no, then use the Law Report listed for the case

3. In the example above,

Begum v Special Immigration Appeals Commission [2020] EWCA Civ 918, [2020] 1 **WLR** 4267.

WLR is listed and it falls under the Second Best Report according to the hierarchy, so the Law Report citation would be

[2020] 1 **WLR** 4267.

The Law Report Hierarchy

Best Law Reports: Official Law Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AC (Appeal Cases) ● QBD (Queen’s Bench Division) ● KBD (King’s Bench Division) ● Ch (Chancery Division) ● Fam (Family Division) <p>If a judgement is documented in these reports, it is imperative to cite that specific report.</p> <p>If these reports are not available, check to see if the second best law reports are listed.</p>
Second Best Law Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All ER (All England Law Reports) ● WLR (Weekly Law Reports) <p>All ER and WLR are of equal status, so either of these reports may be cited.</p> <p>If these reports are unavailable, check to see if the third best law reports are listed.</p>
Third Best Law Reports: Specialist Series of Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All ER (EC) (All England European Reports) ● All ER Comm (All England Commercial Cases) ● BCLC (Butterworths Company Law Cases) ● BHRC (Butterworths’ Human Rights Cases) ● BMLR (Butterworths Medico-Legal Reports) ● Con LR (Construction Law Reports) ● FCR (Family Court Reports) ● International Tax Law Reports ● IP&T (Intellectual Property and Technology Reports) ● IRLR (Industrial Relations Law Reports) ● LGR (Local Government Reports) ● LRC (Law Reports of the Commonwealth) ● STC (Simon’s Tax Cases) <p>All of these reports are of equal status, so any of them may be cited.</p> <p>If these reports are unavailable, check to see if the fourth best law report is listed.</p>
Fourth Best Report (Last Resort!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLUK (Westlaw UK)

Please note that not all law reports are listed here (especially the authoritative specialist series of reports). If the law report isn’t listed, then you will need to use your judgement to determine the best report. This guide and information is adapted from the LexisNexis Blog.¹

¹ LexisNexisUK Blogs, ‘Law Reports: Hierarchy and the Status of Authorities’ (*LexisNexis*, 26 Jun 2014) <<https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/blog/dispute-resolution/law-reports-status-of-authorities>> accessed 5 February 2024.