

Legal encyclopedias provide an overview of the full range of American law. The articles in *Corpus Juris Secundum* (CJS) and *American Jurisprudence 2d* (Am. Jur. 2d), the two major American legal encyclopedias, serve a number of useful research functions. They are excellent sources of background information and primers of general legal principles, and are especially helpful to researchers working in unfamiliar areas of the law. Encyclopedia articles also gather a wealth of references to primary legal authority and secondary sources such as law review articles and other legal publications. Both encyclopedias are located in the Reference area of the Law Library. Encyclopedias are **secondary sources** and should never be cited to as a primary source of law.

CJS AND Am. Jur. 2d

Each encyclopedia contains over 400 topical articles arranged alphabetically by subject. Both also have detailed multi-volume subject indexes. Although both encyclopedias cover essentially the same range of subject matter, differences in editorial philosophy and cross-referencing features make CJS and Am. Jur. 2d complementary rather than duplicative. Unique features and editorial contrasts are outlined below:

CJS follows West's practice of comprehensive case citation. CJS editors try to cite all relevant reported federal and state court opinions.

Am. Jur. 2d provides citations to selected cases, citing only the most important or relevant cases on a given topic.

CJS provides cross-references to West "Key Numbers." Am. Jur. 2d articles refer researchers to American Law Reports (ALR) and other publications comprising the "Total Client Service Library." The Total Client Service Library is a compendium of ALR annotations, treatises, formbooks, etc., designed to function as a complete research system.

RESEARCH IN LEGAL ENCYCLOPEDIAS

1.) Encyclopedia articles are arranged alphabetically by topic. Outlines at the beginning of each article assign section numbers to individual subtopics. Two basic strategies, called the "topic method" and the "index method," can be employed to find encyclopedia articles.

Topic method. Find the topic heading for the area of law you are researching by scanning the alphabetically arranged volumes (if your choice of terminology doesn't match a relevant topic heading, use the "index method," described below). Once you have located the right volume and topic search the article outline for the specific section or sections addressing your research needs.

Index method. Search the multi-volume subject indexes under a variety of synonyms. References in the indexes are keyed to specific subtopic sections or ranges of sections. Index searching quite often refers the researcher to related discussions located under several different topic headings. Both CJS and Am. Jur. publish indexes to individual topics, which are more detailed than the general index. These are located in the specific topic volume.

- 2.) Scan the footnotes to pertinent sections for citations to cases and statutes that might prove useful. Also note the cross-references that follow many sections.
- 3.) Check the encyclopedia volume's pocket part for the most current material on your topic.
- 4.) Read and "Shepardize" relevant cases cited in the encyclopedia.

In addition to CJS and Am. Jur., the Law Library holds many multi-volume treatises which are encyclopedic in nature. **Local Encyclopedias** focus on a specific state. There are fifteen state encyclopedias (none for Idaho). **Special Interest Encyclopedias** focus on a specific topic. For example, *Am. Jur. Trials* is a special series that is an encyclopedic guide to modern trial practices, procedures, and strategies. It includes commentary, cross-references, checklists of questions, sample forms, and other useful resources.

LEXIS AND WESTLAW

The full-text of Am. Jur. 2d is available on Lexis and Westlaw. The full-text of CJS is available on Westlaw. Both Lexis and Westlaw are subscription only services, requiring a password for access.