Citing Legal Material in APA format

http://www.lib.wsc.ma.edu/legalapa.htm#fedleg

To locate the “§” (Section symbol) as used in these examples, open the Insert ribbon, click on the Symbol icon, and then select the (normal text) font and the Latin-1 Supplement subset.

Westfield State University Ely Library

APA Style - Citing Legal Materials

Citing US Supreme Court Decisions | Citing Decisions of Lower Federal Courts
Citing Massachusetts Court Decisions | Citing Federal Statutes
Citing Massachusetts Statutes | Citing State and U.S. Constitutions
Citing Congressional Hearings | Citing Congressional Bills
Citing Federal Legislative Reports and Documents

The APA style of citing legal materials is based on The Bluebook (REF KF 245 B58 1996).


- Note, however, that the APA style incorporates various changes into the Bluebook style.
- The Bluebook style is not used to cite legal periodical articles or books. Use the regular APA style.
- To cite legal materials from states other than Massachusetts, follow the forms given below for Massachusetts, but substitute the abbreviations found on pages 170-228 of the Bluebook.
- Some Web-based databases do not include the data required to cite according to these rules. Lexis-Nexis is the best source.

Back to Top

CITING U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic Format


Note: The volume and page numbers refer to U.S. Reports. All reporting services include this information. Ignore the "Cite As" at the head of the page in Supreme Court Reporter, because this form of the citation is not used in APA style.

Example

Citing Legal Documents and Legislation

TEXT CITATION

Basic Form

Name v. Name (Year)

(Name v. Name, Year)

Examples

The Supreme Court has held in United States v. Lane (1986) that misjoinder under Rule 8(b) is subject to harmless-error analysis.

The Supreme Court has held that misjoinder under Rule 8(b) is subject to harmless-error analysis (United States v. Lane, 1986).

CITING DECISIONS OF LOWER FEDERAL COURTS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic Format

Name v. Name, Volume number Reporter abbreviation Page number (Court Name).

Reporter Abbreviations

F., F.2d or F.3d for Federal Reporter (circuit courts)


Examples


TEXT CITATION

Basic Form

Name v. Name (year ) or (Name v. Name, year)

Examples

In Flibotte v. Pennsylvania Truck Lines, Inc. (1997), the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit held that it is appropriate for a judge to refuse to direct the verdict.

The Court of Appeals for the First Circuit has held that it is appropriate for a judge to refuse to direct the verdict (Flibotte v. Pennsylvania Truck Lines, Inc., 1997).
CITING MASSACHUSETTS COURT DECISIONS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic Form

Name v. Name, Volume number Reporter abbreviation Page number (Court abbreviation Year).

Reporter Abbreviation refers to Northeastern Reporter: N.E. or N.E. 2d. The citation appears after Cite as on the top of the page of Massachusetts Decisions.

Note: Cases in the Massachusetts Social Law Library (http://www.socialaw.com/) do not include references to Northeastern Reporter. To cite such a case, find it in Lexis-Nexis (ask a reference librarian for assistance if necessary).

Example


TEXT CITATION

Basic Form

Name v. Name (Year) or (Name v. Name, Year)

Examples

In Silverleib v. Hebshie (1992), the Massachusetts Court of Appeals held that an order for the removal of a sewer line is in the nature of an equitable order.

The Massachusetts Court of Appeals held that an order for the removal of a sewer line is in the nature of an equitable order (Silverleib v. Hebshie 1992).

CITING FEDERAL STATUTES

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Cite a statute in its location in the U.S. Code. Alternatively, cite the statute in its original publication in the Statutes at Large, rather than in the code. This is usually done when the statute is an appropriation, has been repealed, or has its contents scattered in different parts of the Code.
Citing Legal Documents and Legislation

Basic form
Name of Act § Section number, Volume number U.S.C. § Section number (Year).

Examples

TEXT CITATION

Basic form
Name of Act (Year)
Name of Act of Year

Examples

CITING MASSACHUSETTS STATUTES

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY
Cite the statute as found in the Massachusetts General Laws, or if not there, in the Massachusetts Acts.

Basic form

Examples
Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 71, § 1A.

TEXT CITATION
Basic form (from Massachusetts General Laws)
Mass. Gen. Laws ch. Chapter number, § Section number (Year)
(Mass. Gen. Laws ch. Chapter number, § Section number, Year)

Examples
In Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 71, § 1A (1966), the Legislature provided for a period of silence at the beginning of the school day.

The Legislature provided for a period of silence at the beginning of the school day (Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 71, § 1A, 1966).

Basic form (from Massachusetts Acts)
Name of Act (Year)

Examples
In An Act Designating Certain Bridges in the Town of Middleborough (1967), the Legislature made the bridges' names official.

The Legislature made the bridges' names official (An Act Designating Certain Bridges in the Town of Middleborough, 1967).

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CITING STATE AND U.S. CONSTITUTIONS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic form
Abbreviated name of Constitution pt. Part number (if any), art. Article number in Roman numerals. § Section number.
Abbreviated name of Constitution pt. Part number (if any), amend. Amendment number in Roman numerals, § Section number.

Examples
Mass. Const. pt. 1, art. XV.
U.S. Const., amend. XIV, § 1.
CITING LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

TEXT CITATION

Basic form
Identical to reference list entry, using parentheses as needed.

Examples
Freedom of assembly is guaranteed by Mass. Const. pt. 1, art. XV.
Equal protection of the law is a constitutional right (U.S. Const. art. XIV, § 1).

Back to Top

CITING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic form
Title of Hearing. Number of Congress Cong., Number of Session Sess., Page number (Year) (testimony of Name of witness).

Example

TEXT CITATION

Basic form
Title (Year).

Example
Chesemore's testimony is found in RU486: The Import Ban (1990).

Back to Top

CITING CONGRESSIONAL BILLS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY
Citing Legal Documents and Legislation

Basic Form
Title, Bill or Resolution Number, Number of Congress Cong., Number of Session Sess. (Year).

Example

TEXT CITATION

Basic Form
House Bill or Senate Bill number (Year)

Examples
Senate Bill 671 (1993) provided for treatment of severe mental illnesses.
A proposed law (S. 671, 1993) provided for treatment of severe mental illnesses.

CITING FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Basic form
Series abbreviation No. Number, Number of Congress Cong., Number of session Sess. Page number (Year).

Abbreviations
Senate Document: S. Doc.

Example

TEXT CITATION
Basic Forms

Series name No. number (Year)
(Series abbreviation number year)

Examples

In House Report No. 300 (1999), the House Agriculture Committee approved amendments to the Federal Crop Insurance Act.