



Learning to Love the

Bluebook

(Everything You Need to Know About Bluebooking)



Why Bluebook?

1) Convey.

- A citation tells us what court issued the decision in a case
 - Consider: a Supreme Court case v. district court case
 - Binding authority versus persuasive authority

2) Locate.

- Tell reader where to find the authority
- Uniformity

3) Conform.

- Satisfy instructor / employer / judge's expectations

An Example

The right to counsel includes the right to the effective assistance of counsel. *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 676 (1984) (establishing a two-part test for ineffective assistance of counsel).

What can we tell just by looking at this citation?

Placement of Citations

- There are two main ways to incorporate a citation into your writing:
 1. A Citation Clause
 - In *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 676 (1984), the United States Supreme Court held that the right to counsel includes the right to the effective assistance of counsel.
 2. A Citation Sentence
 - The right to counsel includes the right to the effective assistance of counsel. *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 676 (1984).

General Tips:

Do

- Use:
 - Summary of contents (back cover)
 - Quick reference (inside front cover)
 - Index (381-415)
 - Table of contents (pages vii-xiv)
- Overview in each rule (first sub-rule in each of Rules 9-21)
- Look at the examples in each rule
- Tab your Bluebook

General Tips: Don't

- Assume that you can intuit the correct rule
- Copy and paste from Lexis/Westlaw/Bloomberg
- Be overwhelmed!

General Structure of the Bluebook

- Bluepages
- Bluepages Tables
- Rules of Citation and Style (Rules 1-9)
- Specific Rules About Various Sources (Rules 10-21)
- Super-Specific (Tables, Abbreviations)

Bluepages + Bluepages Tables

- Intended to be used by practitioners
- Concise, accessible introduction to basic legal citation
- When filing documents with a court check tables for abbreviations of court filings and for jurisdiction-specific rules

Specific Rules Based on Source (Rules 10-21)

- Rule 10: Cases
- Rule 11: Constitutions
- Rule 12: Statutes
- Rule 13: Legislative Materials
- Rule 14: Administrative and Executive Materials
- Rule 15: Books, Reports and Other Nonperiodic Materials
- Rule 16: Periodical Materials
- Rule 18: Internet, Electronic Media, and Other Nonprint Resources
- Rule 19: Services
- Rule 20: Foreign Materials
- Rule 21: International Materials

Order of Authorities

- List authorities in order of helpfulness or authoritativeness (Rule 1.4)
 - Example: Cite a Supreme Court case before a District Court case if they support the same proposition.

Rule 10: Cases

[Case Name], [Reporter Citation], [Pincite] ([Deciding Court]
[Year])

The Reporter Citation consists of:

[Vol. #] [Reporter Abbrev.] [First Page # of Case]

Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla.
2011)

Case Name Reporter Citation Pincite Court + Year

Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla.
2011)

Case Name

Reporter
Citation

Pincite

Court +
Year

Case Names (Rules 10.2, B4)

- Underline or italicize up to, but not including, the comma
- Rule 10.2.1: General rule for case names
- Abbreviations
 - Table 6: General Words
 - Table 10: Geographical Terms
 - Rule 10.2.2: Abbreviate words of eight letters or more if *substantial* space is saved and the result is unambiguous

Case Names in Sentences Versus Citations

- Underline or italicize the case name in a textual sentence
- Abbreviations differ between textual citations and citation clauses
 - Abbreviate according to Tables 6 and 10
- The first time you mention a case in the text, follow the case name with the remaining elements of the **full citation** set off by commas (citation clause)
- You may then refer to the case using a short cite if it will be unambiguous according to Rule 10.9

Case Name in a Sentence

In *Southern Pacific Co. v. Jensen*, 244 U.S. 205 (1917), Justice McReynolds stressed the value of uniform laws.

Case Name in a Citation

Justice McReynolds stressed the value of uniform laws. *S. Pac. Co. v. Jensen*, 244 U.S. 205 (1917).

Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla. 2011)

Case Name

Reporter

Pincite

Court +
Year

Citation

Reporter Citation

- A reporter is a series of books that contain judicial opinions
- The Bluebook explains which reporter you should cite for authorities from **every jurisdiction**.
 - Where? First reporter listed in **Table 1**
- Only include **one reporter**
 - Exception: Rule 10.3.2 for *some* very old cases
- Our example: *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla. 2011)
 - Florida: p. 258
- **DON'T** include multiple reporters.
 - Correct: *S. Pac. Co. v. Jensen*, 244 U.S. 205, 216 (1917)
 - Incorrect: *S. Pac. Co. v. Jensen*, 244 U.S. 205, 216, 37 S. Ct. 524, 529 (1917)

Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla. 2011)

Case Name

Reporter
Citation

Pincite

Court +
Year

Pincites

- Pincites (B10.1.2)
 - Repeat the first page if the pincite is on the first page.
 - *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 34, 34 (Fla. 2011).
- Page Range
 - If page number consists of three or more digits, drop the repetitive digit and use a hyphen (-) or en-dash (—)
 - *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 340, 342—45 (Fla. 2011)
- Multiple, non-consecutive pages come after commas
 - *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 34, 35, 37, 39 (Fla. 2011).
- Footnotes
 - Cite page where footnote appears; no space between n. and footnote number
 - *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 34, 35 n.5 (Fla. 2011).

When to Pincite?

- Always (almost)

Short Citation Forms (Rules 10.9, B4)

- Once you provide full citation to an authority, you may use short form in later citations, *provided that*
 - (1) Reader will understand what is being referenced;
 - (2) Earlier full citation falls in same general discussion; and
 - (3) Reader won't have trouble quickly locating the full cite
- Generally use only the first party's name, unless to do so would be confusing.
 - *Smith v. Jones* becomes *Smith*
 - But *United States v. Williams* becomes *Williams* (not *United States*)
- Acceptable short forms of *Jardines v. State*, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla. 2011)
 - When citing to a specific pincite:
 - *Jardines*, 73 So. 3d at 37.
 - 73 So. 3d at 37.
 - *Id.* at 37.
 - More rarely, when referencing an entire decision (no pincite):
 - *Jardines*, 73 So. 3d 34.
- Use of *Id.* (Rule 10.9, B4.1)
 - Only if citing the exact same source as in the immediately preceding citation and there is only one authority cited in the preceding citation
 - If same pincite, use "*Id.*" alone. If a different pincite, specify: "*Id.* at 37."
 - Underline/italics runs under the period

Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34, 37 (Fla.
2011)

Case Name

Reporter
Citation

Pincite

Court + Year

Court and Year

- Always include the court *unless* SCOTUS case in U.S. Reports (B.4.1.3)
 - *Technical* exception for state supreme courts where reporter unambiguously identifies the state
- Use **Table 1** for the correct court abbreviations (do not guess!)

Super-Specific: Tables

T.1-T.4

- Table 1 supplements Rules 10–12
 - Specific rules for all U.S. jurisdictions – federal, states and territories.
 - Identifies which reporters to cite, how to abbreviate court names, what the form for state statutes and state constitutions are, etc.
- Table 2 supplements Rule 20
 - Many foreign country guidelines – citing to constitutions, statutes, and cases.
- Tables 3–4 supplement Rule 21
 - Citing intergovernmental organization and treaty sources.

Super-Specific: Abbreviations

- The Bluebook requires that you use certain abbreviations and ONLY those abbreviations
- Table 6 (case names)
 - Only for case names *in citations*.
 - For case names in text, see Rule 10.2.1(c)
- Table 10 (geographical terms)
 - For case citations, institutional authors, periodicals, foreign materials, treaty citations
- Table 13 (legal journals, generic abbreviations for periodicals)
 - Use when citing a newspaper, magazine, or journal
- Abbreviations are generally non-transferable.
 - Table 6 don't apply in periodical titles; Table 13 abbreviations don't apply in case names; none of the abbreviations apply to titles of books or articles

Rule 1.2: Signals

- Signals (1.2): Words or phrases that show the reader the relationship between the proposition stated and the authority cited
 - No Signal
 - 1) An authority that directly states the proposition
 - 2) Source of a quotation
 - 3) Authority referred to in the preceding text
 - Signals
 - “*e.g.*”: Introduce an authority that is one of multiple authorities directly stating the same proposition
 - “*see*”: Introduce an authority that *clearly* supports but does not directly state the proposition
 - “*see, e.g.*”: Introduce an authority that is one of multiple authorities that *clearly* supports but does not directly state the proposition
 - “*cf.*”: Introduce authority that supports a proposition different from the main proposition but is sufficiently analogous to lend support
- **Example:** This Court had routinely held that a minor under age ten cannot consent to a search absent a warrant. *See, e.g., A v. B*, 100 F.3d 112, 114 (2d Cir. 1994) (finding 6-year-old child’s consent invalid).

Rule 1.5: Parentheticals

- Parentheticals (1.5)
 - Explain relevance of cited authority, but save space in the text
 - Quoting / citing / explaining
 - Very useful for the explanation section of your briefs to give context to legal rules
- Example:
 - *But see Flanagan v. United States*, 465 U.S. 259, 264 (1984) (explaining that the final judgment rule reduces the potential for parties to “clog the courts” with a succession of time-consuming appeals).
- You can use a variety of words to introduce a parenthetical:
 - For example: “explaining” “finding” “noting that” “emphasizing” “discussing” “commenting upon” (and many others)
 - A parenthetical may also consist entirely of a quotation from the case

Statutes

- Cite to the official code whenever possible
 - U.S.C. preferred for federal statutes
 - Table 1.3 for preferred compilations for each state
- Statute citations usually include:
 - Abbreviated name of code
 - Cited section number(s)
 - Year of the cited code edition (*not* the year the act was passed).
 - This is hard to find and annoying

Example: 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (2006).