

Finding journal articles

This guide is written for law students. It will help you find a journal article when you have a reference, e.g. in a footnote in your textbook or on a seminar handout.

1. What are journal and journal articles?

Journals are like academic magazines. Some law journals cover lots of different areas of law, whereas others focus on a single area.

Like magazines, new journal issues are published on a regular basis: quarterly, monthly or even annually. They can be produced in print format or digitally. As with magazines, each issue of a journal contains a number of articles.

Collectively, all the issues of a journal published in a year are known as a volume. So each journal will have one volume per year.

Unlike most magazine articles, journal articles tend to be detailed, well-researched and high-quality pieces of research. Because new issues are regularly published, new ideas and developments tend to be discussed in journal articles long before they are included in books. Book publishing is a much slower process.

Reading and discussing journal articles is a good way to improve your legal knowledge and confidence and to strengthen your coursework.

2. What do all the numbers mean?

References to journal articles can seem quite complicated. Compare your reference to the examples below and see if you can see the parallels.

Emmanuel Voyiakis, 'Causation and opportunity in tort' (2018) 38 *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 26.

Stephen Shute, 'Appropriation and the law of theft' [2002] *Criminal Law Review* 445.

A reference to a journal article starts with the name of the author(s), followed by the **title of the article**.

You then have the year and the volume number followed by the **title of the journal**.

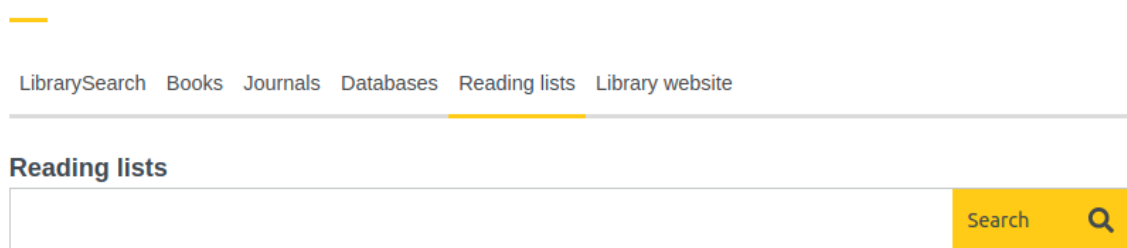
If you get muddled about which title is which, remember the **article title** always comes before the **journal title**. The final number is the page that the article starts on.

Some journals (e.g. *Public Law* and *Criminal Law Review*) do not use volume numbers, but just use the year to differentiate one volume from another. References to these journals have square brackets around the year, as shown in the second example above.

Understanding this structure will help you with both finding journal articles and referencing them in your own work.

3. Start with your online reading list

Search the library



The screenshot shows a navigation bar with the following tabs: LibrarySearch, Books, Journals, Databases, Reading lists, and Library website. The 'Reading lists' tab is highlighted with a yellow underline. Below the navigation bar is a search box with the text 'Reading lists' on the left and a yellow search button with the text 'Search' and a magnifying glass icon on the right.

You can find the **reading list** for any module, by typing the module number in the *reading list* tab of the search box on the library homepage: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/>

If your module leader has recommended a journal article for a seminar, then there will be a link to it on the module's online reading list. Click the *view online* button next to the article to read the article.

Using your online reading lists is the quickest and easiest way to find the most useful articles for your modules.

4. Find a journal article using LibrarySearch

If the article isn't on your module reading list, then use the *LibrarySearch* tab of the search box on the library homepage: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/>.

Don't put the whole reference in the box, just use the article title. Putting the article title in double speech marks can help.

LibrarySearch

"Causation and opportunity in tort"

Search



If LibrarySearch finds the article you need, click on the *view full text* button or *view PDF* button and enter your student number and password if prompted.

Help! I clicked on the button on LibrarySearch but it hasn't taken me to my article.

If this happens, go back to the results list in LibrarySearch and click on the article title. This will then show more information about the article. Look under *access online*. The button you used before will have taken you to the first option on this list. If there are other access options listed underneath, then use those *view full text* or *view PDF* links. If you click on *report broken link* next to the one that didn't work, then we can fix it for you.

If LibrarySearch doesn't help then try Westlaw, LexisLibrary and/or HeinOnline. You can try these in any order.

5. Find a journal article using Westlaw.

Go to <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law#westlaw> and click the link under *How to access Westlaw*.

In Westlaw, click *journals* in the bar that runs along the top of the page, and select *journals search* from the drop-down.

Journals Search

☆ Add to favourites

🏠 Make this my start page

🔗 Copy link

Free Text	<input type="text"/>
Subject/Keyword	<input type="text"/>
Article Title	<input type="text" value="appropriation and the law of theft"/>

Put the title of your article in the article title box and click *search*. If you see your article in the results list, check it says *full text* below it. If it only has an abstract (summary) then you will need to use another database such as LexisLibrary or HeinOnline to look for the full text.

Help! Westlaw is confusing and scary.

Westlaw is a powerful legal tool. But it isn't always easy to use.

Have a look at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law#westlaw> to find:

- Step-by-step guides
- A downloadable PDF guide and lots of help videos
- Details of Westlaw and LexisLibrary workshops, which run every semester.

6. Find a journal article using LexisLibrary.

Go to <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law#lexislibrary> and click the link under *How to access LexisLibrary*.

On the LexisLibrary homepage, look for the *find a title* section. You could click on *journals* at the top of the screen, but this route is quicker.

Put the article title in the *journal article* box and click *find*. In the results list, check the *source* column to make sure the result comes from a journal, not *Journals Index* or *Journals index plus*. These indexes will just give you article abstracts, not the full text. Click the title of anything in the results list to read it.

Find a Title...

Legislation	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Find"/>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Act <input type="checkbox"/> SI <input type="checkbox"/> Retained EU <input type="checkbox"/> EU	
Case name or citation	<input type="text"/> v <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Find"/>
Journal article	<input type="text" value="causation and opportunity in tort"/>	<input type="button" value="Find"/>
Form or precedent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Find"/>
Find a source	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Find"/>

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- Step-by-step guides
- A downloadable PDF guide and lots of help videos
- Details of Westlaw and LexisLibrary workshops, which run every semester.

7. Find a journal article using HeinOnline

Go to <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law#heinonline> and click the link under *How to access HeinOnline*.

Put the title of the article into the search box at the top of the HeinOnline homepage. Like LibrarySearch, putting the title in double speechmarks can help.

If your article comes up in the results list, click on the title to read it online. Alternatively, click on the PDF icon to the right to download it to read offline.

8. The journal title is abbreviated

If you find a reference to a journal article in a book or another article, the author may have abbreviated the name of the journal. Although you can still find the article without knowing the full title of the journal, it can still be helpful to know.

The Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations (<http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk>) is a useful tool for finding out what these abbreviations stand for.

9. If you still can't find what you need

If you've tried all the tips in this guide but still haven't been able to find the full text of the article you need then contact the Academic Liaison Librarian for Law. You can find her details at the end of this document. She can then see if there's anything you've missed or will show you how to request the article from another library (an interlibrary loan).

Getting help and finding out more

More information and support can be found on the law page of the library website:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law>

If you need any help with finding or using library resources for law, please contact Charlie Brampton, the Academic Liaison Librarian for Law:

Email: c.brampton@brookes.ac.uk

Tel: 01865 483077

JHB 112, Headington Library
Oxford Brookes University