

# Using LexisLibrary for English law

**This guide will help you use LexisLibrary to find cases, legislation and journal articles**

## What is LexisLibrary?

LexisLibrary is an online legal database, which the library subscribes to for you. It allows law students to access the cases, legislation, journal articles and legal commentary that they need to succeed in their modules. You can search for something (e.g. a case) and then quickly jump from that to other related documents. It's updated very quickly, so you can be confident of finding up-to-date materials, even in rapidly changing areas of law. LexisLibrary is widely used across the legal sector, so gaining confidence and skills in using it will be helpful beyond university.

## Accessing LexisLibrary

Go to <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law/how-to-use-lexislibrary/> and click on the *Go to LexisLibrary* button near the top. You may be prompted for your student number and password.

[Go to LexisLibrary](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law/how-to-use-lexislibrary/)

If prompted, you will need to accept the terms and conditions.

It is important you access LexisLibrary through the library website rather than by Googling it otherwise you will not have access to all the content the library pays for access to.

The LexisLibrary homepage contains a simple search box and also tabs in the light grey bar along the top. This guide will describe using the tabs to search, but you can use the simple search box instead if you prefer. If you do use the simple search box, you may find the *filters* button helpful as you can specify the sort of material you're looking for.

Tip: You can return to the LexisLibrary homepage from anywhere in LexisLibrary by clicking on the *home* link in the top left.

## How to find cases

On every page in LexisLibrary you will see the *cases* tab in the light grey bar that runs along the top. Click on it to see a search form. You do not need to fill in all the boxes!

Using the boxes at the top of the form you can do any of the following:

Search by <b>case names</b>	e.g. Donoghue v Stevenson
Search by <b>citation</b> . NB: brackets and full stops are optional	e.g. [1967] 1 WLR 716
Search by topic or theme in the <b>search terms</b> field	e.g. joint enterprise. Lexis assumes your words are a phrase, and only finds results where the words are next to each other. If you want to search for individual words use AND (e.g. negligence AND damages)

Tip: If you do want to search for a topic, rather than for a specific case, try using the *add topics to search* link. This gives you a list of keywords to pick from, arranged by area of law. This will help you get a shorter, more precise list of results than just using the *search terms* field. You can just search for one or more topics or you can use this in addition to the *search terms* field.

If you get a long list of results, you can use the filters down the left hand side of the results screen to narrow down your search.

At the top right of your search results, you can change how the results are sorted e.g. by date or by court etc. To read a document, simply click on the link in the results list.

If you prefer to browse rather than search, the left of the cases search page gives you this option. Click on *browse*, pick the series of law reports you are interested in and then just keep narrowing it down until you reach the case you need.



Tip: These icons appear at the top of all cases, and will allow you to download, email or print the document.

There is a handy box labelled *find out more* down the right hand side of every case. Here you can jump to related journal articles and other cases. This is a good way to find new materials for your coursework research. You also jump to relevant commentary this way, mostly from [Halsbury's Laws of England](#).

## How to find legislation

On every page in LexisLibrary you will see the *legislation* tab in the light grey bar that runs along the top. Click on it to see a search form. You do not need to fill in all the fields!

Using the search form you can do any of the following:

Search by <b>title</b> or SI number (in <b>series number</b> field)	e.g. Equality Act 2010 or 2015/1490
Search by topic or theme in the <b>search terms</b> field	e.g. "houses in multiple occupation". Use speech marks to find the words together in a phrase
Search for a specific section using the <b>provision</b> field	If you want to read a specific section, put the number in the provision field and the title in the title field. You will then be taken directly to that section.

Tip: If you do want to search for a topic, rather than for a specific Act/SI, try using the *add topics to search* link. This gives you a list of keywords to pick from, arranged by area of law. This will help you get a shorter, more precise list of results.

If you get a long list of results, you can use the options down the left hand side of the results screen to narrow down your search.

NB: If you have searched for an Act by name, the search results are likely to give the whole Act as the top result, followed by separate results for each numbered section of the Act. From any section in an Act, click on the left hand 'table of contents' link to move around the Act.

To the top right of your search results, you can change how the results are sorted. To read a document, simply click on the link in the results list.

NEW! A valuable new feature in legislation is the ability to easily see how the legislation has changed over time. At the top of any document, look for a timeline. (If the section has not changed, then there may not be a timeline). You can then quickly jump to points in the past, and even see proposed future changes. You can also click on *highlights* under the timeline to highlight the recent changes. Click on *text* to turn the highlighting off.



Tip: These icons appear at the top of all legislation documents, and will allow you to download, email or print the document.

## How to find journal articles

On every page in LexisLibrary you will see the *journals* tab in the light grey bar that runs along the top. Click on it to see a search form. You do not need to fill in all the fields!

You can also browse for journal articles by using the *browse* option on the left of the search form. If you have the reference to a particular article, this may be quicker than using the search form. You can also combine browsing and searching – this will allow you to search for articles in a particular journal. Just select the journal title from the *browse* option and then use the quick search box provided.

Tip: If you do want to search for a topic, rather than for a specific article, try using the *add topics to search* link. This gives you a list of keywords to pick from, arranged by area of law. This will help you get a shorter, more precise list of results.

If you get a long list of results, you can use the filters down the left hand side of the results screen to narrow down your search.

As well as full text articles, LexisLibrary also provides **abstracts** (i.e. short summaries and citation information) of a large range of other articles.

If you find an abstract of an article that you'd like to find the full text of, just treat it like an article on your reading list. Advice about finding articles when you have a reference can be found in the *Finding a journal article* help guide (available as a PDF from <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law/e-journals-for-law/>)



Tip: These icons appear at the top of all articles, and will allow you to download, email or print the document.

## Searching tips

LexisLibrary contains a lot of material – this is what makes it such a valuable resource for law. However, this does mean you can get a large number of search results when you're exploring a topic. Knowing how to combine search words with connectors can help you get the most appropriate list of results. These connectors will work anywhere in LexisLibrary:

<b>or</b> to find alternatives	<b>refugee or migrant</b>
<b>and</b> to find all terms	<b>easement and light and owner</b>
<b>and not</b> to exclude a term	<b>equality and not race</b>
<b>w/n</b> to specify proximity (where n is a number)	<b>medical w/5 negligence</b> (words occur within 5 words of each other)
<b>w/s</b> for words in the same sentence	<b>inchoate w/s offence</b>
<b>w/p</b> for words in the same paragraph	<b>inchoate w/p offence</b>
<b>!</b> to find variant endings of a word	<b>bank!</b> (finds <i>bank, banks, banker, banking</i> etc.)

## Getting help and finding out more

More online information can be found on the Law help pages, at [www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law)

If you need any help with finding or using library resources for law please contact **Charlie Brampton** (Academic Liaison Librarian for Law) using the contact details below.

Email: [c.brampton@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:c.brampton@brookes.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01865 483077

Headington Library, JHB 310 (Level 3, Zone C)  
Oxford Brookes University.