



Legal Writing Center

SOME BASICS ON BLUEBOOKING

With A Focus on Maryland Rules

This is a quick guide to citing Maryland cases and statutes, based on Bluebook Rules 10 and 12. It is not intended to be a comprehensive discussion of citation rules. If you encounter a situation that is not covered in this guide, make sure to check the Bluebook for more detail.

Cases – Bluebook Rule 10

The first time you cite a case, use the full citation format:

Lansdowne v. State, 287 Md. 232, 412 A.2d 88 (1980)¹.

Let's break down each component:

Name: *Lansdowne v. State*

- The name should be *italicized* (Rule 10.2). Underlining may be used instead of italics, but the practice is dying out.
- Many words in a party's name can be abbreviated. Table 6 of the Bluebook is a list of acceptable abbreviations of common words. Table 10 is a list of abbreviations for geographical locations.

Reporter identification: 287 Md. 232, 412 A.2d 88

- Cases are still cited to their print publication, called reporters, even though most research happens online these days.
 - The first number is the volume in which the case appears.

¹ In recent years, practitioners (and judges) are moving away from using parallel citation in court documents. You will want to ask your professor or employer whether you should parallel cite, which we have done here, or only cite to the Maryland Reporter: *Lansdowne v. State*, 287 Md. 232 (1980).



- The next element is an abbreviation of the title of the reporter.
 - West publishes a series of federal and regional reporters. Maryland cases are reported in the Atlantic Reporter (abbreviated A., A.2d, or A.3d, depending on date.)
 - Many states, including Maryland, also have official state-specific reporters. Maryland Court of Appeals cases are published in Maryland Reports (abbreviated Md.); Court of Special Appeals cases are published in Maryland Appellate Reports (abbreviated Md. App.)
 - Parallel citations: Maryland courts require that the official state reporters be cited. List the Maryland-specific reporter first, followed by a comma, and then the Atlantic Reporter cite.
 - Use of both citations is common practice, but check with your professor to see what s/he prefers.
- The number after the reporter abbreviation is the first page of the opinion. If you are citing the case for a specific point of law rather than for the general holding of the case, you should include a **pincite** to the specific page on which the cited material appears. This also holds true if you are quoting language directly from the case.

Closing parenthetical – Court and Date

- Indicate the court that issued the decision, unless that information is already clear from other elements in the citation. Here are the rules:
 - The citation must indicate the jurisdiction in which the case was decided. If that is not clear from the reporter citation, include the information in the parenthetical.
E.g., *Lansdowne v. State*, 412 A.2d 88 (Md. 1980).
- Include the year of the decision.

Short citation format

After the initial citation, later references to the case should use a **short cite** format.

- If there is no intervening citation after the initial citation, you may use *Id.*
 - If the later reference is to a different page than the initial cite, use *Id.* with a pincite: *Id.* at 239.
- If you have cited another authority between the initial citation and the later citation, your short cite must include an abbreviated version of the case name,



the volume and reporter, and a pincite for the specific language or point of law you are referring to.

- Example: *Lansdowne*, 287 Md. at 235.
- The case name should be limited to one party. Generally this is the first party in the case name.
 - If the first party is a jurisdiction (e.g., United States or Maryland) use the opposing party's name.

Here are some sample Maryland case citations:

Maryland Court of Appeals:

Full cite: *Lansdowne v. State*, 287 Md. 232 (1980).

Full cite with pin point page: *Lansdowne v. State*, 287 Md. 232, 239 (1980).

Short cite: *Lansdowne*, 287 Md. at 239.

Or

Full cite: *Lansdowne v. State*, 287 Md. 232, 412 A.2d 88 (1980).

Full cite with pin point page:

Lansdowne v. State, 287 Md. 232, 239, 412 A.2d 88, 90 (1980).

Maryland Court of Special Appeals

Full cite: *Allen v. State*, 158 Md. App. 194 (2004).

Full cite with pin point page: *Allen v. State*, 158 Md. App. 194, 197 (2004).

Short cite: *Allen*, 158 Md. at 197.

Or

Full cite: *Allen v. State*, 158 Md. App. 194, 857 A.2d 101 (2004).

Full cite with pin point page:

Allen v. State, 158 Md. App. 194, 197, 857 A.2d 101, 102 (2004).

Short cite: *Allen v. State*, 158 Md. App. at 197; 857 A.2d at 102.



Statutes – Bluebook Rule 12

Usually when you cite a law passed by the legislature, you are citing to a *statute*, also referred to as a *code*. Statutes are a collection of laws that are currently in force, organized by subject area. (Legislation is also published in chronological order according to the legislative session in which it was passed. These are called *session laws* and are beyond the scope of this guide.)

Nominal vs. numbered codes:

Citing a Maryland statute is a bit more complicated than citing a federal statute. Both systems are subject-based collections of laws, but the federal statutes use a numerical system of organization, while Maryland has a nominal system, assigning subject matter names to its major divisions. Thus a federal law concerning the judiciary would be cited as 28 U.S.C. § 1201, while a Maryland law concerning the judiciary would be cited as Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 1201.

The first time you cite a Maryland statute, you must use the full citation format, which consists of the abbreviation for the Maryland code, the subject matter title, the section number, and the year:

Md. Code Ann., Est. & Trusts § 3-203 (2016).

Let's break down each component:

Identify that you are citing to the Annotated Code of Maryland

- The citation format is Md. Code Ann.
- The General Assembly has designated both the West and the Michie (Lexis) versions of the Code as official, so you do not have to worry about the official/unofficial dichotomy that is such an issue with federal statutes.

Name of the title in which your section appears

- Table 1 of the Bluebook gives the accepted abbreviations for the titles for all jurisdictions, including Maryland.

Section number

- Precede the section number with the section symbol §
- There are two parts to the section number, separated by a dash.
 - The first number designates the chapter where the section is located
 - The second number is the specific section you are citing.
 - Always include both parts of the section number.



Year

- The format of the year depends on whether you are citing to the print version of the statute or the online version.
 - If you are citing to the print, the year will depend on whether the section appears in the main (hardback) volume, in the supplement (pocket part), or in both:
 - Entire section in the main volume – use the date on the spine
 - Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. § 10-401 (2008).
 - Entire section is in the supplement – note the publisher and that it is a supplement, and use the date of the supplement.
 - Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 1-101 (West Supp. 2016).
 - Part of the statute is in the main volume and part is a supplement – use the dates on both the main volume and the supplement.
 - Md. Code Ann., Nat. Res. § 4-421 (2006 & West Supp. 2016).
 - If you are citing to the statute as published in a commercial database, provide the name of the service and the date the database was last updated
 - Md. Code Ann., Hum. Servs. § 3-501 (LEXIS through 2016 Regular Session of the General Assembly).

Short-cite format

- After the initial citation, you may use a short-cite for subsequent citation.
 - The citation includes the subject-matter title and the section number:
 - Hum. Servs. § 3-501.

Have additional questions?

Contact the Legal Writing Center – law.ubalt.edu/legalwriting

