



Legal Writing Center

10 Quick Tips to Help You Navigate the Bluebook.

1. What's the difference between the blue pages and the white pages?

The blue pages should be used for “all non-academic writing.” White pages are used for academic writing or when the blue pages do not provide you with an answer. In addition to checking the applicable rules in the blue pages when filing documents in a particular court, you must also check local court rules. For example, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland Local Rules are found at <http://www.mdd.uscourts.gov/publications/forms/LocalRules.pdf>

2. How do I cite a case?

Rule 10. tells you to include the name of the case, the information about the reporter, including its name, volume, and the page number where you can find the case. If the jurisdiction and court are not apparent from the reporter name, you need to include this information in the parenthetical as well. Rule 10.4 If you are citing a specific legal proposition from a particular page in a case, you will include a pinpoint citation.

Examples:

Hailes v. State, 442 Md. 488 (2015).

Hailes v. State, 442 Md. 488, 489 (2015). *489 is a pinpoint citation

State v. Freeman, 387 S.E.2d 158 (N.C. 1990). “N.C.” tells the reader that the Supreme Court of North Carolina decided this case. “S.E.2d” is the regional reporter.

3. What's the deal with parallel citation? Must I use it?

Parallel citation refers to citing to a case and its location in both a state and regional reporter. Before the advent of electronic research, it was commonplace to require both citations so that reader could access the case in either reporter. Rule 10.3 requires individuals to check the local rules and the Bluebook, which will tell you whether you must cite to both the regional and state reporters. Under the local rules of Maryland, appellate briefs are required to cite to the official Reporter, which would be Md. or Md. App. Md. R. 8-504(a)(1). However, the Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation T. 1.3, at 268, directs one to cite to the regional reporter (“Cite to A. A2d or A.3d, if therein.”). These two provisions are interpreted by many as requiring parallel citation, although



increasingly practitioners are citing solely to the official state reporter only in appellate briefs. Check with your employer or professor regarding practice and preference.

Example:

Hailes v. State, 442 Md. 488, 489, 113 A.3d 608, 609 (2015).

4. What if I want to cite to a portion of a case other than the majority opinion? Is there any other information I need to include to indicate the weight of authority? (Rules 10.6, 10.7)

If you are citing a dissent, concurrence, or per curiam opinion, add this information at the end of the citation.

Example:

Holt v. State, 435 Md. 443, 468, 78 A.3d 415, 429 (2013) (Greene, J., dissenting).

If you are citing a case that has prior or subsequent history within the past two years, then this should also be included in the citation.

Example:

Holt v. State, 208 Md. App. 539, 56 A.3d 806 (2012), *aff'd*, 435 Md. 443, 78 A.3d 415 (2013).

5. **Once I cite a case, must I cite it in full every time after that?** (Rule 10.9, Rule 4.1)

No. There are two types of short citations for cases. The first is used when the case has been cited in the document already but other authorities have been cited since the initial citation.

Example:

Hailes v. State, 442 Md. 488, 489, 113 A.3d 608, 609 (2015).

Holt v. State, 435 Md. 443, 468, 78 A.3d 415, 429 (2013) (Greene, J., dissenting).

Hailes, 442 Md. at 495, 113 A.3d at 612.

If the case name is used in the sentence, then it may be omitted in the citation.

Example:

In *Hailes v. State*, the court stated, “CJP § 12–302(c)(4)(i) does not authorize the State to appeal from the circuit court's exclusion of Pate's identification of Hailes because the detectives did not violate any constitutional provision in obtaining the identification.” 442 Md. at 495, 113 A.3d at 612.

The second type of short citation is “*Id.*” This is used only when the immediately preceding citation contains only one source, and that source is the same source used in the current citation. Sources cited in explanatory parentheticals may be ignored.



Example:

Hailes v. State, 442 Md. 488, 489, 113 A.3d 608, 609 (2015).
Id. at 495, 113 A.3d at 612.

NOTE: the period after “*Id.*” must be italicized.

6. How do I cite to a federal or state statute? (Rule 12)

Citations to statutes should include the abbreviated name of the code, the specific section, paragraph, or article number being referenced, and the year of the code.” Rule 12.3 The official federal code is the *United States Code*, which should be cited whenever possible. If this is not possible, then an unofficial code, such as the *United States Code Annotated*, may be used. State codes are listed in table T1.3.

Example:

18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) (2012).
Md. Code Ann., Crim . Law § 10-201(c)(2) (2002).

7. Can I shorten the citation for a statute after I cite it the first time? (Rule 12.10)

Yes. When the same section of the statute is being cited immediately after the initial citation, “*Id.*” is appropriate. If a different section in the same title is being cited, the section number is sufficient.” No *Id.* if it’s a different section. If a different provision is cited, then that provision should be cited.

Example:

Md. Code Ann., Crim . Law § 10-201(c)(2) (2002).
Id.
Id. at § 3-203(b).

8. How do I cite to a document that a party filed in court or a document issued by the court such as a court order? (Bluepages, B17)

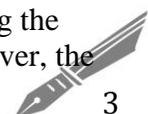
When citing a court document, the Bluebook requires the following: the name of the document, the pincite, and a document date, where applicable. The name of the document should be abbreviated in accordance with BT1.

Example:

Citing an appellate brief: Appellant’s Br. 10.

9. When do I use signals before a citation? (Rule 1.2)

Signals can be used to show additional support for or comparison or contradiction to a proposition or argument in any kind of court document, memorandum, or academic exercise. No introductory signal is necessary if the proposition is directly quoting the source, uses numerical data, or is directly supported by the cited source. If, however, the



reader must take an inferential step between the proposition and the cited source, an introductory signal is necessary.

Examples:

See

See also

See, e.g.,

Cf.

Contra.

Note: If using a signal, a parenthetical explanation is a good idea. See the next question!

10. When and how do I use explanatory parentheticals? (Rule 1.5)

Explanatory parentheticals should be used to explain why a particular source is relevant to the stated proposition. There are two types of explanatory parentheticals. The first is when the explanation is a direct quotation from the source. The second is when the author uses the parenthetical to explain the relevance of the source. In the second instance, the explanatory phrase must start with a present participle (“ing” word).

Example:

Holt v. State, 435 Md. 443, 450, 78 A.3d 415, 419 (2013) (“The detectives testified that Blue arrived at Lake Montebello and parked his vehicle near a workout station.”).

Holt v. State, 435 Md. 443, 460, 78 A.3d 415, 424 (2013) (noting that the court must examine the totality of the circumstances).

