Legal Research & Writing Outline

1. Understanding the Basics of the Law

•What Is the Law?

•Sources of Law

•State Versus Federal Law

•The Court System

2. Finding Legal Resources

•Where Legal Information Is Located

•Primary Sources and Secondary Sources

•Looking for Legal Resources on the Internet

•Legal Research Websites

3. Identifying Your Legal Issue

•How to Approach Your Research

•Step 1: Is the Issue Civil or Criminal?

•Step 2: Figuring Out the Area of Law You're Researching

•Step 3: What Are the Resources That Will Help You Find What You Need?

•Step 4: Figure Out Your Legal Research Question

4. Finding and Using Secondary Sources

•Online Resources

•Self-Help Legal Books

•Legal Encyclopedias

•Form Books

•Practice Manuals

•Continuing Legal Education Publications

•Law Reviews and Other Legal Periodicals

•Specialized Loose-Leaf Materials

•Treatises and Monographs

•Restatements of the Law

5. Finding and Using Constitutions, Statutes, Regulations, and Ordinances

•Finding and Using Constitutions

•Finding Federal Statutes

•Finding State Statutes

•Understanding and Using Federal and State Statutes

•Finding and Using Regulations

•Finding and Using Procedural Statutes and Rules

•Finding and Using Local Laws or Ordinances

6. Finding Cases

•Using Citations to Find Cases

•Finding Cases on the Internet

•Finding Cases in the Law Library

•The Next Step

7. Using Case Law

•What Is a Case?

•How Cases Are Published

•How Cases Affect Later Disputes

8. Validating Your Research

•Making Sure It's "Good Law"

•How to Shepardize a Case

•Shepardizing Statutes

•Using Shepard's for Research

9. Organizing and Putting Your Legal Research to Use

•Organizing Your Research

•How to Write a Legal Memorandum

•Going to Court

•Finding and Working With a Lawyer

* Book: Legal Research, Stephen Elias, Attorney | 2015, 17th Edition, at www.nolo.com.