

## DIGESTS

# How to Locate a Case Using a Digest

The Law Library has two sets of West Digests in print format (now published by Thomson Reuters):

The ***United States Supreme Court Digest***, used to locate United States Supreme Court cases, is located in Compact Shelving next to the *Supreme Court Reporter*, at [KF 101 .1 U55](#). Like all digests, each volume in the set is updated with pocket parts.

***West's California Digest***, located in Row C-9 of Compact Shelving at [KFC 57 .W47](#), is used to locate California Supreme Court and California Appellate Court cases.

**Digests are arranged alphabetically by topic.** Examples of the approximately 400 topics are: *Banks and Banking, Franchises, Insurance, Libel and Slander, Partnership, Fraud, and Criminal Law.*

Each topic is divided into **subtopics** known as "**key numbers**." A complete list of topic headings is available in the front of each digest volume. A complete list of key numbers is available at the beginning of each topic. A Quick Reference Guide to West Key Number System is available online [west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/wlres/keynmb06.pdf](http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/wlres/keynmb06.pdf).

Locate a **topic** and **key number** that interests you by scanning the list of topic headings and key numbers or by using the Descriptive Word Index at the end of each set of digests.

West also publishes *West's Analysis of American Law*, which is a complete guide to the topic and key number system. This is available at the Reference Desk [KF 141 .W485](#).

Read the case summaries that are listed under each topical key number. A case citation follows each summary. This citation will be composed of a volume number, an abbreviation that indicates the "reporter," or series of books that contains the case you need, and the page where your case begins. Some cases can be found in more than one reporter; therefore more than one citation may be listed, e.g., "6 Cal. App.3d 675; 86 Cal. Rptr. 294."

See the list of **abbreviations and locations of case reporters** on the last page of this document to locate the reporter that contains your case.

If you have the name of a case and the jurisdiction in which it was decided, you can find the citation to your case using the **Table of Cases** volume of the digest covering that jurisdiction. These volumes are located at the end of the set.

Use *Westlaw* to locate cases electronically in any jurisdiction with West's topical and Key number system. The Law Library's subscription to *Westlaw* is available on all public computers.

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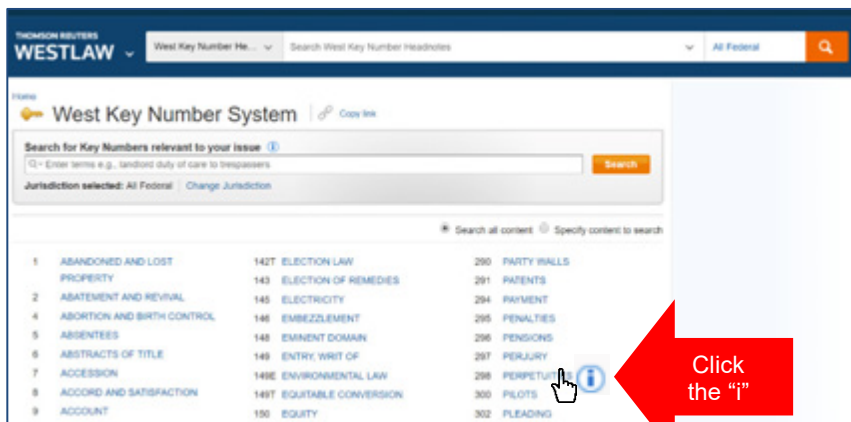
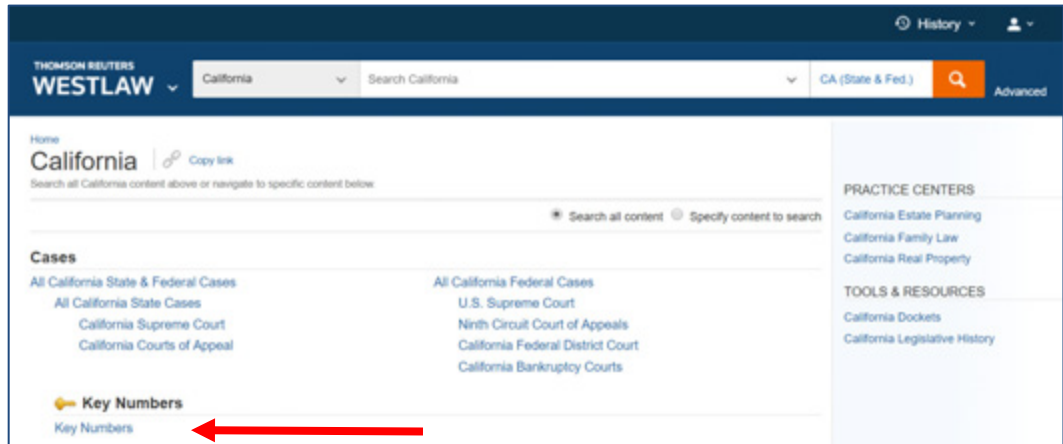
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## 1. How to Locate a Case Using Topic and Key Number System in Westlaw

Click on *Westlaw* on any Law Library computer, and follow these steps:

- Click on Key Numbers.

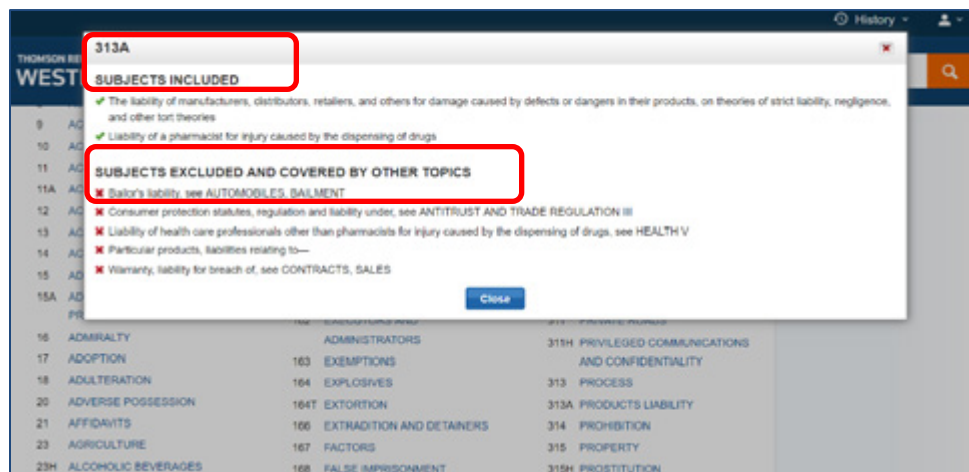
The next page will display the list of topics and topic numbers.



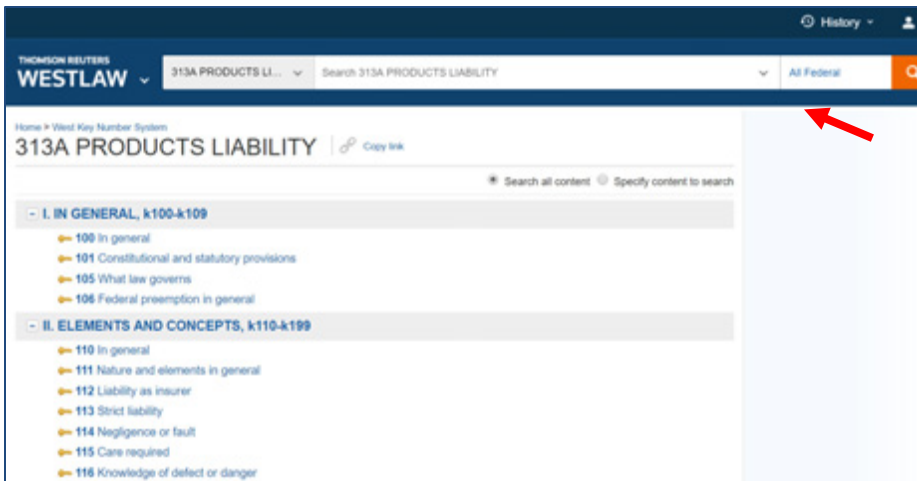
For more information on any topic:

- Roll your cursor over the topic to display a small "i" (stands for information).
- Click on the "i" to display subject coverage information.

The example below is for topic 313A Products Liability. Subjects included and excluded are identified.



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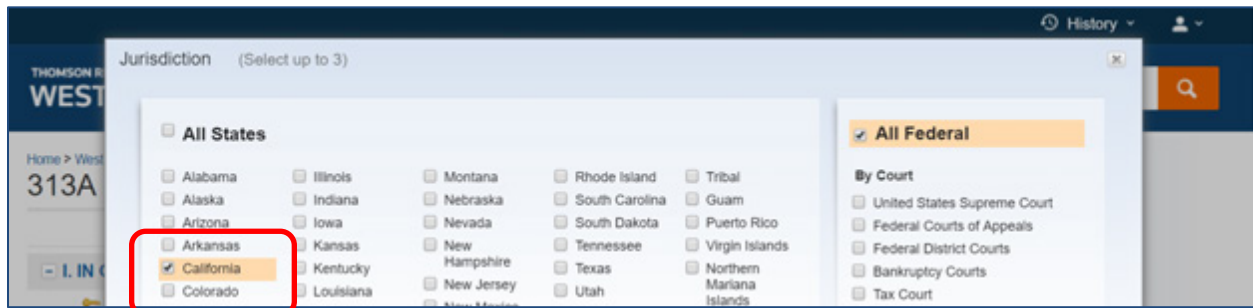


➤ Click on the topic to display a detailed list of **key numbers** and subtopics

When you click on a key number, the key number and topic will appear in the search field at the top of the screen.

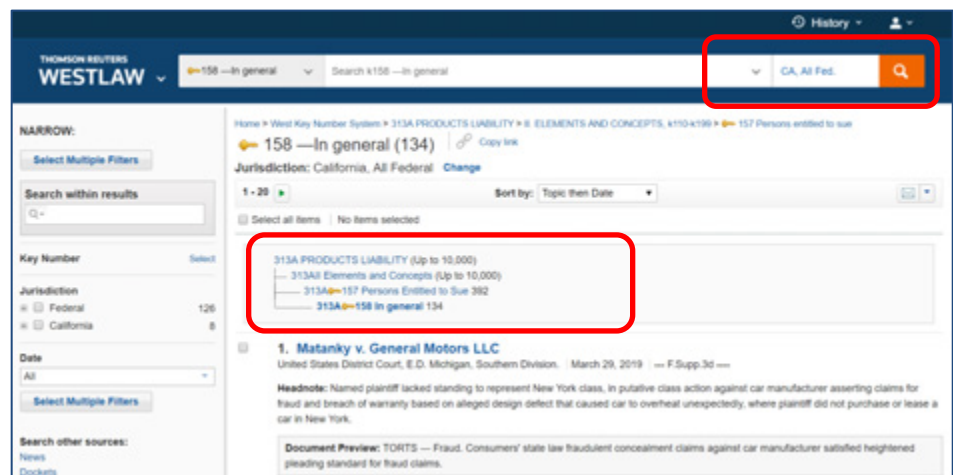
The default jurisdiction is “All Federal” (see the arrow in the graphic above).

- To add California cases to your search, click on “All Federal” to open the jurisdiction window.
- To add California, click to check California and save the changes on the bottom of the page.



A search will retrieve a list of cases for the key number and jurisdiction selected.

Under jurisdiction on the left side of the page. Click on California if you want to view only the cases in this jurisdiction.



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## 2. Abbreviations and Locations of Case Reporters

### *California Reporters*

Official *California "Reports"* located in Compact Shelving, rows C16 – C20:

**Cal.**, **Cal. 2d**, **Cal. 3d**, **Cal. 4<sup>th</sup>**, **Cal. 5<sup>th</sup>** – *California Reports*: California Supreme Court.

**Cal. App.**, **Cal. App. 2d**, **Cal. App. 3d**, **Cal. App. 4th**, **Cal. App. 5<sup>th</sup>** – *California Appellate Reports*: California Appeals Courts.

**Cal. Rptr.**, **Cal. Rptr. 2d**, **Cal. Rptr. 3d**. – *West's California "Reporter"*: contains both California Supreme Court and California Appellate Court cases. Located in Compact Shelving, rows C12 – C13.

### *Regional Reporters*

These reporters contain appellate level cases from the 50 states. These cases are available in the Law Library electronically through the Library's subscription to *Westlaw* or *Lexis Advance*. Click here for a [map](#) the United States and the National Reporter system regions. California cases also appear in the **Pacific Reporter**.

**A.**, **A.2d**, **A.3d** – *Atlantic Reporter*: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and the District of Columbia.

**N.E.**, **N.E.2d**, **N.E.3d** – *North Eastern Reporter*: Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York & Ohio.

**N.W.**, **N.W.2d** – *North Western Reporter*: Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota & Wisconsin.

**P.**, **P.2d**, **P.3d** – *Pacific Reporter*: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington & Wyoming.

**S.E.**, **S.E.2d** – *South Eastern Reporter*: Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia & West Virginia.

**So.**, **So.2d**, **So.3d** – *Southern Reporter*: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana & Mississippi.

**S.W.**, **S.W.2d**, **S.W.3d** – *South Western Reporter*: Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas.

**Federal Reporters** containing federal cases are located in Compact Shelving, rows C54 - C67:

**F.**, **F.2d**, **F.3d** – *Federal Reporter*: United States Circuit Court of Appeals Decisions.

**F. Supp.**, **F. Supp. 2d**, **F. Supp. 3d** – *Federal Supplement*: United States District (trial) Court Decisions.

**U.S.**, **S.Ct.**, **L.Ed.** – United States Reports (official), Supreme Court Reporter (West), United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyer's Edition (LexisNexis): Supreme Court Decisions. The Library only carries the West Supreme Court Reporter in print. (The L.Ed available in Lexis Advance).

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS GUIDE, OR IF YOU NEED HELP FINDING  
OR USING THE MATERIALS LISTED, DON'T HESITATE TO ASK A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN