Starting Research with the Case or Statute You’ve Been Given

Don’t stay up all night. Read a case once and understand it.

Reading a case can seem like reading a foreign language. LexisNexis® has built-in tools that translate what you’re reading into something you can understand, helping you digest and analyze a large volume of information efficiently, so you’re fully prepared for your professor’s cold call in class.

Start by pulling up a case on Lexis Advance®. Enter the citation for your case or statute in the red search box. This will retrieve the document.

Top three tools for understanding your case and finding related authority:

Get your bearings with a Case Summary. It’s like a mini case brief. Read this first for a clear overview of the facts and holdings of the case. Now you’ll only need to read the case once to understand it, saving hours of time.

LexisNexis® Headnotes are shortcuts to what your professor may ask about. Reading the headnotes will ensure you don’t miss the black letter law which will likely be discussed in class. Above each headnote are legal topic tags showing you which area of law that quote is discussing, so you can stay oriented to why the rule is important.

Educate yourself quickly with Topic Summaries. LexisNexis has built-in one-page cheat sheets for important legal topics. These provide you with the legal definition, elements, and links to key cases, making them a great addition to your class outlines.
These four tools tell the whole story of a statute:

Check the **Table of Contents** to see how your statute fits within the code.
See what Title or Chapter your statute section is located within, and view surrounding statutes that may be related to the same legal topic to feel confident that you haven’t missed any important statutes relevant to your assignment.

See how the courts have interpreted a statute using **Annotations**.
Once you’ve read your statute, consult the Annotations to get the full story. Knowing how the courts have interpreted and applied the statutory language will affect how you apply that statute for your assignment.

Case opinions are organized by topic and listed under **Case Notes**.
Select a topic from the list to see the key cases where courts made a ruling involving your statute.

Uncover the history of a statute’s interpretations by **Shepardizing**.
The Shepard’s® report will show you all cases that have cited to your statute. Seeing how those past cases construed your statute will provide you with evidence of how the statute would likely be applied to your assignment hypothetical.