Your legal argument is only as strong as the authority you cite to support it.

You’ve got your first major research assignment, and you want to really crush it. You’ve selected three cases for your argument. Are they the strongest authority? Have they been challenged in the courts? Have other cases followed them enough that you’re sure they’re the most authoritative opinions?

It’s critical to know if the law you’re relying on is still valid and hasn’t been overruled, and whether it’s the strongest authority you could cite. This process is called Shepardizing™. The LexisNexis® Shepard’s® indexing system has been used since the 19th century, and it remains the industry’s premier citations service.

Quickly find Shepard’s analysis

The Shepard’s Signal™ indicator by the case name in the document view on Lexis Advance® provides an overall impression of how carefully you’ll need to scrutinize the case. Get a quick snapshot of the analysis of the various holdings in a case with the Shepard’s box on the right.

Select Shepardize® this document to open the full Shepard’s report.

The key, at right, shows what the various Shepard’s Signal indicators mean. Only Shepard’s reports on seven types of analysis, including Followed by—which shows how many, and which, cases and courts have followed a case, helping you to determine its precedential value.
How to Shepardize®

Shepardize your research on Lexis Advance in three easy steps:

**STEP 1: Shepardize the ruling, or decision, for your specific issue**

Instead of Shepardizing an entire case, Shepardize the specific rule from a case which speaks to your issue.

For example, a rule in 800 F.2d 111 says a remedy of front pay is available in ADEA claims for wrongful discharge. You would Shepardize this rule to see if it’s good law, not the entire case. Although it’s important to notice which Shepard’s Signal indicator has been assigned to the case, it’s more important to see how your rule of law was treated by other courts.

LexisNexis® Headnotes summarize the rules of law discussed in a case. To quickly find the Headnotes, use the Jump to feature located at the top of the case.

Choose which LexisNexis Headnote you’d like to Shepardize and click the Shepardize—Narrow by this Headnote link at the end. This will Shepardize just the rule of law which speaks to your issue.
STEP 2: Review the citing decisions

Each Shepard's report lists cases analyzing the decision under Citing Decisions. Check the case analysis and quickly see how your decision was treated by other courts.

- Select Citing Decisions ① at the top left of the Shepard's report.
- Use Search Within Results to narrow to specific terms. For example, type front pay ② in the box. Then, look at the Analysis filter ③ to see whether the McNeil case regarding the issue of front pay was overruled, questioned or criticized.
- The Analysis filter will also show whether the issue of front pay has been followed by other courts ④. “Followed by” analysis is only available on Shepard’s through LexisNexis. Your legal argument to rely on a case as precedent is stronger when several courts follow the same rule.

STEP 3: Review the appellate history

The appellate history allows you to see the history of a case as it progresses through the court system. The appellate history is the only place where you will see whether a case was “Reversed by” a higher court.

- From inside a Shepard's report, select Appellate History ①.
- Click the Map button ② on the right. The Map view quickly shows when a higher court reverses a lower court decision, so you don’t accidently cite the lower case when it is no longer the best precedent.
Quickly find additional supporting cases and secondary sources

You can also find treatises, law reviews and other sources that cite your case on Shepard’s, making it easy to learn more about your legal issue.

1. Shepardize your case.
2. Select Other Citing Sources.
3. Narrow By Treatises under the Content filter.
4. You can further narrow by Search Within Results to the specific issue of front pay to ensure a more on-point result set.

Spot weaknesses in your opponent’s arguments

It’s easy to spot holes in your opponent’s arguments using Shepard’s Table of Authorities that provides a list of legal authority that their case cited to as precedent. For example, if your opponent cites 860 F.2d 834, use these steps to check the current precedential value of citing that case.

1. Shepardize the case (follow the steps at the top of this page).
2. Select the Table of Authorities content link.
3. Narrow By Following under the Analysis filter. This will pull up the cases that Coston followed and relied on as precedent.
4. It’s possible that Coston is relying on past precedent that is no longer considered the best law to follow. Negative Shepard’s Signal indicators found in your result set could expose weaknesses in your opponent’s decision to rely on Coston as precedent.

Only Shepard’s can help you:
- Be certain you’re citing good law
- Build your argument with the strongest precedents
- Identify weaknesses in your opponent’s arguments

LexisNexis, Lexis Advance, Shepard’s, Shepardize and the Knowledge Burst logo are registered trademarks, and Shepardizing and Shepard’s Signal are trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., used under license. Other products or services may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.

© 2015 LexisNexis. All rights reserved. LA13388-1 0715

Get more research tips at YouTube.com/LexisNexisLawSchools

lexisnexis.com/lawschool