

Pinpoint: Citation and Formatting Guide

Note: These reference guides do not take the place of assignment guidelines



When citing a court case or other legal document, it is important to be both concise and specific. *The Bluebook*, the main style guide for legal writing, recommends a citation arrangement that includes up to five pieces of specific information:

1. The name of the document being cited (abbreviated based on *The Bluebook* guidelines)
2. The volume number of the reporter (the report that published the document)
3. The name of the reporter
4. The location of the cited material (page number, section number, or paragraph number)
5. The date of the document

This is formatted as follows:

Name of the case, volume number reporter location of cited material (date)

Examples: *Name:* FGCU v Comma, *Volume number:* 153 *Reporter:* U.S. *Location of Material:* 12, 18 *Date:* Jan 29, 1991.

FGCU v Comma, 153 U.S. 12, 18 (Jan 29, 1991).

Name of the Document

When writing out the name of a document, *The Bluebook* suggests abbreviations to be used for longer words, and can be referenced when abbreviating your titles. If you do not have *The Bluebook*, or your title contains words that are not listed in the book, you can use your best judgment when abbreviating. Any words that are seven letters or more can be abbreviated.

Example: In the citation Ayala Dep. 30, 30 – 35 (Feb. 2001) “Dep.” is an abbreviation for “deposition.”

You do not abbreviate the names of the parties involved in the case, but you only have to list the first name on either side of the “v.”

Example: In the case “Ayala, Fischell, & Davis v Writing Center & Florida Gulf Coast University,” your citation would only say “Ayala v Writing Center.”

Location of Cited Material

These types of citations are called “pinpoint citations” because they pinpoint the exact place in the text that the cited material comes from. Depending on the type of document, pinpoint citations may reference pages, paragraphs, sections, or page and line numbers.

Pinpoints to Pages

- Cite the page or range of pages that the information you are citing came from.
Ex: Ayala v Fischell, 12-15.
- If the case you are citing comes from a report that contains more than one case, list the page that your specific document starts on, and then list the specific pages you are citing. Ex: Ayala v Fischell, 10, 12-15.
- A comma and the word “at” are used if the page number could be confused with another part of the citation, such as the volume number. Ex: Ayala v Fischell, 12 U.S. 10, at 12-15.

Pinpoint: Citation and Formatting Guide

Note: These reference guides do not take the place of assignment guidelines



Pinpoints to Sections and Paragraphs

- If the document has numbered sections or paragraphs, you will cite them rather than the page number (as they are more precise). The symbol § is used to indicate sections, and the symbol ¶ is used to indicate paragraphs. Example: Ayala v Fischell, 12 U.S. § 4, ¶ 2.
- You do not use the word “at” before a section or paragraph symbol.
- Put a space between the symbol and the number that follows it. Example: Ayala v Fischell, 12 U.S. ¶ 4.

Pinpoints to Page and Line Numbers

- If the lines on the pages that you are citing are numbered, cite both the page and line numbers.
- Separate line and page numbers with a colon, in line:page order. Example: Chase Dep. 15:21.
- To cite information that begins on one page and ends on another, include the beginning and ending pages and lines. Example: Chase Dep. 15:21 – 16:4.
- When listing multiple locations, separate nonconsecutive pinpoints with commas. Example: Chase Dep. 15:21 – 16:4, 18:5, 19:17 - 21.

Date of the Document

Provide the date in full (month day, year) for the decision dates of the following documents: depositions, trial or hearing testimony, and judgements and orders. Example: Ayala Dep. 30, 30 – 35 (Feb 5, 2001). If you do not have the full date, include as much of it as you have.

For other documents, provide the date when:

- Two or more documents that you are citing have the same name
- The date of the document is significant to what you are writing about
- It is needed to avoid any other confusion

Examples: Fischell Aff. ¶ 9, May 10, 2003.
Fischell Aff. ¶ 2, June 2, 2003.

Short Form Citations

Short form citations are used when you cite the same source multiple times. When you are citing, give a full citation to each document the first time you cite it within a new section; for example, you would give the full citation the first time you introduce your source within the Statement of Facts and again in the Argument section of a legal brief. The subsequent citations can be shortened by using a shortened form of the title and removing the date, if you do not have multiple sources by the same name.

Example: (1st citation) Ayala v Fischell, 12 Va. ¶ 8 (Feb 5, 2016) → (Subsequent citations) Ayala, 12 Va. ¶ 9

If you are citing the same source two or more times in a row *without citing another source between them*, the citations following the first can have their name replaced with “*Id.*” *Id.* stands for the Latin *idem*, which means “the same,” and is a way to inform your reader that the source you are using now is the same as the previous one.

Example: (1st citation) Ayala v Fischell, 12 Va. ¶ 8 (Feb 5, 2016) → (Following citation) *Id.* 12 Va. ¶ 9

If you are citing the same exact location in the text, you can use *Id.* for the entire citation.

Example: (1st citation) Ayala v Fischell, 12 Va. ¶ 8 (Feb 5, 2016) → (Following citations from same location) *Id.*

Pinpoint: Citation and Formatting Guide

Note: These reference guides do not take the place of assignment guidelines

