## **Name: Oladokun Victor**

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Legal researchers are encouraged to begin with secondary sources such as **law review articles** or **treatises**, which are likely to lead to specific primary law such as statutory references or case citations.

Primary law citations can then lead the researcher to additional primary law, or even back to additional helpful secondary materials.

## **Secondary sources are a great place to begin your research**. Although the primary sources of law--case law, statutes, and regulations--establish the law on a given topic, it is often difficult to quickly locate answers in them. Secondary sources often **explain legal principles** more thoroughly than a single case or statute, so **using them can help you save time**. Secondary sources also help you avoid unnecessary research, since you are tapping into work that someone else has already done on an issue

Secondary sources include:

* Legal encyclopedias
* American Law Reports (ALR)
* Treatises
* Law journals
* Restatements

Secondary sources are particularly useful for:

* Learning the basics of a particular area of law
* Understanding key terms of art in an area
* Identifying essential cases and statutes

Secondary sources of law are only made use of whenever there are no primary sources of law to fall back on.

Secondary sources of law are the sources of law that do not carry a dominant legal weight and binding

effect. The legal authorities contain in these kind of sources are diluted and persuasive which are not

binding on any court of law. According to Beredugo (2009), secondary sources of law are less

significance sources of law that carry barely persuasive legal authority or effect and are therefore ,

not binding on any court of law. Secondary sources can be useful in court of law or resorted to where

the court finds the opinion or fact underlying the authority contained therein. Secondary sources can

also be referred to in court if it supports the authorities of the primary sources. Examples of secondary

sources of Nigerian law according to Beredugo includes:

(a) decisions of courts of foreign countries

(b) International conventions, treaties, and resolutions of international bodies;

(c) Statements or opinions of jurists and learned authors contained in law textbooks, journal,

periodicals, dictionaries, letters, speeches, and interviews;

(d) legal opinions contained in nullified judgements.

Secondary sources of law also include all sources that provide helpful introductions to legal subjects,

synopses of decisions, statutes, and regulations in a given field, analyses of trends and historical

background of law, explanation of new or difficult concepts, descriptions and analysis of the law and

its developments and citations to primary sources through footnotes and annotations.