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**COURSE CODE: LAW 102**

**COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL METHOD II**

**MATRIC NO.: 19/LAW01/046**

**QUESTION:** Explain the secondary sources of law

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. The secondary sources of Nigerian law are the indirect ways through which we get our law Secondary Law consists of sources that explain, criticize, discuss, or help locate primary law.  Examples of secondary sources of law are:

Law Reports

Text Books and Treatises

Periodicals, Journals, and Legal Digests

Casebooks

Legal Dictionaries

Newspapers

## **LAW REPORTS**

## **Law reports** or reporters are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case **law** decided by courts. When a particular judicial opinion is referenced, the **law** report series in which the opinion is printed will determine the case citation format.

## **TREATIES**

## **Treaty**, a binding formal agreement, [contract](https://www.britannica.com/topic/contract-law), or other written instrument that establishes obligations between two or more subjects of [international law](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-law)(primarily [states](https://www.britannica.com/topic/state-sovereign-political-entity) and [international organizations](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-organization)). The rules concerning treaties between states are contained in the [Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vienna-Convention-on-the-Law-of-Treaties) (1969), and those between states and international organizations appear in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties Between States and International Organizations or Between International Organizations

**LEGAL PERIODICALS**

Legal periodicals contain articles about emerging areas of law and are written by professors, practitioners, judges, and law students. Commonly used legal periodicals include law reviews, law journals, and bar journals.

## **Why Use a Legal Periodical?**

Legal periodicals are often the first secondary source to cover new and emerging areas of law and to highlight developments and changes in the existing law. An issue that is too new to appear in an encyclopedia or treatise is often discussed heavily in the trade press or scholarly journals. In addition to providing an in-depth discussion on the legal issue, a law review or journal article also will provide citations to significant, and often recent, primary and secondary sources.

**CASEBOOKS**

A **casebook** is a type of [textbook](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textbook) used primarily by students in [law schools](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_school).[[1]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casebook#cite_note-ah83-1) Rather than simply laying out the [legal doctrine](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_doctrine) in a particular area of study, a casebook contains excerpts from [legal cases](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_case) in which the law of that area was applied.[[1]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casebook#cite_note-ah83-1) It is then up to the student to analyze the language of the case in order to determine what rule was applied and how the [court](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court) applied it.[[1]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casebook#cite_note-ah83-1) Casebooks sometimes also contain excerpts from [law review](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_review) articles and [legal treatises](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_treatise), historical notes, editorial commentary, and other related materials to provide background for the cases.

**LEGAL DICTIONARIES**

A legal dictionary contains the definitions of legal terms taken from a variety of sources. They are the first place you should look when you do not understand what a legal term means.

The two most commonly used legal dictionaries are [**Black's Law Dictionary**](http://wrlc-gulaw.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?tab=Everything&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&vid=01WRLC_GUNIVLAW:01WRLC_GUNIVLAW&lang=en&offset=0&query=any,contains,b1260349?) and **[Ballentine's Law Dictionary](http://wrlc-gulaw.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?tab=Everything&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&vid=01WRLC_GUNIVLAW:01WRLC_GUNIVLAW&lang=en&offset=0&query=any,contains,b175741?)**. Print copies of Black's are located throughout the library on swivel stands. Black's is also available on [**Westlaw**](https://a.next.westlaw.com/Browse/Home/SecondarySources/BlacksLawDictionary?originationContext=AutoComplete&contextData=(sc.Default)&transitionType=CategoryPageItem), while Ballentine's is available on [**Lexis**](https://advance.lexis.com/api/permalink/f4e4b50b-0a46-4b9e-a97e-00238f02e585/?context=1000516).

## **Why Use a Legal Dictionary?**

In addition to providing a general definition of the legal term in question, legal dictionaries may also provide references to applicable primary law and other secondary sources containing more in-depth discussions of the term. For example, the entry for the legal term of art in Black's Law Dictionary contains a definition and references two Supreme Court opinions.

**LEGAL NEWSPAPERS**

legall **newspapers**, for the purposes of this article, are defined as **newspapers**printed weekly or oftener, the principal purpose being to disseminate general legal and court **news**. ... They are not read for entertain- ment or general **news**, but for information on legal and business affairs transacted in a local area.