

A Law Workshop Guide: Understanding Citations

A citation is a reference to a legal authority. It is essential that citations to legal material follow a standard format so that anyone may find the referenced items without difficulty.

A case citation will follow the same format:

Houston v BBC 1995 S.C. 433

- **Parties:** Houston v BBC
- **Date:** 1995
- **Case Report Abbreviation:** S.C (in this case, session cases)
- **Page Number:** 433

In some instances, multiple case reports will be published in a year. In this situation, the case report will be preceded by a number:

[2008] 4 All. E.R. 28

- **Year:** 2008
- **Volume: 4** (4th Volume)
- **All England Law Reports:** All. E.R.
- **Page Number:** 28

You will quickly become familiar with the most common case report abbreviations.

SC: Session Cases	All E.R: All England Law Reports	QB: Queen's Bench
SLT: Scots Law Times	WLR: Weekly Law Reports	AC: Appeal cases
SCCR: Scottish Criminal cases Reports	KB: Kings Bench	Ch: Chancery division

To help you understand these further, there are helpful guides you can use:

Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations

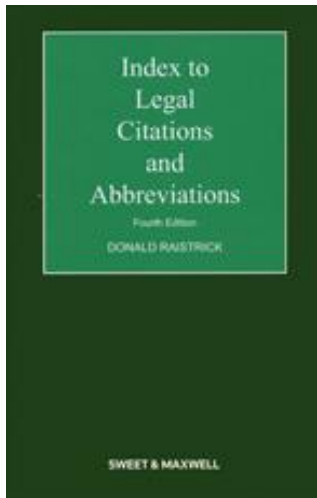
The Cardiff Index is the most commonly used online index.

This database allows you to search for the meaning of abbreviations for English language legal publications, from the British Isles, the Commonwealth and the United States, including those covering international and comparative law.

A wide selection of major foreign language law publications is also included with publications from over 295 jurisdictions covered by the Index

The database mainly covers law reports and journals, however some other legal publications are also included.

You can search via series title or abbreviation



Index to Legal Citations and Abbreviations

Commonly known as 'Raistrick' – Index to Legal Citations & Abbreviations is the most commonly used **printed** index.

There are copies available in the Law Workshop and level 7 of the main library.

Neutral Citations.

Introduced in the early 2000's, neutral citations refer to the case, not to the law report. They were designed to make it easier to find cases online.

[2009] CSOH 42

Year: 2009

Court & Division: CSOH

Case Number: 42

Neutral citations follow the same convention as the printed case reporting series, however the abbreviation is not a publication but a court – in this example, CSOH is the abbreviation for the **Court of Session (Outer House)**.

*Remember – A case may be cited in more than one law report! These are called **parallel citations**. Citations must be listed in order of authority, from law reports down to newspaper reports and transcripts.*

Citing in Court – Session Cases series

