LRC Week 3 Training
Introduction to Legal Research
Part 1
What we will cover

- Differences between primary and secondary sources

- Types of secondary sources
  - Legal Encyclopedias (AmJur, CJS, Cal Jur, and Witkin Summary of California Law)
  - Treatises and Practice Guides (Witkin Treatises, Matthew Bender Practice Guides, CEB Practice Guides, Rutter Practice Guides)
  - American Law Reports
  - Legal Periodicals


In-Class Research Problem: Medical Marijuana

- Secondary source & statutory research
Primary sources (primary authority)

- Examples: Caselaw and statutes & codes
- Created by the courts and the legislature
- It’s the law!

- Binding/mandatory vs. nonbinding/persuasive
  - Jurisdiction
  - Weight of authority (level of court)
Secondary sources (secondary authority)

- Secondary sources are background resources.

- Examples: encyclopedias, treatises and practice guides, A.L.R. annotations, journal or law review articles, and restatements of the law.

- Secondary sources are NOT binding, but they can be a good way to start research as they contain valuable citations to primary sources.

Secondary sources are huge time-savers!
Legal Encyclopedias

- Report on the general state of the law in different subject areas.


- In addition, California has two state encyclopedias: *California Jurisprudence* (Cal. Jur.) and *Witkin’s Summary of California Law*. 
Treatises and Practice Guides

- Essentially, single-subject legal books.

- Treatise examples: Corbin on Contracts, Products Liability in a Nutshell, Witkin California Criminal Law.

- Practice guide examples: California Landlord-Tenant Practice, California Civil Practice.

- Popular practice guide publishers include Matthew Bender ([Lexis](https://www.lexis.com)), CEB ([OnLaw](https://www.ceb.com)), and Rutter ([Westlaw](https://www.westlaw.com)).
American Law Reports (ALR)

- Contains articles called “Annotations.”

- Annotations collect summaries of cases from a variety of jurisdictions to provide an overview of the law on a topic.

- They are more detailed than encyclopedias.
Legal Periodicals

- Law journals or law reviews

- Contain detailed articles on very specific topics, e.g. *Last Resorts and Fundamental Rights: The Substantive Due Process Implications of Prohibitions on Medical Marijuana*, 118 Harv. L. Rev. 1985 (2005)

- Generally, not a good place to start your legal research if you are just getting familiar with a topic.
Searching for secondary sources

In Westlaw and Lexis you have two options for accessing secondary sources.

Option 1: Type in the name of the item (e.g. California Jurisprudence, American Law Reports, etc.) and select one of the populated options, and search within the item.

Option 2: Search by natural language and filter by clicking on secondary sources, jurisdiction, and/or type.
In-Class Research Problem

Fact Pattern:

Calvin is a resident of San Diego and suffers from chronic back pain. He has a valid medical marijuana card and often smokes in the morning to alleviate the pain. His employer routinely administers drug tests. Calvin is worried that he could be fired for failing a marijuana drug test even though he has a medical marijuana card.

- What is California’s law regarding medical marijuana?

- Should Calvin be worried about failing a drug test even though he has a medical marijuana card?