

Finding law journal articles

This guide is aimed at law students and will help you find journal articles. You can find additional information and ideas on [the law page of the library website](#).

1. Get started

Start from the library homepage (www.brookes.ac.uk/library). From here you can get to your module reading lists, to LibrarySearch, Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline, all of which are described in more detail below.

2. Why are journal articles so important and useful?

Journals are an important resource which can be used to keep up to date with the latest developments in the law. They are also a key source of academic criticism and commentary upon the law which should be used in addition to ... books ... , particularly when researching for a piece of written work, a seminar, or a moot.¹

Journals continuously publish new issues and new articles. This means that new ideas and developments are often discussed in journals long before they make it into books.

Journal articles usually have more precise themes than books, for example an article could focus on a single case.

Look at the marking criteria for your assessments. The wording will vary depending on your course and year of study, but a high quality piece of work is described as one where there is evidence of reading academic materials such as journal articles. This indicates that your module leaders place a high value on journal articles as a source.

3. What do all the numbers in the references mean?

If you look at the end of a textbook chapter, you may see some references to journal articles. References to journal articles can seem quite complicated, so it helps to know what all the parts mean. Understanding this will also help you when you come to create your own footnotes and bibliographies in assessments.

Compare a reference you find in a textbook to the two examples below and see if you can see the parallels.

Emmanuel Voyiakīs, 'Causation and opportunity in tort' (2018) 38 Oxford Journal of Legal Studies 26.
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¹ Emily Finch and Stefan Fafinski, *Legal Skills*, (9th edn, OUP 2023) 178.

Stephen Shute, 'Appropriation and the law of theft' [2002] Criminal Law Review 445.

A reference to a journal article starts with the name of the author(s), followed by the title of the article. You then have the year and the volume number followed by the title of the journal.

If you get muddled about which title is which, remember the article title always comes before the journal title.

The final number is the page number that the article starts on.

Some journals (e.g. Public Law or Criminal Law Review) do not use volume numbers, but just use the year to differentiate one volume from another. References to these journals have square brackets around the year, as shown in the second example above.

Top tip: Sometimes the title of the journal is abbreviated e.g. rather than saying Modern Law Review, the reference may say MLR. Section 9 of this guide shows you how to find out what an abbreviation means.

4. Start with your module reading lists

You can find the **reading list** for any module by typing the module number in the “reading list” tab of the search box on the [library homepage](#):

Search the library


LibrarySearch Books Journals Databases **Reading lists** Library website

Reading lists

Search

If you go to one of your modules on [Moodle](#), you can also find its reading list there. Just look under “key resources” in any module.

You can spot journal articles on your reading list, because they'll be labelled “article”, like the example below. Simply click on the “view online” button next to any article and you'll get immediate access.



The victims of hate crime and the principles of the criminal law in Legal Studies

Article - by Chara Bakalis - 2017 - Recommended

VIEW ONLINE

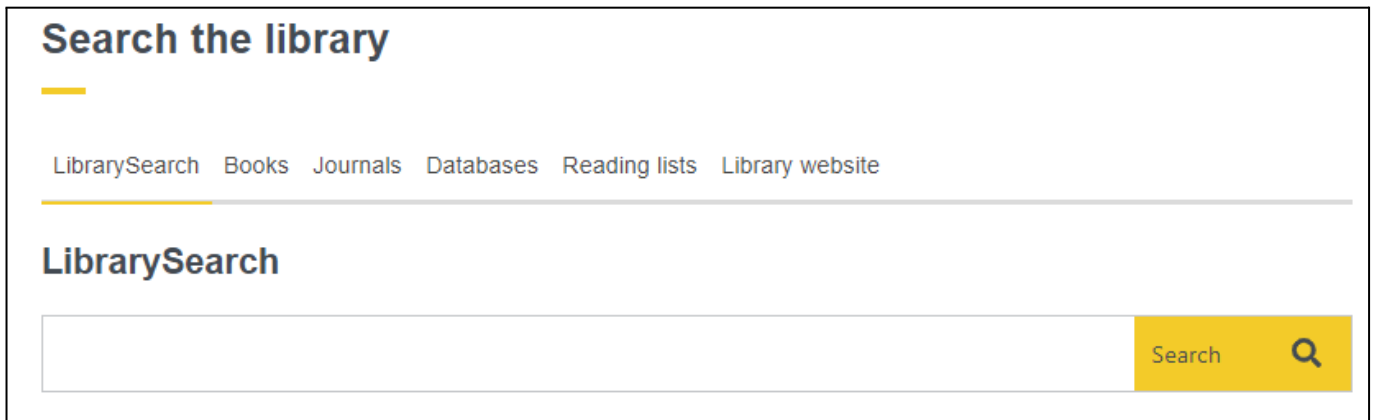
In rare cases, you will see an article that does not have a “view online” button. While we do not have digital access to this article, you may still be able to access a print version of it via the library. You are most likely to encounter this with articles from the Common Market Law Review, which is used in EU law. [Learn more about finding Common Market Law Review articles](#).

Using your online module reading lists is the quickest and easiest way to locate the things your module leaders recommend you read.

5. Use LibrarySearch to find journal articles

LibrarySearch is a good place to start your research, and to go beyond articles that are not on your reading lists.

Go to the search box on the [library homepage](#) and select the “LibrarySearch” tab:

A screenshot of the LibrarySearch interface. At the top, it says "Search the library" in a large, bold, blue font. Below this is a horizontal navigation bar with several tabs: "LibrarySearch", "Books", "Journals", "Databases", "Reading lists", and "Library website". The "LibrarySearch" tab is currently selected and highlighted with a yellow underline. Below the navigation bar, the heading "LibrarySearch" is displayed in a bold, black font. Underneath this heading is a large, empty search input box. To the right of the input box is a yellow button with the word "Search" in black text and a magnifying glass icon.

If you’re looking for a particular article, just put the title of the article in the search box. Don’t put the whole reference into the search box.

You can also use LibrarySearch to find articles on a particular topic. [Learn more about choosing effective search words.](#)

If you find an article that looks useful, click on the “view full text” or “view PDF” button next to it. Enter your student number and Brookes password if prompted.

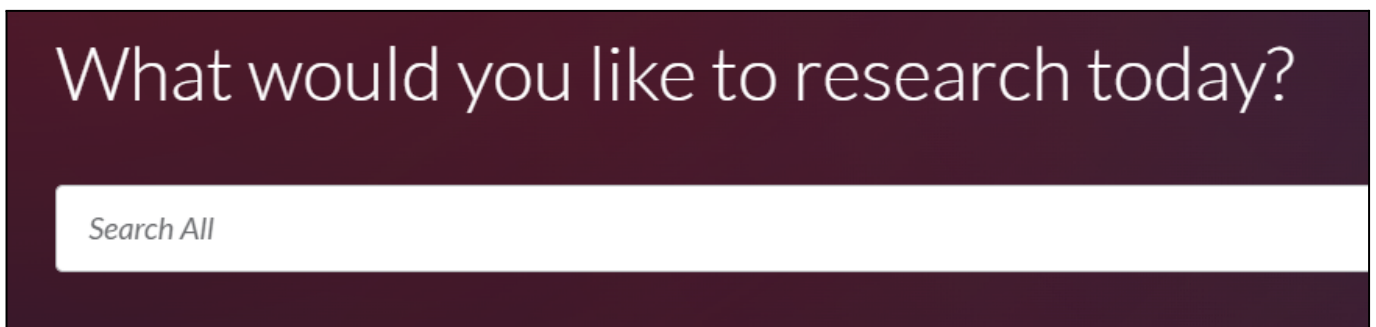
Top tip: Not every journal article that you have access to is picked up by LibrarySearch. We recommend using any of Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline in addition to LibrarySearch.

6. Use Lexis+ to find journal articles

Lexis+ is a powerful and useful collection of case law, legislation, journal articles and much more. [Access Lexis+](#) and [see all of the library’s Lexis+ support materials.](#)

[See step-by-step instructions for finding journal articles on a topic using Lexis+.](#)

You can also use Lexis+ to search for a specific article that you have a reference for. Put the title of the article (not the whole reference) into the “What would you like to research today” box.

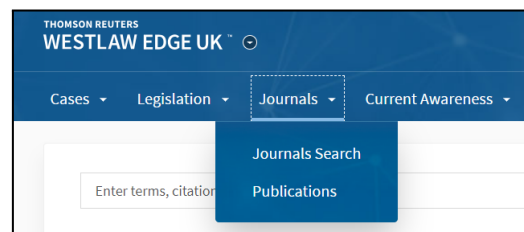
A screenshot of the Lexis+ search interface. It features a dark purple background. At the top, the text "What would you like to research today?" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this text is a white rectangular search box with the placeholder text "Search All" in a grey, italicized font.

Top tip: If you get a long list of results, use the “books and journals” filter down the left hand side of your results to narrow it down to just journal articles.

7. Use Westlaw to find journal articles

Westlaw is a powerful and useful collection of case law, legislation, journal articles and much more. [Access Westlaw](#) and [see all of the library's Westlaw support materials](#).

[See step-by-step instructions for finding journal articles on a topic using Westlaw](#).



You can also use Westlaw to search for a specific article that you have a reference for. From the dark bar that runs along the top of every Westlaw page, select “journals” then “journals search”.

Then enter the title of the article (not the full reference) into the “article title” box:

A screenshot of the 'Journals Search' page on Westlaw. The page has a white background with a light blue header. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Add to favourites', 'Make this my start page', and 'Copy link'. Below these is a 'Show Terms and Connectors' link. The main search area contains several input fields: 'Free Text', 'Subject/Keyword', 'Article Title', and 'Author'. Below these are two dropdown menus: 'Full Text Journals' (set to 'All') and 'Document Type' (set to 'All').

8. Use HeinOnline to find journal articles

HeinOnline is a large American collection of journal articles. It is particularly useful for international law and criminology. [Access HeinOnline](#) and [see all of the library's HeinOnline support materials](#).

[See step-by-step instructions for finding journal articles on a topic using HeinOnline](#).

9. Decoding abbreviated journal titles

If you see a reference to an article where the title of the journal is abbreviated, you may want to know what the full name of the journal is.

Use the [Cardiff Guide to Legal Abbreviations](#) to help with this.

10. Accessing articles that we don't have at Oxford Brookes

Through the library's subscriptions to Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline, all Oxford Brookes students have access to a **huge** selection of law journal articles. But we don't have everything!

If you want to read an article but you can't find it via one of the sources listed above, check out [Go Further, Get More](#). This page shows you some alternative routes to accessing the things you want to read.

11. Getting help and learning more

Lexis+, Westlaw and HeinOnline are really powerful tools, but they're not always straightforward to use. If you get stuck or want some ideas about how to make the most of these tools get in touch with us, and we can help.

Getting help and finding out more

More information and support can be found on the law page of the library website:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources-and-services/course-resource-help/law>