

Tips for Students from Students

HOW TO DO LEGAL RESEARCH

From a 3L point of view

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ENSURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION BEING ASKED OF YOU.

- What is the legal question?
- Narrow your focus where possible i.e. what jurisdiction are you looking at and/or what level of court do you need to consider
- What are possible search terms, phrases you are looking for?

DETERMINE WHO THIS WORK IS FOR (CLIENT, PARTNER, YOURSELF, ANOTHER ASSOCIATE), THIS WILL DETERMINE HOW IN DEPTH YOUR RESEARCH NEEDS TO BE.

- Ask what the turnaround time is or what is the deadline
- Determine the who the task is for and cater the response to the appropriate length i.e. a short email or a page or two
- Ask how the research should be summarized and reported, e.g. legal memo, email message, research paper/article, notes for a verbal discussion

DETERMINE WHAT LEGAL INFORMATION YOU NEED.

- Primary sources and/or secondary sources – knowing the length will help with how much information here you need i.e. 3 cases per argument
- What and how are you defining as “good law”. What is the precedent case/ruling - look to note up

START RESEARCHING ON LEXIS ADVANCE QUICKLAW.

- Knowing all the preliminary information (listed above) will help you know what you are looking for or where to start looking in Quicklaw i.e. I'm looking for an update on the legislation or what was the ruling in X at the Court of Appeal in Nova Scotia?

PUT YOUR RESEARCH TOGETHER.

- Knowing who you are writing for will help you determine what is required when you present your information
- Cross compare with Canlii/ Westlaw to see if you're missing something




OVERALL OR FINAL THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Make sure your citations are correct
- Did you write for your audience and is this reflected in your language choice?
- Is there a precedent (precedented form) you need to follow?
- Give your conclusion
- Make sure you're answering the legal question you were assigned/asked to look into
- Take a step back to reflect and see if you're missing gaps
- If there are gaps, are you going to fill them or just note them in your report

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