

In legal citations, the name of the case is underlined or italicized. The party seeking relief comes first, then the individual or organization whose action or decision is being complained about or appealed. The name of the case is followed by a comma, the volume of the reporter, the name of the reporter, the page number where the case is located, and finally, in parentheses, the year the court decided the case. *Reporters* are sets of books in which opinions of a court or adjudicating agency are printed.

The pertinent official reporters are listed here, along with the type of cases they print and the abbreviations used in citing them.

Court Cases	Reporter	Abbreviation for Citations
U. S. Supreme Court cases	<i>United States Reports</i>	U.S.
	<i>Supreme Court Reporter</i>	S.Ct.
	<i>United States Reports, Lawyers Edition</i>	L.Ed., L.Ed.2d or L.Ed.3d
U. S. Courts of Appeals cases	<i>Federal Reporter</i>	F., F.2d or F.3d
U.S. District Court cases	<i>Federal Supplement</i>	F. Supp. or F. Supp.2d

The Government Printing Office prints all Supreme Court cases in *United States Reports*. The privately printed *Supreme Court Reporter* also reports Supreme Court cases, but it adds editorial commentary. *United State Reports, Lawyers Edition*, which can be abbreviated as “L.Ed.” or “L.Ed.2d,” for older cases and “L.Ed.3d” for recent cases, adds briefs by attorneys and *amicus curiae* as well. A small percentage of U. S. Court of Appeals cases are printed in *Federal Reporter*. *Federal Supplement* contains a small percentage of federal district court cases, those chosen by their presiding judges as worthwhile.

AFGE, Local 2544 v. Federal Labor Relations Authority, 779 F.2d 719 (D.C. Cir. 1985)

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Appellant/Petitioner | *Appellee/Respondent* | *Volume* | *Page #* | *Court* | *Year*
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In the case cited here, AFGE, Local 2544 appealed a decision by the FLRA to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in 1985. The case was printed in Volume 779 of Federal Reporter.

The next example is a citation of a case heard by a District Court.

Flanders v. Golsan, 913 F. Supp. 885 (C.D. Cal. 1996)

<i>Appellant/Petitioner</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Page #</i>	<i>District Court</i>	<i>Year</i>
<i>Appellee/Respondent</i>	<i>Reporter</i>			

When citing a precedent in your brief, use an official reporter whenever possible. The cases published in official reporters were selected because of their precedent-setting significance. (Attorneys actually lobby for the honor of having their cases included.) Precedents in an official reporter carry more weight than cases that were not selected.

If your precedent is too recent or too minor to be published in one of the official reporters, you will have to resort to citing a precedent from an unofficial reporter. No unofficial reporters carry more prestige than those published by the Bureau of National Affairs. BNA publishes two massive collections of specialized labor publications: *Labor Relations Reporter* and its electronic version, the online service *Labor and Employment Law Library*. *Fair Employment Practices* (abbreviated as FEP Cases) and *Labor Relations Reference Manual* (abbreviated as LRRM) are two of the many separately priced segments of these huge collections. *Fair Employment Practices* publishes court decisions relating in large part to employment discrimination. *Labor Relations Reference Manual* publishes both court decisions and NLRB decisions. BNA’s *Government Employees Relations Report* (abbreviated as GERR) includes court decisions relating to the public sector in a weekly newsletter covering issues of employment, personnel, and labor relations in the current public sector. Researchers can also access *Government Employees’ Relations Report* online in electronic format.

WestLaw, West Publishing Company’s online service, has the opinions of every published federal or state court case and huge numbers of unpublished cases as well. WestLaw updates its listings of federal court cases every twenty minutes. Westlaw shows citations of published cases (in both official and unofficial reporters) and specifies when a case is unpublished. Use standard citations for published cases. For unpublished cases, use Westlaw’s electronic citation format:

2000 WL 233240

<i>year</i>	<i>reporter</i>	<i>Westlaw’s assigned case number</i>

How to Make Subsequent References

Because it would be awkward to cite the same case numerous times using the long format, the citation of all kinds of precedents—court cases, FLRA, EEO, etc.—is abbreviated

in subsequent references. When the case is mentioned the first time, the full, formal citation is entered, followed, in parentheses, by the abbreviation the writer chooses to use when mentioning the case again.

Evans v. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, EEOC. No. 05910438, August 1, 1991 (Evans)

AFGE, Local 2544 v. Federal Labor Relations Authority, 779 F.2d 719 (D.C. Cir. 1985) (AFGE Local 2544)

The abbreviation should be distinctive enough that the case will not be confused with any other. In the last example, for instance, *AFGE Local 2544* is chosen as the abbreviation instead of *AFGE v. FLRA* because of the abundance of cases in which AFGE has challenged FLRA. *AFGE Local 2544* is more distinctive.

How to Cite Merit Systems Protection Board Decisions

Rodriguez v. the Department of Agriculture, 27 MSPB 79 (1985)

<i>Appellant/Petitioner</i>	<i>Appellee/Respondent</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Page #</i>	<i>Year</i>
		<i>Reporter</i>		

It is always best to cite cases from the official recorder of the Merit Service Protections Board, *Decisions of the MSPB*, which is abbreviated as “MSPB.” However, cases are sometimes cited from LRP Publications’ unofficial reporter, the *Merit Systems Protection Board Reporter*. It is abbreviated as “MSPR.” Occasionally we find a citation with references to both reporters. It is written this way, with the official reporter listed first:

Douglas v. Veterans Administration, 5 MSPB 313, 5 MSPR 280 (1981).

How to Cite Decisions of the FLRA

The only official reporter of FLRA decisions is *The Decisions of the Federal Labor Relations Authority*, which is abbreviated as “FLRA.” It publishes virtually all of the FLRA decisions, so there is no need to use an unofficial reporter in citations.

Internal Revenue Service, Kansas City, 50 FLRA 661 (1995).

<i>Abbreviated version of the section of the agency, with no mention of the union</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Page #</i>	<i>Year of decision</i>
	<i>Reporter</i>		

American Federation of Government Employees, SSA General Committee
and Social Security Administration, No. BW-92-R-0017 (Segal, 1992)

<i>Agency/Management</i>	<i>Case #</i>	<i>Arbitrator, Date</i>
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