

COAL GUIDE: AN INTRODUCTION

OR:

HOW TO CITE FOR FREE



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PRESENTERS

WHAT IS IT?

The Canadian Open Access Legal Citation Guide/Guide canadien de la référence juridique en accès libre (COAL-RJAL) is a Canadian citation guide.

It is free to use and hosted on CanLII at <https://canlii.ca/t/7nc6q>
2024 CanLII Docs 830.

It was created and is maintained by law librarians from across Canada.

WHAT IS THIS?



- THE COAL-RJAL LOGO, AND...
- A MEMENTO OF THE GREAT PERIOD DEBATE OF 2022-2023.
- SCHRODINGER'S PERIOD: IT IS BOTH PRESENT AND ABSENT.



WHY CREATE THIS NOW?

Legal professionals need a guide that serves them, their clients, and their communities.

As library and courthouse budgets tighten and costs for students, sole practitioners, and small firms increase, Canadians require a high-quality, no-cost citation guide.

The technology and project management styles that proliferated during the pandemic allowed us to work together to meet this need.

WHY USE



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO DECISION-MAKING BODIES MUST USE PROPER CITATIONS. REQUIRING LITIGANTS TO FIND AND PURCHASE CITATION MANUALS IS THEREFORE AN ACCESS TO JUSTICE ISSUE. COAL-RJAL MITIGATES THIS PROBLEM BY BEING:
 1. FREE TO USE;
 2. ACCESSIBLE TO ANYONE WITH AN INTERNET CONNECTION; AND
 3. AVOIDS PAYWALLED MATERIALS.

EXPERTISE AND THOUGHTFULNESS

- COAL-RJAL WAS WRITTEN OVER THE COURSE OF TWO YEARS BY EXPERIENCED LAW LIBRARIANS FROM SEVEN PROVINCES* WHO FREQUENTLY WORK WITH CITATIONS.
- THE AUTHORS CONSULTED OVER 45 EXTERNAL REVIEWERS FROM A VARIETY OF USER GROUPS, JURISDICTIONS, AND TYPES OF CANADIAN LEGAL SETTINGS, INCLUDING COURTS, FIRMS, JOURNALS, LAW SOCIETIES, AND LAW SCHOOLS.
- THESE POINTS, ALONG WITH THE EMBEDDED FEEDBACK OPTION, ENSURE THAT THE GUIDE MEETS THE NEEDS OF ALL THOSE WHO WORK WITH THE LAW.

*Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

EXAMPLE: CITING CASE LAW

Neutral Citation Available:

McGill

Case name, | neutral citation |
pinpoint | [*short form*].

Example:

Tran v Armstrong, 2015 ABQB 343 at para
23 [*Tran*].

COAL

Case name, | neutral citation |
pinpoint | [*short form*].

Example:

Tran v Armstrong, 2015 ABQB 343 at para 23
[*Tran*].

Neutral Citation Not Available, but CanLII Citation Available:

McGill

Case name, | CanLII citation | pinpoint |
(jurisdiction and level of court) | [*short form*].

Example:

R v Oakes, 1986 CanLII 46 at para 9 (SCC)
[*Oakes*].

COAL

Case name, | CanLII citation | pinpoint |
parallel citation (jurisdiction and level of court) |
[*short form*].

Example:

R v Oakes, 1986 CanLII 46 at para 9, [1986] 1
SCR 103 (SCC) [*Oakes*].

IF NEITHER A NEUTRAL CITATION NOR A CANLII CITATION ARE AVAILABLE

General:

Case name, | main citation, | parallel citation | (jurisdiction and level of court).

Example:

- *Westholme Lumber Co. v St. James Ltd.* (1915), 21 DLR 549, 8 WWR 122 (BCCA).

IF NEITHER A NEUTRAL CITATION NOR A CANLII CITATION ARE AVAILABLE

With a pinpoint reference from an online database:

Case name, | main citation, | parallel citation | pinpoint (database used) |
(jurisdiction and level of court).

Example:

- *English v English* (1979), 25 NBR (2d) 345, 51 APR 345 at para 3 (Lexis) (NBQB).

IF NEITHER A NEUTRAL CITATION NOR A CANLII CITATION ARE AVAILABLE

With a pinpoint reference from a physical reporter:

Case name, | main citation | pinpoint, | parallel citation | (jurisdiction and level of court).

Example:

- *Westholme Lumber Co. v St. James Ltd.* (1915), 21 DLR 549 at p 550, 8 WWR 122 (BCCA) [*Westholme*].

MCGILL V COAL – HOW DO THEY LOOK DIFFERENT WHEN CITING THE PRINT?

McGill:

Westholme Lumber Co v St James Ltd (1915), 21 DLR 549 at 550, 8 WWR 122 (BCCA) [*Westholme*].

COAL:

Westholme Lumber Co. v St. James Ltd. (1915), 21 DLR 549 at p 550, 8 WWR 122 (BCCA) [*Westholme*].

EXAMPLE: CITING LEGISLATION

EXAMPLE (UNIQUE JURISDICTION)

Between 1987 and 1990, Manitoba laws were re-enacted in English and French. Since then, the statutes have been enacted in both languages. Only the bilingual PDF version of the statute is official. The link to the PDF version is located at the top of the unofficial consolidated version.

Following royal assent, Manitoba statutes are published as annual chapters online and in print. When referring to the original statute as enacted, the SM (i.e., Statutes of Manitoba) citation should be used. This citation is located near the title of the Act in the unofficial version and in the upper corner of the official PDF version.

Example:

- *The International Education Act*, SM 2013, c 52.

The Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba (CCSM) is a set of public general acts available online. When citing a consolidated Manitoba statute, use the CCSM reference. No date is added after the abbreviation CCSM. Note that there is no comma between the abbreviation CCSM and the chapter number.

Example:

- *The International Education Act*, CCSM c 175.

MODERN



COAL-RJAL was written in the context of the modern legal profession, with all the modern legal technology that entails.



Not only does it consider technological problems like citing AI-generated content, but it also re-considers the uses and usefulness of each element in a computer-literate world.



The guide aims to be format-neutral and is focused on the sources themselves rather than their formats (e.g., online vs. print).



If a source can only be accessed online (e.g., a website, a podcast, etc.), this is not explicitly noted in the citation, as the URL acts as a sufficient indication.



Angle brackets are not necessary to denote a URL, as modern users are able to distinguish a URL from the surrounding text.



The Internet Archive's Wayback Machine is recommended and linked for users who need to create archived URLs, as this is a free service that expands an important publicly accessible archive with each use.

EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE: WEBSITES AND WEBPAGES

McGILL

Author, | “title of the website/webpage” | (date of the website/webpage) | pinpoint, | online (type of electronic source): | <URL> | [archived URL].

Example:

- Tom Ross & Chris Hinchcliffe, “The Right to Disconnect for Federal Workers” (19 June 2024) online: <mross.com/what-we-think/article/the-right-to-disconnect-for-federal-workers>.

COAL

Author, | “title of website/webpage” | (date of the website/webpage) | URL | (accessed access date if applicable | , archived at URL if applicable) | pinpoint.

Example:

- T. Ross & C. Hinchcliffe, “The Right to Disconnect for Federal Workers” (19 June 2024) <https://www.mross.com>.

CONSISTENT

LIKE ELEMENTS ARE FORMATTED ALIKE AND LOCATED IN THE SAME SPOT WHENEVER POSSIBLE. SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- **FORMAT:** USING THE 'AT' WHEN PINPOINTING ALL ELEMENTS, RATHER THAN ONLY SOME.
- **FORMAT:** USING QUOTATION MARKS AROUND TITLES OF SECTIONS OF A WORK AND ITALICS FOR TITLES OF WHOLE WORKS, E.G., "CHAPTERS"/BOOKS AND "ARTICLES"/JOURNALS.
- **LOCATION:** (ALMOST) ALWAYS PLACING THE PINPOINT AT THE END OF THE CITATION.

EXAMPLE: PINPOINT

- COAL INCLUDES A UNIQUE INDICATOR FOR EACH TYPE OF PINPOINT, WHILE MCGILL OMITTS AN INDICATOR FOR 'PAGE'.
- COAL INSTRUCTS WRITERS TO ALWAYS USE 'AT' BEFORE THE PINPOINT, WHILE MCGILL INSTRUCTS WRITERS TO USE 'AT' BEFORE SOME TYPES OF PINPOINTS, BUT NOT OTHERS:

McGill	COAL
at	at p(p)
at para(s)	at para(s)
art(s)	at art(s)
at ch(s)	at ch(s)
s(s)	at s(s)

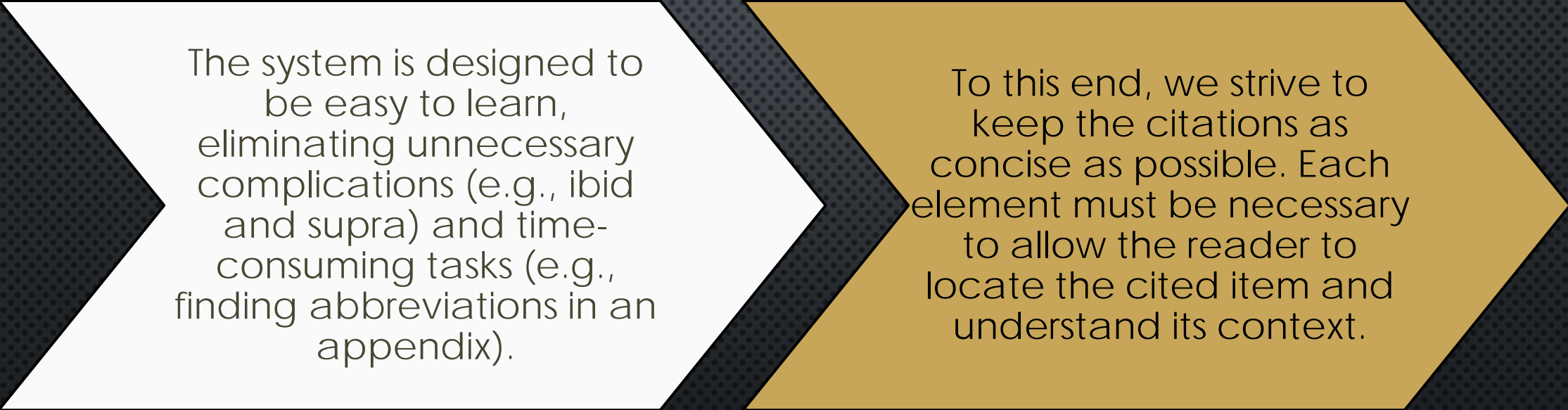
RESPONSIVE

- THE GUIDE HAS AN EMAIL ADDRESS FOR FEEDBACK EMBEDDED IN THE INTRODUCTION, ALLOWING ALL USERS TO PROVIDE THE EDITORIAL BOARD WITH FURTHER COMMENTARY.
- IT IS NOT CHAINED TO THE TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING CYCLE, WHICH MEANS:
 - SECTIONS DEALING WITH NEW TOPICS CAN BE ADDED YEARLY;
 - ERRORS CAN BE FIXED ON THE SAME YEARLY SCHEDULE; AND
 - THERE IS NO MONETARY INCENTIVE TO MAKE UNNECESSARY CHANGES.
- EXAMPLE:
 - IF YOU HAVE CORRECTIONS, COMMENTS, OR IDEAS FOR NEW SECTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT COAL.RJAL@UBC.CA.

FLEXIBLE

- COAL-RJAL WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AS MANY SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE WITH THE FEWEST SECTIONS POSSIBLE TO AVOID OVERWHELMING THE USER.
 - NO GUIDE CAN LIST EVERYTHING A USER MIGHT NEED TO CITE, AND THE MORE SECTIONS A GUIDE HAS, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT CAN BE TO USE (ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE JUST LEARNING LEGAL CITATION, E.G., STUDENTS, SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS, NEW PARALEGALS, ETC.).
 - WHILE WE WILL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS IN YEARS TO COME, WE STRIVE TO WRITE EACH SECTION WITH ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY THAT IT CAN APPLY AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE. ADDITIONAL SECTIONS ARE ONLY INCLUDED IF THE CURRENT SECTIONS DO NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ALLOW THE READER TO FIND AND CONTEXTUALIZE THE CITED SOURCE.

EASY TO LEARN AND USE



The system is designed to be easy to learn, eliminating unnecessary complications (e.g., *ibid* and *supra*) and time-consuming tasks (e.g., finding abbreviations in an appendix).

To this end, we strive to keep the citations as concise as possible. Each element must be necessary to allow the reader to locate the cited item and understand its context.

EXAMPLE: CASE NAME

REPRODUCE CASE NAMES AS THEY APPEAR IN THE DATABASE OR REPORTER IN WHICH THE CASE IS FOUND, BUT DO NOT INCLUDE A PERIOD AFTER THE “V” FOR VERSUS, “C” FOR CONTRE, OR “R” FOR REX OR REGINA.

- *Tran v Armstrong*, 2015 ABQB 343 at para 23.
- *R v Oakes*, 1986 CanLII 46 at para 9, [1986] 1 SCR 103 (SCC).
- *McArthur v Dominion Cartridge Co.* (1904), [1905] AC 72 at p 75, 91 LT 698 (PC).

EXAMPLE: NO JOURNAL ABBREVIATIONS

- MCGILL REQUIRES WRITERS TO LOOK THROUGH APPENDIX D TO FIND THE TITLE OF THEIR JOURNAL AND THE APPROPRIATE ABBREVIATION. IF THE JOURNAL IS NOT FOUND IN THE APPENDIX, WRITERS MUST USE A CHART OF COMMON WORDS AND ABBREVIATIONS TO CREATE THE ABBREVIATION.
- COAL INSTRUCTS WRITERS TO USE THE TITLE OF THE JOURNAL.

SHORT NAME AND REPEAT REFERENCES

Add a shortened version of the case name in square brackets at the end that you can use to refer to the case throughout the remainder of the document.

This is not necessary if you only refer to the case once.

MCGILL

- The short name can be referred to in text or in footnotes using “supra”:

¹ *Tran v Armstrong*, 2015 ABQB 343 at para 23 [*Tran*].

² *Ibid* at para 15.

³ *Kruk v Kruk*, 2024 MBKB 163 at para 7 [*Kruk*].

⁴ *Tran*, *supra* note 1 at para 17.

COAL

- In subsequent citations, only the shortened case name (and pinpoint, if applicable) is needed.

¹ *Tran v Armstrong*, 2015 ABQB 343 at para 23 [*Tran*].

² *Tran* at para 15.

³ *Kruk v Kruk*, 2024 MBKB 163 at para 7 [*Kruk*].

⁴ *Tran* at para 17.

Neither *ibid* nor *supra* are used in COAL.

QUESTIONS?

