

Westlaw Classic

West Key Number System

On Westlaw Classic, each legal issue in a published opinion is identified, summarized in a Headnote, and then categorised by assigning it both a Topic and a Key Number in the West Key Number System. The West Key Number System is a classification system that organizes cases by topic, allowing you to quickly find cases related to a particular issue.

Using the West Key Number Digest

The West Key Number Digest contains the complete Topic and Key Number classification system. A "Topic" refers to a broad legal subject, while a "Key" represents a more specific subtopic or issue within that broader Topic, allowing for a hierarchical organization of legal concepts for efficient legal research and referencing.

Use this Digest to search for case law regarding specific legal concepts.

1. Click **Topics & Key Numbers** in the All Content tab on the Home Page. The West Key Number System page, which lists all Topics, is then displayed.
2. Browse or search the West Key Number Digest of Topics to find a Topic related to your issue.
3. Click into a Topic to display the Key Numbers related to that Topic and drill down through the list to locate your specific Key Number Topic e.g Abandoned and Lost Property

The screenshot displays the Westlaw Classic interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Enter terms, citations, databases, anything ..." and a dropdown menu set to "All Federal". Below the search bar, the "Browse" section is active, showing a navigation menu on the left with "Cases" selected. Under "Cases", "Topics & Key Numbers" is highlighted with a red box and a circled "1". The main content area shows the "West Key Number System" page. A search box is present with the text "Search for Key Numbers relevant to your issue" and a "Search" button. Below the search box, there is a list of topics with checkboxes. "1 ABANDONED AND LOST PROPERTY" is selected with a red box and a circled "3". To the right, a "PRACTICAL LAW" banner is visible. At the bottom, a detailed view of the selected topic is shown, listing key numbers: "21 In general", "22 Abandonment and abandoned property in general", and "28 Lost or mislaid property".

Retrieving Case Headnotes

On a Topic Page, you can select a Key Number and then retrieve case law Headnotes classified under the West Key Number System. Headnotes are summaries of specific points of law addressed in a particular case, drafted by Westlaw attorney-editors to ensure that Topics include relevant cases even where those cases may use atypical language.

1. Click a **Key Number** that represents your issue to retrieve case Headnotes.
2. You can change the jurisdiction by clicking on **Change** next to the **Jurisdiction:** field at the top to retrieve Headnotes from the relevant jurisdiction.
3. Click on the **Case Title** to view the full text of a case.
4. Use the [KeyCite status flags](#), if available, to view the KeyCite result for the case.
5. Use the **Search within results** field in the left column to narrow the list of headnotes to those that contain specific terms. You can enter a term or a [Boolean Terms and Connectors search](#).

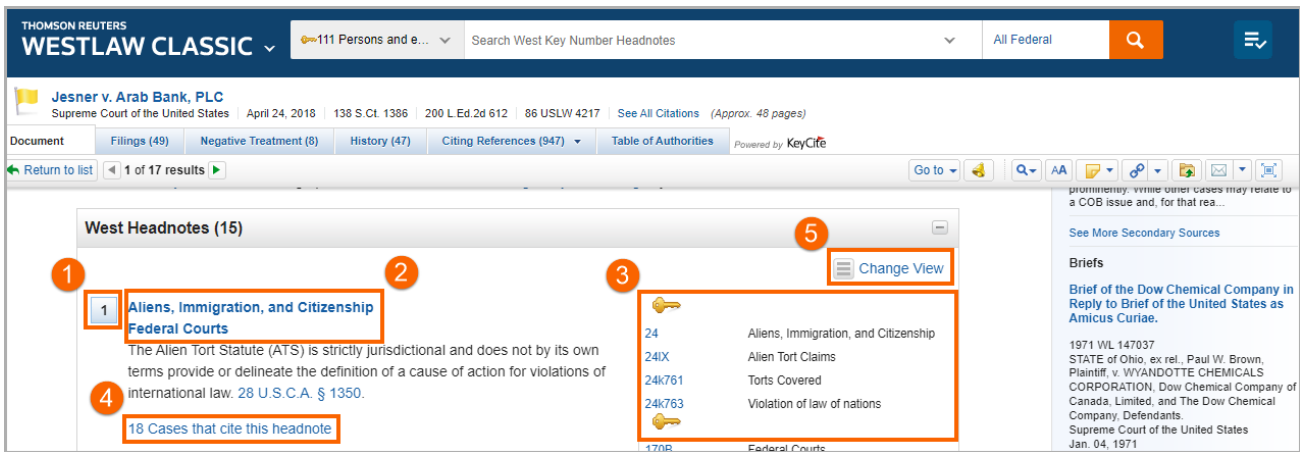
The screenshot displays the Westlaw Classic search results page for the topic '34 Treasure trove'. The interface includes a search bar at the top with the text '34 Treasure trove' and a search button. Below the search bar, there are filters for 'Jurisdiction: All Federal' and 'Sort by: Topic then Date'. The main content area shows a list of cases, with the first case highlighted: '1. JTR Enterprises, LLC v. An Unknown Quantity of Colombian Emeralds, Amethysts and Quartz Crystals'. The case details include the court, date, and a headnote summary. A document preview is also visible for the first case. The left sidebar contains a 'NARROW:' section with a 'Search within results' field and various filters. The right sidebar contains 'TOOLS & RESOURCES' and 'West Key Number System Updates'.

Topic and Key Number Headnotes within Case Law

You can use the West Key Number System referenced within a specific case by consulting the Headnotes section at the top of the opinion. The Headnotes display further Topic and Key Numbers related to and from the same jurisdiction as the source case.

1. Click on the **Headnote** number to navigate to the section of the opinion that references the Headnote.
2. Click the **Title** link to navigate to the Topic and view other cases discussing the same legal issue.
3. Click on a **Key Number** link within the classification hierarchy in the right column to view other cases discussing the same legal issue. This hierarchy drills down into specific Key Numbers of the main Topic.
4. Click on the **Cases that cite this headnote** link, where available, to view a list of other cases that cite the same Headnote.

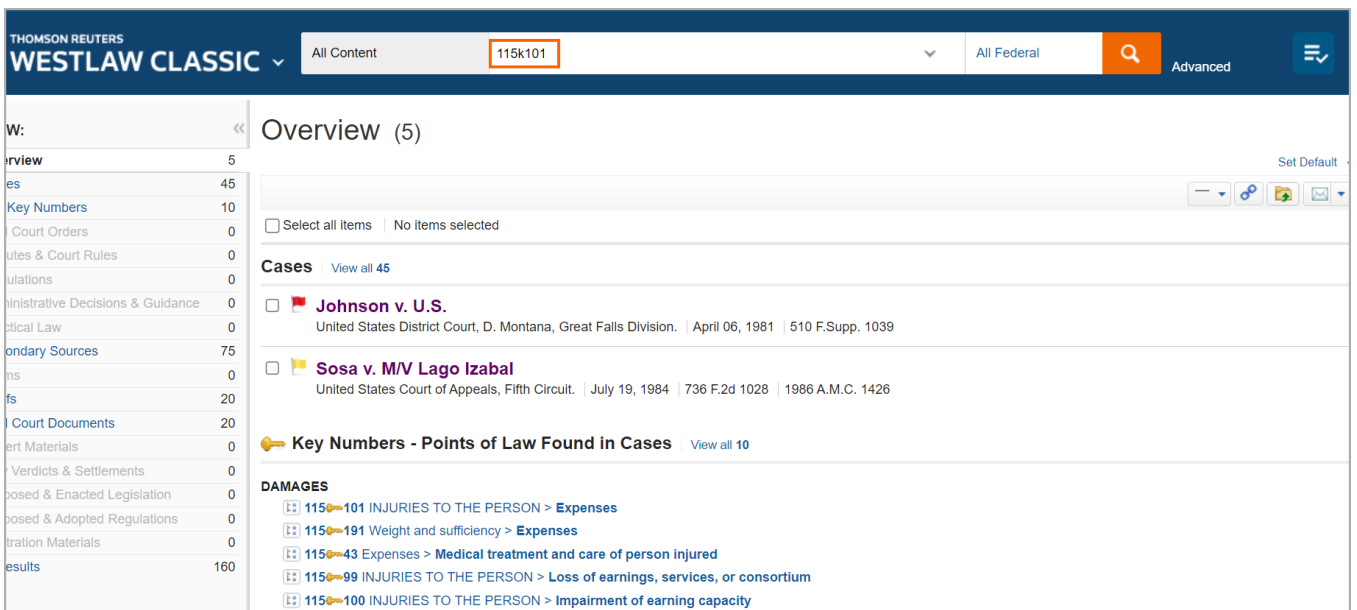
5. Click on **Change view** to alternate between viewing Headnotes as either a Grid View or List view.



Search by Topic and Key Number

You can run a Search Bar query using a Topic and Key number.

For example, to search for cases with the Headnotes classified under Topic 115 (Damages) and Key Number 101 (Expenses), enter 115k101 in the search bar, changing the jurisdiction if necessary, and click to Search.



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To sign into Westlaw Classic, visit westlaw.com.

For assistance using Westlaw UK, email SSA.MENATrainers@thomsonreuters.com

For additional training materials, visit [Product Support](#) on Westlaw Classic, or the Westlaw Classic [training website](#).