

The Bluebook Style Guide

The Bluebook is a style guide for legal citation that is used widely throughout most state and federal courts in the United States. Currently in its 21st edition as of July 2020, the style book is published by the Law Review Associations from Yale, Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania. *The Bluebook* is comprised of the Bluepages, which outline citation rules in non-academic legal documents, and the Whitepages, which outline citation rules in academic research papers or law reviews. This guide will address the use of *The Bluebook* as a reference tool for general formatting guidelines as well as for the specific citation guidelines found in both Bluepages and Whitepages.

Please note: Certain court systems, such as the Supreme Court, and certain states, such as Delaware and California, have their own citation styles or modifications to *The Bluebook*. It is important to carefully check the submission comments to see if the student provided the name of the style that was used. Some rules may not be fully covered here.

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The Bluebook Basics

In *The Bluebook* there are two different sections, Bluepages and Whitepages, that guide writers on how to properly cite material depending on the type of work being written. While Whitepages lists detailed citation formats when writing research papers and law reviews in the academic setting, Bluepages are typically consulted to find acceptable modified citation formats when writing legal court documents such as motions, opinions, memoranda, and briefs. Whenever a rule or format guideline isn't clear in Bluepages, Whitepages should be consulted. Each of these sections will be discussed in more detail further below.

General formatting suggestions

Listed below are general formatting suggestions for legal writing. Note that these are not particular to *The Bluebook* but are commonly used in legal writing.

- Use of Times New Roman in 12 pt. font
- No title page
- No references page
- No page numbering

General formatting rules specified in *The Bluebook*:

Listed below are formatting rules found in *The Bluebook*. Most rules apply to both types of legal writing (court and academic). Any differences to take into consideration are indicated in each section.

Footnotes:

- Whitepages (academic writing): required. See section below
- Bluepages (legal writing meant for courts): not required

Capitalization:

- Both: when addressing or referring to any court in full (including the Supreme Court) capitalization of "Court" needs to appear at every mention
- Both: court document titles should only be capitalized when directly referring to the actual title of the document (not the generic name) or if the document has been filed as it relates to the subject of your writing

- Both: words such as “Act”, “Circuit”, “Code”, “Commonwealth”, “Constitution”, “Court”, and “Federal” are all capitalized when used after mentioning the specific legal document in-text
- Both: suggest keeping capitalization rules for titles and acts as they appear in their original sources
- Bluepages: items like “Plaintiff”, “Defendant”, “Appellant”, and “Appellee”, are capitalized when referring to them as a subject in a legal document
- Any further capitalization rules should reflect rules outlined in *Chicago Manual Style*.

Titling:

- Both: Supreme Court Justices are referred to by, “Justice [last name]” or “Chief Justice [last name]” depending on title. Judges are referred to as, “Judge [last name]” or “Chief Judge [last name].”
- Both: justices are listed in order of seniority.

Block Quotes:

- Both: quotes of **50 or more words** need to be indented on both sides and justified; this might not appear to be centered in-text depending on the legal document.
- Both: quotes within block quotes are punctuated just like in their original text, but there are no quotation marks around block quotes. Omissions to quotes also use the ellipses “...” system. Use [] for missing characters/information and [sic] for typos and misspellings
- Whitepages: the footnote immediately follows the quote. Only change formatting if it is reflected in certain writing such as poetry or dialogue.
- Bluepages: the citation is placed on the next line immediately following the quotation and it is *not* indented

Numbering:

- Both: any numbers 0-99 need to be written out; use numerals numbers over 100

- Both: other specific rules include
 - Comma usage in larger numbers is utilized *except* when in a citation.
 - Ordinal numbers such as “3rd” or “2nd” show up in citations as, “3d” or “2d”.
 - Symbols such as (§) section or (¶) paragraph are used unless they begin a sentence, in which case they are spelled out.

Typeface

Bluepages citations use standard typeface and underscoring. Bluepages prefers underscoring of the following materials in citations, although *italics* may be used if consistent. Whitepages requires these items to be *italicized* except where noted.

- Titles of books, essays, articles, and legislative materials
- Long and short case names (Whitepages: only short forms are italicized)
- Introductory signals
- Procedural and explanatory phrases in case citations
- Internal cross-references (e.g., *infra*, *supra* and *id.*)
- Introductory phrases for related authority (e.g., *reprinted in* and *available in*)
- Any punctuation within these related materials

The following items should only be underscored/italicized when used in a textual sentence (as opposed to in a citation):

- Publication titles
- Words italicized in original quotations
- Foreign words and phrases

Bluepages Citations

Important to note: Bluepages citations should appear directly following related evidence and propositions and not as footnotes. Footnotes appear only in Whitepages (academic legal writing).

There are two kinds of citations: **stand-alone citation sentences** and **citation clauses**.

- **Citation sentence:** begins as a standalone sentence with proper capitalization and period punctuation. They are used to cite sources and authorities that relate to the entire previous sentence/statement. If there is more than one citation needed, they are separated by semicolons within the same sentence.

- **Citation clause:** follows propositions by way of a comma and immediately follow the proposition within the sentence. They are used to cite authorities that relate to only part of a sentence. Unless the citation source starts with a capitalization do not capitalize a citation clause.

Signals are used in citation clauses/sentences to connect evidence/proposition to authority.

Authority is similar to a source, and can be a law, provision, rule, statute, or include the legislative/legal organizations that make them.

In Bluepages, signals need to be underlined. In Whitepages, signals are *italicized*. Multiple signals are listed in a certain order as well as the authorities within each signal. See below for more information about ordering.

The following is a list of the most commonly used **signals** in order:

(none)	a direct quotation, reference, or statement from the authority on a proposition
<u>E.g.</u>	one of multiple sourced authorities offering the same statement on a proposition
<u>Accord</u>	one of multiple sourced authorities, also including another authority that was previously cited
<u>See</u>	supports but does not directly state the proposition
<u>See also</u>	additional information provided by an authority in support of the proposition
<u>Cf.</u>	sufficiently relevant supporting material that only indirectly supports the main proposition
<u>Compare...with...</u>	similar or contrasting authorities with relevant importance
<u>Contra</u>	a contrary idea or proposition to the main proposition (think counter)
<u>But see</u>	support of a proposition that is counter to the main
<u>But cf.</u>	support of a proposition that is analogous to the contrary of the main proposition
<u>See generally</u>	helpful background material in support of the proposition

Order of signals: signals in in-text citations (Bluepages) are listed by significance and importance to both the proposition and to the legal system overall. Those most strongly

connected to the proposition or main idea are listed first, followed by a descending order (supportive, comparative, contradictory, or background) as seen in the order in the chart above. Authorities within each signal are ordered in this same manner.

You can also have multiple signals in one footnote (Whitepages), which need to be written out by level of authority and grouped with similar authority citations in a full citation sentence separated by semicolons.

Explanatory Parentheticals: the inclusion of additional information in parentheses to explain the relevance of citations to their propositions. These can start with a present participle phrase or just consist of a quoted sentence or short clarifying statement. They do not begin with proper capitalization or end in punctuation unless a full sentence quote is included.

Volume number: written in Arabic numbers (0-9) and is located before the author's name when an author of an entire set of volumes is cited. If the set includes many authors and only one volume is used, the number goes before the volume title.

Subdivisions: sections and paragraphs are cited with their symbols (§) or (¶); additional subdivision phrases are covered in Whitepages (see Abbreviations section below).

Page numbers: given before the parenthetical date information and does not include "p" as seen in other types of citation format.

Footnotes/Endnotes: footnotes are cited by giving the page number where the footnote is found, "n." immediately followed with the footnote number.

Other formats for citations such as LEXIS or other databases, are found below in Whitepages.

Citation Examples

Important to note: *The Bluebook has no citation list such as a references page. Bluepage citations appear in-text in long form at first mention and then can be shortened after. There may be complex sentences that require multiple citations after it, and these would require **string citations**, or citations separated by semicolons.*

Below is a list of both long and short-form citation formats for judicial and legislative sources. This list is not exhaustive to all materials that might be cited. Refer to Whitepages for any unclear rules not listed here for citations, and although not required in Bluepages, if using footnotes, see Whitepages for footnote citation placement rules.

- **Constitutions:**

- **Long form:** (1) Federal/state constitution abbreviation (2) article or amendment abbreviation, and (3) section.

U.S Const. art. II, § 1.

- Short-form citation accepted: “Id.”

- **Case citation:**

When referring to the full name of a case in-sentence *outside* of a citation sentence/clause the case name must be underlined with *only common acronyms* or the following words abbreviated: “&” (“and”), “Ass’n” (“association”), “Bros” (“brothers”), “co.” (“company”), “Corp.” (“corporation”), “Inc.” (“incorporated”), “Ltd.” (“limited”), and “No.” (number”).

For the first mention of a case in-text, follow the name with the remaining elements of the full citation (as seen below) by use of commas. Any further mention of the case can use even just one named party as long as it’s clearly identifiable.

- **Long form:** (1) name of the case with proper typeface (2) published or unpublished source (includes reporter, pincite, and/or page number), (3) court and/or year in parentheses, (4) parenthetical information (as needed), (5) any other relevant history of the material (as needed also known as **explanatory parenthetical** outlined further below). This information changes according to court/source referenced but the building blocks remain the same.

Two examples are listed below:

Supreme Court case:

New York Times v. Sullivan 376 U.S. 254 (1964) (supporting free speech protections for journalists, restricting the ability to sue for defamation without malice intent shown).

U.S District Court case:

Viacom International Inc. v. YouTube Inc. 2010 WL 2532404 (S.D.N.Y. 2010) (regarding “safe harbor” provisions in the DMCA).

Pincites are used to cover page ranges or multiple specific pages of case documents in both long and short-form citations. Commas are used to separate non-sequential pages, while page

ranges with three or more digits should drop repetitive numbering to provide clarity. For footnotes, “n.” is used.

Ex: 200-05, 350, 352, n.5

- **Short-form citations:** use short form citations as long as it is clear what source is being discussed and that the full citation can be easily found. There are several ways to format a shortened citation, and all include a **pincite**. Here are a few examples with the previously used *New York Times v. Sullivan* citation:

New York Times, 376 U.S. at 50.

376 U.S. at 50.

Id. at 50.

“Id.” is only used when there is only one preceding authority in a citation.

“Supra” and “hereinafter” when used in-text only to refer to legislative hearings, court filings, books, pamphlets, reports, un-published materials, non-print resources, periodicals, services, treaties, international agreements, regulations, directives, internal cross-references and intergovernmental organizations.

There are additional short-form citation formats for specific types of citations listed below.

- **Cases available on online databases (unreported or without reporter number):**
 - **Long form:** (1) name of case, (2) docket number, (3) database name (LEXIS, BL, WL) with code and (4) court name and full date of last disposition of case in parentheses. Note: If page numbers are included, they precede the court name and date with an asterisk “*”.
 - **Short form:** see immediately above for acceptable short-form case citation formats
- **Statutes**
 - **Federal Statute:**
 - **Long form:** (1) official name of the act, (2) published source, and (3) year of publishing or year the statute was passed in parentheses. If a statute/code is **unofficial**, then the publisher needs to be written before the year Ex: (West 2019).

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 (1990).

○ **State Statute:**

- **Long form:** (1) code abbreviation by state, (2) section number, and (3) code year in parentheses.

N.Y. U.C.C. Law §63 (2021).

Each state has multiple code abbreviations. Just as with unofficial federal statutes, publisher information needs to also be included for unofficial state code.

- **Short form for statutes:** Bluepages can use “**Id.**” and will include proper section number “**§**” if different rules are addressed within the same citation. They also can be included with: (1) Title number (for unofficial code) (2) abbreviation of code (U.S.C/N.Y./Iowa Code/etc.) and (3) code year (publisher name included if unofficial code) Below is a short-form example of the previous citation:

N.Y. §63 (2021)

• **Enacted/Unenacted Federal Bills, Resolutions, and Legislative Materials:**

- **Long form:** (1) name of bill, (2) Congressional chamber/legislative body abbreviation, (3) bill number, (4) Congressional/legislative session number (5) section, and (6) year.

Freedom of Information Act, S. 1160, 88th Cong. §2 (1965).

- **State Bills and Resolutions** are the same as federal above except **state abbreviation** is included in parentheses along with publishing year, ex: (Ga. 2010). There are many types of abbreviations per state, and all cannot be included here.

• **Judicial and Legislative Material Abbreviations for use in citations and footnotes:**

Supreme Court	U.S.
Supreme Court Reporter	S. Ct.
Federal Reporter	F., F2d, F3d
Federal Appendix	F. App'x
Court of Appeals	1st Cir., 2d Cir., ... 10th Cir., D.C. Cir, Fed. Cir.
U.S District Courts	(each state has multiple districts and agencies)
Federal Supplement	F. Supp., F Supp. 2d, F. Supp. 3d
Federal Rules Decisions	F.R.D.
Bankruptcy Reporter	B.R.
Federal Cases	F. Cas.

Code of Federal Regulations	C.F.R.
Federal Register	Fed. Reg.

This list is not exhaustive. The entities of the federal court system have changed names over the years, so the date of the citation will determine the proper name, and consequently the correct abbreviation.

- **Books, Treaties, and Non-Periodicals:**

- **Long form:** (1) volume number (if included), (2) full name of author(s), (3) title of publication, (4) pincite, (5) year of publication, editor, and edition in parentheses.

The Associated Press, [The AP Stylebook](#) 5-10 (55th ed. 2020).

- **Short form:** use "[Id. at pincite](#)" for references to the previous citation; use "[last name, supra, at pincite](#)" for even earlier citations

- **Periodic Materials:**

- **Long form:** (1) full name(s) of author(s) as written, (2) title of article (with proper typeface), (3) abbreviated name of publication (should be included on document), (4) pincite, and (5) date of publication.

Robyn M. Powell, [From Carrie Buck to Britney Spears: Strategies for Disrupting the Ongoing Reproductive Oppression of Disabled People](#), 107 Va. L. Rev. 246 (2021).

Consecutively paged journals should follow pincite rules listed above, "at" is used to describe non-consecutive pages.

- **Short form:** use "[Id.](#)" and "[supra](#)" as previously discussed.

- **Newspapers:**

- **Long form:** (1) author(s), (2) title with proper typeface, (3) abbreviated/shortened name of publication, (4) date of publication, and (5) page number.

Alan Rappeport, [National Debt Breaks Record At \\$30 Trillion](#), N.Y. Times, Feb. 2, 2022, at A1.

- **Short form:** use "[Id.](#)" and "[supra](#)" as previously discussed.

- **Court Documents:**

- **Long form:** (1) abbreviated name of document (see list below), (2) pinpoint citation, (3) date of document, and (4) if applicable, Electronic Case Filing (ECF) number found on PACER system.
- **Short-form:** as with all short form citations, the one for court documents needs to be apparent in relation to the full citation in-text. Should include (1) court document abbreviation (listed below), and (2) ECF number OR just (1) court document abbreviation and (2) pincite.
- **Abbreviations:** In Bluepages, facets of court documents and ongoing cases are abbreviated in citations. Court documents can be abbreviated in citations but NOT in-text/in sentences. In the list below, there are a number of terms that are purposefully not abbreviated and should be spelled out fully. Additionally, any words not included here that are seven or more letters should also be abbreviated.

Most commonly used court document abbreviations:

Admission	Admis.	Dismiss	Dismiss
Affidavit	Aff.	Docket	Docket
Affirm	Affirm	Document	Doc.
Amended	Am.	Evidence	Evid.
Answer	Answer	Exhibit	Ex.
Appeal	Appeal	Grant	Grant
Appellant	Appellant	Hearing	Hr'g
Appellee	Appellee	Injunction	Inj.
Appendix	App.	Instruction	Instr.
Application	Appl.	Interrogatory	Interrog.
Argument	Arg.	Joint Appendix	.A.
Attachment	Attach.	Judgment	J.
Attorney	Att'y	Limine	Lim.
Brief	Br.	Memorandum	Mem.
Certiorari	Cert.	Minute	Min.
Compel	Compl.	Motion	Mot.
Counterclaim	Countercl.	Objection	Obj.
Court	Ct.	Opinion	Op.
Cross-claim	Cross-cl.	Opposition	Opp'n
Declaration	Decl.	Order	Order
Defendant[s]	Def[s].	Petition	Pet.
Demurrer	Dem.	Petitioner[s]	Pet'r[s]
Deny[ing]	Den.	Plaintiff[s]	Pl[s].
Deposition	Dep.	Preliminary	Perlim.
Discovery	Disc.	Production/Produce	Produc.

Quash	Quash	Subpoena	Subpoena
Reconsideration	Recons.	Summary	Summ.
Record	R.	Supplement	Suppl.
Rehearing	Reh'g	Support	Supp.
Reply	Reply	Suppress	Suppress
Report/Recommendation	R.&R.	Temporary Restraining Order	
Reporter	Rep.	TRO	
Request	Req.	Testimony	Test.
Respondent	Resp't	Transcript	Tr.
Response	Resp.	Verified Statement	V.S.
Stay	Stay		

- **Internet Sources:**

- **Long form:** (1) name of author(s), (2) title of webpage in proper typeface, (3) title of main page of website, (4) date and time (date of posting, date last updated, or date last visited, in that order of significance), and (5) URL.

Emily D. Baker, [Friday Night Live | Ethan Klein Defeats Triller's Lawsuit | Lawyer Reacts](https://youtu.be/xsXC13RZ5yg/), Youtube (Jan. 14, 2022), <https://youtu.be/xsXC13RZ5yg/>.

- **Short form:** "[author/document title, supra](#)" or "[id.](#)" Do not include the URL in short form.

Whitepages Citations

In Whitepages writing, such as law reviews, **footnotes** are used for all citations unlike Bluepages' use of in-text citations. Whitepages also does not use a citation list or references page.

Citation format specifics that differ from those listed in the Bluepages section above:

- authors, titles of books, and periodicals are written in LARGE AND SMALL CAPS font, although some replace this system with a standard font. Both are exemplified below:

ROBYN M. POWELL, *FROM CARRIE BUCK TO BRITNEY SPEARS: STRATEGIES FOR DISRUPTING THE ONGOING REPRODUCTIVE OPPRESSION OF DISABLED PEOPLE*, 107 VA. L. REV. 246 (2021).

-OR-

Robyn M. Powell, *From Carrie Buck to Britney Spears: Strategies for Disrupting the Ongoing Reproductive Oppression of Disabled People*, 107 Va. L. Rev. 246 (2021).

- Standard font should be used in **case names** in full citations in Whitepages except for procedural phrases which are *italicized*. Ex: (*v*, *ex*). If a case name appears in an article title, it is not italicized.
- **Internal cross-references** to other propositions in-text use, “*supra*” or “*infra*.”. *Supra* defines any material already mentioned in the writing. *Infra*. refers to content that will appear later on in the writing.
- Short forms of citations are permitted, but only when the authority has been mentioned in the **last five footnotes**.
- Use of “*id.*” in footnotes is permitted to cite a single preceding authority.

Footnotes:

- Numbered with a call number
- Appear right after their evidence or authority being cited
- Used after a full sentence of evidence or after only part of a sentence if more than one authority is being discussed
- Appear after punctuation, including quotation marks, but before dashes and colons
- May include more than one authority in a single footnote
- Use **signals**

Signals, as discussed in the Bluepages section above, are also used in footnotes to demonstrate relationship and authority to propositions. Notice that in Whitepages signals are *italicized* instead of underlined like in Bluepages works. Signal words can also be used in-text as part of a sentence but are not *italicized*. Please see the chart above in the Bluepages section for more information about use of signals.

- **Citation sentences** and **citation clauses** are included within the footnote itself to provide additional support (or contradiction) of an authority within a footnote:
 - Must be ordered by level of authority and significance as see in the Signals chart
 - **Citation sentences** are used for authorities that could either support or contradict an entire sentence in the footnote. Proper capitalization and punctuation are needed.

- In citation sentences, signals of more than one type must be separated into separate sentences.
- In citation sentences, signals of the same type can be separated by semicolons in the same sentence
- **Citation clauses** are used when an authority supports or contradicts only **part of a sentence within a footnote**. The clause is separated by commas within the footnote.
 - In citation clauses more than one signal type can be grouped together being separated by semicolons.

Footnotes example with call numbers found at the foot of the page:

Ex: This is the main argument/proposition¹. This is supporting evidence² and this is further support.³ This is contradicting evidence or evidence that isn't directly related to the previous idea.⁴

¹ Citation would appear here in proper format with no signal because it is a direct reference.

² “*E.g.*” signal and citation(s) would be used to reference supporting material to the first proposition.

³ “*See*” and related signals (plus the citation[s]) could be used as further support to main idea indirectly.

⁴ “*Contra*”, “*Compare*”, or “*See generally*” could be used for the final footnote signal in this example.

Subdivisions and Abbreviations

Subdivisions will frequently be abbreviated when seen in legal writing citations. Below is a list of commonly used abbreviations:

Add.	Addendum	Illustration(s)	illus.
Amend.	Amendment	Introduction	intro.
Annotation	Annot.	Line(s)	l./ll.
Appendix/Appendices	App./Apps.	Number	no.
Article	art.	Page(s)	
Attachment	attach.	in cross-references	p./pp.
Bibliography	bibliog.	other	none
Book	bk.	Paragraph(s)	¶/¶¶ -OR-
Chapter	ch.		para./paras.
Clause	cl.	Part	pt.
Column	col.	Preamble	pmb.
Comment	cmt.	Principle	princ.
Decision	dec.	Publication	pub.
Department	dept.	Rule	r.
Example	ex.	Schedule	sched.
Figure	fig.	Section(s)	§/§§ -OR-
Folio	fol.		sec./secs.
Footnote(s)		Serial/Series	ser.
in cross-references	note/notes	Subdivision	subdiv.
other	n./nn.	Supplement	supp.
Historical notes(s)	hist. n./hist. nn.	Table	tbl.
Hypothetical	hypo.	Title	tit.
		Volume	vol.

Every abbreviation must be followed by a period. Since there are word limits on some legal documents, abbreviations can be “closed” or include no spaces between elements and periods. This list is not exhaustive; there are additional lists of required abbreviations for various areas of government, geographic location, date, industry, and service. The Bluebook encourages writers to not employ abbreviations not found in the lists unless the abbreviation is in no manner ambiguous.

THE INDIGO BOOK

The Indigo Book was created by NYU Law School and is used as an easier, more streamlined guide than *The Bluebook*. *The Indigo Book* is a free resource and can be accessed at the following link:

<https://law.resource.org/pub/us/code/blue/IndigoBook.html>

Important to note: citations created using *The Indigo Book* as a reference tool will create “citations that are compatible with the Uniform System of Citation.”

The Indigo Book highlighted differences:

- **Typeface:** Indigo book strongly recommends only the use of *italics* instead of *The Bluebook* rule of using underline for Bluepages and *italics* in Whitepages documents. Their reasoning is that underline was made for typewriters and the modern preferred form of font typeface change is *italic*.
- **Authority:** While the order of signals within a citation is similar to *The Bluebook*, *The Indigo Book* also provides guidance on how to order authorities within each signal. In *The Bluebook* there are very few explicit rules on this, stating it must be done in a “logical manner.” In *The Indigo Book*, however, there are very specific guidelines in section R10 which are helpful to determine proper ordering of authorities within each signal.
- **Break-up of citations:** *The Indigo Book* permits the breaking-up of citations, similar to APA or MLA where the case name is stated in the text first, and the rest of the citation appears in a separate citation sentence. *The Bluebook* has no rule about this.

Citation examples compatible with the Uniform System of Citation:

The Indigo Book provides many more citation examples of a variety of authorities (government agencies, legal bodies, courts, reporters, legislative agencies, etc.). While an example of each authority is not provided in this brief guide, the table of contents of *The Indigo Book* is provided below. The example of each authority seen in the table of contents can be viewed by navigating to the corresponding section of *The Indigo Book* at the link above.

Note: *The Indigo Book* is free from copyright restrictions which allows the following table of contents of *The Indigo Book* to be copied below.

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- R12. Court & Year
- R13. Weight of Authority and Explanatory Parenthetical
- R14. History of the Case
- R15. Short Form Citation for Cases

C. STATUTES, RULES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS

- R16. Federal Statutes
- R17. State Statutes
- R18. Rules of Procedure and Evidence, Restatements, and Uniform Acts
- R19. Administrative Rules and Regulations
- R20. Federal Taxation Materials
- R21. Legislative Materials
- R22. Short Form Citation of Legislative and Administrative Materials
- R23. Sources and Authorities: Constitutions

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F. JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, & NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

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