

Official and Unofficial Reports and Star Paging

What are Official and Unofficial Reports?

Cases are published in official and unofficial reports. The official report is the report the federal or a state government says you must cite in documents you submit to courts. The official report is usually published by the federal or a state government, but may be published by a commercial publisher. For example, Utah's official report currently is the *Pacific Reporter*, published by West Publishing. In addition to being published in an official report, a case may be published in several commercially published unofficial reports: For example *Roe v. Wade* is published in an official report, the *United States Reports*, and two unofficial reports, the *Supreme Court Reporter* and *Lawyers' Edition*. The *Association of Legal Writing Directors (ALWD) Citation Manual* indicates which reports are official reports.

What is Star Paging?

Many law firms and libraries carry only one report and it may be an unofficial report. If you must cite the official report and your firm or library only has the unofficial report, must you go to a library which has the official report? Fortunately no because in most unofficial reports you will find the official report's page numbers cross referenced. This cross referencing is called star paging.

Star Paging in Print

Star paging looks different in different reports.. For example, in the unofficial report *Lawyers' Edition* brackets enclose the official report's, the *United States Reports*, corresponding page numbers. In the unofficial *Supreme Court Reporter* upside down Ts mark the official report's, the *United States Reports*, page numbers. Here is an example of the latter:

410 U.S. 118	ROE v. WADE Cite as 93 S.Ct. 705 (1973)
to complicate and not to simplify the problem.	
Our task, of course, is to resolve the issue by constitutional measurement, free of emotion and of predilection. We seek earnestly to do this, and, because we do,	
_117	we have inquired into, and in this opinion place some emphasis upon, medical and medical-legal history and what that history reveals about man's attitudes to-

The extent of star paging varies by report. An unofficial state report may list only the official report's first page in the unofficial report's caption.

Star Paging Online

Traditionally and many jurisdictions still require you to cite official report pages unless a case is unavailable in print. So if you find a case online you must still cite official report pages. Fortunately Lexis and Westlaw

have complete star paging for federal and state cases. Here is an example:

410 U.S. 113, *116; 93 S. Ct. 705, **709;
1973 U.S. LEXIS 159, ***7; 35 L. Ed. 2d 147

In addition, population growth, pollution, poverty,
and racial overtones tend [**709] to complicate and not
to simplify the problem.

Our task, of course, is to resolve the issue by constitu-
tional measurement, free of emotion and of predilection.
We seek earnestly to do this, and, because we do, we
[*117] have inquired into, and in this opinion place some

The number of stars (or asterisks) before a page number is significant. In the case above, one star before a page number indicates a page in the *United States Reports*. Two stars indicate a page in the *Supreme Court Reporter*. Three stars indicate a page on Lexis. How do you know that a particular number of stars indicates a particular report? If you look at the case caption, you will see cites to the same case in different reports. Within the cites you will see the particular number of stars given to a particular report.

Although Lexis and Westlaw have complete star paging for federal and state cases, other online databases, such as Utah Law on Disc, and World Wide Web sites which have cases do not have complete star paging and may list only the first page of the official report.

Why Do Paragraph Symbols Appear on Recent Cases?

Traditionally all jurisdictions required you to cite to official report pages. However, as cases have become increasingly available online, citing official report page numbers has become increasingly inconvenient. Some jurisdictions now permit or require you to cite paragraph numbers instead of page numbers. Hence paragraph numbers are beginning to appear in case reports. However, some jurisdictions, Utah for example, that allow or require you to cite paragraphs when quoting or referring to a particular part of a case may still require that you also include the official report's first page. So you may need to use star paging to find the official report's first page.