Don't reinvent the wheel.

Use secondary sources to guide your research.

Treatises
A book or set of books that provide a detailed overview of an area of law. Include citations or cross-references to primary sources. A HORNBOK is like an abridged treatise.

Available in print and on Westlaw, Lexis or Bloomberg Law.

**Legal Encyclopedias**

Just like a regular encyclopedia, a set of books providing a broad overview of the law of a particular jurisdiction. State-specific encyclopedias especially can be a good starting point for unfamiliar legal areas.

Available in print and on Westlaw or Lexis.

**Practice Guides**

Usually, one or two volume books that provide a jurisdiction-specific guide to practicing law on a particular subject. Very useful when confronted with a new area of law.

Available in print and on Westlaw, Lexis or Bloomberg Law.

**Law Reviews**

Journal articles are often academic in focus, but usually include some summary paragraphs at the beginning that provide helpful overviews of an area of law. Use the article footnotes for references to helpful primary or other sources.

Available Westlaw, Lexis or HeinOnline (for older articles).

**Restatements**

Restatements are a “secondary source plus” in which committees of well-respected scholars and practitioners describe the established rules in different areas of law. Great for understanding the doctrines governing a legal topic. Often cited as authoritative by courts.

Available in print and on Westlaw or Lexis.

**American Law Reports (ALR)**

Contain “annotations” that provide detailed summaries of case law on a specific topic. A great starting point if you find a recent, on-point annotation for your topic.

Available on Westlaw or Lexis.