

# Black's Law Dictionary

*Black's Law Dictionary* is the most frequently used legal dictionary in the United States.<sup>[1]</sup> Henry Campbell Black (1860–1927) was the author of the first two editions of the dictionary.

## History

The first edition was published in 1891 by West Publishing, with the full title *A Dictionary of Law: containing definitions of the terms and phrases of American and English jurisprudence, ancient and modern, including the principal terms of international constitutional and commercial law, with a collection of legal maxims and numerous select titles from the civil law and other foreign systems*. A second edition was published in 1910 as *A Law Dictionary*.<sup>[2]</sup> Black died in 1927 and future editions were titled *Black's Law Dictionary*.

The sixth and earlier editions of the book additionally provided case citations for the term cited, which was viewed by lawyers as its most useful feature, providing a useful starting point with leading cases. The invention of the Internet made legal research easier therefore many state- or circuit-specific case citations and outdated or overruled case citations were omitted from the seventh edition in 1999. The eighth edition introduced a unique system of perpetually updated case citations and cross-references to legal encyclopedias. The current edition is the eleventh, published in 2019.<sup>[3]</sup>

As many legal terms are derived from a Latin root word, the dictionary provides a pronunciation guide for such terms.<sup>[4]</sup> In addition, the applicable entries provide pronunciation transcriptions pursuant to those found among North American practitioners of law or medicine.

## Availability

An online version of the tenth edition can be accessed through the paid Westlaw legal information service, and is available as an application for iOS devices.<sup>[5]</sup>

The second edition of *Black's Law Dictionary*, published in 1910, is now in the public domain and is widely reproduced online. References to case law are out-of-date, and that edition of the dictionary omits legal terms that have since come into use and does not reflect contemporary changes in how legal terms are used.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Bibliography

- *Black's Law Dictionary* 11th ed. (West Group, 2019), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 978-1-5392-2975-9
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 10th ed. (West Group, 2014), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 978-0-314-61300-4
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 9th ed. (West Group, 2009), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-19949-7
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 8th ed. (West Group, 2004), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-15199-0
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 7th ed. (West Group, 1999), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-22864-0
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 6th ed. (West Publishing, 1990) ISBN 90-6544-631-1
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 5th ed. (West Publishing, 1979) ISBN 0-8299-2041-2
- *Black's Law Dictionary* Revised 4th ed. (St. Paul: West, 1968)
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 4th ed. (St. Paul: West, 1951)
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 3rd ed. (West Publishing Co., 1933) (the first edition after Henry C. Black's death)
- *A Law Dictionary* 2nd ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing, 1910) ISBN 1-886363-10-2. Public domain (<https://books.google.com/books?id=R2c8AAAAIAAJ>) (accessible for free through Google Books)
- *A Dictionary of Law* 1st ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing, 1891) ISBN 0-9630106-0-3

### Pocket editions

- *Black's Law Dictionary* 6th pocket ed. (West Group, 2021), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 9781731931610
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 5th pocket ed. (West Group, 2016), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-84489-9
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 4th pocket ed. (West Group, 2011), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-27544-4
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 3rd pocket ed. (West Group, 2006), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-15862-6
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 2nd pocket ed. (West Group, 2001), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-25791-8
- *Black's Law Dictionary* 1st pocket ed. (West Group, 1996), Bryan A. Garner, editor, ISBN 0-314-06690-X

### Non-English editions

- *Blackův právnický slovník*. Complete translation of 6th edition into Czech. Victoria Publishing, Prague, 1993. ISBN 80-85605-23-6.
- Āqā'ī, Bahman. *Farhang-i huqūqī-i Bahman: Ingīlīsī-Fārsī: bar asās-i Black's law dictionary* (1999)<sup>[7]</sup> (Fārsī)
- Muq̄tadirah-yi Qaumī Zabān. *Qānūnī, Angrezī-Urdu luḡhat: Blaiks lā' dikshanaarī se mākhūz (Based on Black's law dictionary) / nigrān, Fatih Muḡammad Malik* (2002)<sup>[8]</sup> ISBN 969-474-084-3. (Urdu)

## See also

- *Bouvier's Law Dictionary*
- Legal terminology textbook
- List of legal abbreviations

*Black's Law Dictionary*

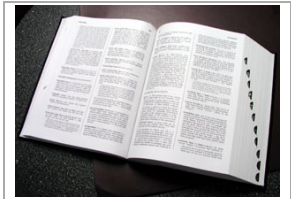


Image of the 7th edition

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- [Wex](#)

## References

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1. "Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library" (<https://library.law.yale.edu/us-legal-dictionaries>).
2. OCLC 33831602 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/33831602>)
3. "Black's Law Dictionary" (<https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/products/law-books/blacks-law-dictionary>).
4. Macleod, P. R. (1997). Latin in legal writing: an inquiry into the use of Latin in the modern legal world. *BCL Rev.*, 39, 235.
5. "Black's Law Dictionary App" (<https://lawschool.westlaw.com/Marketing/Display/MI/543>). *Westlaw*. Thomson Reuters. Retrieved 30 October 2021.
6. Whisner, Mary (20 February 2009). "Dictionaries Make Strange Bedfellows". *Language of the Law*: 93–108.
7. NCSU Libraries (<https://archive.today/20120805202213/http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCSU1542020>)
8. "University of Toronto Library" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20120112195510/http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/index?Ntt=Black's+Law+Dictionary&Ntk=Title&Ntx=mode%2Bmatchallpartial&formName=search\\_form\\_simple&N=0&Nu=p\\_work\\_normalized&Np=1](https://web.archive.org/web/20120112195510/http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/index?Ntt=Black's+Law+Dictionary&Ntk=Title&Ntx=mode%2Bmatchallpartial&formName=search_form_simple&N=0&Nu=p_work_normalized&Np=1)). Archived from the original ([http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/index?Ntt=Black's+Law+Dictionary&Ntk=Title&Ntx=mode%2Bmatchallpartial&formName=search\\_form\\_simple&N=0&Nu=p\\_work\\_normalized&Np=1](http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/index?Ntt=Black's+Law+Dictionary&Ntk=Title&Ntx=mode%2Bmatchallpartial&formName=search_form_simple&N=0&Nu=p_work_normalized&Np=1)) on 2012-01-12. Retrieved 2011-10-25.

## External links

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- WorldCat listing for all nine editions (<http://www.worldcat.org/wcpa/servlet/org.oclc.lac.ui.EditionsServlet?oclcnum=44045815>)
- Libraries with the Urdu edition ([http://worldcat.org/oclc/52593933&referer=brief\\_results](http://worldcat.org/oclc/52593933&referer=brief_results))
- Libraries with the Persian edition ([http://worldcat.org/oclc/52992657&referer=brief\\_results](http://worldcat.org/oclc/52992657&referer=brief_results))
- *Black's Law Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (1910) (<https://archive.org/details/BlacksLaw2dEd>) at the Internet Archive

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