Congratulations on becoming a member of the law review or journal at your school! Being invited to join a journal is a prestigious achievement. As a member of a journal, you may have the opportunity to write your own note or comment.

With Bloomberg Law®, you can zero in on a topic for your note or comment using a variety of integrated resources—from court opinions and dockets to current awareness articles and news from over 50,000 sources.

THE BASICS

A note or comment is a scholarly paper that discusses a relevant legal issue and is generally 20 to 30 pages long.

Your goal in writing a note or comment is to provide a unique perspective on a legal issue, take a position on an emerging legal issue, or offer a new interpretation of an existing rule of law.

Visit the Law Reviews and Journals page on Bloomberg Law to find all of this information and more!
CIRCUIT SPLITS

Circuit splits are a great resource to find a potential topic for your note or comment. A circuit split exists when two or more circuits in the United States Courts of Appeals have different interpretations of federal law.

On Bloomberg Law, you can find circuit splits two ways:

1. United States Law Week Circuit Split Charts: The charts come from The United States Law Week (U.S.L.W.), a Bloomberg BNA Law Report publication that tracks the most significant cases and key legislative, regulatory, and legal developments across the country. In the first issue of each month, U.S.L.W. publishes a chart of the prior month’s prominent circuit splits. Click on Law Reviews and Journals under the Law School Success section. On the Law Reviews and Journals page, click on the United States Law Week Circuit Split Charts link.

2. Federal Court Opinions: Go to the Search & Browse menu and select Court Opinions. Type All Federal Court Opinions in the Select Sources search box, and enter the Keywords circuit n/15 split and an extended date range, such as 1/1/2011 to present. Narrow your search by utilizing the filters on the left side of the results list. An example of this search is here.

RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

Reviewing emerging legal developments is another effective way to find an interesting comment or note idea, and to ensure your research remains up to date. Choose an area of law that interests you and spend time reviewing relevant publications. Through Bloomberg Law, you have access to over 100 Bloomberg BNA Law Reports. Law Reports are current awareness publications written by experienced legal editors and expert practitioners on a wide range of topics and industries.

Typical Law Report articles are written by attorney-journalists, contain analysis of the case they are covering, and link to the case in question as well as supporting documents. Insights articles are written by practitioners and are typically longer, footnoted, and identify issues in the practice of law. Both types of articles are effective starting points for notes or comments, and do not “pre-empt” a note or comment.

Law Firm Research memorandums are another strategic source for finding interesting and current note or comment paper ideas. Large law firms periodically release research memorandums, directed to their clients, which discuss current issues in a particular area of the law. Bloomberg Law has collected many of these research memorandums and made them text searchable.
CASES OF INTEREST

Personal experiences or interests can provide the basis for a thought-provoking note or comment topic. If you already have a case in mind, Bloomberg Law can help you focus your research further.

Pull up a case directly through the <GO> Bar, either by case name or citation, using the Court Opinions by Case Name or Citation Search option in the drop-down list.

Gain context for recent federal cases by examining Dockets. Search across a national database of court filings through Search Dockets under the Litigation & Dockets tab, or link directly to a docket in the General Info section of a federal court opinion.

Using the docket, you can gain insight into the procedural path of the litigation, and pull up original court documents. Use these to discover each party’s legal arguments and view actual evidence used in the case. Bloomberg Law provides complimentary access to most federal court documents to academic users.

Further your research by using the BCite Case Analysis tab, including the Sort options and dynamic filters. Remember: a citing case that distinguishes your opinion may be helpful to explain why a particular court has treated your case differently. Distinguished means that a case has been differentiated from another opinion on either the facts or the law. On the Case Analysis tab, view distinguished cases by selecting “Distinguished” under the Citing Case Analysis filters.

The Citation Frequency filter and sort option allow you to quickly find cases that contain significant discussion of your target case. Layer filters together to find cases that distinguish your case and contain a significant discussion.

Keep track of your case with a Citation Alert. Choose “Create Citation Alert” on the Citing Documents tab to be emailed when your case is cited in subsequent legal documents. Apply Content Type filters before clicking Create Citation Alert to narrow the alert to just cases.
STEP 2: STAY CURRENT

> Make sure you are aware of new cases, news, and more that may affect your topic
> Take advantage of unlimited searching and alerting across the integrated resources on Bloomberg Law

Continue your research by searching thousands of sources in our specialized News Search. On Bloomberg Law, you have access to over 50,000 news sources, including Bloomberg News. Click on the News & Law Reports menu and then Search News to run specific, exact searches on your topic by Keywords, Companies, People, Topics, and more. Create Search Alerts to be notified every time an article matches your criteria.

Browse news on specific legal topics, such as patent law or antitrust enforcement, on the Latest News page. Click on the light-grey bars in the upper left corner of the Latest News page to open up the News Topic Menu to see available topics.

Keep in mind that Law Reports are also very useful for researching and staying up-to-date after your topic is chosen. You have the ability to subscribe to any the Law Reports that interest you by clicking on the “Manage Email Notifications for BNA Law Reports” button on the BNA Law Reports page.

You can also run keyword searches across all the Law Reports by keyword, and create a Search Alert, so that you can easily stay on top of your particular area of interest.

STEP 3: STAY ORGANIZED

> Use workflow tools on Bloomberg Law to keep your research organized and up-to-date
> Save all your research in one place and have quick access to all your sources

As you research and write your note or comment, staying organized will be key to your success. Bloomberg Law provides you with several workflow tools to help you keep track of your materials and manage your time efficiently and effectively.

For example, every search you run and document you view on Bloomberg Law is saved in your Research Trail for six months.

You can access your Research Trail through the black bar at the top of every screen.

In addition, you can organize your work with Workspaces. Easily create a Workspace for your comment or note and use tags and descriptions to help organize your research. Items added to your Workspace remain there indefinitely. You can also share the research in your Workspaces with your editors and other members of your journal or law review, and upload your own personal files and documents to keep everything in one safe place.

Finally, add documents to your Queue to print, download, or email them as a group. The Queue also acts as a storage space so you can add documents now and decide whether they are important later.