



West's Encyclopedia of American Law (13 Volume Set)

By Thomson Gale, Lehman



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Editorial Review

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The new edition of this standard legal reference is a worthy successor to the original. The encyclopedia contains a comprehensive overview of American law, covering historical and current terms, concepts, events, movements, cases, and significant persons. New cases, events, and trends have been thoroughly integrated into existing entries. Some, such as *Absentee voting*, *Jurisdiction*, and *terrorism*, have been substantially rewritten, while many others, such as *Abington School District v. Schempp*, *abortion*, and *Judge advocate* have new content appended. Omissions from the first edition have been corrected, with new entries for Ralph David Abernathy, Bella Abzug, the *Amistad* mutiny, and the "abuse excuse" as well as for George W. Bush, Tom Ridge, and Kenneth Starr, of recent import. Of the more than 5,000 entries, 2,000 have been revised and 630 are new. Even the photographs have been updated--different photographs are often used, even when article content is the same.

How were several hundred entries added and others lengthened while only one volume was added to the size of the set? The greatest change seems to be a sharp decline in the number of photographs, tables, and charts. Color has also been eliminated. Nonetheless, the set still contains numerous illustrations that enrich the text and help show the effects the legal system has on individuals. Other changes include the use of italics for the definitions that begin each entry on a legal term, making these easy to distinguish, and the addition of further readings to a majority of main entries. Useful features in both editions include "In Focus" essays on controversial issues, time lines for all biographical entries that show important moments in the subject's life as well as important historical events, a dictionary of legal terms, an index of cases, and a general index. An appendix volume has been helpfully renamed *Primary Documents* and contains the text of speeches, legislation, and historic legal documents ranging from the Magna Carta to the Treaty with Sioux Nation. The "Milestones in the Law" features, which have the text of landmark cases, briefs, and related documents, have been gathered into another appendix volume. This beautifully edited encyclopedia is highly recommended for high-school, community college, public, and undergraduate libraries. *Jan Lewis*
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