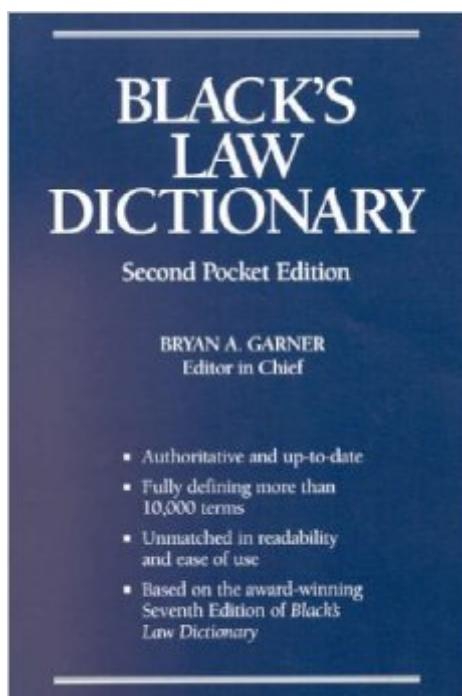


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Black's Law Dictionary, Second Pocket Edition



Synopsis

This newest addition to the Black's Law Dictionary Series is an easy-to-access and completely up-to-date version of the world's most trusted and authoritative legal dictionary. It is based entirely on the widely-acclaimed 7th edition of Black's Law Dictionary, and has been edited by Bryan A. Garner, the nation's preeminent legal lexicographer. This Second Pocket Edition packs more than 10,000 terms into a single compact volume that is easy to read and even easier to carry. It is the essential companion dictionary to the Standard edition, or as a stand-alone legal tool. Definitions are accurate, brief, and clear. Black's is more than a dictionary--it is a reference that defines, explains and amplifies legal meaning. Helpful extras in the second edition include a dictionary guide and the complete U.S. Constitution.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While I consulted my pocket edition a decent amount in my first year, it was in no way something I couldn't live without (e.g., the Emanuel series, coffee). This is not a cheap volume for what you get -- specifically, *short* and spare definitions, the vast bulk of which you will never encounter. If you do the bulk of your studying in the library, you likely will find several big ol' Blacks stationed throughout, not to mention Am Jur and CJS and whatnot. In addition, Westlaw offers Black's definitions online, and Lexis has something similar. It's easy to find alternatives and go without. The definitions are so short that a term of any complexity might just as well be more confusing after consulting it. From what I can gather, the emphasis was on boiling definitions down, not on developing terse, informative definitions. (And I found at least one blatant editorial goof -- the omission of "barrister,"

despite its cross-reference at "solicitor"; omission of "renvoi") I mean, you don't even feel like you're reading a real dictionary; rather it's like some kind of perverse travel phrasebook. The bigger one is a better reference, but for the amount you'll actually need that kind of tool, you're better off spending the money on a good hornbook for a big class. My two cents: Garner ought to design a volume targeted at 1Ls, with 2/3 fewer terms (Is "kleptomania" really necessary?) and two to three times the explanation. It should focus on stuff 1Ls are likely to encounter and not know, stuff for which a good, thorough, contextual explanation would really help students see how the piece fits into the puzzle. I truly can't think of one time I've used this book since my first year.

As a long-time medical editor who felt herself something of an expert, it was a shock to enter the very different world of legal editing and be confronted with terms that look misspelled but may not be; case citations presented in a myriad of ways; Latin phrases that are familiar but not enough to comfortably edit legal articles; and so forth. I bought the paperback version of Black's, and it became my editing bible overnight. Having read the reviews written by law students and attorneys, I bow to their judgment of this book. But I am neither, and I need a tool I can use quickly and well. For me, this book is truly a godsend. The definitions are clear, concise, and enough to let me know whether the copy I am reading has cited a case clearly, or whether I have to query the author. And that's only one of many examples. As far as I am concerned, this is a five-star reference book, one that I am glad to have in my editing library.

I teach at a law school, and my students tell me that they like this pocket dictionary. You can't lug the complete edition of Black's around campus; it's too big. But this little paperback is just right for pulling out of a backpack when the professor uses a term everyone "should" know. It's convenient. And accurate.

This recommendation is based on the assumption that the reader has already decided to purchase a legal dictionary. I have found Black's pocket version the best of the portable legal dictionaries. There are more numerous entries and the definitions are clear and complete. I also like the grouping of specific definitions under a more general entry. For example, under "negligence" there are sub-entries for "active", "adventent", "comparative", "concurrent", "contributory", "criminal", "culpable", "gross", "imputed", "inadvertent", "joint", "negligence per se", "ordinary", "passive", "slight", and "subsequent." There are four pages of entries of types of contracts (from adhesion to void contracts) under the main definition of "contract." This dictionary may be more expensive than

the others, but in this case you'll get what you pay for. I have used Gilbert's, for instance, and found it to be inadequate and not as comprehensive as Black's. One final note: The 2nd Pocket Edition is based on the larger Black's 7th Edition. An 8th Edition was released in 2004, so we might anticipate a 3rd Pocket Edition being released soon.

As mentioned in an earlier review, the pocket version of Black's Law Dictionary is ideal for the beginning law student, such as myself. While not as thorough as the unabridged version, it is much more convenient to carry around for one. Second, the concise definitions are ideal for getting the gist of a legal definition. I have found that many of the cases studied in first year classes are seventy to one-hundred-and-fifty years old. As a result, many legal terms used in those cases are a bit outdated. Enter the pocket dictionary, which does an admirable job of giving a concise clear definition, just right for understanding the term used in the case. As the semester has rolled along, I have found that I am using the dictionary less, which is natural I suppose since I am becoming more familiar with the language of law. I still keep it handy as a refresher. While the internet does offer many valuable resources for defining legal terms, the pocket dictionary is still a valuable resource for use on a plane, on the bus, or when the internet isn't available in class. If you are planning on studying law, I would recommend picking up a copy of the pocket version of Black's Law Dictionary.

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