This chapter provides an overview of the legal sources in international law. Sources of law determine the rules of legal society and, like national legal societies, the international legal society has its own set of rules. The discussion begins in Section 2.2 with article 38 of the International Court of Justice Statute. Section 2.3 discusses treaties, Section 2.4 covers customary international law, and Section 2.5 turns to general principles of international law. Attention then turns to the two additional sources listed in article 38. Section 2.6 discusses judicial decisions and Section 2.7 examines academic contributions. Section 2.8 discusses the role played by unilateral statements. The chapter then turns to the issue of a hierarchy of sources in Section 2.9 and concludes in Section 2.10 with a discussion of non-binding instruments and so-called ‘soft law’.

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