Guide to using Rabbinic texts:

Transliteration issues:
Hebrew has a different phonetic structure from English, and there is no universally accepted transliteration system. Therefore, the same title or word might show up in English works with diverse spellings.

Here are a few things you can look for.

Consonants

- The Hebrew letter ב is usually an English B, but under some circumstances it is pronounced as a V. In those cases, it can be transliterated as either b, b, or v. (In German, it might even show up as a w.)
- Hebrew ג can show up as either a v or a w.
- Hebrew נ is an aspirated h sound, and is correctly transliterated as a h (with a dot underneath). Ashkenazic Jews pronounce it as a gutteral, like the soft ב (see below), and so it is often transliterated as a kh or ch.
- The Hebrew ת, which is a Y consonant, might be transliterated as i or j (especially in German works).
- Similarly, the letter פ is usually a simple K, but under some circumstances it is a guttural (Scottish/German) ch or kh sound, and is transliterated accordingly.
- Hebrew ס can be either a P or F sound, depending on certain grammatical rules. In the latter case, it can be written as a p, p, f or ph.
- The Hebrew צ is an emphatic S sound with no real equivalent in English. The correct transliteration is s, but Ashkenazic Jews generally pronounce it as a TZ sound, so that it will be transliterated as z, tz, ts, c or ç.
- Hebrew ק is a back-of-the-throat kind of K sound, though Ashkenazic Jews do not distinguish between it and a hard ב (see above). Therefore you might find it as a q, k (with a dot underneath) or just plain k.
- Hebrew כ has a sh sound, and is usually transliterated as such. However you might find it with a diacritic sign on top. Also, under some circumstances it has a S sound, and may appear as either a s or with a special diacritic sign.
- Hebrew ר is a simple T, but is sometimes softened into a th sound, which might also be printed as t (underlined). However, very few Jewish communities actually pronounce the th sound. The Sefaradic pronunciation, used in modern Israeli Hebrew, treats both as simple t, and it is transliterated accordingly. Ashkenazic Jews, on the other hand, pronounced the soft version as an s, and you will sometimes find spelled that way.

Vowels

- The vowel ח that is generally pronounced ah, will usually be printed simply as a (sometimes with a line or carat on top). Ashkenazic Jews pronounce it as an o, and some texts will write it as one.
- The vowel that is usually transliterated as i, and pronounced as either the i in “sit” or the ee in “seen,” may appear in transliteration as ee, etc.
Similarly, the vowel that is usually an e, and is pronounced like the e in “set,” may appear in some transliterations as ey, ay, or more exotic combinations.

There is a half-vowel known as the sheva or shewa that is technically transliterated as a superscript ª, but might also appear as a simple e, apostrophe (’), or be omitted altogether.

**Citation Methods for Rabbinic texts:**
For additional details use: G. Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*.  
*Encyclopedia Judaica*  
My “A Page of Talmud” Web site:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html>

**Orders and Tractates of Mishnah-Tosefta-Talmuds:**
Citations from Mishnah will usually take the form of: M *TractateName*  
ChapterNum:ParagraphNum; e.g., M. Suk. 4:2. Tosefta is the same, except for a T instead of the M at the beginning.  
Citations from Babylonian Talmud may have the prefix TB, BT, Bab. B, or Bavli before the Tractate title. Even without those indications, you can recognize its source by the use of the “PageNum a/b” format, referring to the front or back of the numbered leaves in the standard editions; e.g., *Yevamot* 36a.  
There is no standardized method for citing the Jerusalem Talmud, though the fact that a source is from there will be clearly indicated with such prefixes as TP, PT, TJ or J.

**English versions:** There are several English translations of the Mishnah, including those by C. Danby, P. Blackman, J. Neusner, etc. Don’t worry too much about Tosefta. At any rate, there is a (poor) translation by J. Neusner. A complete translation of the Babylonian Talmud is published by the Soncino Press, London (edited by I. Epstein). Translations of individual sections are being published by ArtScroll Publishers (NY), A. Steinsaltz, and others.  
The Palestinian/Jerusalem Talmud is currently being translated in a series by University of Chicago Press under the editorship of J. Neusner.

I. Order Zera’im [“Seeds” agricultural rules]:  
1. B”akhot [blessings]  
2. Pe’ah [corner of field]  
3. D’mai [doubtful produce]  
4. Kila’im [doubtful produce]  
5. Sh’vi’it [seventh (sabbatical) year]  
6. T’rumot [heave-offerings]  
7. Ma’as’rot or: Ma’aser [tithes]  
8. Ma’aser sheni [second tithe]  
9. Hallah [dough offering]  
10. ‘Orlah [premature fruit]  
11. Bikkurim [first fruits]

II. Order Mo’ed [“Appointed Times” holy days]:  
1. Shabbat [Sabbath]  
2. ‘Eruvin [mixed domains]  
3. P’sahim [Passover]  
4. Sheqalim [shekel contribution]

III. Nashim [“Women” family law]:  
1. Ye’vamot [levirate marriage]  
2. K’tubbot [marriage contracts]  
3. N’darim [vows]  
4. Nazir [Naxirite vow]  
5. Yoma [“the day” of Atonement]  
6. Sukkah [feast of Tabernacles]  
7. Besah [“egg”] or Yom Tov [festival]  
8. Rosh Ha-shanah [New Year]  
9. Ta’anit [fast days]  
10. Megillah [scroll (of Esther)]  
11. Mo’ed Qatan [lesser holidays]  
12. Hagigah [pilgrimage offering]  

IV. Neziqin [“Damages” civil and criminal law]:  
1. Bava Qamma [first section]
2. Bava Mesi’a [middle section]
3. Bava Batra [last section]
4. Sanhedrin [courts]
5. Makkot [lashes]
6. Shevu’ot [oaths]
7. ‘Eduyyot [testimonies]
8. ‘Avodah Zarah [idolatry]
9. Avot [“ethics of the) fathers”]
10. Horayot [instructions]

V. Qodashim [“Holy things” sacrifices and the Temple]
1. Zevahim [offerings]
2. Menahot [meal offerings]
3. Hullin [non-sacred food]
4. B’khorot [firstlings]
5. ‘Arakhin [assessments]
6. T’murah [substitutions]
7. K’ritot [extermination]
8. M‘ilah [misappropriation]
9. Tamid [continual (daily) offering]
10. Middot [dimensions (of the Temple)]
11. Qinnim [birds’ nests]

VI. Tohorot [“Purity”]
1. Kelim [vessels or utensils]
2. Oholot [tents]
3. N’ga‘im [plagues (“leprosy”)]
4. Parah [(red) heifer]
5. Tohorot [pure things]
6. Miqva’ot [purification baths]
7. Niddah [menstrual impurity]
8. Makhshirim [“enablers”]
9. Zavim [genital emissions]
10. T’vil Yom [on the same day as immersion]
11. Yadavim [hands]
12. ‘Uqsin [stems]

Structure of Maimonides’ Mishneh Torah:
Available in an almost complete English translation published by Yale University Press.
Fourteen general topics, each referred to as “Sefer ha-” (The Book of …). Each book is subdivided into several sections with the titles “Hilkhot…” (The Laws of …). Citation is usually to the “Hilkhot” (sometimes abbreviated to “hil.” or just “h.”), and you are left to your own to know which Book it comes from. Each “Hilkhot” section is divided into numbered chapters and paragraphs, so that citation will usually follow the format: Hil. Melakhim. 3:13.
1. Sefer ha-Madda’ [Book of Knowledge]: Theology and belief
2. Sefer Ahavah [Book of Love]: Prayer
3. Sefer Zemanim [Book of Times]: Holiday calendar
4. Sefer Nashim [Book of Women]: family law
5. Sefer Q’dush-shah [Book of Holiness]: ritual prohibitions
6. Sefer Hafla’ah [Book of affirmations]: oaths, vows, etc.
7. Sefer Z’ra‘im [Book of Seeds]: Agricultural regulations
8. Sefer ‘Avodah [Book of Service]: Temple worship
9. Sefer Qorbanot [Book of Sacrifices]
10. Sefer Tohorah [Book of Purity]
11. Sefer N’ziqin [Book of Damages]: torts, theft, etc.
12. Sefer Qinyan [Book of Acquisitions]
13. Sefer Mishpatim [Book of Judgments]: civil law
14. Sefer Shoftim [Book of Judges]: Court administration

Structure of Shulhan ‘Arukh (same as Arba‘ah Ṭurim [=Ṭur]).
Except for some individual sections, it is not available in English translation.
Divided into four sections, each with sequentially numbered chapters and (for the Shulhan ‘Arukh) numbered paragraphs:
I. **Orah Hayyim:** ("The Path of Life"; see Psalms 16:11): Deals with worship and ritual observance in the home and synagogue, through the course of the day, the weekly sabbath and the festival cycle.

II. **Yoreh De'ah** ("Teach Knowledge"; see Isaiah 28:9): Deals with assorted ritual prohibitions, especially dietary laws and regulations concerning menstrual impurity.

III. **Even Ha-'Ezer** ("The Rock of the Helpmate"; see 1 Samuel 5:1; Genesis 2:18): Deals with marriage, divorce and other issues in family law.

IV. **Hoshen Mishpat:** Deals with the administration and adjudication of civil law.

The sections are often identified by abbreviations: **O. H.**, **Y.D.**, **E.H.**, **Ho.M.**