Why do you need to cite sources?

- Citing sources is a way of giving credit where credit is due and is expected in academic writing.
- By citing sources, you are able to build up your own credibility by appropriating the credibility of the authors of your sources.
- Citing sources also ensures that you avoid plagiarism.
In general, two different things need to be cited.

1. Any direct wording that is taken from a source needs to be placed in quotation marks and cited. This gives the original author credit for their words.

2. Most information or ideas taken from a source needs to be cited. Information/ideas of this type would include:
   - Statistics
   - Information that only experts in a field would commonly know
   - Summaries and/or paraphrases of ideas from your text
Your own ideas and common knowledge need not be cited.

- With your own ideas, be sure that you have kept careful notes about what ideas you had before you began doing research, so that you are sure that an idea is your own and does not come from a source.

- Common knowledge includes the following:
  - Information that most everyone would know
  - Dates
  - Conventional wisdom/sayings
To properly cite a source in MLA format, you need to do both of the following:

1. Include an in-text citation when you use the source in your essay.
2. Include a works cited page with full publication information of each source used in the essay.

In order to match up the in-text citation with the works cited entry, the in-text citation should be whatever the alphabetizing word is of the works cited entry.

- Usually, this can be the author’s last name, since the author’s last name will usually alphabetize the works cited entry.
- If no author is given for a source though, the in-text citation should be whatever comes first in the works cited entry.
- The page number should also be include in the in-text citation, if there is a page number available.
Most works cited entries will follow the same basic logic, and this can be helpful in figuring out what you should use for your in-text citations. Just about all MLA works cited entries will begin in this way:

- Author Name (Last, First). “Article/Chapter/Web Page Title.” 
  *Newspaper/Book/Web Site Title.*

- If no author’s name is listed, then the title of the article/chapter/web page would be the alphabetizing word of this works cited entry and that would be how you would cite this source in the text of your essay.

- After these first three parts, you have to look up the specific type of source that you are citing and follow the example for that type of source.
Example. Look at this article and pull out what the works cited entry would begin with.
So, the works cited entry would begin like this:

- Palmer, Brian. “Seriously, How Do You Get to Sesame Street: How Professional Puppeteers Learn their Trade.” *Slate*

Based on this example, your in-text citation has to include Palmer’s last name, since the works cited entry would be alphabetized under that name.

- You could cite it in your text in one of two ways then:
  - Brian Palmer states “Conditioning is another issue. It’s hard enough to hold your hand above your head for five minutes, but many puppets weigh 10 pounds or more.”
  - “Conditioning is another issue. It’s hard enough to hold your hand above your head for five minutes, but many puppets weigh 10 pounds or more” (Palmer).
What if we didn’t have an author’s name though?

- Then, we would cite this source based on the article title, using the alphabetizing word of that title, which is “Seriously.”
- The citation would look like this then:
  - The article “Seriously, How Do You Get to Sesame Street” states “Conditioning is another issue. It’s hard enough to hold your hand above your head for five minutes, but many puppets weigh 10 pounds or more.”
  - “Conditioning is another issue. It’s hard enough to hold your hand above your head for five minutes, but many puppets weigh 10 pounds or more” (“Seriously”).
- Here also, it is correct to cite the source either in the text of the sentence or in parenthesis at the end of the sentence.
After this point, how the rest of the works cited entry is formatted changes, depending on what type of source we are citing.

Since the source in this example is an online news website, we would find the corresponding example in a writing handbook or on the website that we are using to help make the citations.

The rest of the works cited entry would look like this: