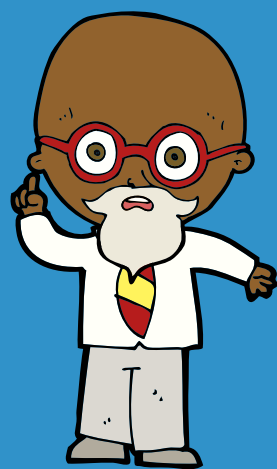


# SO, WHY DO WE CITE OUTSIDE SOURCES?



TO SHOW OUR  
PROFESSOR WE DID  
THE READING?

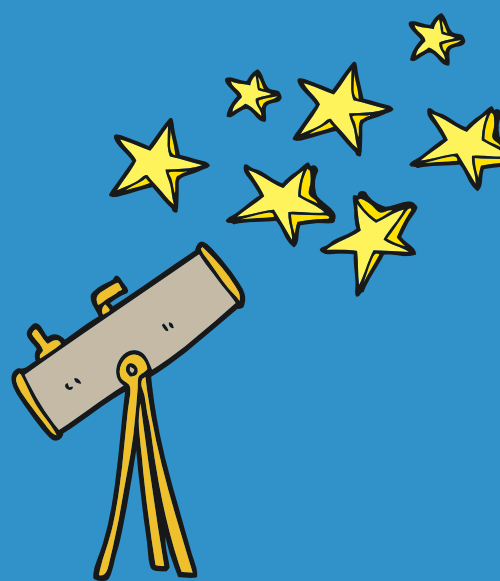
NOPE!



Imagine that you're writing an essay on gun control. People have been arguing about gun control since the ratification of the Second Amendment. If you start talking about the issue without any knowledge of the history of the topic, you won't seem knowledgeable, and nobody is going to want to listen to what you have to say.

And, frankly, this is because you won't BE knowledgeable, even if you have a lot of personal experience with guns or gun violence. To be a part of a conversation, you have to JOIN it, which means you have to know what was said before you. In the words of Richard Miller and Ann Jurecic, "Think of citation as an opportunity to demonstrate what you can DO with the words of others. To cite sources... provides the material for you to carry on a conversation with writers whose work you find compelling" (119).

What do they mean: "what you can DO with the words of others?" Well, this means you don't have to choose texts you just agree with. You want to choose texts that will teach your readers (and yourself!) something-but also something you can be in conversation with. You can disagree with a text (or agree with part of a text, but disagree with another part.) A text can, in the words of Miller and Jurecic, "provide positions or arguments to grapple with or shift the direction of the conversation." They also point out that they "value citation that brings in a new perspective that questions or rejects the most obvious way of thinking or that turns the issue, question or problem you are working on so that you can see it from another angle" (119).



Remember-Writing is thinking! When you write about someone else's words on a topic that's important to you, you will be in conversation with that person, and you will begin to think about that topic more thoughtfully. With this in mind, make sure you choose credible sources-that is, authors who are qualified to talk about the topic-people worthy of your time, and your readers' time. We will talk more about credible sources in class, but it is more important to find credible sources (even if they disagree with you) than it is to go on a treasure hunt to find some random guy with a blog on the internet who is saying the exact thing you want to hear.

I mean, who IS that guy?

**"Every time you cite another writer you should ask: What work do I want these words or ideas to do for my readers?" (Miller and Jurecic (20).**

## Works Cited

Miller, Richard E., and Ann Jurecic. *Habits of the Creative Mind*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.

Shakespeare, William, et al. *Hamlet*. Penguin Books, 2015.