A Recipe for Tasty Quotes: Chop, Blend, and Digest!

Chop: Quote as concisely as possible. Reduce the quotation to just those bits you need to prove the point you're making. Rule of thumb: quote when your interpretation depends on the *actual words or phrasing*. Otherwise, paraphrase or summarize.

Blend: **1.** Introduce the quote with orienting details that help the reader understand its context and significance (who said it, specifically? when? in what context?)
2. Integrate quotes *grammatically* into your own sentence**.**

Digest: Make sure you actually *explain* how the quote proves your claim before moving on. *Repeat the words*! Not, "This proves," but "This allusion to _____ proves."

The Recipe Demonstrated

Romulus's sacrifice was not filled with respect for the gods or Hercules, but instead it was a selfish way to insure his power and immortality. "This was the only foreign religious rite adopted by Romulus; by doing so he showed, even then, his respect for that immortality which is the prize of valour. His own destiny was already leading him to the same reward." Romulus had respect for immortality, not the gods, and believed he deserved it because he overpowered and killed his twin brother.

1. **Chop**: which part of the quote is NOT necessary to prove that Romulus was more concerned about his own "immortality" than that of the gods he was sacrificing to? "~~This was the only foreign religious rite adopted by Romulus~~." We can cut that and still have the important stuff.

2. **Blend**: We need to introduce the quote by saying who is speaking (Livy) and in what context (referring to the sacrifice of Hercules). This might mean we have to further edit what's left of the quote to make it fit grammatically.

> As Livy explains, Romulus sacrificed to Hercules ~~"showed, even then,~~ [*to show*] "his respect for that immortality which is the prize of valour"~~.~~ *[and to prove*] "~~H~~is own destiny was already leading him to the same reward."

3. **Digest**: *Why* did we keep both "his respect for that immortality" and "His own destiny…"? To show that Romulus was sacrificing to the immortals in order to make himself seem immortal <u>by association</u>. So say this in the explanation!

Cleverly associating his own "destiny" with Hercules' "immortality," Romulus reveals his true devotion is to himself, not to the gods.

Result: *As Livy explains, Romulus sacrifices to Hercules to show "his respect for that immortality which is the prize of valour" and to prove that "his own destiny was already leading him to the same reward." By associating his own "destiny" with Hercules' "immortality," Romulus reveals that his true devotion is to himself, not to the gods.*

The Technical Aspects of Quoting

1. Punctuation introducing quotes

- Use a comma when you introduce a quote with a word like "said" (e.g. claims, observed, argues, etc):

  Adorno claims, "there is neither anticipatory anxiety nor a self that endures" in Rite of Spring.

- Otherwise, do not use a comma where normal syntax would not require it:

  Adorno associated Fascism's spirit of aggressive collectivism with the "glorification of the supposedly plain, average man" in popular music.

- Use a colon (1) to introduce multi-sentence quotes or (2) to introduce lengthy block quotes with a complete sentence.

  In his 1913 review of the Rite of Spring, Jacques Rivière remarks: "There are tremendous collisions among [the instruments], but never a blending of fusion. They always remain clearly detached, amply free."

2. Punctuation at the end of quotes

- Commas and periods go inside quotation marks (in the U.S.A.)

  Rivière appreciates Stravinsky's "distinct and resolute voices," which he contrasts with Debussy's ethereal sound.

  Rivière appreciates Stravinsky's "distinct and resolute voices."

- Colons and semicolons go outside the quotation marks.

- Question marks and exclamation points go inside the quotation marks when they belong to the author being quoted; they go outside when they belong to you.

  Andrews asked, "What was the principal aim of the revolution?"

  Can you believe she called them "filthy traitors"?

3. Block quotes

Use them only when necessary—that is, when your interpretation depends on the *whole* quote. If a quotation is four lines or more, set it off as a "block quote" introduced by an informative sentence and a colon. Block quotes are indented in their entirety, and single-spaced. They do not require quotation marks.

R.I. Moore reveals the full scope of his thesis about the rise of the "persecuting society" in the late Middle Ages at the conclusion of his introduction:

> *Persecution became habitual. That is to say not simply that individuals were subject to violence, but that deliberate and socially sanctioned violence began to be directed, through established governmental, judicial and social institutions, against groups of people defined by general characteristics such as race, religion or way of life; and that membership of such groups in itself came to be regarded as justifying these attacks.*[5]

4. Editing Quotes: Brackets and Ellipses

a. Adding: Use brackets when you're adding words or letters that weren't part of the original.

Example 1: *In Stravinsky's music, Rivière observes, "there are tremendous collisions among them [the instruments], but never a blending of fusion."*

Example 2: *"[T]here are tremendous collisions among them," explained Rivière, "but never a blending or fusion."*

Capital "T" added because it's necessary at the beginning of a sentence, but "there" wasn't capitalized in the original.

b. Subtracting: Use ellipses (…) to indicate when you've cut part of a quotation. Strive not to overuse them, though, for they're ugly and they provoke skepticism.

Rivière explains,"The musician is no longer in the center as is the poet, . . .but like a general who presses the enemy hard at its three or four strongest points, he attacks the subject" from many angles.

You don't need ellipses at the *beginning* of the quotation if it's blended with your own prose, because the absence of capitalization indicates that this is not the beginning of the sentence in the original. When you edit at the *end* of a quotation, however, you should include ellipses, plus the final punctuation mark (for a total for FOUR dots, if it's a period):

Rivière compares Stravinsky to "a general who presses the enemy hard at its three or four strongest points. . . ."