



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

- Chop:** Quote as concisely as possible. Reduce the quotation to just those bits you need to prove your point. 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? when? in what context?)
 2. Edit quotes so they mesh *grammatically* with your lead-in remarks.
- Digest:** Make sure you *explain* how the quote proves your claim before moving on. *Refer to the words!* Not “This shows,” but “This allusion to _____ shows.”

The Recipe Demonstrated

Romulus’s sacrifice was not filled with respect for the gods or for Hercules, but instead it was a selfish way to ensure 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.”⁵ 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). Blending with our own lead-in also means we have to 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] “His 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 by association. So let’s say this in the explanation!

Cleverly associating his own “destiny” with Hercules’ “immortality,” Romulus revealed his true devotion was to himself, not to the gods.

Result: *As Livy explained, Romulus sacrificed 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 revealed that his true devotion was to himself, not to the gods.*