# Quoting Rules To Live By

## Consider the following as rules to observe faithfully:

1. When you write about literature, quote the work often. If you write about a novel, a short story, a play or a poem and fail to quote frequently, then your reader will assume you are not familiar with the text.
2. When you quote directly, edit the passage; use as few of the author’s words as necessary to make your point. This economical use of quotations puts YOU in control instead of the author. Remember, quote only when the author’s words are unique, startling, or occur in a sentence you’d never write.
3. When you quote directly, hide the quotation in your own words. Try to make the author’s words indistinguishable from your own (except, of course, by the quotation marks). This process of “incorporating a quotation,” can be evaluated for success by reading your sentence aloud. A listener should not be able to tell where your words end and the author’s begin.

1. Avoid using these weak introductions to quotations: “The author states…” and “the poet says…” and similar phrases. These call attention to your quoting. Use of these “crutches” is a direct violation of Rule #3.
2. To make the author’s words fit the grammatical context of your sentence, you may have to insert or change a word or words. Do this by placing any word(s) new or different in [square] brackets in the appropriate position in the quotation.
3. As strange as it may seem, all punctuation is placed INSIDE the closing quotation marks—EXCEPT for the period after a parenthetical citation which is NOT.

Example

Allende’s use of juxtaposition is especially compelling in her portrayal of Esteban’s mother who is a” block of solid flesh” and a “monstrous pyramid of fat and rags,” though her eyes in sharp contrast are “sweet, blue, innocent [and] surprisingly alive” (Allende 85).