

## How to Handle Complicated Quotes

- The first tip is to make quotes less complicated by just quoting smaller chunks of them.

Here's a part from page 107 in *BUA* that is hard to quote because it's complex:

"I want to do what's best for her," Arturo said.

"I know. This is it."

And finally Arturo agreed, and the decision was made.

There are two main things that make the part above complex:

- 1.) It goes in and out of dialogue. In other words, it includes dialogue and narration.
- 2.) It involves more than one speaker.

- The example above can be handled by quoting less and in smaller chunks:

Arturo and Alma sacrifice a lot for Maribel when they decide to move to America. After hesitating a little at first, Arturo agrees to leave the life he's built in Mexico for his daughter. Arturo says, "I want to do what's best for her" (107).

- Notice that "Arturo says" works great as a signal phrase for a simple quote. A quote is simple when it doesn't involve two speakers and when it doesn't go in and out of dialogue.
- But notice also how "Arturo says" does not work well to weave in a complicated quote:

Arturo says, "I want to do what's best for her, Arturo said. I know. This is it. And finally Arturo agreed, and the decision was made" (107).

- Three things would help:
  - 1. Quotes within quotes (single quotes inside double quotes)
  - 2. Brackets (add square brackets to clarify speakers [ ] )
  - 3. A colon to set up a scene, dialogue, exchange, conversation, example, etc.

Arturo and Alma's willingness to make big sacrifices can be seen in this exchange where they discuss moving to America for Maribel: "'I want to do what's best for her,' Arturo said. 'I know. This is it.' [Alma replied.] And finally Arturo agreed, and the decision was made" (107).

The importance of communication is highlighted when Alma finally opens up about Maribel's fall in this crucial conversation between Alma and Arturo: "'So she fell, Arturo! And it was my fault.' [Alma cried.] 'That's what you think?' [Arturo asked]" (245). This is a very significant part of the book because after Alma shares her feelings, Arturo goes on to comfort Alma by giving her a very different way of looking at the situation.