

Brackets: Not Just for NCAA Basketball

Brackets are the square version of parentheses marks. Just because they look a little alike doesn't mean they have the same function. Here are the four uses for brackets:

1. To enclose parenthetical information within parentheses:
John said his business was thriving (although in a previous interview [December 1, 2011] he indicated the doors would close soon).
2. To correct a mistake in a direct quote:
“It was one of the best des[s]erts I’ve ever had.”
“Please tell me the affect [sic] of the medication.”
3. To indicate your own explanation or comments in a direct quote:
“I have never [and I mean never] said I hated her before.”
4. To add notes:
“There will be new taxes.” [Crowd is booing.]
“I didn’t mean it like *that* [emphasis added] even if she thought I did.”

Brackets aren't used often in fiction, but they are still a good mark to understand. You never know when you'll need them!