

Blog Post 1: Close Reading a Passage from *Infinite Jest*

500 words minimum

Due Tuesday, January 27th for A-L

Due Tuesday, February 3rd for M-Z

For your first blog assignment I would like you to select a passage that you find significant from what we have read of David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996) up until this point.¹ I would like you to *closely read*, to *interpret* the particular moment you have chosen. Passages can be as short as a sentence but no longer than a paragraph, *and should be quoted in full and cited appropriately at the beginning of your post* (work and pg. # are fine).

Begin by *briefly* describing the moment you have chosen to closely analyze and give some context for the passage. But I would like the majority of the work you do here to be interpretive rather than descriptive. So for this first post I would like you to pay attention to *form* in the passage, scene, or moment you have chosen to write about. How does the *structure* of the moment you've selected contribute to the construction of meaning? What exactly is that meaning? How does the form interact with the content of the work? How does the passage you have selected seem related to other issues we have discussed? How does one confront the difficulty of Wallace's writing, to *do* something with it, to *say* something about it? How might you *work* with and *unpack* Wallace's prose? How is this moment formally related to other points in the novel? Basically, these questions are to get you thinking, and you do not need to answer them all. I'm primarily interested in your *interpretation* here, how you *specifically* investigate what kind of narrative, linguistic, poetic work the text is doing, and looking at form is the manner in which I would like you to do this.

Blogs are notoriously informal so these do not need to be formal papers—i.e., you will not need an introduction, thesis, or conclusion here. I would, however, still like you to make an *argument for an interpretation*, and to get right to the heart of the matter in your reading as quickly as possible. These posts should be critical, incisive, and interpretive. Further, 500 words is not much space to say anything, so your writing and thinking should be specific, focused, and concrete.

¹ If you are ahead in the reading, then by all means feel free to select a passage beyond the assigned reading.