TASK 2

Here are some reviews of the novel *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. Read texts A-D and questions 1-7 Then write the letter of the text which provides the information required.

- ☐ all statements have a matching text
- ☐ each text can go with more than one statement
- ☐ each statement only goes with one text

CUSTOMER REVIEWS OF *INFINITE JEST*

A. GENIUS REWARDS THE PATIENT

David Foster Wallace is a genius, and he knows it. But unlike other geniuses that you might know, he never tries to make you feel dumb. He just wants you to understand the same things that he does, so occasionally you'll feel out of your depth. But he's also a gifted writer, so odds are that after reading Infinite Jest you will come out understanding him.

The main sign of Wallace's genius is that he can make us feel this gut-level sadness without even appearing to work at it. His ironic situations can make you feel that there's some deeper, unseen, lurking gloominess about the world, and for that reason it's the easy way out.

Wallace has simply written a great story with an unpleasant underlying mood. It's been a long time since I've read a book of such masterful subtlety.

B. SIMPLY PUT, THE JOKE'S ON YOU

While I seek out and enjoy books set in Tucson with great regularity, *Infinite Jest* paints the city in a way that is utterly foreign. But that's actually not my gripe. My true complaint is that for all his talent, Wallace takes a clever idea and absolutely drives it into the ground.

This book could have been half the length that it was. I understand the overwhelming need for writers to construct a massive tome at some point in their careers. However, to say that Wallace's clever little footnote trick gets old, tiresome, and flat out maddening is an understatement.

This book, in short, is a tiring exercise in cleverness. And when you finish it and come to the realization that the joke is on you, it will sting a little. But don't take my word for it, read it yourself (I am, after all, only one of a few dissenters).

C. A WORKING VACATION

Everything you have heard about *Infinite Jest* is true. Should YOU read it? is the only relevant question. This book is work--it's going into the gym and the classroom.

This book, though a novel, is a journey into the mind of David Foster Wallace and is one long suicide note (Wallace hung himself 12 years after publication at age 46).

But it is not grim and dour. It is, at times, gruesome and frightening, and always insightful into the human condition.

Should YOU read it? I rank it as one of the four best books of all time. I lived with it for three weeks pretty much not doing anything else but reading and thinking about what Wallace was saying. I think parts of Wallace surface in all of the characters (there are scores of them) and what he does is to debate between and within characters.

D. CHALLENGING, BUT THE REWARDS ARE MANY

981 pages. Nearly another 100 pages of footnotes. A plot that is all but impossible to describe, if indeed there even is a plot to this book. There's not a way I can describe *Infinite Jest* that doesn't make it sound intimidating and challenging, and there's no denying that, in some ways, those adjectives fit...a little. But what a description doesn't reveal is just how much fun this book is, and just how enjoyable of a read. I mean, this is a book that contains deadly wheelchair-bound assassins, Canadian separatist revolutionaries, prep school kids playing nuclear war games, and so much more. This is a funny book, often on laugh-out-loud levels, and one beautifully written and crafted. In the introduction, Dave Eggers comments that in the entire book, "there is not one lazy sentence," and that's putting it mildly; his sentences are magnificent, with stunning imagery and often brutal feeling.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

WHICH REVIEWER

0. mentions the book's setting?	
1. describes some of the characters?	
2. describes the author's writing style?	
3. implies that many people like the book?	
4. is dissatisfied with the book's length?	
5. mentions Wallace's personal life?	
6. thinks that Wallace's writing seems effortless?	
7. thinks the novel is sad and depressing?	

LIVEWORKSHEETS