Annotated Bibliographies

- Each instructor develops her or his own assignments. Your instructor and the assignment sheet s/he has provided are the two best sources for guidance as you work toward a final draft. The handouts/tutorials for the types of essays feature general guidelines to help you write solid essays, but should be treated only as supplements to your instructor and the assignment sheet.

Annotated Bibliography

- A bibliography is a list of references used for a research project. An annotated bibliography expands on a reference list to include, for each entry, a concisely worded discussion of the source. Each assigned annotated bibliography will call for its own particular features, but this handout/tutorial will attempt to cover a variety of general elements common to many annotated bibliographies.

Bibliographical Entries

- You will almost certainly be expected to format each citation according to a specific style guide (APA, MLA, Chicago, ASA, etc.). For assistance with proper formatting of the citations, consult the appropriate guidebook and the Sam Houston State Writing Center's handouts/tutorials on citations.

Annotations

- Again, your instructor will ask that your annotations perform certain functions and avoid others. The following explains four of the most common functions:

Summary (Indicative) – A skeletal description of the source that provides only a catalogue of topics and issues addressed by the source; does not discuss any details about the source's argument, findings, or data.

Summary (Informative) – A summary of the source that explains its purpose, methodology, argument, support, conclusions, etc.

Critical – A critique of what the source does and how it does it. Your analysis should highlight both the well-executed portions as well as what the source seems to have overlooked or mishandled.

Evaluative – An evaluation of how useful the source is to your particular research project and why.

Most annotations will feature a combination of these approaches. For instance, the most common form of annotated bibliography summarizes a source (Informative) and then moves on to a discussion of its quality and place within your project (Critical and Evaluative).

Style

Whether you are expected to write complete sentences or fragments, a single paragraph or a full page, you should always aim for the most densely packed language possible. Try to avoid any unnecessary wording and fine tune the annotations to direct, purposeful discussions of the source.

Example

Giles, Paul. "Sentimental Posthumanism: David Foster Wallace." *Twentieth-century Literature* 53.3 (Fall 2007): 327-344. *MLA International Database*. Web. 15 April 2010.

Giles positions Wallace within a posthumanism. He defines posthumanism, then discusses Wallace's biography, fiction, and essays to identify posthumanism in Wallace's work. Giles utilizes geographers to identify a shift from modern and postmodern "spatial dialectics" that presents itself in Wallace's work, which eliminates geographical differences with an omnipresent and leveling media. Using N. Katherine Hayles and Donna Haraway, Giles outlines a form of posthumanism that Wallace approaches with a traditionally sentimental humanism. Giles analyzes several stories and essays by Wallace to identifies those elements that may be read as contributing to what Giles ultimately labels "sentimental posthumanism," which Wallace accomplishes in part through an implementation of postmodernist techniques such as self-reflexivity and irony to explore the experiences of characters within a posthuman world.

Although Giles favors lengthy statements and impressive wording over clarity, reading this article is none the less a worthwhile endeavor. The author combines modern works and interviews together in a way that pinpoints what is both vibrant and important.

As I attempt to closely read *Infinite Jest* as a landmark work of post-postmodernism, Giles's article will prove beneficial for its readings of Wallace's fiction and essays—including *Infinite Jest*—that allow Giles to argue for Wallace's sentimental posthumanism and that can also contribute to my argument that Wallace is a post-postmodern writer.

Sources for this handout:
"Annotated Bibliographies." The Writing Center. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2009.
      http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html
Engle, Michael, Amy Blumenthal, and Tony Cosgrave. "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography." Olin and Uris Libraries. Cornell University. 12 Feb. 2010. http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm