

# 8th Grade ENGLISH - Mrs. Garver

## 2026 Summer Reading Assignment

Students should *choose ONE book below to read in its entirety before the first day of school*:

- Historical Fiction: ***War Games* by Alan Gatz**
- Realistic Fiction: ***Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls** (classic lit)
- Fantasy Adventure: ***The False Prince* by Jennifer Nielson**

In addition to reading one book listed above, students are required to type a reflection essay. Students should bring their essay to class and give it to Mrs. Garver, *on the first day of school*. Reflections should be typed, double spaced, MLA format, and 1-2 pages in length.

The first paragraph should focus on a personal response to the novel. Things to consider and include:

- Was it challenging, exciting, emotional, suspenseful, frustrating, inspiring?
- What makes you say that? Use details from the book in your writing.
- What surprised you about the novel?
- Was there a character that stood out to you?
- What did you admire or disagree with?

The second paragraph should focus on what was learned from the novel. Things to consider and include:

- What important lesson or message did the novel teach?
- Did a character's experiences help you reflect on your own choices, attitude, or character?
- What mistakes or successes in the novel taught an important lesson?

The third paragraph should focus on spiritual connection(s) made. Things to consider and include:

- Include at least ONE Bible verse.
- Explain how the verse connects to the novel's message, themes, characters, or conflicts.

When we return to school, students will gather in small groups to discuss the book they chose to read. Groups will work together on a variety of activities, including presentations that will be shared with classmates. Students will also complete individual assignments and take a test the week of August 24th.

Extra TIPS to support you:

- Remember to include the title and the author's full name in your first paragraph.
- Use italics every time you write the book title.
- Use only the last name after the first mention – do NOT italicize author names.
- You should title this assignment—clever titles are always appreciated!
- Use complete sentences and clearly communicate.
- Take advantage of spell check and proofread before you print your essay.
- Your paper should be printed (hard copy) and turned into Mrs. Garver on the first day of school.
- Follow MLA Guidelines exactly—see the next page for reminders.

Lastly, do NOT use AI — All essays will be submitted to turnitin.com, and if your work is flagged as AI, you'll have to rewrite the essay and your grade will be reduced.

# MLA Format

## (Modern Language Association)

### Report Guidelines

The following guidelines are to be used for all typed papers at OCS (unless your teacher directs otherwise)

1. Always use white paper with black ink. (one side only)
2. Always **double-space everything!** (Never single space)
3. Always use **12 point Arial or Times New Roman** (no other font type or size).
4. Always have **one inch margins** on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right).
5. Always have a Left Hand Header of 4 lines (double-spaced) on the **first page** of your paper only: Your name, Teacher's name, Subject and Date (20 August 2026).
6. Always have a Right Hand header on **every page** of your paper: Your last name and page number (use "Header and Footer" option under "View").
7. Always have a **title—centered**. You may choose either Title Case (where only the beginning letter of each word of the title is capitalized) or all uppercase letters. Titles can be either 12 points up to 16 points—this is your choice.
8. **Indent** the first line of body text (and the first line of every new paragraph) ½ inch (usually one tab setting).