

Summer Reading Tips

A. Take the Pre-Reading seriously

- Take advantage of the opportunity to gather clues about what you will be reading
- Take the time to genuinely write about your thoughts, ideas, and prior knowledge to get your brain in motion to understand and think more clearly about what you read.
- Answering the pre-reading questions will lead to confidence as you read. The pre-reading is like a GPS that can help you get to where you need to be because you know what you're looking for.

B. Learn your reading rate for your fiction book so you can manage your time and finish

- The first time you read your book, set your timer/stopwatch on your phone for 30 minutes.
- Read, nonstop, until the time is up, then count the number of pages you read.
- Divide the number of pages you read into the total number of pages in the book.

Example: You read 14 pages in 30 minutes for a 250 page book. Divide 250 by 14, Approximately 18, 30-minute reading sessions are needed to complete the book. Reading rates usually increase as readers get used to the style and voice of the writer. However, not everyone reads at the same rate, and that's OK. Know your reading rate and make adjustments if needed.

C. Control your reading routine

- Know your summer schedule. Do you attend camps, play sports, have a job? Be sure you know when you are able to read during the day and work around your summer fun and responsibilities.
- Do not procrastinate. Choose to read on your own terms so
- Find a comfortable space to read, but not so comfortable that you will fall asleep.

D. Have a positive attitude

- A positive attitude=positive results.
- You will get out of the reading what you put into the reading. If you have a negative attitude...if you take short cuts...if you make the task a fight with your parents...if you see it as a chore or a punishment...then your reading and journal responses will not be done to your true potential.
- Choose a book that aligns with your interests and keep an open mind.

E. Honesty and authenticity will help you succeed in your journal writing.

- Most of the Big Questions will be applicable to all parts of your book. Simply write what you think makes sense and show your work by supporting your idea with text from the book
- Read genuinely and honestly. The internet is filled with responses for every book used in schools. Trust your own intelligence, common sense, and feelings to write responses.
- Avoid the temptation to cheat by using the internet, copying off your classmates, or using AI. If you play games and try to trick the teacher, you run the risk of losing that game along with the teacher's trust. Make a good first impression at your new school with your new teacher.

2026 Freshman Summer Reading List

This summer you will be assigned one work of **fiction** and several short, **nonfiction** essays in preparation for your transition to St. Francis High School. Please review the list of novels below, selected based upon topics our students enjoy reading about most. Choose any novel from the list and then follow the attached directions for reading and writing in your journal. You will be required to read essays from a collection of short works about Buffalo, NY. All freshmen are required to use this book for their nonfiction assignment.

Fiction (Choose one novel from any category)

Adventures in Nature and the Outdoors

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne

Mystery and Crime

This is Our Story by Ashley Elston

Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie

Spiritual Journeys

The Midnight Library by Matt Haig

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis

Science Fiction

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

The Martian by Andy Weir

Sports

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Ghost by Jason Reynolds

Video Games and Gamers

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

Slay by Brittney Morris

War

Soldier's Heart by Gary Paulsen

Sunrise over Fallujah by Walter Dean Myers

Fantasy

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Nemesis by Brandon Reich

Nonfiction (All Freshmen will use this book for the nonfiction assignment)

Right Here, Right Now: The Buffalo Anthology ed. By Jody K. Biehl

Freshman Summer Reading Journal Directions

FICTION PRE- READING DIRECTIONS:

Complete the work listed below ***BEFORE*** you begin reading your book. Respond to each prompt below in your summer reading journaling notebook.

1. **Review the “Summer Reading Tips”** sheet with a family member what you will need to do to be accountable and successful in completing your work by September. Begin your journal by writing a few sentences about your discussion and your plan for success.
2. **Preview and Predict:**
 - Why did you pick this book?
 - What do the title, the graphics, or the back cover tell you about the book?
 - What are you expecting from your reading based on what you might have heard from others who have read it or movies that have been made about it?
3. **Complete a Google search** of the author’s biography. Skim through the information you find and locate details about the following:
 - where the author is from
 - religious beliefs or cultural values associated with the author
 - historical or political events that may have impacted the author’s life
 - pop culture impact from this book or other works by the author
4. We will explore some of life’s Big Questions throughout freshman year in English class. Some of those questions are listed below. **Prior to reading your book, choose one Big Question** from the list and write a short answer to the question based on what you’ve learned in life from your own experiences and observations.

What does it take to be a survivor?
Can ordinary people be heroes?
What makes someone feel like an outsider?
Are old ways the best ways?
Can you recover from tragedy?

When is a risk worth taking?
Why do people fear change?
Why do people break the rules?
How important is money?
How important is telling the truth

READING JOURNAL:

After every 1/4 of the book, choose ONE Big Question from the list that applies best to the section of text you read. **For example**, *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card is 324 pages long. 324 divided by 4 is 81. So for every 81 pages, you would write a short response of 8-10 sentences using a Big Question. You may use the same Big Question more than once. You may also use a different Big Question for each section. Follow these steps for your response:

1. Select a Big Question and briefly summarize one interesting or important detail from your reading that led you to choose the Big Question.
2. Discuss what you can infer about the writer’s message or purpose by examining how the Big Question applies to the events in the book.
3. Include text evidence from the book that supports your response about the Big Question.

Journal Response Heading Example:

Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card

Journal Response 1

Pages 1-81

NONFICTION PRE-READING DIRECTIONS:

All freshman students will read a few essays from the book *Right Here, Right Now: The Buffalo Anthology* ed. By Jody K. Biehl before entering school in September. This book is a collection of writings about the people, the culture, and the history of Buffalo and Western New York. The various authors share their passion and memories about Buffalo in a way that will help you learn more about the city while making you reflect on your own experiences as someone who either is from Western New York or is currently living in Western New York. The first semester of your freshman social studies class is titled The History of Buffalo, New York. These readings will give you a head start on the material you'll be learning about while also giving you practice in reading and analyzing nonfiction.

PRE-READING: Read the "Introduction" of *Right Here, Right Now: The Buffalo Anthology* ed. By Jody K. Biehl (pages 7-9). Respond to each of the following prompts in your notebook. Responses should be 4-8 sentences in length.

1. What is the main idea that the author is trying to introduce and communicate with the reader?
2. Where did her idea for the title of the book come from? What do you think the title means?
3. What did you learn about Buffalo and the people of Buffalo from the introduction? Provide examples.

READING JOURNAL: There are five, labeled sections in the book. You will be required to read one essay from each section for a total of five essays. The sections and essays are listed below.

1. *Our City, Then & Now* –"Where is Buffalo?" by Luke Hamill (pages 18-19)
2. *Flashpoints* –"Tampa Stadium, January 27, 1991" by Marv Levy (pages 52-58)
3. *Neighborhood Stories* –"Back in the Day: Remembrances of Black Buffalo from the 1940s and 1950s" by Georgia Burnette (pages 112-118).
4. *Food, Art, Books & Music* –"I am a Buffaholic" by Andrew Z. Galarneau (pages 163-168)
5. *Home & Belonging* –"A Hydraulics Boyhood" by Tom Dudzik (pages 206-211)

After you complete each essay, respond in your journal using the same prompts as listed above. Responses should be 4-8 sentences in length.

1. What is the main idea that the author is trying to introduce and communicate with the reader?
2. What do you learn about the City of Buffalo's history, geography, or culture? Provide Examples.
3. What did you learn about the author of the essay or the people of Buffalo, in general? Provide examples.

FICTION AND NONFICTION FINAL ASSESSMENTS: When you enter school in September, you will use the responses from your journal to complete final creative and formal assessments that will be assigned by your English and Social Studies teachers.

SUMMER READING WORKSHOPS: The St. Francis English Department will be hosting workshops throughout the summer. Information will be sent in the Red Raider Review and from the Admissions Office regarding dates and times.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Trust yourself and your ability to do your own work. Please re-read the "Summer Reading Tips" regarding authenticity in your work. Make a good first impression.

Exploring Texts

At some point in your life, you have probably considered big questions like the ones on the preceding pages. For thousands of years, writers have also asked these questions, trying to make sense of the world around them. Many have left a written record of their lives and ideas in literature and other texts—works that are worth reading and understanding both for their ideas and for the forms those ideas take.

The Genres

Literature and nonfiction encompass a wide range of text types, or genres. Some are meant to be read; others are meant to be performed by actors on a stage. Informational texts and media may not technically be literature, but they are similarly important to learn about today. Regardless of the genre, good writing allows readers to grapple with important issues and even connect to different cultures.

In this book, you will explore questions and ideas in many genres. An ancient story, a news article, and a poem—despite their differences in form—can all help you explore questions about love or heroism, for example. Before delving into the ideas in texts, familiarize yourself with the genres.

GENRES AT A GLANCE



STORIES

Stories are narrative texts that spring from an author's imagination.

- short stories
- novels
- novellas



POETRY

Poetry is the most compact form of literature. Words are chosen and arranged to create powerful effects.

- free-verse poems
- odes
- sonnets
- narrative poems
- lyric poems



DRAMA

Drama is meant to be performed. Characters and conflicts are developed through dialogue and action.

- comedies
- tragedies
- farces



NONFICTION

Nonfiction is prose writing that deals with real people, events, and places.

- essays
- autobiographies
- news articles
- speeches
- biographies
- opinion pieces

TYPES OF MEDIA



Media are forms of communication that reach large numbers of people. They include many subgenres, each with its own forms and characteristics.

- feature films
- advertising
- Web sites



STORIES

At the heart of literature is **narrative**, the telling of a story. Although stories can be inspired by real events and people, they are mainly the product of a writer's imagination. A fiction writer shapes his or her narrative to capture and hold readers' interest, often creating memorable settings and complex characters who face challenging conflicts. Fictional stories can take any of a wide variety of forms, including science fiction, historical fiction, mysteries, and graphic novels. Regardless of the form, a work of fiction usually is one of three types.

- A **short story** often focuses on a single event or incident and usually can be read in one sitting.
- A **novel** is an extended work of fiction. Because it is much longer than a short story, a novel gives a writer space to develop a wider range of characters and a more complex plot.
- A **novella** is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. Most novellas focus on a limited number of characters and a short time span.

Read the Model This excerpt is about an old Cuban fisherman named Santiago. After months at sea, Santiago finally hooks a giant marlin. Can he muster enough strength to reel in the fish as it circles his boat? Notice the elements of fiction that the author uses to hook readers and to explore the idea of strength.

from

THE Old Man AND THE Sea

Novella by Ernest Hemingway

The fish was coming in on his circle now calm and beautiful looking and only his great tail moving. The old man pulled on him all that he could to bring him closer. For just a moment the fish turned a little on his side. Then he straightened himself and began another circle.

5 "I moved him," the old man said. "I moved him then."

He felt faint again now but he held on the great fish all the strain that he could. I moved him, he thought. Maybe this time I can get him over. Pull, hands, he thought. Hold up, legs. Last for me, head. Last for me. You never went. This time I'll pull him over.

10 But when he put all of his effort on, starting it well out before the fish came alongside and pulling with all his strength, the fish pulled part way over and then righted himself and swam away.

"Fish," the old man said. "Fish, you are going to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too?"

LITERARY TERMS FOR STORIES

- plot
- conflict
- character
- setting
- theme
- narrator
- point of view

Close Read

1. Using terms from the list above, describe what is happening in this literary text.
2. Exploring a Big Question The old man's strength comes from his relentless will to catch the fish. In your opinion, what gives someone strength?



NONFICTION

When you see the word *nonfiction*—especially in a literature book—you probably expect to find literary works such as biographies, speeches, and essays. Nonfiction also includes other kinds of informational texts, such as news articles and train schedules, which provide factual information. Because you encounter informational texts all the time, you should know what to expect from them.

TERMS FOR NONFICTION

- purpose
- organizational patterns
- perspective
- argument
- persuasion

TYPE OF NONFICTION	CHARACTERISTICS	
AUTOBIOGRAPHY/ BIOGRAPHY The true story of a person's life, told by that person (autobiography) or by another person (biography)	• Provides details that give readers insights into a person's life • Is told from the first-person point of view (autobiography) or from the third-person point of view (biography) • Presents the person's own thoughts about his or her life experiences (autobiography) or information from a variety of sources (biography)	
ESSAY A short work that focuses on a single subject. Common types include personal essays and persuasive essays.	• May have the following purposes: to express feelings, to inform, to entertain, to persuade • May be formal, with an organized structure and an impersonal style • May be informal, with a conversational style	
SPEECH An oral presentation of the ideas, beliefs, or proposals of a speaker	• May have the following purposes: to express feelings, to inform, to entertain, to persuade • Achieves its power through effective language, including rhetorical devices and structures, and a compelling delivery	
NEWS/FEATURE ARTICLES Informative writing in newspapers and magazines. A news article reports on recent events. A feature article focuses on human-interest topics.	• Are primarily intended to inform or entertain • May use statistics, quotations from sources, examples, and graphic aids to convey information • Usually are objective and balanced	
FUNCTIONAL TEXTS Writing that serves a practical purpose. Types include consumer documents, such as instruction manuals, and workplace documents, such as memos and résumés.	• Are written for a specific audience (for example, the user of a product or a potential employer) • May present information in charts or other easy-to-navigate graphic formats • Often include specialized jargon	

MODEL 1: AUTOBIOGRAPHY

This excerpt is from an autobiography by Monica Sone, a Japanese-American woman who grew up in Seattle during World War II. Here, Sone remembers the moment when she and her brother Henry found out from a classmate about Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. As you read, consider what the author might be suggesting about the factors that influence a person's identity.

from

Nisei Daughter

Autobiography by Monica Sone

With that, Chuck swept out of the room, a swirl of young men following in his wake. Henry was one of them. The rest of us stayed, rooted to our places like a row of marionettes. I felt as if a fist had smashed my pleasant little existence, breaking it into jigsaw puzzle pieces. An old wound opened up again, and I found myself shrinking inwardly from my Japanese blood, the blood of an enemy. I know instinctively that the fact that I was an American by birthright was not going to help me escape the consequences of this unhappy war.

Close Read

1. How does Sone react to the news about the attack on Pearl Harbor? Cite details that reveal her feelings.
2. Exploring a Big Question Some feels torn between her American upbringing and her Japanese blood. In your opinion, what forces shape a person's identity?

MODEL 2: NEWS ARTICLE

This article was published in the *New York Times* on December 8, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

DECEMBER 8, 1941

JAPAN MAKES SUDDEN ATTACK

NEWS ARTICLE BY FRANK L. KLUCKHOHN

WASHINGTON, Monday, Dec. 8—Sudden and unexpected attacks on Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, and other United States possessions in the Pacific early yesterday by the Japanese air force and navy plunged the United States and Japan into active war.

The initial attack in Hawaii, apparently launched by torpedo-carrying bombers and submarines, caused widespread damage and death.

It was quickly followed by others. There were unconfirmed reports that German raiders participated in the attacks.

Guam was assaulted from the air, as were Davao, on the island of Mindanao, and Camp John Hay, in Northern Luzon, both in the Philippines. Lieut. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commanding the United States Army of the Far East, reported there was little damage, however.

Close Read

1. How do the details in this article differ from those in Sone's account? Cite evidence from both texts to support your answer.
2. Exploring a Big Question Consider other wars you've studied or read about. For what reasons do countries go to war?

Literature and Nonfiction Strategies

Plot your reactions and observations in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1 Ask the Right Questions

An important part of analyzing texts is knowing what questions to ask as you read. What should you be looking for when you are reading a drama? a news article? a classic novel? The following features will help you develop your own instincts for asking the right questions.

Where to Look	What You'll Find
Text Analysis Workshops (at the beginning of every unit)	Interactive practice models and Close Read questions
Side notes and discussion questions	Questions (throughout and following each selection) that focus on the analysis of literary and nonfiction elements
Analysis Frames	Guided questions for analyzing different genres

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML5-11

2 Make Connections

"I can relate to the main character because . . ." "This writer's view of love is different from . . ."—connections like these are what make the ideas in texts meaningful.

- **Big Questions** Life and literature are both about exploring big questions. Look for opportunities to connect what you read with experiences of your own.
- **Discussion/Journaling** Share your insights with others or jot them down. Consider questions such as:
 - What does this mean to me?
 - Who or what does this remind me of?

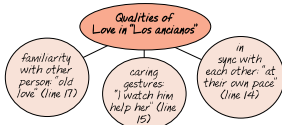


3 Record Your Reactions

Writing down your ideas can help you both remember and sort through your reactions and observations. Try a variety of formats.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Set up a graphic organizer, such as a cluster diagram.



TWO-COLUMN NOTES

Divide each page into two columns, one for quotations and information from the text, and the other for your responses.

"Los Angeles"	My Impressions
"I watch him help her off the curb and I smile" love (lines 15–16)	Shows the power of the couple's love also conveys how moved the speaker is by this sight

Reading Strategies Workshop

Becoming an Active Reader

When you read, you open your mind to new ideas that might be different from anything you've ever imagined. Maybe the world described is one that no longer exists—a world of ravenous dinosaurs or of jousting knights in armor. Maybe the opinions expressed dash with your own. To really explore ideas in texts, you need to fully comprehend what you're reading. Learning how to be an active reader can help you do just that.

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE READING

Preview

Get a sense of a text before you start to read.

- Look for clues in the title, graphics, and subheading.
- Skim the opening paragraphs.

Set a Purpose

Decide why you are reading a particular text.

- Ask: Am I reading to be entertained, to get information, or for another reason?
- Consider how your purpose might affect the way you approach a text. Take notes or enjoy?

Connect

Relate personally to what you are reading.

- Consider whether you've encountered people or situations like the ones described.
- Ask: If I were in this situation, how would I react?

Use Prior Knowledge

Bring to mind what you already know about a topic.

- Before reading, jot down what you already know.
- As you read, connect what you know to what you are learning.

Predict

Try to guess what will happen next.

- Note details about plot or characters that hint at where the story is heading.
- Keep reading to find out how accurate your prediction was.

Visualize

Form sensory images of what is being described.

- Look for descriptive details about characters, settings, and events.
- Use this information to conjure up a vivid scene in your mind's eye.

Monitor

Check your own comprehension as you read.

- **Question** what is happening and why.
- **Clarify** your understanding by rereading difficult parts or asking for help.
- **Evaluate** how well you are understanding the text.

Make Inferences

Make logical guesses by considering the text and your own experiences.

- Record details about characters and events.
- Ask: How can I combine textual evidence with common sense and my own experiences to help me understand this character or situation?

Details in "Walter Mitty"	What I Know	My Inference
Mitty daydreams a lot that he's a hero.	Daydreams are a way to escape real life.	Mitty is probably not content with his real life.

MODEL: SHORT STORY

In this excerpt from James Thurber's classic story, exhilarating daydreams help save Walter Mitty from his own dull existence. As you move between Mitty's imaginary adventures and his ordinary routines, use the Close Read questions to practice active reading skills and strategies.

COMMON CORE

Included in this workshop: RL.1, RL.4, RI.4, L.4

from The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

Short story by James Thurber

"We're going through!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly¹ over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hurricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased: ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge, hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hm!" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat behind him, with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five," she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that," she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why

Close Read

1. **Visualize** Which details in lines 1–14 help you picture the excitement of the scene? Cite details about the setting and the conflict.
2. **Monitor** In the boxed text, the story shifts scenes, from a thrilling adventure to an uneventful car ride. Clarify your understanding by summarizing what is happening.

don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then he drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot.

"It's the millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan," said the pretty nurse. "Yes?" said Walter Mitty, removing his glasses slowly. "Who has the case?" "Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow, but there are two specialists here, Dr. Remington from New York and Mr. Pritchard-Mitford from London. He flew over." A door opened down a long, cool corridor and Dr. Renshaw came out. He looked distraught and haggard. "Hello, Mitty," he said. "We're having the devil's own time with McMillan, the millionaire banker and close personal friend of Roosevelt. Obstreosis of the ductal tract.² Tertiary. Wish you'd take a look at him." "Glad to," said Mitty.

In the operating room there were whispered introductions: "Dr. Remington, Dr. Mitty, Mr. Pritchard-Mitford, Dr. Mitty." "I've read your book on streptothricosis," said Pritchard-Mitford, shaking hands. "A brilliant performance, sir." "Thank you," said Walter Mitty. "Didn't know you were in the States, Mitty," grumbled Remington. "Coals to Newcastle,"³ bringing Mitford and me up here for tertiary." "You are very kind," said Mitty. A huge, complicated machine, connected to the operating table, with many tubes and wires, began at this moment to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. "The new anesthetic is giving way!" shouted an intern. "There is no one in the East who knows how to fix it!" "Quiet, man!" said Mitty, in a low, cool voice. He sprang to the machine, which was now going pocketa-pocketa-queep-pocketa-queep. He began fingering delicately a row of glistening dials. "Give me a fountain pen!" he snapped. Someone handed him a fountain pen. He pulled a faulty piston out of the machine and inserted a pen in its place. "That will hold for ten minutes," he said. "Get on with the operation." A nurse hurried over and whispered to Renshaw, and Mitty saw the man turn pale. "Coropsis has set in," said Renshaw nervously. "If you would take over, Mitty?" Mitty looked at him and at the craven figure of Benbow, who drank, and at the grave, uncertain faces of the two great specialists. "If you wish," he said. They slipped a white gown on him; he adjusted a mask and drew on thin gloves; nurses handed him shining . . .

"Back it up, Mac! Look out for that Buick!" Walter Mitty jammed on the brakes. "Wrong lane, Mac," said the parking-lot attendant, looking at Mitty closely. "Gee. Yeh," muttered Mitty. . . .

Close Read

3. **Make Inferences** Given Mitty's actions in lines 29–34, what can you infer about his personality and his relationship with his wife?
4. **Predict** Now Mitty pictures himself in an operating room with an important patient. What do you imagine will happen?
5. **Connect** Have you ever been the hero in your own dreams? Explain why you think many people have dreams in which they are stars.

2. **Obstreosis of the ductal tract:** Thurber made up this and other terms to sound like—and poke fun at—medical jargon.
3. **Coals to Newcastle:** an unnecessary task. This expression refers to Newcastle, England, which was a major coal-producing city.