

Text 1: *Lucius Elderkin Shurtleff's Gold Rush Diary* (1849–1850)

Excerpt:

"We left New York aboard the Empire City on November 30, bound for Chagres. Crossing the Isthmus was a trial – dense jungle, oppressive heat, and the constant fear of fever. The natives, though courteous, seemed to us strange in their ways, and their language was a mystery. At last, we boarded the Norman for San Francisco, arriving after weeks of hardship. The sight of the Golden Gate filled us with hope, though the city itself was a chaos of tents and timber."

Text 2: *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella Bird (1879)

Excerpt (Letter I):

"Lake Tahoe is before me, with its pine-fringed margin and snowy mountains, and the air is so pure and exhilarating that one feels as if life had begun anew. The lake lies like a sapphire in a setting of emerald and opal, and the silence is broken only by the ripple of the water and the occasional cry of a bird. The beauty is unspeakable, and yet it is a beauty that makes one long for companionship to share it."

Text 3: *Travels with Charley in Search of America* by John Steinbeck (1962)

Excerpt:

"When I was very young and the urge to be someplace else was on me, I was assured by mature people that maturity would cure this itch. When years described me as mature, the remedy prescribed was middle age. In middle age I was assured that greater age would calm my fever and now that I am fifty-eight perhaps senility will do the job. Nothing has worked. I fear the disease is incurable."

Text 4: *How to Travel Cheaply in Europe* by Nomadic Matt (2009)

Excerpt:

"Europe doesn't have to break the bank. With a little planning, you can explore the continent without draining your savings. Use budget airlines like Ryanair or EasyJet, book hostels through Hostelworld, and take advantage of free walking tours in major cities. Traveling off-season will save you even more. Here's my complete guide to making your European adventure affordable."

Text 5: *Ultimate Guide to Iceland* by The Blonde Abroad (2025)

Excerpt:

"Iceland is a dream destination for adventure lovers! From chasing waterfalls to soaking in geothermal lagoons, this guide covers everything you need to plan the perfect trip. Don't forget to pack layers – the weather changes fast! Here are my top tips for renting a car, finding hidden hot springs, and capturing those epic Instagram shots."