

Answer Key: Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country

Grade: 3 **Subject:** Social Studies **For teacher use only** Social Studies

How to use this key

Answers are grouped by section and question number. Many items are open-ended; accept any response that shows the right idea even if the wording is simple or different. Notes flag where more than one answer is defensible and list common misconceptions to watch for. Everything students need is in the packet, so answers should draw on the three community stories, the picture chart (Figure 1), and Table 1 only. Estimated grading time: ~3–5 min per packet.

Start Look & Notice grade for effort · ~1 min

1 One thing you see near your home.

Full credit for any reasonable thing a student might see (house, store, road, tree, park, field, tall building, etc.). Warm-up graded for effort.

2 How you get to school.

Accept any circled choice (walk, bus, car, bike) with the sentence finished to match. Graded for effort; there is no wrong choice.

Apply Use the Chart & Table ~2 min

3 Read the chart — tall buildings close together.

The **city** (urban). Read directly from Figure 1.

4 Read the table.

a) farms and ranches = **country** (rural). b) yards and drive a car = **suburb** (suburban). c) ride a bus or train = **city** (urban). All read directly from Table 1.

5 Compare — one likeness, two differences.

Alike (any one): all three are communities where people live, work, and play; all three have homes; all three have people with jobs; all three have ways for people to travel.

Different (any two): what it looks like (tall buildings close together vs. houses with yards vs. open land with homes far apart); common jobs (city shops/offices vs. suburb schools/shops vs. country farms/ranches); how people travel (bus/train/walk vs. drive a car vs. drive a car or truck).

Watch: a difference must contrast the places, not just describe one place.

6 Cause and effect — the place shapes the jobs.

Accept any one community with a correct place → job link. **Models:**

- **City:** there are many tall buildings and shops close together, so people work in stores, offices, hospitals, and restaurants.
- **Suburb:** there are homes, schools, and small shops, so people work at schools and shops (and some drive into the city for work).
- **Country:** there is lots of open land, so people work on farms and ranches growing food and caring for animals.

Full credit needs a place detail **and** a matching job. See rubric below.

7 Fact (F) / Opinion (O).

- a) **F** — checkable in the country story / Table 1.
 - b) **O** — "best place" is what someone likes; cannot be proven.
 - c) **F** — checkable in the city story / Table 1.
 - d) **O** — "more fun" is a personal feeling.
- Fact = you can check it in the packet; opinion = what someone feels or likes.*

8 Evaluate the claim "people travel the same way in every community."

Correct: B (No). The packet shows different travel: city people often ride a bus, train, or walk; suburb people drive a car; country people drive a car or truck. Reject A (nothing says travel is the same) and C (the packet does describe travel). Explanation must cite one such detail from a story or Table 1.

Explain CER (Q9) ~1–2 min

9 Compare how life is different in two communities.

Model answer (city vs. country). Claim: Life in the city is busy with tall buildings close together, but in the country homes are far apart on open land. Evidence: (1) The city story / Table 1 says the city has tall buildings and people ride a bus or walk. (2) The country story / Table 1 says the country has open land with farms and people drive a truck. Reasoning: The two places look different and have different jobs, so people live and travel in different ways.

Defensible alternates: any two communities may be chosen (city vs. suburb, or suburb vs. country) and earn full marks if the claim names both communities, two accurate clues support it, and the reasoning connects the difference to the place.

CER scoring rubric (3 points)

Score	Claim	Evidence	Reasoning
3	Names two communities and clearly tells one way life is different.	Two accurate clues from the stories, chart, and/or Table 1.	Correctly links the difference to the place (its land, buildings, jobs, or travel).
2	Names two communities; difference mostly clear.	One solid clue, or two with a small error.	Some correct linkage but incomplete or a small mix-up.
1	Vague or names only one community.	Clue weak, off-topic, or not from the packet.	Little or flawed reasoning; no clear link to the place.
0	No/incorrect claim.	No evidence.	No reasoning.

For Grade 3, accept short phrases and simple spelling; grade the idea, not the handwriting.

Close ACE ~1 min

ACE Articulate / Connect / Extend.

Articulate: accept any accurate plain-language definition (e.g., "a community is a place where people live, work, and play together").

Connect: the cited part must actually show the place shaping jobs — e.g., the chart's city buildings, the suburb "drive a car" note, or the country "farms" note.

Extend: any reasonable choice (city, suburb, or country) with one supporting reason. More than one answer is defensible; grade the reason, not the choice.

Watch Common misconceptions

- **All communities are the same (Q5, Q8).** Students may think every place is alike. Point to the clear differences in looks, jobs, and travel in the stories and Table 1.
- **Mixing up suburb and country.** A suburb is near a city with houses and yards; the country is open land with farms and homes far apart.
- **Fact vs. opinion (Q7).** A statement using "best" or "more fun" is an opinion, not a fact — it cannot be checked in the packet.
- **Cause vs. effect (Q6).** The place (land, buildings) is the cause; the jobs are the effect. Students sometimes name a job without naming what about the place leads to it.
- **"City" the community vs. a country/nation.** Here "country" (rural) means open farmland, not a nation. Clarify if a student is confused.

Teacher follow-up based on likely errors

If many students say the communities are "the same" (Q5/Q8), do a quick 3-way sort of the looks/jobs/travel details. If Q7 shows fact/opinion confusion, re-anchor with the Word Bank and a couple of quick examples. If Q6 or the CER (Q9) reasoning is thin, model aloud the "place → job" link for one community. The highest-value idea to revisit is that **where people live shapes their daily life, jobs, and how they travel.**

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