

Substitute Guide: Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country

Grade: 3 **Subject:** Social Studies **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students learn that people live in different kinds of **communities** — a **city**, a **suburb**, and the **country** — and that **where people live shapes their daily life, jobs, and how they travel**. They read three short stories, look at a simple picture chart and a table, then **compare** the communities and write a short reason. **You do not need a social studies background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet, and you may read any part aloud.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC Chapter 113 (Grade 3 Social Studies).

- **Primary (geography / communities):** comparing how people live in urban, suburban, and rural communities and how the human and physical features of a place shape daily life, work, and travel.
- **Skills (social studies skills):** using and interpreting a simple picture chart and a table to compare communities with evidence.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted, and no specific section number is asserted. Please confirm the codes and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept neutral and age-appropriate.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, or textbooks are needed.
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (4–6 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no textbooks, no safety hazards.

Timing Suggested pacing (~45–60 min)

Segment	Time	What students do
Start — Look & Notice	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up

Segment	Time	What students do
Build — Read the community stories	10 min	Read the three stories, word bank, picture chart (Figure 1), Table 1
Apply — Use the chart & table	20 min	Q3–Q8 (chart, table, compare, cause/effect, fact/opinion, check the claim)
Explain — CER	10 min	Q9 claim/evidence/reasoning comparing two communities
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	"Which community fits the job or hobby?"

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's work is a paper reading activity called *Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country*. A community is a place where people live, work, and play. You will read three short stories — one about a busy city, one about a quieter suburb, and one about the open country. Then you will look at a picture chart and a table and answer with a pencil. Work by yourself — no computers or books. Read the parts in order; if one question is tricky, skip it and come back. Everything you need is in the packet, so you do not need to know any outside facts. You may quietly read aloud to yourself. Put your name, class, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need help with a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck comparing, point them to **Table 1** — the three communities sit side by side there.
- For cause and effect (Q6), point to a community's **story**: the land or buildings is the cause, the job is the effect.
- For "fact or opinion" (Q7), point to the **Word Bank**: an opinion says what someone feels or likes (like "best" or "fun").
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems and starters** for Q6, the CER (Q9), and ACE.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What does the packet say?" or "What is that place like?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any story or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank**.
- **Glossary**: community = a place where people live, work, and play; city = a big, busy place with many people and buildings; suburb = a quieter place near a city, often with yards; country = open land with farms and homes far apart; job = the work a person does; travel = to go from one place to another; fact = something you can check; opinion = what a person feels or likes. Read any meaning aloud and give a quick example ("a *suburb* is like a neighborhood of houses just outside a big city").
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in short words or phrases instead of full sentences, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white, with roomy writing space.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed**: calculator (no math required), phones, computers, textbooks or outside sources (everything needed is in the packet).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky how far most students got and any words or questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for students who assume the three communities are the same (Q5/Q8) and for fact/opinion mix-ups in Q7. A quick next-day sort of the looks/jobs/travel details, plus reviewing the "place → jobs" link for each community, would reinforce this well. The CER (Q9) responses show who can compare two communities and cite a story, the chart, or Table 1 as evidence.

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