

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.

G03_SOC_CommunitiesCompare_01 — Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country Substitute Guide

Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country

Grade: 3 **Subject:** Social Studies **Time:** ~45 min + ~15 min extra **Work mode:** By yourself · pencil only Social Studies

Start Here

This is a **paper reading activity**. You will read three short stories about places where people live. Then you will look at a picture chart and answer with a **pencil**. You do **not** need a computer or a book. **Everything you need is in this packet**. Work by yourself. If a question is hard, skip it and come back. You may read the parts quietly to yourself.

Start Look & Notice 5 min

Warm up before you read. A **community** is a place where people live, work, and play together.

1 Think about the place where **you** live. Write **one thing** you see near your home.

2 How do you get to school? Circle one. Then finish the sentence.

 walk  bus  car  bike

I get to school by _____.

Build Read the Community Stories 10 min



A City (urban) — written for this packet

A **city** is a big, busy place. Many people live close together in tall buildings. The streets are full of cars, buses, and people walking. There are many shops, jobs, and things to do. People in a city often work in stores, offices, hospitals, and restaurants. Many people ride a bus or train, or they walk, because places are close together.

Type: original community story · Place: city (urban)



A Suburb (suburban) — written for this packet

A **suburb** is near a city, but not as busy. Most homes have a yard, and the streets are quieter. People often drive a car to get to work, school, or the store. Some people who live in a suburb drive into the city for their jobs. There are schools, parks, and small shops close to home.

Type: original community story · Place: suburb (suburban)



The Country (rural) — written for this packet

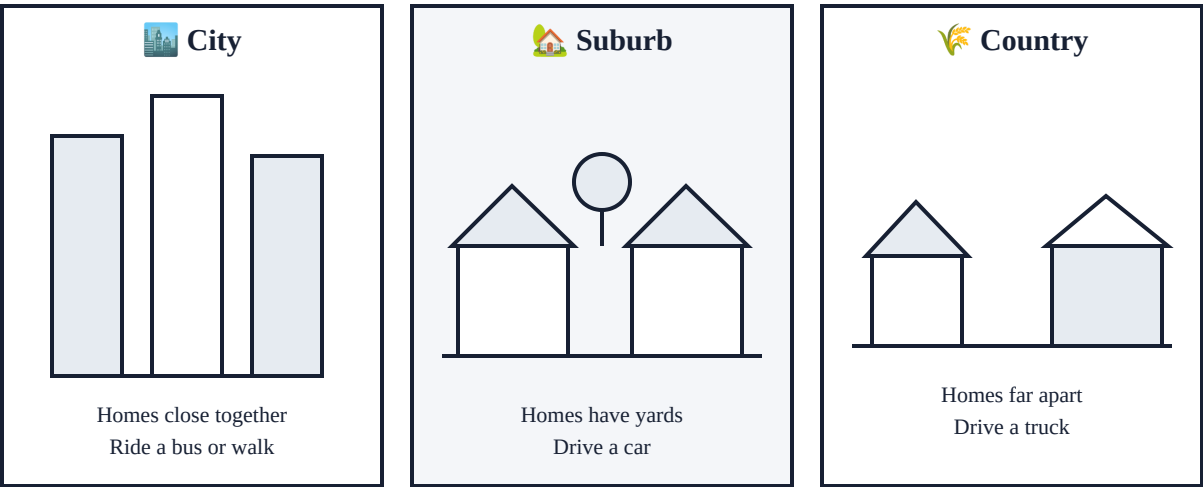
The **country** is a place with lots of open land. Homes are spread far apart, so you can see fields, farms, and trees. Many people work on farms or ranches, growing food or caring for animals. Because places are far away, people

usually drive a car or truck to get where they need to go.

Type: original community story · Place: country (rural)

Word Bank

- community
 - a place where people live, work, and play together.
- city
 - a big, busy place with many people and buildings.
- suburb
 - a quieter place near a city, often with yards.
- country
 - a place with open land, farms, and homes far apart.
- job
 - the work a person does.
- travel
 - to go from one place to another.
- fact
 - something you can check to see it is true.
- opinion
 - what a person feels or likes; not proven true.



A simple drawing — not a real map. Black on white so it reads clearly.

Figure 1. A picture chart comparing three communities. On the left, a city has tall buildings close together. In the middle, a suburb has houses with yards. On the right, the country has homes far apart with a farm. It is drawn in black and white so it reads clearly in grayscale.

Table 1 — Comparing the communities (written for this packet)

Community	What it looks like	Common jobs	How people travel
City (urban)	Tall buildings; homes close together	Shops, offices, hospitals, restaurants	Bus, train, or walk
Suburb (suburban)	Houses with yards; quieter streets	Schools, shops; some drive to the city	Drive a car
Country (rural)	Open land; homes far apart	Farms and ranches	Drive a car or truck

Type: original comparison table · Use it with the picture chart to answer the questions.

Apply Use the Chart & Table 20 min

3Read the chart. Look at Figure 1. Which community has **tall buildings** close together?

Answer: _____

4Read the table. Use Table 1 to fill in each blank.

- a) People in the _____ do jobs on farms and ranches.
- b) In the _____, homes have yards and people drive a car.
- c) In a _____, many people ride a bus or train.

5Compare. Use the stories and Table 1.

One way all three communities are alike:

Two ways the communities are different:

6Cause and effect. Why do **jobs** differ from place to place? Pick **one** community and tell how the **land or buildings** there help make the jobs. Write 1–2 sentences.

Sentence starter: "In the _____, there is _____, so people _____."

7Fact or opinion? Write **F** for a fact you can check in the packet, or **O** for an opinion (what someone feels or likes).

- _____ a) In the country, homes are spread far apart.
- _____ b) The city is the best place to live.
- _____ c) Many people in a city ride a bus or train.
- _____ d) Farms are more fun than tall buildings.

8Check the claim. A student says: "*People travel the same way in every community.*" Does the packet agree?

- Yes — the packet says everyone travels the same way.
- No — the packet shows city people often ride a bus, suburb people drive a car, and country people drive a car or truck.
- The packet does not talk about how people travel.

Tell why you picked your answer. Use one detail from a story or Table 1:

Explain Claim–Evidence–Reasoning 10 min

Question 9. Pick two communities. How is life different in those two places? Write a **claim** that names your two communities and tells one way life is different. Give **two clues (evidence)** from the stories, the picture chart, or Table 1. Then tell your **reasoning** — why the difference makes sense.

Sentence stems you may use: "In the _____ people _____, but in the _____ people _____." · "One clue is... (from a story / the chart / Table 1)." · "A second clue is..." · "This makes sense because the place has _____."

Claim

Evidence (two clues)

Reasoning

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Articulate

In your own words, tell a friend what a **community** is.

Connect

Name one part of this packet (the chart, a story, or Table 1) that shows how a place changes people's jobs.

Extend

Is where **you** live most like a city, a suburb, or the country? Tell one reason.

Continue Early Finisher optional • ~15 min

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Which community fits the job or hobby? On the back of this page, match each one to the community that fits best, and tell **why** using the packet: (1) a person whose job is to **grow food on a farm**, (2) a person who wants to **walk to many shops and offices**, (3) a family who wants a **yard to play in** but likes being near a city. For each one, name the community and give one reason from a story, the chart, or Table 1.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–9 and the ACE box are answered. The early-finisher matching is optional, but turn it in too if you did it.

G03_SOC_CommunitiesCompare_01 — Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country Student Packet



TEACHER ANSWER KEY FOLLOWS

Do not copy the pages after this divider for students.

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.**

G03_SOC_CommunitiesCompare_01 — Comparing Communities: City, Suburb, and Country Teacher Answer Key