

Substitute Guide: Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data

Grade: 6 **Subject:** Social Studies (World Cultures & Geography) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension
Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students learn to **compare two real societies** — Japan and Kenya — using two short profiles and a simple comparison table. They practice **reading maps/data**, finding **similarities and differences**, and explaining a difference with **geography and economics** (cause and effect). They also sort statements into **fact, interpretation, and opinion**, and finish by writing a short evidence-based comparison. **You do not need a geography background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC §113.18 (Grade 6 Social Studies, Contemporary World Cultures).

- **Primary — geography/society (provisional):** comparing the ways different societies use their physical environment, and how geographic factors influence economic activities and where people live.
- **Skills — social studies skills (provisional):** analyzing information from maps, tables, and other visuals, and distinguishing fact from interpretation and opinion.

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

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted. Please confirm the codes and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept non-partisan.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, atlases, 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 — Notice & Predict	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up
Build — Read the profiles	5–10 min	Read Profile A (Japan), Profile B (Kenya), word bank, comparison table; Q3
Apply — Read & compare	20–25 min	Q4–Q7 (compare/contrast, explain a difference, fact/interpretation/opinion, evaluate a claim)
Explain — CER	5–10 min	Q8 claim/evidence/reasoning
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	"Change one factor and predict"

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a paper geography investigation called *Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data*. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers, atlases, or textbooks. First read the two short country profiles — one for Japan, one for Kenya — and study the comparison table. Then answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. Everything you need is printed in the packet — you do not need to know any outside facts. You may quietly read the profiles aloud to yourself. Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need help understanding a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck on a similarity or difference (Q4), point them to the **comparison table** — each row lines up the same indicator for both countries.
- For "explain a difference" (Q5), prompt: "What does the land and climate let people grow or make in each place?"
- For "fact / interpretation / opinion" (Q6), point to the **Word Bank** definitions; an "opinion" usually states a preference, an "interpretation" says "probably" or "because."
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** for the CER (Q8) and ACE sections.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What do the profiles say?" or "Which row of the table shows that?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any passage or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank** (society, climate, landform, economy, manufacturing, republic, fact, interpretation, opinion are defined).
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q8 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed:** calculator (no math required), phones, computers, atlases, 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 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 list a **difference** where a **similarity** was asked, or who mark a reasoned "probably..." statement as a plain fact in Q6. A quick next-day discussion sorting a few statements into fact / interpretation / opinion, plus reviewing how land and climate shape whether people farm or manufacture (Q5), would reinforce this well. The CER (Q8) responses show who can name a factor and back it with two pieces of evidence from the profiles or table.

G06_SOC_CompareSocieties_01 — Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data Substitute Guide

Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data

Grade: 6 **Subject:** Social Studies (World Cultures & Geography) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension
Work mode: Independent · pencil only Social Studies

Start Here

This is a **paper geography investigation**. You will read two short profiles of two real countries, study a comparison table, and answer questions using a pencil. You do **not** need a computer, an atlas, or the internet — **everything you need is printed in this packet**. Work by yourself and do your best thinking. Write in complete sentences where you are asked to explain. If a question is hard, skip it, keep going, and come back. Reading the profiles aloud quietly to yourself is allowed and encouraged.

Start Notice & Predict 5 min

A **society** is a group of people who share a land, ways of living, and a government. Warm up before you read the profiles.

1 Read this short summary, then answer below.

Summary (written for this packet): "Two countries can sit far apart on a map and be very different. One is a chain of mountainous islands where most people live in crowded cities and factories make cars and electronics. The other is a warm inland-and-coastal country where many families farm the land and raise animals, and tea and coffee are important crops."

Type: original summary · Focus: comparing two societies

Notice: Write **one thing you notice** in this summary.

Predict: Based only on this, **predict one way** the two countries' daily life might be different.

2 Why do you think a country's **land and climate** might change how its people earn a living? Give **one reason** in your own words.

Build Read the Profiles 5–10 min

Profile A — Japan (written for this packet)

Japan is an island country in eastern Asia, made up of a long chain of islands in the Pacific Ocean. Much of the land is steep and mountainous, so most people live packed into cities and towns along the coasts and in the flatter valleys. Japan has a **temperate** climate with four seasons — warm summers and cool-to-cold winters. Because there is little flat farmland and few mines, Japan buys many raw materials from other countries. Its economy is built mostly on **manufacturing and technology**: factories make cars, machines, and electronics that are sold around the world. Japan's government is a **constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament**, which means it has an emperor as a ceremonial symbol but its laws are made by leaders the people elect.

Type: original country profile · Facts: well-established geography/economics

Profile B — Kenya (written for this packet)

Kenya is a country in eastern Africa with a coast on the Indian Ocean and a large inland area of highlands, plains, and savanna. The **Equator** runs across Kenya, so much of the country is warm all year, with wet and dry seasons rather than four cold seasons. Many Kenyan families make a living through **farming and raising animals; tea and coffee** grown in the cooler highlands are important crops that Kenya sells to other countries, and tourists visit to see wildlife on the plains. More people are moving to growing cities such as the capital, Nairobi. Kenya's government is a **republic** with a president and an elected assembly, so its leaders are chosen by the people through voting.

Type: original country profile · Facts: well-established geography/economics

Word Bank

- society
 - a group of people who share a land, ways of living, and a government.
- climate
 - the usual weather of a place over many years.
- landform
 - a natural shape of the land, such as a mountain, plain, or island.
- economy
 - the way people in a place make, sell, and use goods and money.
- manufacturing
 - making goods in factories, such as cars or electronics.
- republic
 - a government in which people elect their leaders.
- fact
 - a statement that can be checked and shown true or false.
- interpretation
 - an explanation of what evidence means; reasoned from facts.
- opinion
 - a personal belief or preference; not proven by evidence.

Two Societies at a Glance

Indicator	Country A: Japan	Country B: Kenya
Landform	Chain of mountainous islands	Coast plus inland highlands & plains
Climate	Temperate, four seasons	Warm all year, wet & dry seasons
Main economic activity	Manufacturing & technology	Farming, animals, tea & coffee
Government	Constitutional monarchy, elected	Republic, elected president
Where most people live	Crowded coastal cities	Farms & fast-growing cities

Figure 1. A simple comparison table of Japan and Kenya across five indicators. All lines and labels are black on white so the table reads clearly in grayscale.

3Using the table, fill in each blank with **Japan** or **Kenya**.

- a) The country whose main economic activity is manufacturing and technology: _____
- b) The country that is warm all year with wet and dry seasons: _____
- c) The country made up of a chain of mountainous islands: _____

Apply Read & Compare 20–25 min

4Compare and contrast. Use the profiles and the table.

Two similarities between Japan and Kenya (things that are the *same* or alike):

- a) _____
- b) _____

Two differences between Japan and Kenya (things that are *not* alike):

- c) _____
- d) _____

5Explain a difference using geography or economics. Kenya has many more farmers than Japan does. Using the profiles and table, explain **why the land and climate might cause this difference** (cause → effect). Write 2–3 sentences.

6Fact, interpretation, or opinion? Write **F** (fact you can check in the packet), **I** (interpretation reasoned from facts), or **O** (opinion / personal belief).

- _____ a) The Equator runs across Kenya, so much of it is warm all year.
- _____ b) Because Japan has little flat farmland, it probably depends more on factories than on farming.
- _____ c) Japan is a far more interesting country than Kenya.
- _____ d) Japan is made up of a chain of mountainous islands.

7Evaluate a claim using the packet. A student claims: *"Both countries earn a living in exactly the same way."* Do the profiles and table support this claim?

- Yes — both countries depend mainly on factories.
- No — Japan's main activity is manufacturing and technology, while Kenya's is farming, animals, and crops like tea and coffee.
- The packet says nothing about how either country earns a living.

Explain your choice using one detail from Profile A or Profile B:

Explain Claim–Evidence–Reasoning 5–10 min

Question 8. Which one factor — landform, climate, or economy — best explains why daily life in Japan and Kenya is so different? Write a **claim** naming the factor you choose, support it with **two pieces of evidence** from the profiles or the table, then explain your reasoning.

Sentence stems you may use: "The factor that best explains the difference is..." · "One piece of evidence is... (from Profile A / Profile B / the table)." · "A second piece of evidence is..." · "This matters because it shapes how people..."

Claim

Evidence (two pieces)

Reasoning

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Articulate

In your own words, explain what it means to **compare** two societies, as if teaching a friend.

Connect

Point to one row in the table or one line in a profile that shows a clear difference between the two countries. Name it.

Extend

Name one way **your own community** (outside this packet) is like **or** unlike Japan or Kenya, and give one reason.

Continue Early Finisher optional • ~15 min

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Change one factor and predict. On the back of this page, imagine **Kenya's cool highlands suddenly became too dry to grow tea and coffee**. Using only the profiles and table, **predict two ways** Kenya's society might change (think about jobs, trade, and where people live). For each prediction, name the **factor you changed** and the **effect you expect**.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class period, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–8 and the ACE box are answered. The early-finisher prediction is optional but turn it in too if you did it.

G06_SOC_CompareSocieties_01 — Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data Student Packet



TEACHER ANSWER KEY FOLLOWS

Do not copy the pages after this divider for students.

Answer Key: Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data

Grade: 6 **Subject:** Social Studies (World Cultures & Geography) **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 correct reasoning even if the wording differs. 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 two profiles and the comparison table only. Estimated grading time: ~5–7 min per packet.

Start Notice & Predict grade for effort · ~2 min

1 Notice + predict from the short summary.

Full credit for any reasonable notice + prediction. **Notice** examples: "the two countries are very different," "one has factories and one has farms," "one is islands and one is inland/coastal." **Predict** examples: "people do different kinds of jobs," "one eats/grows different food," "one lives in bigger cities." Accept any on-topic prediction — this is a warm-up graded for effort.

2 Why land and climate might shape how people earn a living.

Accept any reasonable idea in the student's own words: flat, fertile land and rain help farming; mountains and little farmland push people toward factories and cities; a warm climate lets certain crops grow; a place near the ocean may fish or trade. More than one answer is defensible.

Build Read the Profiles ~1 min

3 Read the table — Japan or Kenya.

- a) Manufacturing and technology = **Japan**.
- b) Warm all year with wet and dry seasons = **Kenya**.
- c) Chain of mountainous islands = **Japan**.

Apply Read & Compare ~2–3 min

4 Compare and contrast — two similarities, two differences.

Similarities — accept any two supported by the packet, e.g.:

- Both have a coast / border the ocean (Japan the Pacific, Kenya the Indian Ocean).
- Both sell important goods to other countries (Japan: cars/electronics; Kenya: tea/coffee).
- Both have leaders the people elect (Japan's parliament; Kenya's president/assembly).
- Both have growing cities where more people are moving.

Differences — accept any two supported by the packet, e.g.:

- Landform: mountainous islands (Japan) vs. coast plus inland highlands and plains (Kenya).
- Climate: temperate with four seasons (Japan) vs. warm all year with wet/dry seasons (Kenya).
- Main economic activity: manufacturing/technology (Japan) vs. farming, animals, tea & coffee (Kenya).
- Government type: constitutional monarchy with an emperor (Japan) vs. republic with a president (Kenya).

Watch: a common error is listing a **difference** in the "similarities" blanks (or the reverse). A similarity is something the two share; a difference is something they do not share.

5 Explain a difference (why Kenya has many more farmers) using geography/economics.

Model: "Kenya has warm weather all year and large areas of highlands and plains, so the land and climate are good for growing crops like tea and coffee and for raising animals — this gives many families farming jobs. Japan is mostly steep mountainous islands with little flat farmland and a cooler climate, so instead of farming, many people work in factories and cities. The difference in land and climate leads to a difference in how people earn a living." Award credit for connecting Kenya's warm climate/farmland to farming **and** Japan's mountains/little farmland to factories (a clear cause → effect). See rubric.

6 Fact (F) / Interpretation (I) / Opinion (O).

- a) **F** — checkable in Profile B (the Equator crosses Kenya, so it is warm all year).
 b) **I** — reasoned conclusion using "probably" (Japan's little farmland → depends more on factories).
 c) **O** — a personal belief/preference ("far more interesting"); cannot be proven.
 d) **F** — checkable in Profile A / the table (Japan is a chain of mountainous islands).
Fact = checkable; interpretation = reasoned from facts (often "because/probably"); opinion = personal belief.

7 Evaluate the claim "both countries earn a living in exactly the same way."

Correct: B (No). The packet shows Japan's main activity is manufacturing and technology (cars, machines, electronics), while Kenya's is farming, raising animals, and crops like tea and coffee. Reject A (Kenya does not depend mainly on factories) and C (both profiles clearly describe how each earns a living). Explanation must cite one such detail from Profile A or Profile B.

Explain CER (Q8) ~1–2 min

8 Which factor best explains why daily life differs?

Model answer. Claim: Landform best explains the difference in daily life between Japan and Kenya. Evidence: (1) Table/Profile A: Japan is a chain of steep, mountainous islands with little flat farmland, so most people crowd into coastal cities and work in factories. (2) Table/Profile B: Kenya has coast plus inland highlands and plains, so many families can farm and raise animals across the land. Reasoning: Because the shape of the land decides how much farmable space there is and where people can live, it drives the differences in jobs, cities, and daily life — which is why landform best explains the contrast.

Defensible alternates: a student may instead choose **climate** (warm all year vs. four cold seasons shapes crops and life) or **economy** (manufacturing vs. farming shapes daily work) and still earn full marks if two accurate pieces of evidence support the chosen factor. Grade the quality of the evidence and reasoning, not which factor is named.

CER scoring rubric (3 points)

Score	Claim	Evidence	Reasoning
3	Clear claim naming one factor (landform, climate, or economy).	Two accurate, relevant pieces from the profiles and/or table.	Correctly links the factor to how daily life differs and explains why it matters most.
2	Factor named, mostly clear.	One solid piece, or two with a minor error.	Some correct linkage but incomplete or a small misconception.

Score	Claim	Evidence	Reasoning
1	Vague or partly correct claim.	Evidence weak, off-topic, or not from the packet.	Little or flawed reasoning; no clear link to daily life.
0	No/incorrect claim.	No evidence.	No reasoning.

Close ACE ~1 min

ACE Articulate / Connect / Extend.

Articulate: accept any accurate plain-language definition (e.g., "to compare two societies is to look at how they are alike and how they are different").

Connect: the cited row/line must actually show a difference — e.g., landform row (islands vs. highlands/plains), climate row (four seasons vs. warm all year), or economy row (factories vs. farming).

Extend: any reasonable like/unlike comparison of the student's own community with a reason (e.g., "like Japan, my city is crowded"; "unlike Kenya, few people here farm"). More than one answer is defensible; grade the reason, not the choice.

Watch Common misconceptions

- **Similarity vs. difference (Q4).** Students may put a difference where a similarity was asked. A similarity is something both countries share; a difference is something only one has.
- **Fact vs. interpretation (Q6).** A "probably/because..." statement is usually an interpretation, not a plain fact. A preference ("far more interesting") is an opinion.
- **Climate ≠ weather.** Climate is the usual pattern over many years; "warm all year" or "four seasons" describes climate, not one day's weather.
- **"Both earn a living the same way" (Q7).** The packet clearly contrasts manufacturing (Japan) with farming and crops (Kenya).
- **One right factor in the CER.** Q8 has no single correct factor — landform, climate, or economy are all defensible if backed by two pieces of evidence.

Teacher follow-up based on likely errors

If many students confuse similarities and differences in Q4, do a quick "same or different?" sort using the table rows. If Q6 reveals fact/interpretation/opinion confusion, re-anchor with the Word Bank definitions and a few quick examples. If CER (Q8) evidence is thin, model naming a factor and pointing to two specific rows or profile lines aloud. Reinforcing that geography (land and climate) shapes economy and daily life is the highest-value idea to revisit.

G06_SOC_CompareSocieties_01 — Comparing Two Societies with Maps and Data Teacher Answer Key