

Looking at Communities: Comparing Urban and Rural Neighborhoods

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES	GRADES
<p>Our urban areas have become so dominant that frequently the children we teach have no connection with and very few concepts about life in a rural area or small town. In this lesson students will compare and contrast urban vs. rural communities, using their community as one of the two examples. Other communities could be compared including ethnic communities, communities in other states, or communities in other countries. This lesson is adaptable to other grade levels.</p> <p><i>Students will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the basic needs of all people and recognize how the needs are met in different communities • Compare human characteristics of rural and urban areas • Describe human and physical features using a map and aerial photo • Relate physical features to ways people use the land to work and play 	2 nd -6 th
	TIME
	3 class periods
	<p style="text-align: center;">REQUIRED MATERIALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Computer projector ✓ Computer Internet access for students (optional) ✓ Two pictures of rural homes and 2 pictures of urban homes ✓ Topographic maps and aerial photos of the rural and urban areas ✓ Poster paper or newsprint, markers, ✓ Wall map of Minnesota (optional)
MINNESOTA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS	
<p>(GRADE 2)</p> <p>Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.</p> <p>2.3.1.1.4 Use maps, photos, or other geographic tools to answer basic questions about where people are located.</p> <p>Standard 9. The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to, and change, the environment.</p> <p>2.3.4.9.1 Identify causes and consequences of human impact on the environment and ways that the environment influences people.</p> <p>(GRADE 3)</p> <p>Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.</p> <p>3.3.1.1.1 Use maps and concepts of location (relative location words and cardinal and intermediate directions) to describe places in one’s community, the state of Minnesota, the United</p>	

States or the world.

Standard 6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.

3.3.3.6.1 Identify landforms and patterns in population; explain why human populations are unevenly distributed around the world.

(GRADE 4)

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

4.3.1.1.1 Create and use various kinds of maps, including overlaying thematic maps, of places in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico; incorporate the “TODALS” map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display spatial information.

Standard 2. Geographic inquiry is a process in which people ask geographic questions and gather, organize and analyze information to solve problems and plan for the future.

4.3.1.2.2. Use photographs or satellite-produced images to interpret spatial information about the United States, and also Canada or Mexico.

Standard 3. Places have physical characteristics (such as climate, topography vegetation) and human characteristics (such as culture, population, political and economic systems).

4.3.2.3.1 Locate and identify the physical and human characteristics of places in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico.

Standard 6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.

4.3.3.6.1 Explain how geographic factors affect population distribution and the growth of cities in the United States and Canada.

Standard 9. The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to and change, the environment.

4.3.4.9.1 Explain how humans adapt to and/or modify the physical environment and how they are in turn affected by these adaptations and modifications.

(GRADE 5)

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

5.3.1.1.1 Create and use various kinds of maps, including overlaying thematic maps, of places in the North American colonies; incorporate the “TODALS” map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display spatial information.

Standard 3. Places have physical characteristics (such as climate, topography and vegetation) and human characteristics (such as culture, population, political and economic systems).

5.3.2.3.1. Locate and identify the physical and human characteristics of places in the North American colonies.

(GRADE 6)

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

6.3.1.1.1

Create and use various kinds of maps, including overlaying thematic maps, of places in Minnesota;

incorporate the “TODALSS” map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display spatial information.

Standard 6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and other human settlements.

6.3.3.6.1 Locate, identify and describe major physical features in Minnesota; explain how physical features and the location of resources affect settlement patterns and the growth of cities in different parts of Minnesota.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

Teacher’s Note: Before you begin this lesson, you will need to have ready 2 pictures of rural homes and 2 pictures of urban homes including old and new homes and houses and apartments with one set representing your students’ neighborhood. (It would be helpful if you had photos rather than relying on the Internet.) In addition, you will need topographic maps and aerial photos of the same places. Go to the website indicated in Website Resources to download topographic maps. Go to Google maps for topographic maps (identify the name of the town and Minnesota) and aerial photos (identify the name of the town and aerial photo).

Day #1

Ask students what is a small town and what is a city. How are they the same and how are they different? With the entire class brainstorm and record on the large paper generalizations about small towns and cities with the labels “Small Towns (Rural Areas)” and the other “Cities (Urban Areas)”. Begin by asking questions such as “What do you think is true about small towns?” and “If you have visited a small town, what things were different from our city?” Try to list 10 characteristics on each side.

As a class, discuss each of the 4 pictures and reasons for identifying each as small town home or city home. Decide together if the reasons are similar to the characteristics listed earlier or if new characteristics can be added. Ask the students where they think the pictures were from. Show them using a map of Minnesota the locations of the small town and the city and explain where the pictures were taken if possible.

Discuss together the students’ preconceptions about the small town and the city. Who lives there? Why? Have they visited the two places? Would these homes look the same in a different small town or in a different city? What is unique about the pictures that may not be true in a different small town or city of the same size?

Day #2 and #3

List together the resources necessary to meet the basic needs of a community. The list should include the following elements: 1) homes; 2) schools; 3) businesses; 4) places of worship; 5) grocery stores; 6) community services (police, fire, library, post office); 7) entertainment venues; 8) health services; 9) parks.

Explain that they will be looking within each of the communities for the resources listed. Begin by showing the aerial photos and explaining that they are taken from planes and help cartographers to develop maps. Photos are updated every few years and changes in the community can be found by comparing different photographs. Next, explain that topographical maps show elevation and manmade and natural landforms; they are often the same scale as aerial photos and are used by city planners, transportation departments,

hunters, and even fishermen. Look at some of the differences between the two and explain that the maps have been enlarged to show more detail.

As a class or divided into groups have students find examples of the resources using the aerial photo for the small town. Zoom into the small town and discuss the resources and their locations. For example, there may be a clinic but no hospital, there may be an elementary school but not a high school; the businesses may be located together in a central area; the homes may be in rows near the businesses. Next, examine the topographic map and discuss how the buildings are arranged because of the terrain or bodies of water. For example, the buildings are located on the flatter areas; the roads follow the slope of the terrain; the town is near the body of water.

Examine the city using a similar procedure. Zoom into the city and discuss the resources and their locations. For example, there may be more than one clinic and a hospital; there may be an elementary school and a middle and high school; the businesses may be clustered together in several areas; the homes may be in rows or cul de sacs surrounding the businesses. Next, examine the topographic map and discuss how the buildings are arranged because of the terrain or bodies of water. For example, the buildings are located on the flatter areas; the roads follow the slope of the terrain; the city is near the body of water.

Discuss the characteristics made earlier. What evidence was found to support them? What are the similarities and differences between small towns and cities, between rural and urban areas? How were the basic needs of people met through their available resources? What problems might arise if all the resources were not available? How might the people access the resources? How did the landscape affect the number or location of the resources? How did the landscape affect the kind of businesses and their locations? How did the landscape affect the kind of parks and their locations? How did the landscape affect where the houses were built? Were resources centrally located or located near each other, such as the houses, schools, and community services?

Conclude by highlighting the commonalities between small towns and cities and the basic needs that can be met in both places through their available resources. Also discuss that the physical features can determine the resource number, location, and type as well as the size of the community.

Extensions

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a small town or in a city.
2. Compare other communities with your community or with one another. These could include ethnic communities, communities in other states, or communities in other countries. Also, refugee communities could be used. Compare human and physical characteristics and how resources are met in different communities.

Assessment

Class discussion

Website Resources

“Topographic Maps” at Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/tomo.html>

Additional Website Resources

“Topographic Maps for Minnesota” at Minnesota IT Services

http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/elevation/topo_maps.html