

Cities, Towns, Villages & Countryside · Conversation & classroom guide

Learning with a grown-up · Ages 4–8 · Flexible participation

What looks different between the city and the village here?

Learning aim: Compare visible settlement patterns and describe a connection between built places and surrounding countryside.

A five-minute conversation

Choose two parts of the landscape and compare what you can actually see: buildings, streets, shared spaces, fields or trees. Use the labels after your child has noticed a difference.

Start here: Compare two clusters using more/fewer and close together/spread out.

Explore further: Explain a connection between a settlement and surrounding land without treating the labels as exact size thresholds.

What looks different between the city and the village here?

Answer cue: The pictured city has more buildings close together; the pictured village is a smaller cluster. Children may also notice roads or open spaces.

Is the countryside empty of people?

Answer cue: No. People live and work there too. This picture includes farms and connections between settlements.

How could these places be connected?

Answer cue: The roads link places. People may travel between them for family, work, shops or other activities; those possible journeys are discussion ideas, not all shown in the picture.

Keep the idea clear

A settlement is a place where people live together. City, town and village classifications vary by country; these illustrations are examples, not universal population rules. Cities have green spaces too, and countryside can include villages. No kind of home or community is better than another.

Try: Connect two places on a pretend map

Materials: Paper and crayons.

1. Draw two different clusters of buildings and some open land.
2. Add a road or path that connects the clusters. Choose a shared place, such as a library or park.
3. Tell a short journey along your route and explain what the traveler passes.

What this can show: The child names a visible difference and describes a plausible connection between two places. Use a made-up place. Children do not need to share their address, photograph their home or compare family possessions.

Return to it: Return to Nature and People. Which features on your map were built by people, and which are natural?

Cities, Towns, Villages & Countryside · In the classroom

A 15-minute classroom lesson

Prepare: Paper and crayons. Read the answer cues before sharing.

Words to explore

settlement — A place where people live together.

city — A large settlement with many buildings and streets.

town — A settlement with homes and shared places such as shops.

village — A small settlement.

countryside — Land outside towns and cities.

3 min · Notice: Look together and invite one observation before introducing the vocabulary.

4 min · Compare: Use the three discussion prompts, following the picture rather than expecting memorized definitions.

5 min · Try together: Draw two different clusters of buildings and some open land. Add a road or path that connects the clusters. Choose a shared place, such as a library or park. Tell a short journey along your route and explain what the traveler passes.

3 min · Explain: The child names a visible difference and describes a plausible connection between two places.

Understanding check: The child names a visible difference and describes a plausible connection between two places.

Answer guidance: The pictured city has more buildings close together; the pictured village is a smaller cluster. Children may also notice roads or open spaces. No. People live and work there too. This picture includes farms and connections between settlements. The roads link places. People may travel between them for family, work, shops or other activities; those possible journeys are discussion ideas, not all shown in the picture.

Offer two enlarged scenes at a time, a spoken description or large tactile blocks. Accept invented places and avoid assumptions about travel or housing experience.

A response to keep

Draw, point or describe one idea from this picture.

One clue I can explain now...

Something else I wonder...

<https://kiddos.ai/learn/olivia-the-globetrotter/settlements>

Related story: Olivia and Doudou in Paris — Olivia and Doudou visit cities in their Paris, San Francisco and Venice books. This new landscape broadens that idea to other settlement patterns; it is not a map of one of those cities.

Our discovery record

Use words, marks, a drawing or an adult's notes. Keep this page with you; nothing needs to be uploaded.

Date / time (if useful): _____

My question or idea

What I noticed

What I think now

What I want to explore next

Stories to continue together: <https://kiddos.ai/books>

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