

Lesson Plan—

All About Canadian Communities: Towns

All About Canadian Communities: Towns focuses on one kind of urban community in Canada, offering students ways to explore specifically the features and characteristics of towns, the similarities and differences between urban and rural communities, how their own community compares with Canadian towns, and the sample communities—Lac-Mégantic, Quebec; Wainwright, Alberta; and Amherst, Nova Scotia.

Teaching Notes

Key Concepts/Background: The students’ exploration of towns will help them practise their social studies skills and acquire knowledge about some of the discipline’s key concepts:

- People in Canadian communities depend on one another and their environment.
- Towns, like other kinds of Canadian communities, have certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics towns have in common with other kinds of Canadian communities; others they do not.
- People in towns depend on one another and on people in other communities to meet their needs and wants, and to exchange goods and services.
- Towns are connected to other towns and to other types of Canadian and international communities.

As students explore the subject of towns through text and pictures, help them to see the key characteristics of this community type:

- Towns are urban communities, thus distinct from rural communities.
- In general, towns have fewer people and take up less space than cities.
- Each town has its own government.
- Towns provide services to townspeople, such as a common supply of clean water and a fire department.

Key Terms: community, natural features, built features, resources, transportation

Reading Strategies

- You may wish to take students on a walk through the book, introducing them to the features of the book (table of contents, headings and parenthetical explanations, pictures and captions, etc.) and explaining how students can use these features to help them gain knowledge from the text.
- Review the title of the book with students. Ask them what they think the book will be about. Point to and read the title of the series and repeat the title of the book. Ask students how the title of the series and the title of the book go together. Then ask them what they know about towns. Record the features of towns that they suggest.

Activities

Creating Maps, Solving Problems: This activity is designed to help students understand the information that maps can give them and how that information can be used to help them get around in their community.

After students have carefully read *All About Canadian Communities: Towns* together or independently, begin by asking students the boxed question on Student Book page 4: “What does the picture tell you about life in towns?” Students might note, for example, that the town presented on Student Book page 5 is not very big, so they could probably walk to their friends’ homes and to the playgrounds; they could get to stores, school, or the hospital quickly, even on foot or by bicycle; and both the police and firefighters are nearby, so they would feel secure.

Then ask students to imagine that they live in one of the homes shown near the top of the picture and that this is the northern boundary of the town. What route would they follow to get from home to school, to visit the fire station, or to visit the hospital? What landmarks would they look for as they walked to school or to the fire station?

Blackline Masters

- All About Towns—Pictorial Map
- All About Towns—Research Questions

Ask students to work in groups or independently to create maps of the town that is pictured on Student Book page 5. Their maps need not show all the features of the picture, but should show the locations of the following:

- roads and streets
- farmlands
- stores
- fire station
- shoreline
- school
- hospital

Finally, have students mark on their maps with four different coloured pencils or crayons the routes they would follow to walk from their home in the north end of the town to

- school
- stores
- the hospital
- the fire station

Viewing and Interpreting Maps, Labelling Features of Towns: This activity is designed to help students develop their mapping skills and increase their understanding that people in communities depend upon one another and their environment, that communities have distinguishing features designed to help people meet their needs, and that the community features that people have built serve specific purposes.

Ask students to use the BLM “All About Towns—Pictorial Map,” which reproduces the pictorial map on Student Book page 5, to label different features of towns.



Then instruct them to identify the features on the BLM as natural features (trees, lakes, rivers, farmland, etc.) or built features (houses, factories, roads, schools, churches, hospitals, sidewalks, etc.). Ask student to note especially

- places that offer the townspeople resources—such as stores, nearby farms, gas stations
- methods of transportation—such as cars, trucks, and buses
- places where people in the town work

Answering Research Questions, Reading for Information: To help students see the usefulness of using research questions to focus their research activities, provide them each with a copy of the BLM “All About Towns—Research Questions.” Explain that this kind of organizer or chart can be used to record information and to help students retell the information in their own words. Explain to the students that you will fill in the first row of the organizer with the information they give you as they scan the book.

Read the title of the BLM and then the subject and research question in the second row of the organizer. Encourage students to share the strategy they will use to locate the information to respond to this question. Some will suggest using the index, others may suggest using the table of contents, and still others will just turn the pages to look for a heading related to environment.

Ask children to respond to the question (that is, retell the information) in their own words as they look at the pages of the book. Allow them to reread the information if necessary.

Record the information, using full sentences or point form. Model the writing strategies you use as you proceed, such as sounding out, checking the book for the correct spelling, and/or using the classroom word wall.

Then ask students to work in pairs to answer the other research questions in the organizer.