

Suburbia Vs. City Life

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What type of region do you live in?
2. Could you imagine living in a different type of region?
3. What benefits are there to living in the suburbs?
4. What do you think "You can't take the city out of the city boy" means?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ 1. stage | a) people you work with |
| ___ 2. settle down | b) strong and well-established |
| ___ 3. sacrifice | c) to give up something you love |
| ___ 4. convenience | d) a period of development |
| ___ 5. suburbs | e) large residential areas outside of the urban center |
| ___ 6. carpool | f) an arrangement in which two or more people share driving days |
| ___ 7. colleagues | g) a sport, club, or class that is attended outside of school or work time |
| ___ 8. extracurricular activity | h) residential areas where the type of housing is similar throughout |
| ___ 9. strip mall | i) to stay long-term with a family or partner |
| ___ 10. subdivisions | j) something that suits your needs and makes life easier |
| ___ 11. close-knit | k) a row of stores where each store has an entrance from outside |



Reading

SUBURBIA OR CITY LIFE

Which style of living suits you best?

1. Where you live says a lot about what is important to you. Your priorities change in each **stage** of life. Did you know that the average American moves about 12 times in a lifetime?
2. Many families **settle down** in residential areas outside of the city. People often **sacrifice** the **convenience** and excitement of city life for the safety, comfort, and peace of the **suburbs**. Commuting to a job in an urban center becomes a way of life. Some people organize **carpools** with **colleagues**, while others rely on trains and buses. In the suburbs, children often walk to school and have friends and **extracurricular activities** in their own neighborhood.
3. City life is more attractive to singles and students. Being able to walk or bike to work or school saves transportation costs and is better for the environment. A large city typically offers a culturally rich experience, including entertainment and food.
4. While some people base their choice of residence on cost or necessity, others think about ideal lifestyle. Do you and your loved ones have what it takes to survive the **strip malls** and **subdivisions** in “the burbs,” or will you always be proud “city folks”? Perhaps you prefer country living or something in between. A **close-knit** community in a small town may provide the best of both worlds.

“Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them.”

—Bill Vaughan, journalist

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What statistic is provided in the introduction?
2. Why do families often settle down in the suburbs?
3. Where do people in the suburbs often work?
4. Why does the reading mention the environment?
5. What nicknames for “the suburbs” are used in the reading?

Vocabulary Review

A. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

1. City life is convenient for us at this stage in our lives.
 - a) status
 - b) show
 - c) period
 - d) platform
2. We don't want to sacrifice our social life by moving to suburbia.
 - a) give up
 - b) save
 - c) ruin
 - d) increase
3. My colleagues threw me a party when I moved away.
 - a) work friends
 - b) family members
 - c) clients
 - d) customers
4. When you live in a close-knit community, everybody knows your name.
 - a) carpool
 - b) tight
 - c) urban
 - d) fantastic
5. The convenience of fast food is why so many people are unhealthy.
 - a) sacrifice
 - b) effortless
 - c) taste
 - d) cost

B. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1. You may need to change the word forms.

1. There is a bookstore in the middle of the _____.
2. I'm looking for a _____ that heads into the city at 8:00 am on weekdays.
3. Most of my _____ live in suburbia.
4. We are thinking about _____ in your subdivision.
5. I _____ my love of theater for a safer neighborhood.

Discussion

1. What has been the best stage of your life so far, and why?
2. In your opinion, which offers more convenience, city life or suburban life?
3. Where is the best location to raise children? Why?
4. Do you live in a close-knit community or are your neighbors strangers? Share your thoughts about this.
5. Do you feel that communities are getting closer and stronger, or are they breaking apart?

Class Opinion

Walk around the class and ask your classmates questions. Write their answers in the chart below.

Classmate's name:	Do you like living in the suburbs?	Do you like living in the city?	Could you live in a small town?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

SUBURBIA OR CITY LIFE

Which style of living suits you best?

1. Where you live says a lot about what is important to you. Your priorities change in each _____ of life. Did you know that the average American moves about 12 times in a lifetime?
2. Many families _____ in residential areas outside of the city. People often _____ the _____ and excitement of city life for the safety, comfort, and peace of the suburbs. Commuting to a job in an urban center becomes a way of life. Some people organize _____ with _____, while others rely on trains and buses. In the suburbs, children often walk to school and have friends and _____ in their own neighborhood.
3. City life is more attractive to singles and students. Being able to walk or bike to work or school saves _____ costs and is better for the environment. A large city typically offers a culturally _____ experience, including entertainment and food.
4. While some people base their choice of residence on cost or necessity, others think about ideal lifestyle. Do you and your loved ones have what it takes to survive the _____ and _____ in "the burbs," or will you always be proud "city folks"? Perhaps you prefer country living or something in between. A _____ community in a small town may provide the best of both worlds.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about and discuss different styles of living. They talk about the pros and cons of city life and life in the suburbs. Includes a class survey and a listening gap exercise.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, city, suburb, suburbia, suburban living, community

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 3. c | 5. e | 7. a | 9. k | 11. b |
| 2. i | 4. j | 6. f | 8. g | 10. h | |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- The introduction states that the average American moves about 12 times in a lifetime.
- Families often settle down in the suburbs for comfort, peace, and safety reasons.
- People in the suburbs often commute to urban centers.
- The reading mentions the environment because city living allows people to choose environmentally friendly options, such as walking and riding bicycles.
- Nicknames for the suburbs include “suburbia” and “the burbs.”

Vocabulary Review

A. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. c | 2. a | 3. a | 4. b | 5. b |
|------|------|------|------|------|

B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1. strip mall | 3. colleagues | 5. sacrificed |
| 2. carpool | 4. settling down | |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Discussion

Answer will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Class Opinion

Have students walk around the class and ask their classmates questions. They should record their answers in the chart.

Listening

1. stage
2. settle down, sacrifice, convenience, carpools, colleagues, extracurricular activities
3. transportation, rich
4. strip malls, subdivisions, close-knit

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Center, Neighborhood, Neighbors, and Theater*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Centre, Neighbourhood, Neighbours, and Theatre*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.