



Build A Better Community Challenge!

 Social Studies •  30 min •  Ages 9-11 • Grade 5

Explore the exciting world of urban planning by designing and building your very own miniature community. Discover what makes a neighborhood function well and how different parts work together to serve its residents.

Our goal is for your child to Identify essential services and structures required for a functional community., Design a community layout that balances different needs and uses of space., Explain the interconnectedness of various elements within a community..

What You Need

Cardboard • Paper • Scissors • Tape Or Glue



Scan To Tailor

Every child learns differently, and this is just the baseline. Scan to jump into the app and easily tailor this lesson to match your child's exact learning level and see how Mai will guide this lesson.



Ready for more adventures? Explore our **Sparks Hub** in the app

Lesson Blueprint

A simple, hands-on lesson that guides your child through curiosity, exploration, and reflection.



Mai's Tips

1. Encourage your child to talk through their decisions as they build, even if it's just to Mai: This verbalization strengthens their critical thinking.
 2. If your child gets stuck on 'what to build', prompt them with questions like 'What do people need to eat: ', 'Where do kids go to learn?', or 'What if someone gets sick?'
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Prep Before Session

1. Gather the materials and choose a safe, comfortable place for the activity.
2. Read through the lesson once so you know where the child will make predictions, test ideas, and reflect.



1 Introduction 5 Min

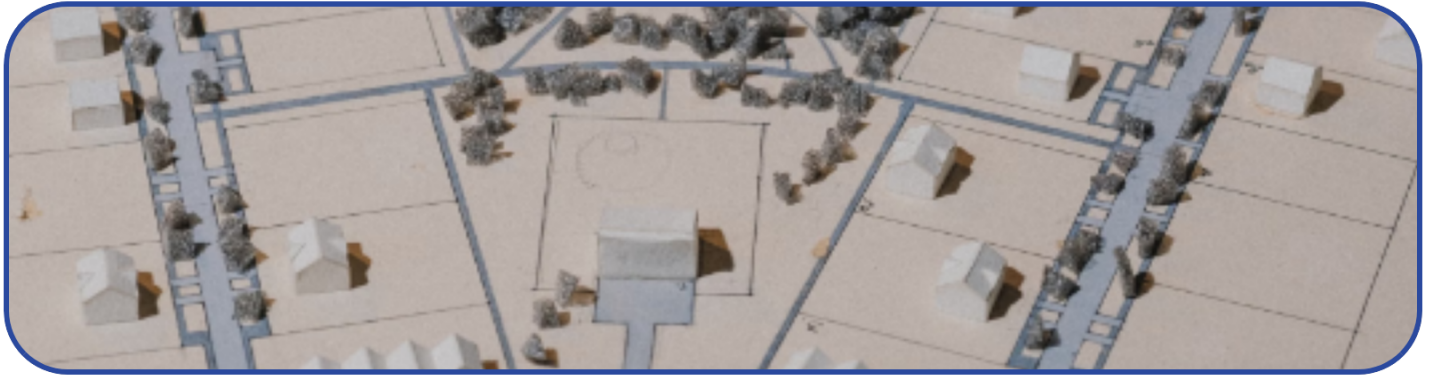
1. Begin by sparking curiosity about their surroundings. Encourage them to think about their own neighborhood. A community is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. You can recognize it by the shared spaces and services people use. For example, our town is a community, but a group of friends who play together online could also be a community. The opposite might be living in complete isolation. Communities are important because they provide support and resources for people. Ask:

- 'What's near our house?'
- 'Where do we go for fun or food?'
- 'What are some important things you see in our neighborhood?'

2. Done when your child identifies 2–3 essential elements of a community, like houses, stores, or parks.



Done when: Student identifies 2–3 essential community elements.



2 Explore & Plan 8 Min

1. First, help your child gather the necessary materials: cardboard, paper, scissors, tape or glue, and a pencil or pen. Then, discuss the challenge of building a new community from scratch. Encourage brainstorming about what essential elements are needed. Ask:
 - 'What are the absolute must-haves for a new community?'
 - 'Where should everything go to make sense for the people living there?'
2. As they come up with ideas for buildings or areas, ask:
 - 'Why do you think that?'
3. Support them in sketching out their initial ideas or making a list before they begin building.
4. Done when your child has a rough plan or list of buildings and features for their community.



Done when: Student has a rough plan or list of buildings/features for their community.



3 Discussion 6 Min

1. Engage your child in a discussion about their planned community. Let them explain their choices first. Ask them to consider why they chose specific buildings and areas. Introduce the idea of interconnectedness: how different parts of a community rely on each other. For example, a grocery store needs people from homes, and homes need the food from the grocery store. The opposite would be isolated elements that don't relate to each other. Interconnectedness is important because it makes a community function smoothly for everyone. Ask:
 - 'Why did you choose those specific buildings or areas for your community?'
 - 'How do you think a library might connect to a school, or a grocery store to the homes?'
 - 'What happens if you forget something really important, like a hospital?'
2. If they get stuck, prompt deeper thinking with: 'Who uses this building?'
3. Done when your child can explain the purpose of several chosen community elements and their connections to each other.



Done when: Student can explain the purpose of several chosen community elements and their interconnections.



4 **Activity** 9 Min

1. Now it's time to bring their plan to life! Supervise your child's use of scissors carefully. Guide them to use the cardboard, paper, scissors, and tape or glue to construct simple 3D models of their buildings. They should then lay out these elements on a larger piece of cardboard or paper to create their community model.
2. Encourage creativity and problem-solving as they build. Remind them that the goal is to make their ideas real, not necessarily to create perfect craftsmanship. Offer to help cut any tougher cardboard if needed, but allow your child to lead the designing and placing of elements. Ask:
 - 'How will you make sure people can easily get from one place to another?'
3. Done when your child has constructed a physical model of their community with multiple elements, such as houses, schools, and parks.

 **Done when:** Student has constructed a physical model of their community with multiple elements.



5 Summary 2 Min

1. Celebrate your child's effort and the community they've built! Connect their model back to real-world towns and cities. Ask:
 - 'What was the most challenging part of designing your community?'
 - 'What's one thing you learned today about how communities are planned?'
 - 'What's one thing you learned today about why communities are so important for everyone?'
 - 'What might you do differently next time, or what surprised you?'
2. Done when your child shares at least one key takeaway or a reflection on their design process.

 **Done when:** Student shares one key takeaway or a reflection on their design process.

Beyond The Lesson

Fuel their curiosity beyond the lesson with bonus sparks.



Table Talk

Urban planners and architects use similar thinking to design real cities and make them better places to live for millions of people.



Did You Know?

Everyday objects can reveal surprising science when we slow down and observe them.



Challenge

Design a solution for a common community problem in your model, like traffic jams, waste management, or lack of green space.

★ Quick Recap Quiz 4 Min

Check what your young scientist remembers. Each question includes a Parent Tip to help them find the answer without giving it away.

1. What's The Main Goal Of Designing A Good Community?

- ☐ To make all the buildings look exactly the same
- ☒ To meet the different needs of the people who live there

 Remind them about the variety of places they included in their own model.

2. Why Is It Important To Have Different Kinds Of Buildings In A Community, Like Schools And Hospitals?

- ☐ Because it makes the town bigger and more interesting to look at
- ☒ Because people have different needs like learning and healthcare

 Ask: 'What would happen if your town only had houses?'

3. If You Put Homes, Stores, And Parks Very Far Apart Without Good Roads, What Problem Might Arise?

- ☐ The buildings would look prettier because they have more space
- ☒ People would have to spend a lot of time and effort traveling

 Connect it to their own experiences traveling by car or bike.

4. Who Might Use The Ideas And Skills From Community Planning In A Real Job?

- ☐ A chef or a musician
- ☒ An urban planner or an architect

 Remind them of the 'urban planner' hat they wore today.