

Rural, Urban, or Remote?

The term **settlement pattern** refers to where people live on Earth (or in a country or province) and the factors that influence where people live.

Canada is the second-largest country in the world in geographical size; however, it has a relatively small population compared to many other countries. The majority of Canadians live in the southern portion of the country and within a few 100 kilometres of the Canada-U.S.A. border. The largest concentration of the Canadian population is in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowland region. A relatively small number of Canadians live in the Shield regions of the near north, and even fewer live in the northern territories. Prior to European arrival in what is now Canada, the First Peoples and original occupants of this land lived in most regions of the country, although population numbers and densities were generally very low.

From the viewpoint of the early European explorers and settlers, Canada itself was regarded as a remote country, since it was far away from the centres of population, power, and wealth in Europe. The term remote means out of the way or located far from the main centres of population and society. A small portion of Canada's settlements are still considered remote because they are located in isolated regions, often in the north. Many of Canada's

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples still live in remote settlements in areas occupied by their ancestors. They make a living through hunting, fishing, gathering, and often working in modern resource development industries in remote northern locations. Many other Canadians have chosen to live in remote settlements where they may have jobs related to the mining, forestry, hydro, and tourism industries in the Canadian Shield or in Canada's Arctic regions.

Many of Canada's early immigrants were attracted by the promise of free or low-cost farmland and saw this as an opportunity for a better life than the one they had in Europe. Much of western Canada was settled through advertising campaigns to attract farmers to the vast open spaces of the prairies. The development of rural settlement focused on farming and established a rural way of life that is still important in Canada today. Early rural life was characterized by large families and neighbours helping each other, among other things, construct farm buildings and harvest crops. It was also characterized by active community social activities such as dances, ball games, and churchgoing. Although families might have lived some distance apart, neighbours always knew each other and could count on each other for help and support. A similar rural way of life still exists in many parts of Canada today. Approximately one out of every five Canadians lives in a rural settlement.

Canada's cities originally developed as centres of trade, as transportation hubs, as places where resources were processed, and as places where artisans could ply their trades. Cities were able to grow and develop once food production was efficient enough that not everyone had to be involved in farming or hunting and gathering activities. Consequently, urban dwellers could focus on other things such as industry and trade, developing the arts and culture, expanding service industries, and developing a variety of educational and recreational opportunities. Urban life is often viewed as very desirable and, over the years, many people, especially those in younger age groups, have migrated from rural and remote areas to the cities in order to live and work, and enjoy the amenities offered in urban centres. Today, approximately four out of five Canadians live in an urban centre.

There are advantages and disadvantages related to living in each type of settlement. Many Canadians may decide to stay in the settlement where they were born, while others may decide to move to another type of settlement for economic opportunities or other personal interests. All three types of settlements, however, are important components in the diverse fabric that makes up our Canadian society.

This may be a good time to ask your learning partner for help. Remember, your learning partner is anybody whom you choose to help you with your course.





Learning Activity 5.1

Rural, Urban, or Remote?

1. Differentiate between urban, rural, and remote.
2. Read the description for at least three of the following fictional places. Identify whether the fictional place is urban, rural, or remote and explain your thinking.

Fictional Place	Description	Urban, Rural, or Remote	Explain Your Thinking
Kelsey House	Kelsey House is a community situated on a pristine lake in northern Manitoba, 700 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg. It has a population of 1,500 people. The economy is centred on commercial fishing and tourism. The community has no year-round road access, but is accessible in winter by a winter road and in summer by ferry service.		
Birdtale	Birdtale is situated in western Manitoba. The primary source of Birdtale's income is from agriculture and related industries. The town serves as an agricultural service centre for the prosperous farming community in the area. Several more agriculture-related businesses operate in the surrounding municipality to further serve local farms. Cereal crops and oilseeds are principal crops, but livestock and specialty animals are becoming increasingly important to the economy. Tourism is a growing part of Birdtale's economy as well. The population of the town is 850.		
Dufferin	With a population of 695,000, Dufferin is one of Canada's largest centres. The city is home to three universities, two colleges, and several trade schools. Dufferin has a strong economy based on transportation, finance, manufacturing, agriculture, and education. It also has the third-busiest airport in Canada. The city has three professional sports teams: hockey, baseball, and football.		

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Learning Activity 5.1: Rural, Urban, or Remote? (continued)

Fictional Place	Description	Urban, Rural, or Remote	Explain Your Thinking
Zachary Rapids	<p>Zachary Rapids is a community located 840 kilometres by air from Manitoba's capital city, Winnipeg. It is accessible via a paved highway and the nearest city is 300 kilometres northeast. The community began a century ago as an outpost for local traders, hunters, and trappers, and as a base for wilderness lodges and outposts. In the mid 1960s, the construction of three hydroelectric generating stations near the community caused an economic boom and the population quickly grew to close to 1600 people. Today, Zachary Rapids is bustling with numerous businesses and services. The community acts as a retail and shopping centre for a large number of small northern Manitoba communities. Goods and supplies are brought in by plane or by truck and are then redistributed to the communities that need them.</p>		
Thunder Valley	<p>6,000 people live in the parkland community of Thunder Valley. It is known as the gateway to northern Manitoba and is a bustling trading centre with a market area of over 20,000 people. Since its settlement, the town has thrived on agriculture. Almost 50% of the surrounding area is under cultivation. Most is seeded with grains and oilseeds, but many producers are diversifying to specialty crops. Woodlands around the town also support a large and prosperous forestry industry. Recreation and tourism are major parts of the Thunder Valley economy too.</p>		

continued

Learning Activity 5.1: Rural, Urban, or Remote? (continued)

3. Look at the following chart of urban population versus rural population in Canada. Read the following questions and circle the best possible answer.

Region	Urban Population (% of Total Population)	Rural Population (% of Total Population)
Canada	80	20
Newfoundland	58	42
Prince Edward Island	45	55
Nova Scotia	55	45
New Brunswick	50	50
Quebec	81	19
Ontario	85	15
Manitoba	72	28
Saskatchewan	65	35
Alberta	81	19
British Columbia	85	15
Yukon	59	41
Northwest Territories	58	42
Nunavut	33	67

Source: Statistics Canada. "Statistics Canada 2001 Census". www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm.

- What is the total urban population of Canada?
 - 100%
 - 80%
 - 20%
 - 10%
- In which province or territory does the rural population exceed the urban population?
 - British Columbia
 - Yukon
 - Nunavut
 - Saskatchewan
- In which province or territory are the rural and urban populations most equally balanced?
 - New Brunswick
 - Nova Scotia
 - Northwest Territories
 - Newfoundland

continued

Learning Activity 5.1: Rural, Urban, or Remote? (continued)

- d) Which province or territory has the greatest percentage of urban dwellers out of the total population?
 - a) Quebec
 - b) Prince Edward Island
 - c) Alberta
 - d) British Columbia
- e) If Canada's urban-rural population is 80%-20% respectively, which provinces most reflect the national settlement pattern?
 - a) Manitoba and Saskatchewan
 - b) British Columbia and Manitoba
 - c) Quebec and Alberta
 - d) Saskatchewan and Alberta
- 4. Read the case study that follows and answer the following questions.
 - a) Based on the reading and your own experience, what are the merits of living in a rural setting?
 - b) Based on the reading and your own experience, what are the merits of living in an urban setting?
 - c) What would you do if you were Sean? Sean's parents? Akina?
 - d) What do you think about Akina's concerns about moving to the farm?
 - f) Do you prefer rural or urban life?

Case Study: Urban versus Rural: Sean and Akina's Story

Sean grew up on his parents' dairy farm. As the only child, Sean had a lot of responsibility. Every morning, he would get up at 5:00 with his mother and father to prepare the cows for milking, making sure the mechanized milk pipeline worked properly. He also had other chores around the farm that he did after school and on the weekends.

Sean started working on the dairy farm with his parents when he was only four; his parents would assign him small tasks that a preschooler could handle. It was important to Sean's parents that he acquire a good work ethic, as well as respect for the farming business, which had sustained his family for generations. It was a hard but rewarding childhood and Sean grew to love the farm. He forged a strong relationship with his parents.

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Learning Activity 5.1: Rural, Urban, or Remote? (continued)

Case Study: Urban versus Rural: Sean and Akina's Story (continued)

After finishing high school at age 18, Sean went against his parents' wishes and left the farm for university to study biology and agriculture. The university was located in a city 250 kilometres away from the farm. Sean would spend the week at school (he had a dorm room in one of the university's residences) and would then travel home and spend the weekends on the farm. He loved going home on the weekends. Sean missed the perks of farm life: being connected to nature; seeing his labours and hard work rewarded; and feeling a sense of connectedness and belonging to the farm.

In his third year of university, Sean met and fell in love with Akina, a fellow student from Japan. Akina grew up in the Japanese city of Tokyo, with a combined (with sister city Yokohama) urban population of 33 million. Being a "city girl," Akina liked the amenities that city life had to offer. She liked live theatre and cultural pursuits such as museums and art galleries. She enjoyed the hustle and bustle of city life and the endless opportunities for jobs, leisure and recreation, education, and culture. Akina was very proud of her Japanese culture and heritage.

After several months of dating, Sean and Akina became engaged. Sean now faces a dilemma...

Once they are married, Akina wants Sean to move to Japan or at least to a large city on the west coast of Canada, such as Vancouver, which has a high population of Japanese people and other Japanese cultural pursuits. She does not want to live in a rural area where people do not understand Japanese culture and where there are none of the pursuits she enjoys. She is worried that if they live in the country, their children will never learn about their Japanese cultural heritage.

Sean's parents, however, want him to take over the farm once they retire. The farm has been in his family for five generations. Sean's great-great-great-grandfather invented a unique kind of cheese. The production of the cheese is a trade secret and Sean's parents want to teach it to him. While Sean's parents do not object to his having a Japanese fiancée, they have been very clear that they will "cut Sean out of their lives" if he does not come back to the farm.

Graduation is only six weeks away. What should Sean do?



You can now assess your learning activity by consulting the answer keys at the end of this module. Keep up the great work!