Scaffolding Strategy

Example:

Grade Level: 4

Subject: Social Studies

Topic: Types of Communities (Urban, Suburban, Rural)

This example shows how to use scaffolding to support English language learners (ELLs) in understanding and comparing different community types.
The activities combine visual tools, guided language and peer collaboration to make content more accessible.

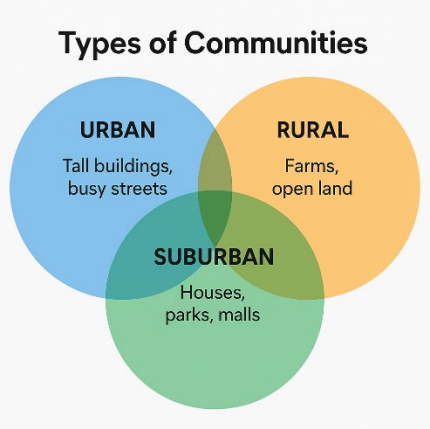
Step 1: Use a Graphic Organizer

Recommended Tool: Three-column chart or Venn diagram
Help students compare communities using visuals and simple descriptions.

Example Chart:

Community Type	What It Looks Like	What People Do There
Urban	Tall buildings, busy streets	Walk, take the bus, shop nearby
Suburban	Houses, schools, parks	Drive, play, go to the mall
Rural	Farms, open land, few houses	Grow food, drive long distances

Visual support: Allow students to draw or attach pictures in each column.



Step 2: Provide Sentence Starters

Support speaking and writing by offering structured language options:

- In an urban community, I see _____.
- A rural community has _____ and _____.
- Suburban communities are _____ because _____.

Adapt the starters to speaking or writing tasks as needed.

Step 3: Build a Word Bank

Create a classroom word wall or handout with key terms (e.g., city, farm, neighborhood, transportation, population).

Step 4: Pair Students Strategically

Encourage collaboration by pairing English learners with peers who can:

- Model clear speech and respectful interaction
- Help explain tasks using simple language
- Provide encouragement and invite participation

Offer time to rehearse answers in pairs before sharing with the class.

Why It Works

These supports help students build confidence while engaging with grade-level content. By combining language support with hands-on activities, ELLs are more likely to participate actively and succeed.