

NEWS BREAK

Article: **Here's your new house. It comes with friends**

Section: **BUSINESS, C5**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, October 4, 2026**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

****Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.****

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will analyze how new housing developments are changing the way communities are designed and how these changes could affect residents' social connections and quality of life. Students will be able to explain why developers are emphasizing walkability, shared spaces, social amenities, and community activities, and why some people are choosing smaller homes in exchange for a stronger sense of belonging. Students will evaluate the potential benefits and concerns of intentionally designed communities, including increased social connection, affordability, privacy, homeowners' associations, and the risk of trying to create community through a business model, and explain how developers, residents, and local governments may need to balance convenience, connection, independence, and quality of life.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using these pictures?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted word means using context clues? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

“The initial marketing for master-planned communities can be **self-fulfilling**. By advertising that they’re into sociability and having some cues, the social crowd will move there.”

Self-fulfilling Guess:

Self-fulfilling Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. They moved to Indigo after feeling _____ in their previous neighborhood in a Houston suburb.
2. Developers of master-planned communities like this one see fear of _____ and desire for _____ as a business opportunity.
3. In 2024, two years after paying \$280,000 and moving in, they left in search of better _____.
4. Despite being in the suburbs, the development has a _____ feel.
5. In California, the community of Silverwood asks its residents to sign a _____.
6. A development in Utah called Firefly markets its slow streets and bountiful parks as an alternative to _____.
7. As home prices and borrowing costs have exploded, selling the American dream increasingly means selling _____.
8. To counter the diminished expectations, _____ communities are playing up urban features like walkability and adding amenities like brew pubs with adjoining parks so parents can gather without arranging for a sitter.
9. “_____ is no longer created organically in new places. It has to be designed and practiced.”
10. Indigo, because it leans so heavily into the friendliness vibe, seems to have attracted people in _____ — divorced, widowed, just starting families — where making friends can be hard.

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

- *How would you feel about living in a community designed to encourage neighbors to spend more time together? What would you like or dislike about it?*
- *Do you think having shared spaces, community events, and walkable neighborhoods can help people feel less lonely? Why or why not?*
- *What is your own neighborhood like? Lots of friendships and get togethers? Are people more to themselves? Isolated?*

Deeper-Dive “Connect & Explain” Comprehension Questions for Small Groups, Entire Classes or Journal Entries and/or Essay Prompts for Extended Enrichment:

1. The article describes Indigo as a master-planned community that includes sidewalks, parks, shops, restaurants, and shared spaces designed to encourage people to interact. How might the design of a neighborhood influence how often people communicate and build relationships with their neighbors?
2. Kiara Aponte and Samir Husain left a larger home in a traditional suburb because they felt isolated and rarely interacted with their neighbors. Why might some people be willing to give up space, privacy, or a larger home in exchange for a stronger sense of community?
3. The article explains that developers are increasingly treating “community as an amenity” and viewing belonging as a potential return on investment. Why might creating opportunities for social connection be valuable to both residents and developers?
4. Indigo includes features such as a coffee shop, parks, a farm, community events, and activities designed to encourage neighbors to meet one another. How could these shared spaces and activities help people who are new to an area, starting a family, divorced, widowed, or experiencing another major life change?
5. Indigo offers a variety of housing types, including apartments, small cottages, duplexes, and large homes, with different types of housing located near one another. Why might having people with different incomes, ages, and lifestyles living in the same community affect the development of a neighborhood?
6. The developers of Indigo created a “belonging framework” that includes requirements such as providing childcare at town meetings and allowing resident clubs to remain open to everyone. Why might developers believe that community and belonging need to be intentionally designed rather than simply expected to happen naturally?
7. The article explains that Indigo’s marketing emphasizes ideas such as “Know Your Neighbors” and a “small-town feel.” How might advertising influence the types of people who choose to move into a community, and how could that create a self-fulfilling cycle?
8. The article suggests that people today may be looking for neighborhoods that provide connection and social interaction because technology and

suburban development have contributed to isolation. Do you think communities should play a role in helping people build relationships with their neighbors? Why or why not?

Extended Essay Prompts

- The article describes a shift in the American suburban ideal from privacy and large amounts of space toward walkability, shared spaces, and social connection. How are changing housing preferences influencing the way communities are designed? In your essay, discuss the benefits and potential challenges of designing neighborhoods around connection and belonging.
- The developers of Indigo believe that community can be intentionally designed through neighborhood layout, shared spaces, activities, and social programming. Do you think a sense of community can be created by design, or does it develop naturally among residents? In your essay, use examples from the article to support your position.
- The article presents the idea that people may be willing to trade a larger home and more privacy for stronger relationships with their neighbors. Would you make the same trade? In your essay, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a smaller, more walkable community with more opportunities for social interaction.
- The article describes “community as an amenity” and explains how developers are using belonging and social connection to attract homebuyers. Is it appropriate for developers to market friendship and community as part of a housing purchase? In your essay, examine the benefits, potential concerns, and responsibilities of developers when creating communities designed around social connection.

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