

In the suburbs On the outskirts

suburb vs outskirts

The main difference between these two expressions is the difference between the nouns suburb and outskirts.

A suburb is a town near a larger city, where people typically live in houses with yards rather than apartment buildings. Suburbs are also associated with a lifestyle oriented around families with children.

The word outskirts, which is always plural, refers to the areas that form the edges of a community. The outskirts of a city or town are the parts of it that are farthest away from its centre. There are outskirts around a city, and these might be suburbs or they might not. There are also outskirts around the edges of a small town.

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in vs on

Why "in the suburbs" but "on the outskirts"?

The most helpful way to think about this is that a suburb is an area with a border around it, so you can be in it (inside the border). The outskirts are more like a line around an area, and it makes more sense to say on a line, than in it.

SUBURB /THE SUBURBS

- We live in a suburb of London.
- Most of the people who live in the suburbs work in the city.
- I grew up in a very middle-class suburb of Birmingham.

THE OUTSKIRTS

- The factory is on the outskirts of New Delhi.
- They live on the outskirts of Milan.
- They've got quite a big place on the outskirts of Leeds.