

Learning with The Irrawaddy, No. 49

To accompany the **November 2010** issue of The Irrawaddy magazine.

Selected article: **Cartoons that Speak a Thousand Words**

TEACHER'S NOTES

Here is the **49th** issue of Learning with The Irrawaddy, a monthly educational supplement to The Irrawaddy magazine. It is designed for English or social studies classes in Post-secondary schools and adult education classes on the Burma border. With each issue of The Irrawaddy, we select one article and design some learning activities for it. You can teach this to learners with **intermediate English or above**.

NOTE: You do not have to do all of the activities listed in this month's issue. You can choose which activities are most appropriate depending on how much time you have, your interests, and the ability of your students.

A. Activities before reading

1. Cartoons

Discuss these questions with the class. Write down students' thoughts and ideas.

Possible answers:

- *A cartoon is a drawing or illustration that often includes a caption or writing to explain the drawing. Sometimes there is more than one picture – like a comic strip. Cartoons are often funny.*
- *A political cartoon is a cartoon written about a political issue. These cartoons are often found in the news section of newspapers and in magazines.*
- *Cartoons or comics are usually written to entertain and amuse. Political cartoons are written to send a political message.*

2. Predict from the title

“A picture is worth a thousand words” means that pictures or images often tell a story that words cannot. Pictures and images can often convey many more details and complex ideas than words.

3. Predict from the picture

This cartoon shows a man with a ballot and a complex labyrinth he must go through before he can vote - put his ballot in the box. The cartoon shows the struggles and challenges of achieving a fair vote.

4. Vocabulary

Answers: 1. b 2. a 3. c 4. a 5. a 6. c

B. Activities during reading

5. Comprehension

Answers: 1. cartoonist 2. regime, political 3. educate, inform
4. Towns, villages

6. Analysis

Answers: 1. Anti-election activists distributed the cartoons in order to educate the public about the election.
2. Cartoons were disseminated in public places: copies were stuck on electrical poles, video stages, and free water services. The cartoons were also given to children who were told to give them to their parents.
3. It seemed to be successful. People, especially children, liked the cartoons. They were more interested in the cartoons than other leaflet campaigns in the past.

7. Match the caption

Answers: 1. d 2. a 3. f 4. e 5. g 6. c 6. b

8. Interpreting Cartoons

Groups decide on the meaning of each cartoon.

or

Give each group one or two cartoons. They decide on the meaning, and present the results to the class.

Possible answers:

Cartoon a: *the promises of the 1990 and 2010 elections have not made life easier or freer for the Burmese people, but just added more burden.*

Cartoon b: *the complex labyrinth shows the struggles and challenges of achieving a fair vote.*

Cartoon c: *shows the USDP having all the money and resources while the people are burdened with the unfair election and the rule of law.*

Cartoon d: *conveys the message that the election race will have only one result.*

Cartoon e: *shows the overwhelming difficulty and possible pain (nails on the other side of the poles) for Burma after the 2010 election.*

Cartoon f: *shows the candidates are not people with integrity or good character.*

Cartoon g: *conveys the message that change happens only on the surface.*

C. Activities after reading

9. Discussion

This discussion could be in the form of a debate: One group could argue that political cartoons are not an effective way to educate and inform the public of political issues, the other group could argue that they are effective.

10. Draw a Political Cartoon

Brainstorm ideas and political issues that might make good cartoons. If possible, students could research on the internet.

Individually or in pairs, students create their own political cartoon. Students present their cartoons to the class, or stick them on the wall.

You could put all the cartoons in a class book.