

Learning with the Irrawaddy 10

To accompany January 2006 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine

Teacher's Notes

Here is the tenth issue of 'Learning with the Irrawaddy', a monthly educational supplement to the Irrawaddy Magazine. It is designed for English, reading or social studies classes in Post-10 schools on the Burma border.

With each issue of Irrawaddy magazine, we select one article and design some learning activities for it. We recommend that you use these exercises with students who have an **intermediate - upper intermediate level of English**. You don't need to use all activities suggested here – choose those that are most appropriate for your students.

In this issue we have included:

- this teacher's guide
- some copies of Irrawaddy magazine
- a class set of photocopies of the article
- a class set of worksheets.

Selected article: *Stateless in Arakan*, pages 22-23

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

Prediction: Title

Before you give students the article, tell them the title: *Stateless in Arakan*. Don't let the students read the article yet. Based on this title, what do students think will be in the article? Write their ideas on the board. Encourage them to give as many details and ideas as they can.

Activity 2

Brainstorm: Rohingyas

Elicit students' opinions, knowledge and ideas about Rohingya people.

Ask *prompting* questions, e.g.

- Where do they live?
- How many Rohingya people are there?
- What religion are they?
- What is their relationship with other people in Arakan State?
- What other things do students know or think about Rohingya people?

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 3

Paragraph Summaries

- a) Students read these paragraph summaries. Students match the summaries with the paragraphs. They can do this alone, in pairs, or in groups.
- A. The Bangladesh government does not want the Rohingyas to live there.
 - B. SPDC and other historians disagree when the Rohingyas arrived in Burma.
 - C. International organizations are asking the Burmese government to give better treatment to the Rohingya.
 - D. The SPDC claim the Rohingyas are illegal immigrants
 - E. Life in Burma got better for Rohingyas after Khin Nyunt was arrested, but now it is getting worse again.
 - F. Although many Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh, most were repatriated.
 - G. Rohingyas in Arakan State have been fleeing, as refugees, to Bangladesh.
 - H. Life for Rohingyas in the refugee camps is very difficult.
 - I. There was a lot of violence against Rohingyas in 2001.
 - J. The Burmese government makes a lot of rules that make life for Rohingyas very difficult.
 - K. The Burmese government and Buddhist communities don't want the Rohingyas to have Burmese citizenship.

Answers:

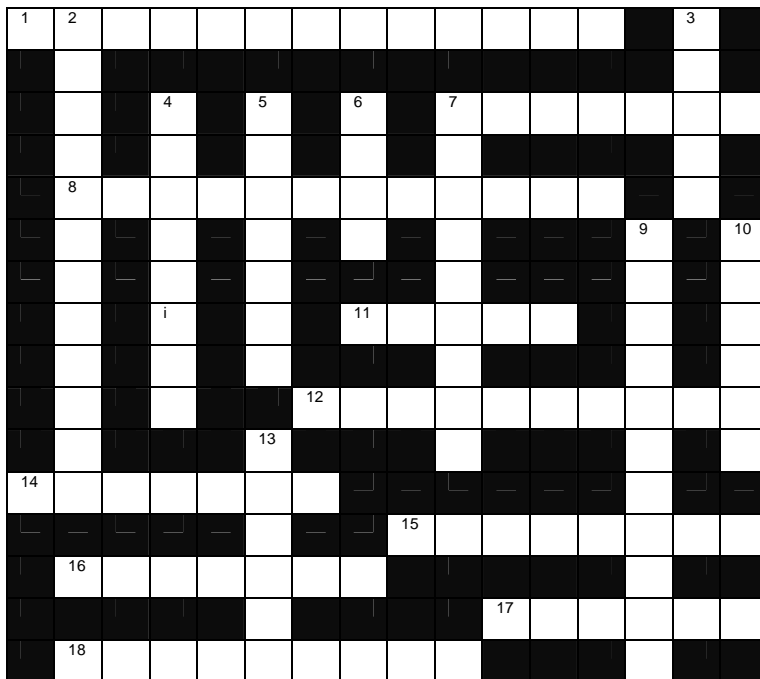
The paragraphs are in this order: G, B, D, K, F, I, J, A, H, E, C

Activity 4**Vocabulary: Crossword**

All the answers to this crossword are in the article. Encourage students to use their dictionaries if necessary.

Across

1. mostly (*paragraph 2*)
7. beside the sea (*paragraph 2*)
8. looking again at something, and deciding whether to change it (*paragraph 11*)
11. demands (*paragraph 11*)
12. happening a lot (*paragraph 5*)
14. violent attack (*paragraph 10*)
15. ability to travel from place to place (*paragraph 7*)
16. against the law (*paragraph 3*)
17. suffix meaning 'not real' (*paragraph 6*)
18. doing things without good reason (*paragraph 9*)

**Down**

2. laws that stop you doing something (*paragraph 7*)
3. a fight, small battle (*paragraph 7*)
4. very strict (*paragraph 1*)
5. increase (*paragraph 10*)
6. large numbers of people or things (*paragraph 5*)
7. forced to do something (*paragraph 8*)
9. has a lot of problems (*paragraph 1*)
10. to live somewhere (*paragraph 4*)
13. bad situation (*paragraph 11*)

Answers:

Across: 1. *predominantly* 7. *coastal* 8. *reassessment* 11. *calls* 12. *widespread*
14. *assault* 15. *mobility* 16. *illegal* 17. *pseudo* 18. *arbitrary*

Down: 2. *restrictions* 3. *clash* 4. *draconian* 5. *upswing* 6. *mass*
7. *compelled* 9. *contentious* 10. *reside* 13. *plight*

Activity 5

Noun phrases

a) Ask if students know what a *noun phrase* is, and get them to explain if they can.

Answer: *noun* – a thing, person, place, idea or action

phrase – a group of words without a verb that make a subject or object.

Therefore a noun phrase is a group of words, without a main verb, that express a noun.¹

b) Go through the information in the box.

A *noun phrase* is like a normal noun, except contains more words, e.g.

1. He is going to work.
2. The teacher is going to work.
3. A man with a red coat is going to work.
4. That tall, thin man over there is going to work.

All the underlined parts of above sentences are nouns. When you are reading, it is very useful to identify noun phrases. It helps you to understand complex sentences.

A noun phrase can contain a noun + determiners and/or modifiers, e.g.

The tall man: The is a determiner, *tall* is a modifier, *man* is the main noun.

c) Identify the noun phrases in these sentences from the article, e.g:

Burma's contentious Arakan State has long been a sore spot for Burma's ruling military junta (3 noun phrases)

1. The generals in Rangoon tell quite another story (2 noun phrases)
2. Under Burmese citizenship laws, no individual or group can claim citizenship (2 noun phrases)
3. Restrictions on mobility since 2001 have made it difficult for Rohingyas to secure employment. (1 noun phrase)
4. The residents of the camps face pressure from Bangladesh to return to Arakan State. (2 noun phrases)
5. Rohingyas are often blamed for political violence in Bangladesh. (1 noun phrase)
6. Since early 2005, oppression of local Rohingyas has been on the upswing. (2 noun phrases)

Answers:

1. The generals in Rangoon tell quite another story (2 noun phrases)
2. Under Burmese citizenship laws, no individual or group can claim citizenship
3. Restrictions on mobility since 2001 have made it difficult for Rohingyas to secure employment.
4. The residents of the camps face pressure from Bangladesh to return to Arakan State.
5. Rohingyas are often blamed for political violence in Bangladesh.
6. Since early 2005, oppression of local Rohingyas has been on the upswing.

¹ Phrases are different from clauses, which contain a main verb, e.g. *The man who was walking down the road*. This Learning with the Irrawaddy does not deal with clauses.

Activity 6**Timeline**

What order did these things happen?
Put the events on the timeline.

- The Burmese government restricts movement and marriage for Rohingyas.
- Rohingya refugees start fleeing to Bangladesh
- The British establish colonial rule on the India/Burma border.
- SPDC increases its presence in Arakan State.
- The UNHCR is involved in repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh.
- Violence in Arakan State: 10 Muslims and 2 Buddhists are killed
- Bangladeshi police raid refugee camps, many Rohingyas are arrested, 3 killed.
- Khin Nyunt is arrested. Life improves a little for Rohingyas in Burma.
- Burma's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that historically, Rohingyas did not live in Burma.

Answers:**now****1800**

- *SPDC increases its presence in Arakan State.*
- *Bangladeshi police raid refugee camps, many Rohingyas are arrested, 3 killed.*
- *Khin Nyunt is arrested. Life improves a little for Rohingyas in Burma.*
- *The Burmese government restricts movement and marriage for Rohingyas.*
- *Violence in Arakan State: 10 Muslims and 2 Buddhists are killed*
- *Burma's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that historically, Rohingyas did not live in Burma.*
- *The UNHCR is involved in repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh.*
- *Rohingya refugees start fleeing to Bangladesh*
- *British establish colonial rule on the India/Burma border.*

Activity 7**Comprehension questions**

Students answer the questions.

1. The Burmese government disagrees with historians about something. What is it?
2. When does the Burmese government think Rohingyas arrived in Burma?
3. According to the Burmese government, which ethnic groups are allowed to be citizens?
4. Did all the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh volunteer to return to Burma?
5. How many Rohingya refugees are still in Bangladesh?
6. How did life change for Rohingyas in Burma after Khin Nyunt's arrest?
7. The article mentions one big problem facing Rohingyas nowadays. What is it?

Answers:

1. When Rohingyas arrived in Burma.
2. Since the British established colonial rule – since 1824.
3. Only ethnic groups that have lived in Burma before British colonial rule.
4. No, some were forcibly repatriated, and some are still there.
5. about 20,000
6. It got better – the junta's direct assault seemed to ease.
7. Forced labour, often for development projects for the Buddhist community.

Activity 8**Identify the main point**

Students decide which is the main point, which are supporting points, and which is not part of this article.

a) What is the main point of this article?

1. Rohingya people are in a bad situation, whether they live in Burma or in Bangladesh.
2. Refugees in Bangladesh face many hardships, including police harassment.
3. Many people in Burma, especially Arakan State, do not like Muslims because they are afraid of them.
4. The Burmese government says that Rohingyas have no rights to live in Burma, and doesn't allow them full citizenship.

Answer: 1

b) Look again at the options above. One option is the main point. Which of the other options are:

- *supporting points?*
- *not a point of the article?*

Answers: *supporting points – 2, 4 not a point of the article – 3*

Activities to do After Reading

Activity 8

Sarcasm

- a) *The fastidious scholars of the State Peace and Development Council claim that the Rohingyas are simply illegal immigrants...*

Get students to look up *fastidious* in their dictionaries. What does 'fastidious scholars' mean?

Answer:

Fastidious means careful, accurate, detailed. A *fastidious scholar* is someone who studies something very carefully, to try to get an accurate, in-depth knowledge of a situation.

- b) Does the author think that the SPDC scholars are fastidious? Discuss this with the students. This is an example of *sarcasm*. Sarcasm is often used by English speakers, in conversation or writing. It is a popular type of humour.

When you are being *sarcastic*, you say the opposite of what you really think, but you say it in a way that everyone knows you don't mean it. Usually sarcasm is meant to be funny. Here are some more examples of sarcasm:

- *I love the hot season - I usually wear a thick coat all day.*
- *Teachers get too much pay! I think they should be paid less.*

Can students think of any other examples?

Activity 10

Discussion

- a) Why do you think the SPDC dislikes the Rohingya?
- b) Many people around the world are afraid of Muslims. They think all Muslims are terrorists, even though most Muslims do not support the activities of extremists. What can be done about this problem?