

Learning with the Irrawaddy 11

To accompany June 2006 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine

Teacher's Notes

Here is the fifth issue of 'Learning with the Irrawaddy', a monthly educational supplement to the Irrawaddy Magazine. It is designed for reading, English 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 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: *Editorial: UN Huffs and Puffs, but Where's the Action?*, page 2

For this issue, we are focusing on the editorial, and looking at some of the characteristics of editorial writing.

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

Editorial and Title

- a) Who writes the editorial, and what is that person's job? What are that person's duties? Students should use their dictionaries if necessary.

Answers:

The editorial is written by the editor. The editor is the boss of the magazine – she or he chooses what articles will go into the magazine. The editorial is an opportunity for the editor to outline her/his opinions and analysis. The editor's duties include deciding what news will go into the magazine, and checking the magazine before it gets printed.

- b) The title of this editorial is 'The UN Huffs and Puffs, but Where's the Action?' What does this mean? What is 'Huffs and Puffs'? Elicit students ideas. Encourage them to use their dictionaries.

Answers:

'Huffs and Puffs' means to make a lot of noise without doing anything. The title says that the UN is making a lot of meaningless noise, but they are not supporting this noise with any useful activity.

Activity 2

Background Information

- a) This article talks about three UN workers: Ibrahim Gambiari, Razali Ismail and Paulo Sergio Pinheiro. Students match these people with their job titles.

Ibrahim Gambari	UN Special Envoy
Razali Ismail	UN Human Rights Envoy for Burma
Paulo Sergio Pinheiro	UN Undersecretary General for Political Affairs

- b) Have students heard about these people before? What do they know about them? Brainstorm anything students know about them on the board. Students read the extra information, and match the person with the description.

i.



_____ is a Nigerian professor and diplomat. After an impressive academic career, he became Nigeria's representative to the UN from 1990-1999. Now he works directly for the UN. He started at the UN as Undersecretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa. He was appointed to his current post in 2005.

ii.



_____ is a Malaysian diplomat. He worked in Malaysian consulates and embassies in India, France and the UK, before he became ambassador to Poland, then India. He was Malaysian ambassador to the UN in 1989 and 1990. At the same time, he was the chairman of the United Nations Security Council. From 1996 to 1997, he was the President of the United Nations General Assembly. Now, he has another UN job.

iii.



_____ comes from Brazil. He is a university professor of international studies. He was Brazil's Secretary of State for Human Rights before he moved to the UN. He has two UN positions - he is also a member of the UN Sub-Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

Answers: i. *Ibrahim Gambari* ii. *Razali Ismail* iii. *Paulo Sergio Pinheiro*

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 3

Match the Summaries

Students match these summaries with the paragraphs in the article.

- A:** Despite the UN asking Burma to stop, operations against the Karen are increasing. Karen people expect more attacks.
- B:** The UN Undersecretary General for political affairs went to Burma and met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- C:** International pressure for change is difficult, because some countries make a lot of money from Burma.
- D:** While the UN under-secretary general for political affairs was in Burma, the military attacked the Karen. Many Karen fled to Thailand.
- E:** Many Burmese people think the UN is trying to look tough, but isn't actually doing anything. However, they still hope the situation in Burma will improve.
- F:** The UN's special envoy has achieved nothing, and the situation in Burma gets worse and worse.
- G:** Although many Karen people were attacked, the media only reported a UN visit to Burma.
- H:** In the past, the UN visited Burma soon after the Burmese army attacked a Karen village.

Activity 5

Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Here are some idioms, phrases and phrasal verbs from the article. Students locate the underlined words and phrases in the text, and choose the best synonym for them.

1. ...UN visit to Burma has knocked the onslaught on the Karen off the front page. (paragraph 3)
 - a. punched
 - b. beaten
 - c. removed
 - d. dealt with
2. ...HIV rates continue to spiral. (paragraph 3)
 - a. go around and around
 - b. get higher and higher
 - c. get smaller and smaller
 - d. go up and down
3. China, Russia and India are three major players (paragraph 7)
 - a. large countries
 - b. good sports teams
 - c. continents near Burma
 - d. important participants
4.it's hardly surprising that Karen people are bracing themselves for further attacks (paragraph 8)
 - a. getting ready
 - b. unhappy about
 - c. expecting
 - d. fighting

Answers: 1. c 2. b 3. d 4. a

Activity 6

What's the Editor's Opinion?

- a) Remind students that the editorial is a chance for the editor to explain her/his opinions and ideas. Ask students the questions: What does the editor think of the situation? What does the editor want us to feel when we read this editorial? Students write *yes* or *no*, about the editor's opinions.
1. The UN has helped Burma a lot.
 2. The UN often speaks out about the Karen situation.
 3. The UN should take stronger action on Burma.
 4. The media reports UN visits to Burma more than the Karen situation.
 5. The Burmese government is trying to help the Burmese people.
 6. China, Russia and India are not interested in changing the regime.

Answers: 1. no 2. no 3. yes 4. yes 5. no 6. yes

Activity 7

Chronological Order

Students put the events in chronological order (the order that they happened)

- Sergio Pinheiro urged Burma's government to stop military attacks on civilians
- Razali visits Burma in May 2002
- Ibrahim Gambari meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
- The Burmese army attacked and killed villagers in Dooplaya, Karen State

Answers:

- Razali visits Burma in May 2002
- The Burmese army attacked and killed villagers in Dooplaya, Karen State
- Ibrahim Gambari meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Sergio Pinheiro urged Burma's government to stop military attacks on civilians both happened last month (May 2006)

Activity 8**Passive Verb Forms**

This editorial uses 10 passive verb forms.

a) Students identify and underline as many as they can find.

Answers:

- ... *who was released for an hour...*
- ... *thousands of ethnic Karen were being battered...*
- Villages *have been locked down, homes burnt, crops destroyed...*
- The last man *sent by the UN to Burma (short for the last man who was sent)*
- *forced labor is still practised*
- *illicit drugs are being produced*
- *as many as 10,000 villagers were forced from their homes*
- ... *big profits are to be made*

b) Students change the passive forms into an active form. They can change the word order if they like, and if they don't know the subject, use 'someone' or 'some people'.

Possible answers:

- *The Burmese army were battering thousands of ethnic Karen*
- *The Burmese army have have locked down villages, burnt home and destroyed crops*
- *The last man that the UN sent to Burma (this is very difficult)*
- *The Burmese army still practises forced labor*
- *Some people still produce illicit drugs*
- *The Burmese army forced as many as 10,000 villagers from their homes*
- *Someone can make big profits (this is very difficult)*

Activity 9**Word Families**

Here are some words from the article. Students complete the chart by adding other parts of the word families.

A few of the words are quite rare, such as *economise* and *authoritative*, so don't expect students to know every word family member.

Answers:

noun	verb	adjective	adverb	person
visit	<i>visit</i>	X	X	<i>visitor</i>
<i>politics</i>	X	political	<i>politically</i>	<i>politician</i>
<i>prison</i>	<i>imprison</i>	X	X	prisoner
<i>speciality</i>	<i>specialize</i>	special	<i>especially</i>	<i>specialist</i>
health	X	<i>healthy</i>	X	X
<i>estimate</i>	estimate	<i>estimated</i>	X	<i>estimator</i>
opposition	<i>oppose</i>	<i>opposed</i>	X	<i>opponent</i>
<i>achievement</i>	achieve	X	X	<i>achiever</i>
energy	<i>energize</i>	<i>energetic</i>	<i>energetically</i>	X
<i>surprise</i>	<i>surprise</i>	surprising	<i>surprisingly</i>	X

Activities to do After Reading

Activity 10

Teach Each Other: Karen IDPs

Students work in four groups. Give each group a column from the article on page 18/19 – ‘Rising Waters’ - about the situation for Karen people fleeing from the Burmese army.

Each group reads the article, and decides how best to explain it to the rest of the class. They are not allowed to read or memorise the words to the article, or to translate it directly from the text – they must use their own words. Encourage all group members to participate in the activity.

Activity 11

Opinions and Solutions

- a) Discuss ideas for UN action in Burma. What can the UN do? Some ideas for UN action are sanctions, more statements and a military invasion by UN troops. Can they think of any more? What might influence the regime?
- b) If they think the UN should take some action on Burma, students can write them a letter. In the letter, they should outline:
 - Who they are
 - Why the UN should take action on Burma
 - What action the UN should take

They can send the letters if they like:

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