

Learning with the Irrawaddy 19

To accompany June 2007 Issue of Irrawaddy magazine

Teacher's Notes

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

With each issue of Irrawaddy magazine, we select one article and design some learning activities for it. You don't need to use all activities suggested here – choose those that are most appropriate for your learners.

In this issue we have included:

- this teacher's guide
- a copy of Irrawaddy magazine
- photocopies of the article
- worksheets.

Selected article: *Welcome to Texas*, pages 28-29.

Although this article is quite long, it is written in easy English. You can teach this to learners with a good pre-intermediate or intermediate level of English.

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

Title

Before you give out copies of the article, write the words *Welcome to Texas* on the board. Elicit suggestions from the class about the topic and content of the article. Write everyone's ideas on the board.

Activity 2

Texas

- a) Learners select the correct location of Texas.

Answer: *i*

- b) Learners give their opinions on whether of these statements are true or false.

Answers:

i. *T* ii. *T* iii. *F* (*Alaska is bigger*) iv. *T* v. *F*

- c) Ask the class if anyone knows anything about Texas. If your learners are refugees, ask if any of them know anyone who has resettled there, or about conditions for refugees there.

Activity 3**Predict the answers**

Learners look through these questions, and guess the answers.

Activities to do During Reading**Activity 4****Check your predictions**

Give learners a time limit to read the article – 4 or 5 minutes. They should look through it quickly, and identify the answers to the questions from Activity 3. Don't allow them to use dictionaries at this stage.

Answers:

1. *No. Free education is available up to the age of 18.*
2. *300.*
3. *Yes, there is an Asian grocery shop.*
4. *Yes*
5. *At first a resettlement agency covers the airfare costs, and then the refugees have to repay them once they get jobs.*
6. *No, most work is menial and low-paid.*

Activity 5**Match the vocabulary**

a) Learners go through the article and underline words they don't understand. Allow them to use dictionaries if they like, but don't let them spend too much time on this.

b) Learners match the words and definitions.

Answers:

1. *h* 2. *j* 3. *k* 4. *l* 5. *a* 6. *d* 7. *m* 8. *b* 9. *f* 10. *c* 11. *l*
12. *g* 13. *e*

c) Learners fill the gaps with words from b.

Answers:

1. *non-profit*
2. *waived*
3. *prejudice, exclude*
4. *menial*
5. *sum up, incident, aggression, civilized:*
6. *sneak*
7. *self-sufficient*
8. *clichés*
9. *allocate*

Activity 6**Phrases in context**

Learners find the example in the article, and identify the best definition or synonym of the underlined phrases.

Answers:

1. *a*
2. *b*
3. *c*
4. *d*
5. *a*
6. *d*

Activity 7**Comprehension**

a) These questions all have one clear answer, easily identifiable from the article.

Answers:

1. *One of ten resettlement agencies. Karen go through 'Episcopal Migration Ministries'.*
2. *300.*
3. *Some Thai students.*
4. *Ring 911 on your phone (they will send an ambulance to help you).*
5. *She spoke a different Karen dialect.*
6. *Four months.*

b) These questions require longer answers, explained in learners' own words. Check that they understand the main points in these questions and answers.

Possible answers:

1. *Some Thai people think Karen (and other people from Burma) might be dangerous. This is because they have seen media stories about God's Army, or an incident when a Burmese maid killed her Thai employer.*
2. *He can't afford it. As he is over 18, he can't get free education, and his family need him to work to help pay the rent. There are English classes available, but his working hours are the same time as the classes.*
3. *His interpreter spoke Burmese, which Ba Zoe doesn't understand. However, he couldn't tell the resettlement agency about this problem, as he can't speak English.*
4. *He has a small child with a heart problem, and his wife is pregnant. His job only pays 7.50 per hour (which is not a lot of money to survive in the US). He can't improve his situation as he can't attend English lessons.*
5. *He is free to go anywhere, unlike in the refugee camps, and he doesn't have to be afraid of the Thai police. Also there are more things he can do.*

Activity 8**The US Homeland Security Act**

a) Ask learners if they understand the US Homeland Security Act (paragraph 8). Elicit a definition, if possible.

Answer:

The US Homeland Security Act doesn't allow migrants who have had contact with armed rebel groups.

b) Learners join the sentence halves about the US Homeland Security Act.

Answers:

1. The Homeland Security Act bans migrants with *contacts with armed rebel groups*.
2. This 'exclusion clause' applied to *people from Burma who lived amongst KNU, KNPP and other ethnic resistance groups*.
3. This was most people *who were applying for resettlement*.
4. Last year, the US waived *this law for Karen and other refugees from Burma*
5. This is because *they do not consider the KNU or KNPP to be a threat to US security*.

Activities to do After Reading**Activity 9****Resettlement – Advantages and disadvantages**

In groups, learners consider the advantages and disadvantages of resettlement. They have to consider advantages and disadvantages to the individual and family resettling, and to the community left behind. Get each group to present their ideas to the class.

Activity 10**Presentation - Problems and solutions**

In groups, students choose a resettlement related problem. This might be a problem about difficulties in the resettlement process, or about problems caused by resettlement. Each group should choose a problem to focus on.

They then think of some possible solutions to these problems. For example, if they choose the problem of a lack of accurate information about life and conditions for refugees in third countries, one possible solution might be videos and interviews with different people who have resettled.

There is a list of problems supplied, or learners can choose their own.