

Learning with the Irrawaddy 21

To accompany the August 2007 issue of the Irrawaddy magazine

Teacher's Notes

Here is the twenty-first 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.

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 learning goals, and the ability and interests of your students.

In this issue we have included:

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

You can teach this to learners with good pre-intermediate or intermediate English.

Activities to do before reading

Activity 1 Title

Let the students look at the title and try to answer the questions.

Answers:

A graveyard is a place where dead people are buried.

A labor camp is a place where prisoners are forced to work.

The author compares a labor camp to a graveyard because the article is about people dying whilst they are in labor camps. (This is a possible answer - see what suggestions the students give).

Activity 2 Spelling

Ask the students if they know the second spelling of 'labor' and ask them why there is a difference.

Answer: *The second spelling is labour, which is the British spelling. The spelling in the article is American.*

Now give them a couple of minutes to write the alternative spelling of the words.

Answers:

organise (British) – organize (American), color (American) – colour (British), criticise (British) – criticize (American), center (American) – centre (British), license (American) – licence (British), program (American) – programme (British), travelling (British) – traveling (American), metre (British) – meter (American), honour (British) – honor (American), dialogue (British) – dialog (American).

When you are finished, ask which spellings are American and which are British.

Activity 3 Disappearing paragraph

Below is a paragraph of text about forced labor around the world. Write the paragraph on the board and ask the students to read it out loud together. Now erase a few of the words and ask them to read it again, filling in the blanks as they go. Erase a few more words and ask them to read again. Continue until there are no words left on the board. See if the class can recite the whole paragraph. After ask them if they can recall any words that they didn't understand.

Forced labour is work that is done against a person's free will. If the person refuses to do the work they usually receive a punishment, which can be physical, mental or sexual. Prostitution can be a form of forced labour as women are often sold to their employer and made to work for free until the money is paid back. Forced labour is a problem in every continent and economy and it is estimated that there are 12.3 million people working in forced labour around the world. 10 million of these people live in Asia.

Activities to do during reading

Activity 4 Find the vocabulary

Answers to exercise b

1. *whim* (paragraph 3) 2. *bribes* (4) 3. *intimidated* (5) 4. *additional* (7)
 5. *condemned* (8) 6. *appalling* (11) 7. *dignity* (12) 8. *fatigue* (14)
 9. *notorious* (15) 10. *directives* (16) 11. *compensation* (17) 12. *malnutrition* (19)

Activity 5 Gap-fill

Answers

1. *compensation* 2. *notorious* 3. *intimidated* 4. *directives* 5. *condemned*
 6. *whim* 7. *malnutrition* 8. *appalling* 9. *bribe* 10. *fatigue* 11. *additional*
 12. *dignity*

Activity 6 Word Families

Check students understand that an X means there is no possible word for that box. Also, you may like to point out that the meanings of words in a family can be very different. For example, an *operation* is usually medical surgery; but an *operator* is usually a person whose job is to connect telephone calls, or a person who uses a machine, e.g. a *computer operator*.

noun	verb	adjective	adverb	person
safety	X	<i>safe</i>	<i>safely</i>	X
<i>corruption</i>	<i>corrupt</i>	corrupt	<i>corruptly</i>	X
<i>assignment</i>	assign	X	X	X
<i>murder</i>	<i>murder</i>	<i>murderous</i>	<i>murderously</i>	<i>murderer</i>
operation	<i>operate</i>	X	X	<i>operator</i>
<i>speciality</i>	<i>specialise</i>	special	<i>specially</i>	<i>specialist</i>
<i>harshness</i>	X	harsh	<i>harshly</i>	X
development	<i>develop</i>	<i>developmental</i>	X	<i>developer</i>
<i>government</i>	govern	<i>governable</i>	X	<i>governor</i>

Activity 7 Comprehension

Answers:

1. *A death sentence (paragraph 1).*
2. *By paying bribes (paragraph 4).*
3. *150,000 kyat (paragraph 6).*
4. *The Pale-Gangaw road construction project (paragraph 9).*
5. *To destroy their dignity (paragraph 12).*
6. *He was a comedian (paragraph 13).*
7. *The Taungswun/Mupalin Quarry in Mon State (paragraph 15).*
8. *The International Committee of the Red Cross (paragraph 19).*
9. *Because of torture, exhaustion, malnutrition and the complete absence of medical treatment (paragraph 19).*

Activities to do after reading

Activity 8 Poster

Put the students into small groups and make sure they understand what happens at a protest. Explain the situation to them and give them some time to prepare their poster. Display all the posters on the wall and ask the class to vote on the best one.

Activity 9 Speech

Keep the class in the same groups and explain to them the protest will take place in 2 hours. Ask them to prepare a short speech about why they are protesting and to choose someone to read the speech to the class. Remind them they are supposed to be angry and that this anger should be expressed in the speech.

Activity 10 Plan your escape

Again, keep the class in the same groups and explain to them that it is now three months after the protest. Nothing has changed in the camp and the prisoners are feeling frustrated and desperate. They decide they want to escape. Ask them to prepare a play about their plan to escape. They can use the information provided about the prison but encourage them to add their own ideas.