

Learning with the Irrawaddy 5

To accompany August 2005 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: Have the People Spoken?* page 7

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 in Context

- a) Look at pages 6 and 7. What things are on these pages?

Answers:

cartoon, letters from readers, two editorial items.

- b) What do all these have in common?

Answers:

They are all based on opinions and analysis. They are not trying to report factual information.

- c) 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 their opinions and analysis.

Activity 2

Prediction: Title

The title of this editorial is “Have the People Spoken?” Elicit students' ideas about what the editorial might be about. Encourage creative ideas!

Write students' ideas on the board.

Students read the article. Which predications were most accurate?

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 3

ASEAN's governments

Match the country with what type of government it has.

Brunei	Cambodia	Malaysia	Indonesia	Singapore	Laos	Vietnam	the Philippines
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1. Democratic political system that most people support.
2. Democratic political system that most people support, that has not changed for a long time.
3. A monarchy, where people are rich.
4. A communist state.
5. A new democracy after 30 years of authoritarian rule.

6. A democracy, where people often take to the streets to demand change.
7. A limited democracy, where people elect an authoritarian leader.

Answers:

Brunei – 3, Cambodia – 7, Malaysia – 1, Indonesia – 5, Singapore – 2, Laos – 4, Vietnam – 4, The Philippines – 6

Activity 4

Key vocabulary

- a) Students scan the text and underline any words they don't know.
- b) In groups, encourage them to identify the meanings of these words in their dictionaries.
- c) Here are some words from the text. Students use them to fill the gaps in the sentences.

**adage stray legacy stifle freewheeling mentality plunge
credibility tackle inflated reshuffle cabinet taint cliché**

1. I couldn't study when I became sick, so my marks _____.
2. Although she is a good leader, she has the _____ of her parents' bad behaviour many years ago.
3. He _____ from his studies, because he was more interested in playing football and listening to music.
4. My grandparents left a family _____ of hard work and caring for others.
5. I wish the government would _____ environmental problems.
6. The training was very _____ - we did what we wanted to, without a lot of discipline.
7. "You always want what you cannot get" is a useful _____.
8. This song is a _____ - another love song that says exactly the same thing.
9. Their was a staff _____. Everyone changed their jobs.
10. The President is losing his _____, as he lies all the time to the people.
11. I am not allowed to speak in meetings. My boss wants to _____ my opinions.
12. He has an _____ idea of his ability – he thinks he is very clever, but he always says stupid things.
13. Our head teacher has a very conservative _____ - she likes strong discipline and tight control of students.
14. The _____ makes all the decisions in this government – the opposition parties and normal MPs don't have any power.

Answers:

**1. plunged 2. taint 3. strayed 4. legacy 5. tackle 6. freewheeling
7. adage 8. cliché 9. reshuffle 10. credibility 11. stifle
12. inflated 13. mentality 14. cabinet**

Activity 5**Idioms and phrasal verbs**

Here are some idioms from the article. Students locate the idiom in the text, and choose the best synonym or definition for the underlined words.

1. ...*the majority of Singaporeans go along with it*. (paragraph 1)
 - a. agree to follow
 - b. strongly support
 - c. don't like
 - d. debate with

2. ...*Yudhoyono, who appears to have brought a breath of fresh air to the political situation...* (paragraph 2)
 - a. new idea
 - b. practical help
 - c. more money
 - d. pleasant change

3. ...*which for three decades was stifled under the heavy hand of former President Suharto* (paragraph 2)
 - a. boxing gloves
 - b. authoritarian rule
 - c. military dictatorship
 - d. human rights violations

4. ...*while Burma has a fully-fledged military dictatorship* (paragraph 6)
 - a. complete
 - b. dangerous
 - c. bad
 - d. ineffective

5. *Corruption scandals, like the airport, refuse to die down as they have before.* (paragraph 5)
 - a. be solved
 - b. become public
 - c. go away
 - d. increase

6. ...*the heavily reshuffled cabinet Thaksin promised in early August would root out dead wood and those tainted with corruption...* (paragraph 5)
 - a. reduce the size of cabinet
 - b. punish corrupt people
 - c. put some people in jail
 - d. remove people who are not useful

Answers:

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

Activity 6**What's the Editor's Opinion?**

"Thai people deserve the government they have".

Do you think the editor agrees with this statement? Why / why not?

Answer: No.

- *The editor lists all the bad points of the government, and points out that the government is less popular now than when they were elected.*
- *At the end the editor asks 'Is this what Thais deserve?' This implies that the editor does not think they deserve this.*

Activity 7**Cliches**

The last paragraph mentions two clichés. A cliché is a phrase that is used so much it has lost its original meaning. Both these clichés refer to the recent reshuffle in the Thai cabinet.

- a) 'Musical chairs' is a game where people walk around some chairs whilst music is playing. When the music stops, people rush to sit down. The person without a chair is out, and the others walk around the chairs to music again.
- b) 'Old wine in new bottles' is when you pour your old wine into a new bottle, so people will think it is new wine.

How do students think these apply to the cabinet reshuffle? Discuss with your class.

Answers:

'Musical chairs' implies that the cabinet ministers changed their jobs by a process similar to this game, a process where being included depends only on luck, and those included don't bring any new ideas.

'Old wine in new bottles': nothing has changed in the cabinet except its appearance.

Activities to do After Reading**Activity 8****What do you think?**

The main point of this editorial is

Although the Thai people elected this government, they deserve a better one.

Do you agree with this? Do you think that people in a democratic country are responsible for their government?

Another example: Many people in the US did not vote for George W Bush, and do not support his policies on Iraq. Can you blame these people for US government policy?

Discuss these ideas as a class.

Activity 9**Running Dictation.**

- a) Write the proper nouns included in the article on the board before you play this game.
- b) Divide the class into teams of 5-8 people. Each team has one writer. The writer sits at one end of the room, with a pen and paper.
- c) Other team members are the 'runners' They are at the other end of the room, where they can see a copy of the article that is stuck to the wall.
- d) When you say 'go', the first runner in each team tries to remember, word for word, as much as s/he can. S/he runs to their team's writer, and dictates as much of the text as s/he can remember.
- e) When the first runner returns, the second runner remembers as much of the text as possible, runs and dictates.
- f) Stop the game after ten minutes. Give the writers the text to mark. The winner is the team with the longest article with the least mistakes (perhaps one point per correct word).

Activity 10**Cartoon**

Look at the cartoon on page 6. What does it mean? Who is the teacher? Who are the students?

Answers:

The teacher is George W Bush, President of the USA. He is talking about sanctions on Burma. The students are leaders of ASEAN countries. They are not interested in what the teacher is saying, and they are doing what they want.

The cartoon implies that ASEAN are not interested in the US's plan for sanctions, and they don't want to obey the US. They want to do what they want.