

Learning with the Irrawaddy 7

To accompany October 2005 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine

Teacher's Notes

Here's the seventh 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: *The Shadow of 1767*, page 21

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

- What do you know?**
What do you think you know?
What do you want to know?

Tell students they are going to read an article about Burma's relations with Thailand. What do students know about this topic?

- *Things they know* are facts that they are quite sure about, (e.g. Thailand and Burma are neighbours)
- *Things they think they know* are things they are unsure of.
- *Things they want to know* are things they are interested in finding out.

In groups, or individually, students fill in the chart:
There are no right or wrong answers in this activity.

Thai-Burmese Relationship		
Things I know	Things I think I know	Things I want to know

Activity 2

Prediction: True or False

- a) Do students think these sentences are true or false? Students guess.
1. Thailand wants to have communication with the Burmese generals.
 2. In 1767, Thailand destroyed Burma's capital city.
 3. Thailand has a good international reputation, because of the Burma situation.
 4. Thailand tried to help reconciliation in Burma by arranging talks between the Shan State Army and the Burmese junta.
- b) Students read the article, and check whether they are right or wrong. If the sentence is false, students write the correct information.

Answers.

1. *True*
2. *False – Burma destroyed Thailand's capital city – Ayutthaya – in 1767*
3. *False – Thailand's reputation has suffered because of their attitude to Burma.*
4. *False – they tried to arrange talks between the KNU and the junta.*

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 3

Summaries

Here are some paragraph summaries. Students match the summaries with the paragraphs. This is very difficult – they might like to do this in groups.

- a. Thailand uses ethnic nationalities as a buffer-zone between Thailand and the junta. The Burmese government does not like this.
- b. There are many issues Thailand and Burma must solve. The most important is the drugs problem.
- c. Thailand is trying to arrange peace talks between the junta and opposition movements. These have not succeeded.
- d. Both Thais and Burmese are encouraged to be very nationalistic.
- e. Thailand treats Burmese migrant workers badly.
- f. Thailand's foreign minister visited Burma. This implies relations between Thailand and Burma are OK.
- g. Thailand and Burma must forget about nationalism and bad past history if they want to have a healthy relationship.
- h. There are many incidents from the recent past, that make Thai/Burmese relations difficult.
- i. Thai and Burmese leaders use nationalism to make problems with each other.
- j. Some people thought that Thailand and Burma were not communicating, after Khin Nyunt was removed.
- k. Burma often insults Thailand.
- l. Thai people don't like Burmese migrant workers. They don't understand that Burmese workers help the economy.
- m. Thai / Burmese relations have a bad history, which still causes problems today.
- n. Migrant workers tell people back in Burma that Thais treat them badly. This causes more problems.
- o. Many people, including some US politicians, do not like Thailand's attitude to Burma.

Answers:

1. *f* 2. *j* 3. *b* 4. *m* 5. *h* 6. *a* 7. *o* 8. *k* 9. *c* 10. *e* 11. *l*
12. *n* 13. *d* 14. *i* 15. *g*

Activity 4**Match the vocabulary**

a) Students go through the article and underline the words you don't know.

b) Students match these words with their definitions.

suppression	<i>anger for a long time</i>
demarcation	<i>drawing lines to show territory</i>
frontier	<i>insulting</i>
lingering	<i>a thing that influences a situation</i>
bitterness	<i>border area</i>
influx	<i>serious</i>
skeptical	<i>opinion or feeling</i>
skirmish	<i>arrival of large amounts of people or things</i>
derogatory	<i>ongoing</i>
grave	<i>following, coming after</i>
subsequent	<i>fight, battle</i>
impression	<i>forcing people to stop doing something</i>
to urge	<i>strongly persuade</i>
factor	<i>doubtful, not believing something</i>

c) Students fill the gaps with words from b).

1. There was a large _____ of new refugees into the camps, because of the fighting across the border.
2. One _____ in the bad relations between Thailand and Burma is past history.
3. The situation is very _____, many people are worried.
4. My _____ is that things are not so good.
5. Thai and Burmese governments said many _____ things about each other.
6. Burmese government _____ of minority education has been happening for a long time.

Answers:

- a) suppression - *forcing people to stop doing something*
 demarcation - *drawing lines to show territory* frontier - *border area*
 lingering - *ongoing* bitterness- *anger for a long time*
 influx- *arrival of large amounts of people or things*
 skeptical - *doubtful, not believing something* skirmish- *fight, battle*
 derogatory - *insulting* grave - *serious* subsequent - *following, coming after*
 impression - *opinion or feeling*
 to urge - *strongly persuade* factor - *a thing that influences a situation*

- b) 1. *influx* 2. *factor* 3. *grave* 4. *impression* 5. *derogatory* 6. *supression*

Activity 5

Rephrasing

Students choose the sentence or phrase that means the same as the underlined sentence or phrase from the article.

1. ...appear to indicate that relations between the two neighbours are back to normal. (paragraph 1)
 - a. maybe
 - b. we don't think
 - c. it looks like
 - d. probably

2. ...contribute to shaping the attitudes of the governments and peoples in the two countries. (paragraph 5)
 - a. influencing
 - b. admiring
 - c. insulting
 - d. controlling

3. any attempt to 'undermine stability between neighbouring countries' would not be tolerated... (paragraph 6)
 - a. invade other countries
 - b. make problems in other countries
 - c. invest in other countries
 - d. help other countries

4. ...Burmese migrants, who are said to be held in low regard by most Thais. (paragraph 10)
 - a. violent
 - b. disliked
 - c. imprisoned
 - d. employed

5. ... contributing still further to bad blood between Burmese and Thais (paragraph 12)
 - a. thinking of people as the enemy
 - b. fighting and arguing
 - c. treating people like animals
 - d. paying low wages

6. Burmese and Thais have much baggage to discard before they can hope for the sort of relationship that should exist between neighbours (paragraph 15)
 - a. have to sign a peace agreement
 - b. have to stop fighting
 - c. have to unpack your bags
 - d. have to throw away bad feelings

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

Activity 6

Comprehension

Students answer these questions. If the answer is not in the text, they write 'don't know'.

1. Why was communication difficult between Thailand and Burma recently?
2. Has the border demarcation problem been solved?
3. Why was Burma annoyed with Thailand in the 1950s?
4. Does President Bush of the US support Thailand's attitude to Burma?
5. Is *Yodaya* a nice thing to call someone?
6. Why was the 'Bangkok Process' unsuccessful?
7. Has Thailand tried to arrange peace talks with many ethnic rebel groups?
8. The article mentions 5 incidents that have caused problems between Thailand and Burma. What are they?

Answers:

1. *Because of Khin Nyunt's downfall (Khin Nyunt was involved in talks with the Thai government – the Thais dealt mainly with Khin Nyunt)*
2. *No, not yet.*
3. *because Thailand did not support Burma's appeal to the UN to help remove Chinese KMT forces.*
4. *Don't know. Some US congressmen wrote to Bush complaining about Thailand's attitude, but the article doesn't mention Bush's opinion.*
5. *No, it's derogatory.*
6. *The junta representatives pulled out – didn't attend.*
7. *Don't know – the article only mentions the KNU.*
8. *The Burmese destruction of Ayathaya in 1767, the U Nu revolt in the 1970s, the KMT Chinese incidents in the 1950s, the Burmese government using the word Yodaya three years ago, and Burma's official newspaper insulting the Thai monarchy.*

Activity 7

What are the problems?

- a) What problems do Thai people have with Burma?

What problems do Burmese people have with Thailand?

Students look through the article and write down all reasons Thais and Burmese have problems with each other.

Answers:

Thai problems with Burma	Burmese problems with Thailand
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>The 5 historical incidents (in activity 6)</i>- <i>Drugs</i>- <i>Identification of migrant workers</i>- <i>Border demarcation</i>- <i>Refugees coming to Thailand</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Border demarcation</i>- <i>Suspicion that Thailand is trying to 'undermine stability' by supporting anti-government groups on the border</i>- <i>Treatment of migrant workers</i>

- b) Brainstorm other issues you can add to the lists – more problems Thais and Burmese might have with each other. Make a class list on the board.

Activity 8**Crossword**

All the answers to this crossword are in the article.

Answers:

b	u	f	f	e	r	z	o	n	e			k	m	t	
	n				e			a					i		
	d				b			r		d	r	u	g		
	e				e			c		i			r		i
a	r	m	y		l			o		c			a		n
	m							t		t			n		v
v	i	s	i	t		s	h	i	n	a	w	a	t	r	a
	n							c		t					s
	e	v	e					s		o	r	a	l		i
			d							r					o
b			u	n		a	m	n	e	s	t	y		a	n
o			c		s		e			h				l	
r		n	a	t	i	o	n	a	l	i	s	m		l	
d			t		a					p				i	
e			e		m									e	
r	o	a	d				s	u	f	f	e	r	e	d	

Activities to do After Reading**Activity 9****Discussion**

The article concludes that nationalism – the belief that your country is better than other countries- is one of the biggest problems, one of the main reasons why Burma and Thailand cannot solve their issues. Discuss these issues in groups, or as a class.

- Do you think nationalism is a good or bad thing?
- Can you think of any example of nationalism in your community? Does it cause problems?

Activity 10**Presentation**

In groups, students choose one or two of the problems from **activity 7**, and think of some solutions. They present their solutions to the class.