

Learning with the Irrawaddy 16

To accompany December 2006 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine

Teacher's Notes

Here's the sixteenth 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 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: *People of 2006*, online version

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

Title

Elicit some ideas from the class about what they think the subject of the article is. When they understand the subject, ask them who they think will be featured in the article.

Activity 2

Match the pictures

Answers:

Top row (left to right): c) *Min Ko Naing*, f) *Thet Win Aung*, e) *Gen. Surayud Chulanont* and b) *Zipporah Sein*.

Middle row: d) *Bo Kyi and Tate Naing*, h) *Kavi Chongkittavorn*, i) *Free Funeral Service* and *Byamaso*

Bottom Row: g) *Free Burma Rangers*, j) *Sone Thin Par*, a) *Ibrahim Gambari*

Activity 3

Who do you know?

Students choose three of the people/organisations that they recognize and make a list of words that they associate with their choice.

e.g. Ibrahim Gambari – UN, Kofi Annan, Burma, meeting, Than Shwe, Security Council

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 4

Vocabulary Match

Students work in pairs to find the right word in the paragraph given.

Answers: **1)** *conqueror* (paragraph 1), **2)** *captors* (paragraph 2), **3)** *solitary* (paragraph 9), **4)** *inactive* (paragraph 12), **5)** *sympathizes* (paragraph 14), **6)** *compassionate* (paragraph 18), **7)** *essential* (paragraph 21), **8)** *reluctant* (paragraph 24), **9)** *afford* (paragraph 25), **10)** *takeover* (paragraph 28), **11)** *appointed* (paragraph 30), **12)** *agenda* (paragraph 31), **13)** *fellow* (paragraph 35), **14)** *opposed* (paragraph 39), **15)** *numerous* (paragraph 42).

Activity 5

Complete the story

Use the words from Activity 4 to complete the gaps in the following story. Each word is used once.

Before doing this activity make sure the students know and understand all the words in Activity 4. They can work alone or in pairs. Each word is used once. If the text is difficult for the students ask them to read it quickly before filling in the gaps and call out any words they don't know.

Katie was recently appointed leader of a small country called Burmania. However, a group of people, led by the famous conqueror Cleo, opposed the new leadership and planned a takeover of the government. Cleo's army attacked the government building with over a 1000 men. They lost the battle but were able to kidnap Katie's comrade Derek.

The following day Derek's captors demanded 10,000,000 Burmanian dollars for his release. Although Katie knew she couldn't afford this, she did not want to remain inactive and called a meeting with her comrades. The first point on the agenda was securing the release of Derek, who was Burmania's strongest soldier and essential to the country's safety. Fortunately, Katie knew a compassionate guard at the prison who sympathized with her and provided information about the prison where Derek was being held.

The government of Burmania decided that the best option was to plan a rescue mission. Initially, Katie wanted to rescue her friend alone as she felt a solitary mission would be easier. However, her comrades were reluctant to accept this idea as they feared for the safety of their beloved leader. After a long debate and numerous suggestions, it was decided that 10,000 soldiers would attack the prison after dark.

At 10.30pm that evening Katie's army marched to the prison and after a long battle they were able to rescue their fellow Burmanian. They also managed to capture the opposition leaders and secure peace for the small country of Burmania.

Activity 6

Who is this?

Students should skim read the article to match the sentences with the correct person or organisation. If they are struggling to understand, go through the first one with them as an example.

Answers: 1) General Surayud Chulanont 2) Kavi Chongkittavorn 3) Free Burma Rangers 4) Min Ko Naing 5) Ibrahim Gambari 6) AAPP (Bo Kyi and Tate Naing) 7) Zipporah Sein 8) Thet Win Aung 9) Sone Thin Par 10) Free Funeral Service and Byamaso

Activity 7

Adverbs

Start by explaining to the class what an adverb is, and why they are used. Then direct them to paragraph 4. Give them some time to read the paragraph and think about the adverb 'greatly'. Now elicit some ideas on why the writer uses this adverb.

Answer: 'Greatly' is used to emphasise that the level or manner of admiration is great.

Now split the class into pairs and ask them to think about why each of the adverbs is used by the writers. Then bring the class together and ask them what they think. Write their ideas on the board.

Answers

- 1) *Severely* (paragraph 9) is used to show that the level or manner of the torture was severe (i.e. very bad).
- 2) *Bravely* (paragraph 15) is used because the writer wants the reader to know that Bo Kyi and Tate Naing continue to do their work even though it is dangerous for them.
- 3) *Purely* (paragraph 25) is used to show that the Free Funeral Service only works in a social capacity, i.e. to help people, not for profit.
- 4) *Currently* (paragraph 26) is used to show that this is the number of funerals provided by the service now.
- 5) *Previously* (paragraph 29) is used to show that the donation was received in the past.
- 6) *Correctly* (paragraph 39) is used to show that Kavi made a prediction which was later shown to be correct.

Once you are sure the class understands the adverbs, ask them to try and write sentences using each adverb. Give them some time after to compare their sentences with their partner. During this exercise you can circulate around the class doing some individual error correction. After, ask students to come and write a sentence on the board, ask the class what they think of the sentence and do some error correction if necessary.

Activities to do After Reading

Activity 8

Writing

Tell the students they have been asked by the Irrawaddy magazine to choose a person of the year 2006. Who would they choose? Why?

Stress to the students that they can choose anyone; teacher, parent, political leader, activist, pop star etc. Help them get started by asking students to call out people they would choose, when a person calls out ask them why they chose that person.

Activity 9

Speech

Imagine you are the person you chose as your person of the year 2006. You have been invited to a ceremony to receive an award for helping Burma and its people. You will have to give a short speech at the ceremony. What would you say? Make some notes and then prepare a speech. After your speech, you will be asked some questions by the audience.

This exercise is a continuation of the previous activity. Make sure the students understand what they have to do and then elicit some ideas about what they would say in this situation. You could maybe do a mind-map on the board.

Ideas might include: a description of what work they do, who they are, a thank you for the award, why they do what they do, how they got involved, a plea for help from the international community, a call to action to the Burmese people etc.