

Learning with The Irrawaddy, No. 30

To accompany the **September 2008** issue of The Irrawaddy magazine

Selected article: *Spare the Child*, pages 12-13

TEACHER'S NOTES

Here is the thirtieth issue of 'Learning with the Irrawaddy', a monthly educational supplement to The Irrawaddy magazine. It is designed for English or social studies classes in Post-10 schools and adult education classes on the Burma border. With each issue of The Irrawaddy, 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 interests, and the ability 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 at least good pre-intermediate or intermediate English.

A. Activities before reading

Activity 1 Title and subtitle

Give students a couple of minutes to look at the title and the subtitle and try to answer the questions. Collect some answers.

Answers:

- 1) *'Spare' in this context means to save, rescue or not harm, so 'Spare the child' means 'Save the child' or 'Don't harm the child'.*
- 2) *To 'pay lip service' means to behave or talk as if you are doing something when actually you aren't.*
- 3) *Elicit ideas, then explain that the article has two main themes: the situation of children in Burma and how the situation affects their basic rights.*

Activity 2 Classroom rights

For the first part, collect some ideas about what a classroom with no rules would be like. Write some on the board.

Possible answers:

- *Everyone would talk at the same time*
- *People would argue or fight*
- *Things would get stolen*
- *No one would listen*

After this discussion divide the class into small groups and ask them to write a list of rules for a good learning classroom. When they have made their lists, ask them to rephrase them as student rights in the classroom; for example, the rule ‘Put up your hand if you want to speak’ could become: ‘Everybody has the right to be heard without interruption.’

If you like, make a class list of rights on a large piece of paper and display it on the wall.

Activity 3 Rights of the child

Make sure the students understand all of the rights in the box before starting the group discussions. When they have finished ask for some ideas from the groups and explain that, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all of the rights in the table are rights that every child is entitled to. (Explain that there are more rights than these in the convention.)

Lead a discussion by asking the students if they agree with the UN that children should have these rights.

B. Activities during reading

Activity 4 Vocabulary – Opposites

Students can do this activity on their own or in pairs

Answers:

1) *b* 2) *g* 3) *h* 4) *a* 5) *j* 6) *i* 7) *e* 8) *f* 9) *d* 10) *c*

Activity 5 Gap-fill

Answers:

1) *putrid* 2) *discard* 3) *menial* 4) *loose enforcement* 5) *ragged* 6) *forsake*
7) *inadequate* 8) *abandon* 9) *edible* 10) *exploit*

Activity 6 True or false?

The paragraphs where the answers are found are given in brackets.

Answers:

1) *True (paragraph 4)* 2) *False (paragraph 6)* 3) *False (paragraph 8)*
4) *False (paragraph 11)* 5) *False (paragraph 12)* 6) *True (paragraph 16)*
7) *True (paragraph 18)* 8) *False (paragraph 23)* 9) *True (paragraph 26)*

Activity 7 Paragraph summaries

Answers:

1) *Paragraph 9* 2) *Paragraph 11* 3) *Paragraph 13*
4) *Paragraph 15* 5) *Paragraph 19* 6) *Paragraph 20*

C. Activities after reading

Activity 8 A letter home - Maung Thaw Kaung

Let the students take some time to fill the table, before collecting answers as a class.

Possible answers:

What do you know?	What can you imagine?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Maung Thaw Kaung is 12 years old</i>- <i>He works long hours in a teashop</i>- <i>He is very thin</i>- <i>He earns 8000 kyat a month</i>- <i>He sleeps on two stools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>He is tired all the time</i>- <i>He misses his friends</i>- <i>He wants to attend school</i>- <i>He likes some of the customers in the teashop</i>- <i>He reads comics before sleeping at night</i>- <i>etc</i>

Then give the students 30 minutes (or homework) to write a letter from Maung Thaw Kaung to his parents. Remind them that it is an informal letter and that they should include the sender's address and the date.

Activity 9 Maung Thaw Kaung's rights

Divide the class into small groups and tell them to look back at Activity 3 and decide which rights Maung Thaw Kaung is denied. Give groups time to discuss and then lead a class discussion on students' ideas and opinions.

Activity 10 Three friends talking

Divide the class into groups of 3 (where possible) and tell them to reread paragraph 11. Tell each group to prepare a conversation between the three boys after a long day at work. If they need some help, suggest these topics of conversation: missing family, wanting to go to school, dreams for the future, how to change the situation, the poor food, the customers who come to the teashop (and any others you can think of).

When they have practiced their conversations, ask some groups to perform for the class.

Activity 11 10 years later – where is Maung Thaw Kaung?

Students can do this activity alone, perhaps for homework. Tell them to imagine what life is like for Maung Thaw Kaung 10 years in the future and write a short article describing his current life.

Tell them to use their imagination, Maung Thaw Kaung might still be poor, but he may have changed his life – perhaps he won the lottery, or saved enough to go to Thailand, perhaps he went to England to study – there are many possible situations!

When students have written their articles ask them to put them on the walls so that the class can view them.