

# Learning with The Irrawaddy, No. 37

To accompany the **August 2009** issue of The Irrawaddy magazine.

Selected article: *Left to rot*, page 12

## TEACHER'S NOTES

Here is the thirtieth seventh 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 level of 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** Look at the title

Try to elicit from the class that the title means something has not been taken care of or has been neglected. Since the article is about Rangoon this means the focus is on poor living conditions in the former capital which are caused by lack of government attention.

#### **Activity 2** Prediction

Give students a few minutes to make lists in pairs and then discuss their ideas as a class.  
*Possible answers: bad roads, poverty, crime, beggars, flooding, dirty, rubbish etc.*

#### **Activity 3** Describe the pictures

*Possible answers:*

*The first picture shows a wet and muddy street which may highlight poor sewerage and flooding problems.*

The second picture shows a woman selling food by candlelight which may highlight that the electricity supply is not good.

## B. Activities during reading

### Activity 4 List the problems

Give the students some time to read the article and make a list of the problems.

**Some Answers:**

*Bad roads, electricity shortages, crime, flooding, trash in the streets, broken traffic lights.*

### Activity 5 Match the vocabulary

**Answers**

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

### Activity 6 Gap-fill

The *city dwellers* went to the mayor to discuss the *hardships* they face everyday in Rangoon. They asked the mayor why the government had *forsaken* them. They described how many years of *neglect* had created *severe* and *widespread* problems for everyone. The people begged the mayor to show *tolerance* and asked him to *negotiate*\* with his bosses for better conditions in Rangoon. The mayor looked very *sheepish* as he talked with the people and promised he would do something.

\* Highlight to the students that *negotiate* is used in a different way than the definition given in Activity 5. Give them the alternative definition 'to deal or bargain with others'.

### Activity 7 Giving evidence

Give students some time to reread the article and provide supporting evidence for the problems in their list. When they have finished ask them to compare their tables with a partner. To provide evidence they should use quotes, numbers and examples. The table below gives a few more examples.

Problem	Supporting evidence
<i>The roads are in a bad condition</i>	<i>In paragraphs 1-8 the author describes how two cars collided because they were trying to avoid holes in the road.</i>
<i>Electricity shortages</i>	<i>In paragraph 10 the author describes how he was not able to use his camera because there was no power during the night.</i>
<i>Flooding</i>	<i>In paragraph 21 the bus driver is quoted as saying 'We thought the rainy season would correct the power shortage, but so far we are only getting flooding...'</i>
<i>The mayor of Yangon is not supportive</i>	<i>In paragraph 25 the author quotes a local</i>

	<i>publication in which the mayor said it is unusual for the streets of Yangon to flood.</i>
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### **Activity 8** Comprehension questions

**Answers:**

- 1) *He was afraid of the traffic police (paragraph 8)*
- 2) *The battery of his camera was dead because there was no electricity during the night (paragraph 10)*
- 3) *The people would be freer (paragraph 13)*
- 4) *Naypyidaw has good roads, 24 hour electricity, no floods, it is modern and efficient (paragraph 14)*
- 5) *There would be 24 hour electricity due to increased hydropower (paragraph 16)*
- 6) *They ‘shook their heads in disbelief’ (paragraph 25)*
- 7) *Getting knocked down by cars (paragraph 28)*
- 8) *What people are doing and saying (paragraph 32/33)*

### **B. Activities after reading**

#### **Activity 9** Mayor of Rangoon 1

Ask the students to write notes about what they would say to the Japanese diplomats and then rehearse their speech. Ask a few people to demonstrate to the class. For homework they could write out the whole speech. Encourage them to try and use some of the words in the box.

#### **Activity 10** The people

Ask the students to write their letter to the mayor either in class or for homework. Encourage them to try and use their tables from activity 7 and some of the words in the box. Display all the letters on the walls of the class for other students to read.

#### **Activity 11** Mayor of Rangoon 2

Describe the situation to the students and ask them to write their sentences. When they are done ask some students to read out their sentences to the class.