

Selected article : **Dignity in Distress**

TEACHER'S NOTES

Here is the 46th 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 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. The language level in this month's article is intermediate.

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, AND THE LEVEL OF ABILITY OF YOUR LEARNERS.

In this issue we have included:

- ★ this teacher's guide
- ★ a copy of the student worksheet
- ★ a copy of The Irrawaddy magazine
- ★ a copy of the article from The Irrawaddy magazine

A. **Activities before reading**

Activity 1

Predict: What is the article about?

These discussion questions are designed to get your class warmed up, speaking English and thinking about what the article is about. The picture is of the cover of a book. The article is a book review. Nine thousand nights is almost 25 years, and the book covers 25 years of events on the Thai-Burma border. Students can think about what kinds of information a book about refugees on the border will cover, and check whether they are right when they read the article. You could suggest students discuss this in pairs or small groups, and then report the thoughts from their group to the whole class.

Activity 2

Vocabulary:

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

B. **Activities during reading**

Activity 3

True or False?

1. False. Nine thousand nights is written by TBBC, and has many different writers.
2. False. It marks the 25th anniversary of TBBC.
3. True (para 4).
4. False. The book is called a scrapbook because it is a collection of different stories. It is not cheaply produced, but is an 'impressive publication' (para 4).
5. False. It has six chapters that cover the history of the refugee crisis and the suffering of all the named ethnic groups (para 5).
6. True (para 6).
7. False. Refugees have shown resilience (strength) and dignity in spite of their suffering.
8. True (para 1). He was wounded in an attack on the UN offices in Baghdad, Iraq.

Activity 4 **Book review**
Answer-guide

Title	Nine Thousand Nights
Author:	TBBC (Thai-Burma Border Consortium)
Topic:	25 years of the refugee crisis
Summary of content:	This book gives a history of the refugee crisis and the camps on the border. It describes people's stories through reports, memories, photographs and poems.
The book's message:	The book celebrates the resilience of the people in spite of their suffering.
Reviewer's opinion:	Does the reviewer like the book? How do you know? The reviewer likes the book. He gives examples of people's stories, and the responses of aid-workers to the difficulties and traumas people have experienced. He says the book is impressive.
Your opinion:	Do you think the book sounds interesting? Why / why not? This depends on the opinion of the student.

Activity 5 **Vocabulary**

Students use the context to guess the meaning of 5 words in the text that they do not know. This encourages confidence and the understanding that you do not have to know every word in order to understand what a passage is saying. The teacher walks round the classroom while students are doing this work, and helps students by asking questions. Students need access to dictionaries to check the meaning.

Activity 6 **Ask and answer questions**

Students demonstrate their own understanding of the passage by writing comprehension questions for each other. The teacher walks round the classroom and checks the work students are doing. You can ask for accurate work here, and correct grammatical mistakes in the student questions and answers.

C. Activities after reading

Activity 7 **Write one person's story**

This is an opportunity for free writing, using what the students know or what they can imagine about the difficulties experienced by refugees, and how people overcome these difficulties.

Activity 8 **Make a class scrapbook, year-book, or magazine**

This is a class project. It is an opportunity for students to create something that celebrates the successes of themselves, the class, and the school. Students can choose what they do, and show their skills. It will not be done in one lesson. If possible, when the book is finished, make photocopies of it so every student can have one. If not possible, have it on display in the classroom for a time, and show it to visitors.