

Topic: Learning English

Activity: The Importance of English: A Lesson Plan for Use With Refugees From Burma

Objectives	Participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ describe why learning English is important in the United States✓ identify challenges some refugees face when they do not speak English✓ identify ways to learn and practice English
Lesson Time	50 minutes
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Refugees from Burma in the United States</i> (http://www.cal.org/co/videos/Burmese/Refugees_from_Burma.html)• Internet access, laptop, projector, and screen, or DVD, television, and DVD player• Flipchart paper, markers, tape• <i>The Importance of English: Images Worksheet</i>, 1 per participant (included)• Writing implements, 1 per participant• Optional: <i>The Importance of English: Quotes Worksheet</i>, 1 per participant (included)
Introduction	<p>Greet participants in English. Encourage participants to respond in English.</p> <p>Tell participants that English is the official and most common language used in the United States. As a large group, ask participants to brainstorm why learning English is important for success in the United States. List these ideas on a flipchart. (Examples may include the need to speak English on the job, the need to speak in English at stores, to interact with members of the community outside your ethnic group, etc.)</p>
Practice	<p>Tell participants the group will now watch a 22-minute video of interviews with refugees from Burma resettled in the United States. Distribute <i>The Importance of English: Images Worksheet</i> and writing implements to participants. Tell participants to watch for the images on the worksheet, and check them off when they see them in the video. Ask participants to pay special attention to why refugees in the video think learning English is important, and ways people learn English.</p> <p>View <i>Refugees from Burma in the United States</i>.</p>
Practice	<p>Divide participants into small groups of 5-6. Referencing the images from their worksheet, groups discuss what the refugees said about learning English, and if participants agree with what they said.</p> <p>Bring the large group together and discuss some of the images. Ask participants what challenges they saw or heard about when refugees do not speak English in the United States. (Answers may include isolation, loneliness, inability to get around independently, etc. Some quotes are highlighted in <i>The Importance of English: Quotes Worksheet</i>, and they correspond with the images in <i>The Importance of English: Images Worksheet</i>.)</p> <p>As a large group, brainstorm ways refugees in the video learned and practiced English. Record these on a flipchart. (Answers may include through the resettlement agency,</p>

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Discussion Questions

from volunteers, in class/going to school, in town, through the internet, at work, while shopping, with friends and neighbors, by asking for help, before they came to the United States, step-by-step, etc.) If participants do not bring up the importance of continuing to learn English even after feeling settled, raise that point and ask why it is important.

- Why is English an important language to learn when living in the United States?
- What are some challenges you might face if you do not speak English?
- What are some ways you can learn and practice English?
- If you speak little or no English, what are some things you can do to communicate with others who do not speak the same language as you?
- Why is it important to continue learning English even after you have a job in the United States?

Variations

1. When working with more literate participants, distribute *The Importance of English: Quotes Worksheets* in place of *The Importance of English: Images Worksheets*. After viewing the video, participants complete the worksheet and discuss their answers in small groups.

Key English Vocabulary

challenges

difficult

easy

English

Internet

step-by-step

to learn

to practice

to speak

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The Importance of English: Images Worksheet

Directions: As you watch the DVD, look for the images below.
Put a check (✓) in the box next to the image when you see the image.



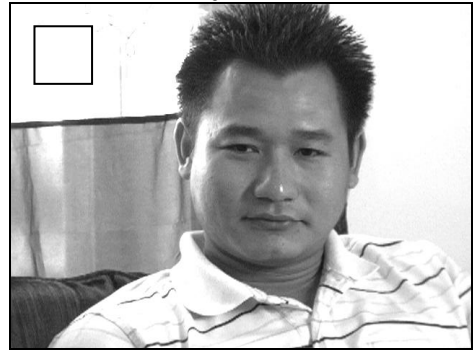
Mary Lay



Awng Hai N-Kum



Ma Mae Hu Shi



Pain Paing



Mar Koe



Rebalka Koe



Kaung Kaung



Ma Mae Hu Shi and Dah Dah

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The Importance of English: Quotes Worksheet

Directions: Read the quote from the DVD. Decide if you agree with the statement or not, and why.

Quote	Agree or disagree?	Why?
<p><u>Pain Paing:</u> Even if they don't learn English, they can do things here. My wife seems to talk as if it's very easy, but for me it's not easy – it's very difficult. You have to do things step by step.</p>		
<p><u>Kaung Kaung:</u> Those who come here and don't speak English face a lot of difficulties. But, there's no need to worry. There are people in the refugee center who can help.</p>		
<p><u>Mary Lay:</u> If you really want to come to America, and when you are here, in order not to face too much difficulty, some people have never been taught. When you come here, I encourage you to learn more English, so you won't face any more difficulties.</p>		
<p><u>Mar Koe:</u> In the future, our lives will get better because the living standard is high here. However, if we're not willing to try and we have no ambition, and we don't learn to speak their language, then it's not worth it to come here. For these people, it will be like them creating problems for themselves.</p>		

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