

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Pro-Democracy Icon Suu Kyi Detained After Surprise Visit, 05/22/2009

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june09/myanmar_05-22.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. **What is a dictatorship? Name as many as you can.**

2. **Where is Myanmar? What do you know about it?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. **Who is Aung San Suu Kyi?**

ANSWER

Aung San Suu Kyi is a key leader in Myanmar's pro-democracy movement, and a Noble Prize winner.

2. **What is Suu Kyi currently charged with?**

ANSWER

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Suu Kyi, 63, is charged with harboring John William Yettaw for two days even though his visit was reportedly unexpected and unwelcome. Analysts believe that Myanmar's military-led government wants to detain Suu Kyi as long as possible to prevent her from challenging their leadership in the country's general elections next year.

3. **What is the other name for Myanmar?**

ANSWER

The country of Myanmar used to be known as Burma. When the British took control of the country in 1886, it was known in English as "Burma." After the controversial military junta rose to power in 1989, they changed the name from "Burma" to "Myanmar."

Opponents of Myanmar's oppressive regime continue to use the name "Burma" as a form of protest against the new government.

4. When was the first military coup in Myanmar?

ANSWER

Myanmar was a democracy until 1962 when General Ne Win successfully led a military coup against the government.

5. What is the 8888 Uprising?

ANSWER

In August of 1988, democratic reformist and peaceful activist Suu Kyi led protests across the nation calling for an end to decades of political oppression and economic hardship under the junta, in what came to be known as the 8888 Uprising.

6. What happened in the 1990 election?

ANSWER

In the free elections in 1990, the National League for Democracy won a landslide victory. Suu Kyi, would have become prime minister but Myanmar's repressive dictatorship did not let her serve her term, instead they placed her under house arrest for 13 of the next 19 years.

7. Name at least two reasons why Myanmar's military regime is considered an oppressive government by human rights advocates.

ANSWER

Myanmar's military regime is considered an oppressive government by human rights advocates because they are: accused of killing, raping and torturing hundreds of thousands of Burmese people; torturing hundreds and killing dozens of Buddhist monks during nation-wide protests in 2007; and blocking aid to thousands of injured and stranded Burmese after Cyclone Nargis struck in May 2008.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. The Noble Prize committee gave Suu Kyi the award describing her as "an outstanding example of the power of the powerless." What do you think that means?

2. What do you think should be done about the repressive regime of Myanmar? Should the United States intervene? Why or why not?

3. Describe the similarities you see between MLK, Gandhi and Suu Kyi. Do you see any differences? How are they different?

4. Do you think it matters what name is used? Which name do you use? Why?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.