TSUNAMI

This lesson paints a vivid picture of the pain and sorrow that the powerful tsunami of 2004 caused to people across countries near the Indian Ocean, but it focuses on the accounts of the heroic efforts, sacrifice and the humaneness of people who found themselves in an unexpected and terrible predicament that tragic night of December 2004. At the surface level, the lesson seems to be read like a simple tale out of a storybook, but when we look deeper, we catch a glimpse of different degrees of human endurance, kindness and exemplary courage in the face of danger. As a classroom lesson, it generates and offers multiple reactions, comments and reflections, and therefore has a lot of scope for language activity.

Before you read

To motivate your learners, arouse their interest and sustain their attention, you can involve them in some pre-reading activities. Here are some ideas you might like to use:

1. Show learners a few pictures of natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, storms or landslides, and a set of headlines/brief reports related to these calamities from newspapers. Ask them, in pairs, to match the pictures and headlines.

2. Alternatively, you can take a set of words related to natural calamities - like flood, famine, storm, earthquake, snowstorm, landslide etc. – and jumble the letters of each word. Ask learners to work out the answers sitting in pairs. For example, the above words can be jumbled as lofod, eifmn, roms, threeqman, swnotrosm, edilsdnal etc.

Once the learners have come up with the correct answers (with your help, if necessary), you can steer them towards the topic by having a class discussion.

3. You can ask them questions like these:

   - What is common to all the conditions and what makes them different?
   - Why is the loss of men and material so great?
   - Do you think one can predict such natural calamities?
   - What would you do if you heard about an earthquake in a neighbouring town?
   - How would you help others in such a situation?

4. You can also ask them these two questions to test their general knowledge:

   i. Which branch of studies deals with earthquakes?
   a. earthology b. quakology c. geophysics d. seismology (Ans.:d)

   ii. What is the unit used to measure earthquakes?
   a. Tremors per second b. Tremor scale c. Quakometer d. Richter scale (Ans.:d)
At this point you can link the exercises with the lesson by announcing that earthquakes take place not only on land but also under the sea/ocean. You can then introduce the lesson by writing the title ‘Tsunami’ on the blackboard and asking the learners what they know of this word. Encourage them to give their reactions on the unpleasant incident — whether they remembered it, how they felt when they came to know about it, if they knew any victims or had read about them, and so on.

Section I

As a while-reading activity you can ask the learners, as they read this section, to make a list of

1. the survivors and the dead mentioned in this section
2. people who helped others even as they were swept away

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survivors</th>
<th>Dead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comprehension check

Here are a few questions to test the learners’ understanding of the gist of this section and some relevant details. You can ask these orally before making learners complete the true or false exercise on page 27.

Who felt the earthquake first at Ignesious’ house?
What was Sanjeev’s profession? Do you think Sanjeev was true to his profession?
How did Meghna keep floating for two days?
Where was Almas Javed at the time of the disaster? Which Family members did she lose in the waves?

Section II

In this section, we read about the presence of mind of a school girl, and how her reactions managed to save the lives of several families. In the second paragraph on page 28, the words **rise, foam, bubble** and **form whirlpools** describe the signs that helped Tilly Smith recognize the unusual movement of the sea caused by the tsunami. You can help focus the learners’ attention on these important words through these simple tasks:

1. **As you know, this is how we recognize an earthquake – first there is an odd humming sound, then the windows and doors begin to rattle, and finally the ground beneath us starts to shake uncontrollably. In section II, we read about the signs that can help us recognize a tsunami wave. Can you locate them?**

2. **Complete the word web given below with words that show the movement of water.**
Answers: rise, surge, foam, bubble, wash away, swell, rushing, roll

3. (This task is an alternative to task 2: you need not do both together)
In section II, we come across several words that describe the movements of sea waves. Find these words and fill in the blanks in the following sentences with them. The meaning of each word is given in brackets.

1. The tsunami waves hitting Thailand in 2004 were caused by a ______________ (very big) earthquake off northern Sumatra.

2. The first sign that showed that something unnatural was happening in the sea was when the water started ___________ (becoming larger), and flooded the beach.

3. During an underwater earthquake, the sea begins to _________ (go up), form ____________ (balls of air in a liquid) and ____________ (form a mass of bubbles).

4. At the same time, as Tilly noticed, the water started forming into _______________ (circular currents of water).

5. All at once, giant waves crashed the seashore in a ____________ (sudden and great rise in the level of the sea), and Tilly's family was saved because they had moved to the third floor of their hotel.

Once they have read the story and found the answers for these blanks, they can answer the comprehension check questions easily.

One important point in this section that you would like to highlight for the learners is that Tilly was of their age, perhaps even younger; but she had the presence of mind to remember her geography lesson and react rightly at the right time. But more importantly, her parents respected her feelings and this saved everyone. If time permits, at this point you can lead a short class discussion:

Ask learners to relate any incident where they themselves managed to avoid an accident because their parents respected their warnings. Someone, for example, might have prevented a fire in the kitchen by warning their parent of a leaking gas cylinder.

After the lesson is over, you can also mention the fact that even children are capable of 'heroic deeds'. You can refer to bravery awards given on Republic Day in our country, and ask learners to collect names of the children who won this year).

Section III

At the beginning of this section, there is a picture-description task for learners. Instead of asking the whole class to describe the picture on page 29, you can add variety to the task
by dividing the class into three groups, and making them write down words and phrases to describe the three pictures on the effects of the tsunami given on page 25, 26 and 29 respectively.

In this section, we read about the effect of tsunamis on animals. Since the comprehension check does not include these, you can make the learners do these simple tasks.

Here is a table on the reactions of some of the animals mentioned in Section III. Fill in the columns with the information about them given in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>PICTURES OF ANIMALS</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elephants</td>
<td>![Elephant]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>![Dog]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flamingoes</td>
<td>![Flamingo]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo animals</td>
<td>![Zoo animals]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we give a report on some event, we often use statistics, which means facts in the form of numbers that shows information about something. For example, we can say ‘More than four million people worldwide watched Barack Obama take oath as the 44th President of the United States of America.’

In Section III, we have a number of figures showing the vast difference between the number of people and animals that died in the tsunami. These statistics have been given as proof that animals may possess a ‘sixth sense’ that warns them of natural disasters beforehand. Complete the list below with the correct statistics:

No. of casualties (dead) reported: ______
No. of countries that were affected by the tsunami: ______
No. of species of birds in Yala National Park: ______
No. of visitors washed away from Patanangala beach: ___________.
No. of animal carcasses found in Yala National Park: __________.

Now pick out any one sentence that shows how humans perish(died) in great numbers but animals didn't.

Working with the text

The questions in this section are expected to make learners revise the important ideas and themes in the lesson. One significant fact that this lesson highlights is the range of human emotions when people face sudden danger. For example, we learn about important morals like courage and sacrifice, as well as reactions of victims in tragedies like these. Here is a final summarizing exercise on this point:

Together with your benchmate, look at the list of words given. They are all adjectives that describe human reactions and characteristics. Follow the steps below:

- Study the words carefully to check whether you know the meaning of each. Look up a dictionary or ask your teacher the meanings of the words you are not very sure of, before you do the next step of the task.
- Now separate the words that show positive qualities from the negative reactions.
- Discuss with your partner and write the names of the people mentioned in the story who have that quality or showed that reaction.
- Share your answers with the class and find out how many of your friends have chosen the same words as you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>brave</th>
<th>sad</th>
<th>resourceful</th>
<th>courageous</th>
<th>traumatized</th>
<th>terrified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sacrificing</td>
<td>frightened</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>helpful</td>
<td>quick-witted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive qualities</th>
<th>Negative reactions</th>
<th>People in the story</th>
<th>Words to describe them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brave</td>
<td>confused</td>
<td>Almas</td>
<td>resourceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>traumatized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 4, 5 and 6 are open-ended and you might get different answers for them. For instance, some students may give answers based on their experiences; and these could be negative or positive. There is no right or wrong answer here; you would like to accommodate all answers. In case a negative picture emerges, you may like to deal with it gently, without allowing too much discussion on it.
Similarly, for question 5, some students may say the award must be shared with Tilly’s parents and others might feel it should be with the geography teacher. Welcome both their ideas and encourage them to argue strongly and justify their claim.

You may also add the following in the discussion:

1. Why do you think Almaz does not to talk about the incident?
2. Why do you think Tilly’s parents have not allowed their daughter to give TV interviews?

Working with language

Activity 1 in this section aims to develop learners’ vocabulary, and should not be very difficult for the learners as they have already done some preparatory tasks on these in the suggested activities on the movement of water under Section II.

In Activity 2, the words that will fill in the blanks are all nouns. But they are not all formed in the same manner from verbs, and learners may not be familiar with nouns such as tremor derived from tremble or rescue (noun) remaining the same as rescue (verb). To help them with the task, you can give them the following list out of which they can select the correct word forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>trembling</th>
<th>confused</th>
<th>reliefment</th>
<th>rescuement</th>
<th>exciting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confusion</td>
<td>tremor</td>
<td>relief</td>
<td>excitement</td>
<td>rescue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After learners have completed activity 3, remember to point out that not all sentences in active voice can be rewritten in the passive. You can give them a set of sentences with intransitive verbs to show them that these verbs do not have passive forms (because they are not followed by the object). Here is a short passage. The intransitive verbs are highlighted. If you like, you can give learners the passage without highlighting these verbs, and ask them to work out by themselves which sentences cannot be transformed into the passive voice.

Asha heard that her friend Sanjay had drowned that night. She could not believe her ears and cried all night long. Her mother came and tried to comfort her. The next day, Asha decided to go to the beach and see if she could be of any help. She stood on the beach for an hour, unable to believe what had happened. Then she walked to the edge of the shore, and started carrying small children back to the first aid tent. Sometimes she simply sat beside injured people comforting them with her kind words. She felt no hunger, nor did she worry that her parents were looking for her. By evening she was exhausted, and her mind was too full of sorrow to remind her of home.

You may also highlight the fact that some verbs are used more often in the passive form than the active one, like

She is surprised. Or I am excited.
Speaking and writing

This section does not include speaking activities, but here is one that will be interesting for learners, and help develop their communication skills.

Divide the class into groups of five or six and give them the following situations for role play (topic: interview with the survivors of the tragedy). Each group will have an interviewer and a set of survivors. Let them first prepare a dialogue sheet they will use for the role play. Once they are ready with their dialogues (e.g. questions & responses), let each group present their interview in front of the class.

Role play situations - an interview with:

1. one of the children that Ignesious saved.
2. the hospital doctor/attendant attending Almaz
3. Tilly Smith’s parents
4. Yala National Park attendants
5. the relief workers at one of the relief camps.

Here is another idea for a speaking task. Discuss with learners the power of Nature, and how we lose everything in an instant when a natural calamity occurs. Then ask them to imagine that Meghna’s elderly aunt, who lives in the nearest city, has somehow managed to speak to Meghna over the telephone. She wants to know whether Meghna is all right, and what things Meghna requires at the relief camp that her aunt can send with a relative. In groups, instruct the learners to write out a telephone conversation between Meghna and her relative.

Writing

Here are some suggestions on writing tasks. These are expected to develop learners’ composition skills.

- Almaz doesn’t talk about her loss; Tilly is not allowed to talk about her heroic efforts. Imagine that these two young girls come to know each other from newspaper reports. Now write a letter
  a. as Almaz to Tilly, appreciating her presence of mind.
  b. as Tilly to Almaz, comforting her on her loss, and promising to be her friend always.

- Suppose you come to know that some of your relatives are going on a family holiday to Andaman or Phuket in Thailand. Discuss with your benchmate and make a list of the things they should carry with them, and ways in which they can prepare themselves in case of an emergency situation like that created by a Tsunami. Then present your list to your classmates and see how many items you had in common.
(Here are some ideas that the learners should be able to include:)

- Carry a powerful torchlight and extra batteries
- Keep an emergency number that people can call in case you are suddenly unwell or injured
- Carry the number of the local police station and hospital
- Follow weather reports every 2 hours
- Be in a group
- Move away from the sea
- Take shelter on high structures
- Observe any odd reaction from animals

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