

In My Country, Most People Can't Afford to Go to School

Sang I



School children in Myanmar. Photo by Kehitys Lehti from [Flickr CC by NC 2.0](#).

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Were you able to go to school as a child? What was it like? What challenges did you have to overcome to be able to participate?
2. *Afford* (verb) means to have enough money to pay for something. *Affordable* (adjective) means something is not too expensive; it has a reasonable price. Use both words in sentences.

In Myanmar

In Myanmar, I lived in a small village. There was one elementary school in my village. We went

to that school from kindergarten through fourth grade. After we finished fourth grade, we had to go to the city for middle school. We had to leave our families in the village.

When I went to school in the city, I had to rent a small house with my friends. In this house, I felt lonely because I didn't have any family with me. At the end of the school day in the city, I would have a lot of work to do. I would have to fetch wood for cooking and walk a long way to get the water to shower or wash clothes. By the time I got home, it would be dark. When I could not afford a candle, I would not be able to study.

Every two weeks, we would go back to the village to get food and things to sell to pay for rent. We would sell foods like rice, eggs, and chicken. We would also use the money to buy notebooks, pencils, and anything we needed for school. I felt embarrassed because I often didn't have the things I needed for school. At school, there was no breakfast or lunch. Without money to buy lunch, I was often hungry at school. Also, we didn't have a school bus. Not having a bus made it difficult to get to school every day.

In the U.S.

In my country, most people can't afford to go to school. Here in the U.S., they give students everything they need. They provide a healthy breakfast and lunch. There are school buses so the children don't need to walk a long way. Children can stay with their parents or family until high school.

I have two children in school in the United States. One is in fourth grade and one is in sixth grade. The teachers are very helpful to my kids and me. Unlike in my country, they are able to call me if something happens at school and let me

know what happened. I am happy because I know my children will have what they need to study at school.

AFTER YOU READ:

- What does the author say is different about school in Myanmar and school in the U.S.? Use the grid below to organize the information.
- Do you believe education should be free? If so, up to what level should it be free? Explain your reasoning.

Sang I is from Myanmar. She has two kids and moved to the U.S. in 2009. She is an ESOL student at Reading Connections in High Point, NC. She thanks Reading Connections for teaching her to read and write in English.



Organize the Information

Use this grid to organize the information that Sang I shares about school in the U.S. and school in Myanmar. Make your own grid in a Google doc and work with a partner to fill it out.

School in Myanmar	School in the U.S.