

FLAMINGO

PROSE

CHAPTER

1

THE LAST LESSON

—Alphonse Daudet
(1840-1897)

Chapter Analysis

Question Type & Marks	Year					
	2016		2017		2018	
	D	OD	D	OD	D	OD
SA	-	-	3	4	-	-
LA	1	1	-	-	-	-

Introduction

'The Last Lesson' is set against the backdrop of the Franco-Prussian war (1870 - 71) in which France was defeated by Prussia with the war led by Bismark. Prussia, then, consisted of what now are the nations of Germany, Poland and parts of Austria. In this story, the French districts of Alsace and Lorraine have passed into Prussian hands. This story also shows the effect of this incident on the normal life in the schools. It also highlights the pain that was inflicted upon the people of a territory by the conquerors, who took away the rights of the people to study or speak their own language.

Summary

As Franz started very late for his school that morning, he was in great fear, especially because his teacher Mr. Hamel had said that he would put up questions on participles and Franz did not know anything about it. For a moment, he thought of running away and spend the day out. It was a warm and bright day. Birds were twittering outside and soldiers were practicing. All these things were more attractive than the rules of participles, but anyhow, he forced himself to move hurriedly towards the school.

When he was passing the town hall, there was a crowd in front of the bulletin board. For the last two years, all the bad news like the lost battles and the orders of the commanding officers, had been displayed on that notice-board. He What could be the matter then ? he thought without stopping.

The blacksmith, who had read the bulletin, told Franz not to hurry. There was plenty of time he had told him. But Franz did not slow down. He thought that the blacksmith was poking fun at him.

Franz wanted to reach his desk unnoticed. He hoped that there would be noise and commotion as usual. He depended on this noise and bustle to reach his desk unnoticed. But, he was surprised. Instead, he found the school quiet. Students were sitting quietly in their seats. Mr. Hamel was not rapping his ruler on the table. He was moving up and down with the ruler under his arm. He too looked grave and quiet.

There was no chance of Franz entering the room unnoticed. He had to open the door and enter before everybody else. Unexpectedly, Mr. Hamel did not rebuke him. Instead, he spoke kindly to him and told him to go to his desk. When Franz had settled down, he looked at Mr. Hamel. There was another surprise for him.

Mr. Hamel had put on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt and his embroidered black silk cap. He used to put on these clothes only on special occasions. But it was no special day. Franz could not understand why Mr. Hamel had put on those Sunday clothes.

There was still another surprise in store for Franz. There were village people on the back benches that had always been empty. The former Mayor, the former Post Master, the old Hauser with his triangular cap and some other village people occupied those back benches.

Mr. Hamel climbed up his chair and spoke to his pupils in a gentle and serious tone. He told them that an order had come from Berlin. French would not be taught to them any more. Instead, German was going to be taught and the new teacher was expected to arrive the very next day. The students were going to have their last lesson in French that day. Now, he knew, what order was there on the bulletin board, and why the blacksmith had told him not to hurry. He could also see why Mr. Hamel had put on his best clothes.

Mr. Hamel's words struck Franz like a thunderbolt. He was lost in thoughts. He had hardly learnt how to read and write, he felt that he would have to stop forever. He was sorry to have wasted his time. He had always been enjoying himself outdoors. He had hated his books. He had dreaded Mr. Hamel and his iron ruler. But his attitude suddenly changed. He felt that his books were good companions. He did not mind Mr. Hamel's ruler and rebukes.

Now, he also understood why the people of the village were there. They were also sorry that they had not been to school for much time. Now, they had come to thank the teacher for his faithful service.

Mr. Hamel asked Franz to tell the rule for the participle. Franz wished he could tell the rule. But he failed miserably.

Mr. Hamel did not scold Franz. He said Franz was not the only person to blame. The people of Alsace had never been interested in learning. The people always put it off till the next day. Franz's parents wanted Franz to earn some money instead of going to school. Mr. Hamel said they were strange Frenchmen who could not write or read their own language. He also blamed himself. He said sometimes he had closed the school when he had wanted to go fishing.

Mr. Hamel, then, praised his mother tongue. He said that French is the most beautiful, most logical and clearest language in the world. He exhorted the people to stick to it. He assured them that if they held fast to their language, they would be able to get rid of the Prussian rulers. Their language was the key to their freedom from slavery.

It was Mr. Hamel's last day at school. But he had the courage and devotion to do his teaching work as usual. He taught grammar. He gave writing exercises. He asked little children to trace their fishhooks. Franz listened to his lesson attentively. He felt Hamel had explained the lesson so clearly which he had never done before. It appeared to him that on that last day, he wanted to give his pupils all the knowledge he had.

The church clock struck twelve. It was the time for the school to close. Mr. Hamel wanted to say something, but he was overwhelmed with emotions. He wrote "Vive La France" on the blackboard and with a wave of his hand, dismissed the class.

Extracts for Comprehension

[4 marks each]

Q. 1. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

I started for school very late that morning and was in great dread of a scolding, especially because M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles, and I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright! The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods; and in the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles, but I had the strength to resist, and hurried off to school.

When I passed the town hall there was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board. For the last two years all our bad news had come from there — the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer — and I thought to myself, without stopping, "What can be the matter now?"

Then, as I hurried by as fast as I could go, the blacksmith, Wachter, who was there, with his apprentice, reading the bulletin, called after me, "Don't go so fast, bub; you'll get to your school in plenty of time!"

- Who is the author of these lines? 1
 - What was M. Hamel going to question Franz about? 1
 - For the last two years, all the bad news had come from _____. 1
 - Who asked Franz not to hurry to school? 1
- Ans.** a. Alphonse Daudet is the author of these lines.
 b. M. Hamel was going to ask Franz about participles.
 c. the bulletin board
 d. The blacksmith Wachter asked Franz not to hurry

to school.

Q. 2. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

I thought he was making fun of me, and reached M. Hamel's little garden all out of breath.

Usually, when school began, there was a great bustle, which could be heard out in the street, the opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated in unison, very loud, with our hands over our ears to understand better, and the teacher's great ruler rapping on the table. But now it was all so still! I had counted on the commotion to get to my desk without being seen; but, of course, that day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning. Through the window I saw my classmates, already in their places, and M. Hamel walking up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and go in before everybody. You can imagine how I blushed and how frightened I was.

But nothing happened. M. Hamel saw me and said very kindly, "Go to your place quickly, little Franz. We were beginning without you."

I jumped over the bench and sat down at my desk. Not till then, when I had got a little over my fright, did I see that our teacher had on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt, and the little black silk cap, all embroidered, that he never wore except on inspection and prize days. Besides, the whole school seemed so strange and solemn. But the thing that surprised me most was to see, on the back benches that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like ourselves; old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the former mayor, the former postmaster, and

several others besides. Everybody looked sad; and Hauser had brought an old primer, thumbed at the edges, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages.

- a. What was Franz banking on to enter the class as he was late? 1
- b. M. Hamel was wearing clothes which he used to wear on his _____. 1
- c. Who sat on the back bench on the last lesson? 1
- d. M. Hamel is introduced as a ruler-wielding teacher. This demonstrates that:
(a) he is concerned. (b) he is adamant.
(c) he is unfeeling. (d) he is a hard taskmaster. 1
- Ans. a. Franz was banking on the commotion in the classroom.
b. prize days.
c. The village people were sitting on the last bench on the last lesson.
d. (d) he is a hard task master.
- Q. 3. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:
- While I was wondering about it all, M. Hamel mounted his chair, and, in the same grave and gentle tone which he had used to me, said, "My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master comes tomorrow. This is your last French lesson. I want you to be very attentive." What a thunderclap these words were to me! Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall! My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn anymore! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up. And M. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.
- a. What order had come from Berlin? 1
- b. Which district came under the Prussian rule? 1
- c. What does the last lesson taught by Hamel symbolize? 1

- d. Franz looked for opportunities to collect _____ by skipping school. 1
- Ans. a. The order had come to teach German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.
b. The districts of Alsace and Lorraine had come under the Prussian rule.
c. The last lesson taught by Hamel symbolise the loss of own language and the loss of freedom.
d. bird's eggs

Q. 4. Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow:

All at once the church-clock struck twelve. Then the Angelus. At the same moment the trumpets of the Prussians, returning from drill, sounded under our windows. M. Hamel stood up, very pale, in his chair. I never saw him look so tall.

"My friends," said he, "I—I—" But something choked him. He could not go on.

Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, bearing on with all his might, he wrote as large as he could —

"Vive la France!"

Then he stopped and leaned his head against the wall, and, without a word, he made a gesture to us with his hand —

"School is dismissed — you may go."

- a. What does the marching of soldiers under the windows represent? 1
- b. What is the moral that the Alphonse Daudet wants to bring out? 1
- c. The language one speaks is the key to _____. 1
- d. 'Viva la France' became an emotional evidence of M. Hamel's?
(a) sadness and patriotism.
(b) finality and depression.
(c) nostalgia and emotional outburst.
(d) love for the school and teaching as a profession. 1
- Ans. a. The marching of soldiers under the window represented the dawn or beginning of Prussia in France.
b. The moral of the last lesson is that one must not put off things that one can do that day.
c. the sense of freedom
d. (a) sadness and patriotism.

Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks each]

Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each.

Q. 1. Why did Franz not want to go to school that day ?
[Delhi Set I, 2017]

Ans. Value Points :

- late for school
- great dread of scolding
- hadn't learnt participles

- it was a warm and bright day
- birds chirping
- Prussian soldiers drilling
- outside was more tempting than the rules of participles (Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : Franz thought of running away from the school that day because his teacher Mr. Hamel had asked them to prepare the chapter on

participles and he hadn't done it. Moreover, he was late for school and was in great dread of scolding from Mr. Hamel. The weather also was good and was tempting him not to go to school.

Q. 2. What did Franz see when he passed the town hall ? [Comptt., Delhi Set-II, 2013]

Ans. When Franz passed the town hall, he saw that there was a crowd in front of the bulletin board which normally displayed bad news received from the commanding officer. 2

Q. 3. After sitting down at his desk, what unusual thing did Franz observe about Mr. Hamel.

[Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-I, 2013]

Ans. Franz observed that Mr. Hamel was dressed in his fine clothes which he wore only on special occasions. He was also milder in his attitude that day. 2

Q. 4. How was Mr. Hamel dressed differently that day ? Why ? [CBSE, SQP 2015]

[Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-I, 2017]

OR

What was unusual about Mr. Hamel's dress on his last day in school ? [Comptt., Outside Delhi-III, 2014]

Ans. Mr. Hamel had put on his beautiful green coat, frilled shirt and a silk cap, the dress he used to wear on special occasions.

He was dressed differently because it was his last day in the school.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Q. 5. Who occupied the back benches in the classroom on the day of the last lesson ? Why ?

[Comptt., Delhi Set I, 2015]

OR

Why were some elderly persons occupying the back benches that day ?

(Outside Delhi 2017, Set I)

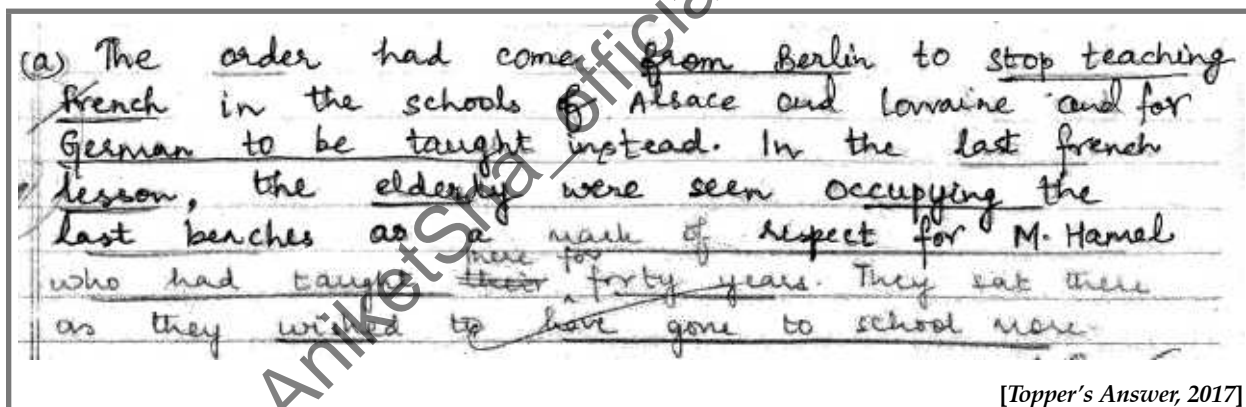
OR

How different was the scene in the classroom on the day of the last lesson ?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-III, 2017]

Ans. Value Points : Unusually quiet school ; older villagers occupying back benches of the classroom; teacher dressed in best clothes; children understanding the lesson better; M. Hamel explained patiently. (Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2



[Topper's Answer, 2017]

Q. 6. 'But the thing that surprised me most was to see'. What surprised Franz most in the class ?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-II, 2013]

OR

What did Franz wonder about when he entered the class that day ? [Delhi Set III, 2017]

Ans. Value Points :

- didn't get scolded in fact was spoken politely to
- everything appeared strange and solemn
- M. Hamel wearing formal clothes
- elders of the village sitting on back benches

(Any two) [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : The thing that surprised Franz the most was to see on the back benches, that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like the students; the old Hauser, with his three cornered hat, the former Mayor, the former Postmaster, and several others. Besides,

everybody looked sad. Mr. M. Hamel had also dressed in formal attire which he normally wore on inspection days or prize-giving functions.

Q. 7. Why is the order from Berlin called a thunder clap by Franz ? [Comptt., Delhi Set-III, 2014]

OR

What was the bulletin board news that caused a change in the school ? [Comptt., Delhi Set I, 2014]

Ans. Value Points : Study of French language prohibited, German made mandatory in all schools in Alsace and Lorraine/unexpected development.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Detailed Answer : The order from Berlin was called a thunderclap by Franz because it was a shock for him to know that the study of French language had been prohibited in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine and only German would be taught there. It was an unexpected development.

Q. 8. Which words of Mr. Hamel were a thunderclap to Franz? [Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-III 2013]

OR

“What a thunderclap these words were to me!” (Franz). What were those words and what was their effect on Franz ? [Outside Delhi, Set-II, 2017]

Ans. Value Points :

- words-‘French will not be taught any longer’
- only German to be taught
- the new master to arrive/take charge from the next day (Any one)
- Franz was shocked that M. Hamel was leaving
- developed sudden love and regard for his books, French and his teacher
- regretted his negligence (Any one)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Hamel told them that it was the last lesson he would teach them. The order had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master would come the next day. That was their last French lesson.

Franz was shocked that Mr. M. Hamel was leaving and he developed sudden love and regard for his books, language and teaches.

Q. 9. How did Franz react to the declaration that it was their last French lesson? [Delhi Set-I, 2013]

Ans. Franz became sentimental. He knew very little about French. But, suddenly, he developed a strange fascination and love for this language. Only a while ago, his books seemed a nuisance to him, but now these were as if his old friends. 2

Q. 10. Why were the elders of the village sitting in the classroom ? [Outside Delhi Set-I, 2017, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- as a mark of respect/to bid farewell to M. Hamel for his forty years of service
- last day of French class
- pay homage to their country which was theirs no more
- repented not having attended class/school
- love for their mother tongue

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] (Any two) 2

Detailed Answer : The elders of the village were sitting in the classroom as they had come to know about the orders from Berlin that they would not be taught French any more. They were sitting there to thank the teacher Mr. Hamel for his forty years of service and to show their respect for their language and the country.

[AI] Q. 11. “We’ve all a great deal to reproach ourselves with”, said Mr. Hamel. Comment.

[HOTS] [Delhi Set III, 2015]

OR

“We’ve all a great deal to reproach ourselves with” said M. Hamel. Refer to the context and explain what he wanted to convey to his students. (SQP 2018-19)

OR

How were the parents and M. Hamel responsible for the children’s neglect of the French language ? [Outside Delhi, Set-III, 2017]

Ans. M. Hamel said these words to Franz when he felt embarrassed at not being able to answer.

- He consoles Franz by saying everyone in Alsace is to be blamed for them not learning their mother tongue/parents, teacher and children all are to be blamed /Alsace puts off learning for tomorrow.

[CBSE Marking Scheme 2018-19] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Hamel, during his last lesson, regretted the fact that he had not fully utilized the time to teach French to his students. There were times when he would give them the day off, to go for his fishing trips or he would send them to water his plants. He also blamed the parents who instead of sending their children to school sent them to the fields to work. Now that French would not be taught anymore in their district, he wished he could have utilized all the time to teach French to the students.

Commonly Made Error

- In questions asking for comments, some students misunderstand it and answer it as a debatable topic.

Answering Tips

- The questions asking comments need to be answered by reporting the facts and not accusing or defending the statement.

Q. 12. Whom does Mr. Hamel reproach for his students’ unsatisfactory progress in studies ?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-I, 2017]

Ans. He blamed himself also because many-a-times he would give them the day off or sent the students to water his garden when he had to go fishing with his friends. 2

[AI] Q. 13. Whom did Mr. Hamel blame for Franz’s inability to answer his questions ? [Comptt., 2015]

OR

Whom did Mr. Hamel blame for the neglect of learning on the part of boys like Franz ?

[Delhi, Set-III, 2011]

Ans. Mr. Hamel blamed the parents of such children and himself for they had neglected the children’s learning because of their own selfish interests. 2

Q. 14. What was M. Hamel’s regret on the day of the last lesson ? [Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-II 2017]

Ans. Value Points :

- had to leave France after forty years
- had not learnt the language properly
- could not speak the language
- parents did not send children to school
- M. Hamel himself gave holiday to the children

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : M. Hamel's regret on the day the last lesson was that he had to leave France after giving forty years of service and his students had not proper the language properly. Mr. Hamel reproached himself for his students' unsatisfactory progress because he often sent his students on personal errands, for example, to water his plants or gave them a holiday when he wanted to go fishing.

Q. 15. What words did Mr. Hamel write on the blackboard before dismissing the last class ? What did they mean ?

[Comptt., Delhi & Outside Delhi, Set I, 2014]

Ans. He wrote 'Vive La France!'. It means Long Live France. [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Commonly Made Error

- Some students do not remember the exact French words written on the board and some of the students write the English translation of the French words.

Answering Tips

- Such questions asking to quote someone or something must be answered in exactly the same words as mentioned in the text.

Q. 16. What made Mr. Hamel cry towards the end of his last lesson ? [Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-II, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- had spent more than forty years but was forced to leave the school, the thought of his departure.
- the thought that France was no longer a free country/Alsace had been occupied by the Germans.
- the thought of missing his school, his pupils and the village folks (Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Hamel cried because he had spent more than forty years there but was now, forced to leave the school. Secondly, the thought that France was no more a free country and was occupied by the Germans made him sad.

Q. 17. Why did Mr. Hamel write 'Vive La France' on the blackboard ? [HOTS] [Delhi Set II, 2015]

Ans. Mr. Hamel wrote 'Vive La France' as a tribute to his country that had lost the war to Prussia. He wanted to remind everyone the importance of loving one's country and one's language. 2

Q. 18. How does Mr. Hamel prove to be an ideal teacher ? [CBSE, SQP 2014-15]

OR

What was M. Hamel's regret on the day of the last lesson ? [Comptt., Outside Delhi, Set-II, 2017]

Ans. Value Points :

- A selfless dedication help in the inception of school.
- 40 years of meritorious service made people conscious of importance of their language and national identity.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014-15] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Hamel proved to be an ideal teacher because he worked with selfless dedication and rendered his 40 years of meritorious service. He made people conscious of the importance of their language and national identity.

Q. 19. Why was Franz not scolded for reaching school late that day ? [Delhi, Set-II, 2017, Delhi 2015]

Ans. On reaching the school late that day, Franz was not scolded because the atmosphere in the school was sombre. Order had come from Berlin that German was to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine from then on. Everyone was sad that it was going to be their last French lesson. 2

[AI] Q. 20. How is the title 'The Last Lesson' appropriate ? [HOTS] [Comptt., Delhi, Set-I/III, 2017]

Ans. Value Points : Last lesson of the French teacher (M. Hamel)/ the last lesson in French/conquest of village by the Prussian leading to ban of learning French/the moment of realisation of the loss by the villagers/realisation of the importance of one's language. (Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : The title 'The Last Lesson' is appropriate because it was M. Hamel's Last Lesson. It was also the last French lesson as the order from Berlin had declared the ban on teaching French.

Q. 21. What changes did the order from Berlin bring about on the day of the last lesson ?

[Comptt., Delhi, Set-II, 2017]

Ans. Value Points : Unusually quiet school / older villagers occupying back benches of classroom / teacher dressed in best clothes/ children could understand the lesson better/ M. Hamel taught patiently. (Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : The order from Berlin was to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. As this was going to be his last day at the school, M. Hamel had put on his best clothes, which he wore only on special occasions. The whole school seemed so strange and solemn. On the back benches that were always empty, the elderly village people were sitting quietly with a sad visage. Some of them were even crying. The students paid a great deal of attention during their last French lesson, even the little ones. The one who had been most affected was M. Hamel. Although he taught every lesson with dedication, he looked sombre and pensive with tears in his eyes.

Long Answer Type Questions**[6 marks each]****Answer the following questions in about 125-150 words:****Q. 1. How different from usual was the atmosphere at school on the day of the last lesson ?***[Outside Delhi Set I, 2015]***OR****How did the order from Berlin change the situation in the school ?***[Outside Delhi Set III, 2015]***OR****What changes did the order from Berlin cause in school that day ?** (TBQ)**Ans. Value Points :**

- school very quiet and still – usually very noisy
- Mr. Hamel with ruler – banging on the desks
- lessons repeated in unison
- that day Mr. Hamel dressed in his Sunday best
- spoke gently and kindly
- all very attentive
- even small children not distracted
- villagers present
- feeling of patriotism and regret at not having learnt French when they had the time

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2015] 6

Detailed Answer : Usually, there used to be a great bustle of opening and closing of the desks the lesson used to be repeated loudly and the teacher's ruler would go rapping on the table, but that day everything was very calm and quiet like any Sunday morning. All the students were in their classroom. Mr. Hamel was walking with his iron ruler under his arm. Franz was frightened to enter the class as he thought that he would be scolded badly as he was very late. But to his surprise, Mr. Hamel did not say anything to him, rather he said to him very politely "Go to your place quickly little Franz." After sitting in his seat, Franz noticed that the teacher was wearing his beautiful green coat, frilled shirt with a little black silk cap having embroidery on it, this type of dress he usually wore for functions or prize ceremonies. Franz noticed that the other villagers including old Hauser, the former Mayor and the former Post master were also present in class and they were sitting on the back benches.

Q. 2. What changes did come over Franz after he heard Mr. Hamel's announcement ?*[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, 2010]***OR****How did Franz's feelings about Mr. Hamel and school change ?** (TBQ)

Ans. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine had passed into Prussian hands after the defeat of France. The French teacher, Mr. Hamel told the students that it was their last French lesson he would give them, as an order had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools. Thus,

a new teacher would come the next day.

These words felt like a peal of thunder to Franz because he thought he hardly knew how to write French. He felt that he would never learn French anymore and felt sorry for not learning it quite seriously. The books which seemed quite a satire a short while ago and heavy to carry, had now become like friends that he could not give up. Moreover, the thought that Mr. Hamel was going away and that he would never see him again, made Franz forget all about his ruler as well as how eccentric he was. **6**

Q. 3. Franz's attitude towards the little school as well as Mr. Hamel changes when he comes to know about the take over of his village by the Prussians. Do you agree ? Discuss with reference to 'The Last Lesson'. *[CBSE, SQP 2012, 2011]*

Ans. When Franz came to know that his village had been taken over by the Prussians, suddenly his attitude changed. Feelings of loyalty were aroused in him. He decided that now, he would pay attention to his lesson. Love for his school and his language suddenly became important to him. He felt that he would never miss his school from the very next day which was in contrast to his attitude of avoiding school earlier. Even, Mr. Hamel became a good teacher. Suddenly, his lesson became interesting. Franz developed an interest in learning the rules of participles. Franz was genuinely upset that Mr. Hamel was leaving the village. He felt that he had hardly learnt to read and write. He was sorry to have wasted his time. He had always been enjoying himself outdoors. He had hated his books. He had dreaded Mr. Hamel and his iron ruler. But his attitude suddenly changed. Mr. Hamel now seemed to him like a gentleman. The sudden threat of losing his very identity sent shivers down his spine and he desperately wanted to learn as much as he could in those forty minutes. The subject was no longer difficult and Mr. Hamel, no longer was a cranky teacher. **6**

Q. 4. Our native language is a part of our culture and we are proud of it. How does the presence of village elders in the classroom and Mr. Hamel's last lesson show their love for French ?

*[HOTS] [Outside Delhi Set I, 2016]***Ans. Value Points :**

- old men of the village sitting quietly at the back of classroom
- were sad as well as sorry for not having gone to school more often
- came to thank the master for forty years of faithful service and to show respect for a country that was theirs no more.
- regretted neglecting their language
- Mr. Hamel explained everything patiently
- appealed to people to preserve 'French'

- holding on to their language will keep them united.
- spoke about the beauty of French language
- was overwhelmed with emotions
- wrote Vive la France on the board in spite of Prussian soldiers marching outside **(Any three)**

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 6

Detailed Answer : The imposition of German language over the French speaking population can't be justified at all. It is the worst kind of colonialism.

The people of Alsace, particularly the village elders, suddenly realise how precious their language is to them. They come to attend the last class. Students like Franz too are not immune to patriotic feelings. Franz feels sorry for neglecting the learning of French. He hates the idea of German language being imposed on them. He remarks sarcastically: "Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons"

Mr. Hamel's love for French is genuine. The shocking order from Berlin arouses patriotic feelings in him. He loves French as the most beautiful language in the world. He calls it the clearest and the most logical language too. He regrets that the people of Alsace have not paid much heed to the learning of this great language. He asks the people to safeguard it among themselves. It is the key to their unity and freedom.

Q. 5. Our language is part of our culture and we are proud of it. Describe how regretful Mr. Hamel and the village elders are for having neglected their native language, French. [Delhi Set I, 2016]

Ans. Value Points :

- Mr. Hamel blamed himself and natives for neglecting French
- got his flowers watered
- had given a holiday when he wanted to go fishing
- parents sent children to work
- elders showed regret – sat quietly at the back of classroom
- Mr. Hamel appealed that they hold fast to their language, a key to their freedom

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 6

Detailed Answer : One day Mr. Hamel told everyone that an order had come from Berlin that French would not be taught there any more. Among the listeners were village people, the former Mayor, the former Post master, and the old Hauser. He further told them that instead of French, German was going to be taught. That day, they were going to have their last lesson in French. Those words struck Franz like a thunderbolt. He had hardly learnt to read and write. He was sorry to have wasted his time. The same thought was passing through the minds of other village elders. Then, he praised his mother tongue. He said that French was the most beautiful, most logical and the clearest language in the world. He exhorted the people to stick to it. He assured

them that if they held fast to their language, they would be able to get rid of the Prussian rulers. Their language was the key to their freedom from slavery. When the clock struck twelve, he tried to say something but he couldn't. Then, he wrote in large letters on the blackboard, "Vive La France!". Mr Hamel reproached himself for his students' unsatisfactory progress.

Q. 6. How did Mr. Hamel display his love for French language ? [Comptt., Set I, II, 2015]

OR

What does Mr. Hamel tell about the significance and safeguarding of French language ? How does he conclude his last lesson ?

Ans. Mr. Hamel, while talking of the French language, said that it was the most beautiful, the clearest and the most logical language in the world. He said that they must guard it among them and never forget it because when the people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language, it is as if they had the key to their prison.

Then, Mr. Hamel opened a grammar book and read the lesson to the students. All he said seemed so easy. He had never explained everything with so much patience. After the grammar, they had a lesson in writing. He requested all of them to hold fast to their language and culture for only their language could get them freedom. The moment they lost their language, they would be colonized forever. Mr. Hamel had new copies for the students, written in a beautiful round hand "France, Alsace". He had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last. He wanted to say something, but he could not, so he wrote on the black board "Vive La France"! and finally with the gestures of his hand he told the students that the class was dismissed and they could go. 6

Q. 7. Everybody during the last lesson is filled with regret. Comment. [Outside Delhi Set I, 2015]

Ans. Content :

Expression

grammatical accuracy, appropriate words and spelling [1½]

coherence and relevance of ideas and style [1½]

Value Points :

Regret in Franz :

- wished he had attended classes more often
- paid more attention.
- found lessons more interesting.

The village people regretted :

- they had paid less heed to learning their language.
- for not letting their wards go to school more often.

Mr. Hamel :

- for sending his students to water flowers.
- giving students a holiday when he wanted to go fishing. [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2015] 6

Detailed Answer : Yes, it is true that everybody in the Last Lesson is filled with regret. We begin with the narrator. As soon as he heard that it was his

last lesson of French, he immediately realised the value of learning French and wished he had done his studies properly. He even wished he had learnt his participles properly.

Mr. Hamel, the teacher regretted that he did not devote all his time in teaching them French. There were times when he had given them a day off as he had gone fishing or he had sent them to water his plants. Now, he wished he had utilized each of those moments.

The villagers and the elderly people of the village also regretted that they had never made an effort to study. They all sat on the last benches in the last class of Mr. Hamel wishing that they had not wasted their time earlier and had studied.

Commonly Made Error

- Many students answer it by expressing feelings of Franz and Mr. Hamel only and ignore the feelings of other villagers and elders present in the classroom.

Answering Tips

- In such descriptive answers, every aspect of the situation connected to the question must be covered in the answer.

AI Q. 8. What shows Mr. Hamel's love for the French language ? [Foreign, Set-I, II & III, 2014]

OR

How did Mr. Hamel say farewell to his students and the people of the town ?

[Outside Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2012]

Ans. Value Points : was filled with emotions/taught them all he could on that one day/blamed himself, for the children not being good in French/told them about the richness of the French language and insisted upon people to hold fast to their mother tongue/wrote with tears in his eyes -Vive-La-France.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Detailed Answer : On his last day at school, Mr. Hamel wore his best clothes. He was emotional and serious. He mounted his chair and in a grave and gentle tone, said that this was his last lesson and that an order had come from Berlin that now only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.

Then, he went on to talk about the French language. He made the villagers realize the importance of their language. He spoke about the beauty of it. He expressed his dismay that the whole population of Alsace was responsible for neglecting their mother tongue. He called upon them to guard it among themselves and never forget it. Their language was the key to their unity and liberation.

He, then, read the grammar lesson and later had a lesson in writing. That day, he gave out new copies on which it was written France, Alsace. He heard every lesson. When the clock struck twelve, he started to say something but his throat was choked. In the end, he turned to the blackboard and wrote as large as he could. "Vive La France!" He, then, stopped and leaned his head against the wall and made a gesture which said "School is dismissed, you may go."

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