

# The last lesson cbse class xii

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



\* in great dread of — fearful in anticipation of something \* counted on — to rely or trust on somebody/something \* thumbed at the edges — worn or soiled edges caused by frequent handling \* in unison — something happening or being done at the same time \* a great bustle — an excited (and often noisy) activity or a rapid, active commotion \* reproach ourselves with — to express disapproval, criticism, or disappointment

1 . What was Franz expected to be prepared with for school that day? That day, Franz was expected to be prepared with the lesson on participles. 2 . What did Franz notice that was unusual about the school that day? That day, Franz noticed the absence of the routine commotion caused by the opening and closing of desks, repeating of lessons in unison and rapping of the teacher's ruler on the table. The usual hustle-bustle was replaced by a strange stillness that was the characteristic of a school on a " Sunday morning. " 3 . What had been put up on the bulletin-board? The bulletin-board notified the general public about an order from Berlin. It stated that only German was to be taught to students in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. 4 . What changes did the order from Berlin cause in school that day? The order from Berlin brought all the routine hustle-bustle of the school life to a stand-still. The teacher, M. Hamel, became more sympathetic to his students and taught his lessons with more patience. The students became more attentive in their classes. The villagers, who were sitting at the usually empty back benches and had come to show their respect and gratitude to M. Hamel, regretted not going to school more than they did. The order also brought about a great change in the feelings of the people towards their country and their native language. There was a general sadness about not being able to utilise the

opportunities of learning French when it was easily accessible. 5 . How did Franz's feelings about M. Hamel and school change? Franz was shocked when M. Hamel told the students about the order from Berlin and that it was their last French lesson. He forgot about his teacher's ruler and crankiness. He developed a fondness for M. Hamel at the troubling idea of being separated from him forever. He understood the pain and agony his teacher was undergoing. And, he became more sympathetic towards his teacher. His school too, now, carried a different meaning. His books and lessons seemed old friends whom he couldn't give up. He realised with pain how much French meant to him and regretted not being attentive in his classes earlier. Suddenly, he felt that the ' difficult concepts' had never actually been difficult. \_\_\_\_\_ THE LAST

LESSON(EXTRA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS) 1. Why was Franz tempted to play truant from school? A. The French teacher M Hamel was going to ask questions on participle which Franz had not prepared. To avoid being scolded he was tempted to play truant from school and spend the day out doors in a pleasurable manner. 2. What was unusual about the school that Franz noticed when he entered the school? A. On entering the school Franz noticed there was unusual silence. There was no usual bustle of opening and closing of desks. The village elders had occupied the last benches that usually remain empty. 3. Why was it the last lesson? How did Franz react to it? A. As the order from Berlin had come to teach German in all schools of Alsace and Lorraine there would be no French lesson form the next day M Hamel announced in the class. The announcement was like a thunderclap to Franz. He felt sorry for not learning French. The French books, which earlier were

nuisance, became attractive. He felt he could not give up his French books.

4. What reasons did M Hamel give for their lack of interest in learning French? A. The lack of interest in learning French was due to the parents who wanted their children to work in farm or mill to earn, due to the students who were reluctant to learn and often put off the lesson for the next day and due to himself as he asked them to water the flower and gave them off when he had to go for fishing

5. Why does not M Hamel want the people to forget French? A. M Hamel wanted them not to forget French as it is the most beautiful and logical language and as long as they hold fast to their language it would be as if they had the key to the prison. 6. Describe how M Hamel conducted the last lesson. ----- A. In his last

French class though M Hamel was emotional he fully involved himself in the teaching learning process. He heard every lesson to the last sitting motionless in the chair. When the church bell struck twelve he stood up pale and wrote 'Vive La French' and with a gesture he communicated that the school is dismissed. EXTRA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. 1 . Justify the title

'the last lessons' Answer : The story 'The Last Lesson' highlights the human tendency that there is plenty of time to do things; hence, man keeps postponing the lessons of life, oblivious to the fact that life is subject to change. The people of Alsace always thought they had plenty of time to learn the lessons; therefore, they did not give much importance to school.

They preferred their children to work on the farms and mills instead of having them learn the lessons. Even Franz, the narrator, always looked for opportunities to skip the school and collect birds' eggs. However, the unexpected happens and an order is received from Berlin regarding

compulsory teaching of German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. It is then that they realise that they would be deprived of what they had been evading all this while. The last French lesson taught by M. Hamel symbolizes the loss of language and the loss of freedom for France. It becomes an emotional lesson rendered by M. Hamel to the villagers, signifying the changing order of life and its impact on the sensibilities and emotions of people. The marching soldiers under the windows represent the dawn of Prussia in France, defeat of the French people and the resultant threat to their language and culture. The story is aptly titled as it evokes the consciousness in the reader not to put off things and do what one can do that day. M. Hamel's bold ' Long live France' on the blackboard becomes substantial evidence of his sadness, patriotism and finality that is reflected in his motionless posture, his fixed gaze on things in the classroom and his eventual words- ' School is dismissed — You may go'. 2 . Franz thinks," will they make them sing in german , even the pigeons?" what could this means?

Answer : The Alsace and Lorraine districts were under the regime of France. During the Franco-Prussian war in which France was defeated by Prussia led by Bismarck and both these districts have passed into Prussian hands. Earlier they were learning their own language, French. As per new set up, an order was passed that German was to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. M. Hamel who had been teaching the French for the last forty years. In his last lesson he told that from the next day in the schools of both districts would teach only German instead of French from a new teacher. They won't be learning their own most beautiful, clearest and logical language. He told the importance of their own language, this feeling of M.

Hamel aroused their patriotic feelings. There came a sudden change in Franz. He disliked learning German. He heard and saw the pigeons. He immediately remarked: " Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons? " It is meant that the German can impose German language on the people of Alsace and Lorraine but they can't impose this language on the birds etc. They can enslave the people but have no authority to compel the cooing pigeons \_\_\_\_\_

Understanding the Text. 1 . The people in this story suddenly realize how precious their language is to them. What shows you this? Why does this happen? The crowd surrounding the bulletin-board, the presence of the villagers in the class, the silence in place of the routine hustle and bustle of the school, the emotions that gripped M. Hamel and Franz, representing that of the teacher and the student community respectively, were all indicators of the realisation of the importance of their language to them. In the story, M. Hamel says that people realise the importance of somebody or something in their lives very often when it is lost to them. Similarly, it was the order from Berlin that made people realise the importance of their language for them.

2 . Franz thinks, " Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons? " What could this mean? Language is inherent to culture and identity. The authority of human beings is restricted only to false boundaries that can be controlled. Nature and other things cannot be governed by some superficial laws of the wilful people. By taking the reference of making the pigeons learn German, the author is pointing to this very constraint. (or) This sentence could possibly mean that however hard the authorities try to embed German language in the culture of Alsace and Lorraine, the natural

status of French, for them, will remain unchanged. French flows in the air and the entire place is imbued with its effect. Even though they train students in German, the basic mode of communication would remain unchanged like the cooing of the pigeons. Talking About The Text. 1 . “ When a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison. ” Can you think of examples in history where a conquered people had their language taken away from them or had a language imposed on them? Some examples of the native language taken away from its people and/or imposition of the language of the conqueror are: (a) Portuguese becoming the lingua franca of Angola. (b) English imposed on the various Celtic peoples. (c) Spanish imposed on the Basques and the Catalans. (d) Turkish imposed on the Kurds. 2 . What happens to a linguistic minority in a state? How do you think they can keep their language alive? For example: Punjabis in Bangalore Tamilians in Mumbai Kannadigas in Delhi Gujaratis in Kolkata A linguistic minority in a state does not have as much liberty to exercise linguistic skills as the natives of the state. They initially try to learn the jargons in order to cope with the day-to-day life activities and finally begin to understand the native language with regular interaction. At the workplace and educational organisations, English or the link language helps a lot to cope up with the work and learning process. But, when it comes to understanding the basic norms of the society, in order to socialize, one does face a sort of linguistic barrier during communication. To keep their language alive, the linguistic minorities can form small communities where they can celebrate their festivals as per their traditions. Moreover, they can continue to speak their native language at their homes in order to make their

children learn the language. People must, even, try to visit their native places at regular intervals in order to stay close to their roots. 3 . Is it possible to carry pride in one's language too far? Do you know what 'linguistic chauvinism' means? Yes, it is possible to carry pride in one's language too far if one is fond of one's own language at the cost of others. Indifference towards other languages is not healthy for any democracy like India. When the sense of belonging to one's own language crosses the thin line between 'pride' and 'proud', it becomes linguistic chauvinism. If people feel good about their languages and traditions, they must have tolerance for other languages too. Everybody has the right to follow the religion as well as speak the language as per his/her desire. In fact, it is disparaging to distort the names of communities, for example, Bongs for Bengalis, Gujju for Gujratis, etc. WORKING WITH WORDS 1 . English is a language that contains words from many other languages. This inclusiveness is one of the reasons it is now a world language, for example: petite — French kindergarten — German capital — Latin democracy — Greek bazaar — Hindi Find out the origin of the following words. Tycoon, tulip, logo, bandicoot, barbecue, veranda, robot, zero, ski, trek tycoon — Japanese tulip — French logo — Greek bandicoot — Telugu barbecue — Spanish veranda — Hindi robot — Czech zero — Italian ski — Norwegian trek — Dutch 2 . (a) Notice the underlined words in these sentences and tick the option that best explains their meanings. (a) " What a thunderclap these words were to me! " The words were \_\_\_\_\_ (i) loud and clear. (ii) startling and unexpected. (iii) pleasant and welcome. (b) " When a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their



prison. " It is as if they have the key to the prison as long as they \_\_\_\_\_ (i) do not lose their language. (ii) are attached to their language. (iii) quickly learn the conqueror's language. (c) Don't go so fast, you will get to your school in plenty of time. You will get to your school \_\_\_\_\_ (i) very late. (ii) too early. (iii) early enough. (d) I never saw him look so tall. M. Hamel \_\_\_\_\_ (a) had grown physically

taller. (b) seemed very confident. (c) stood on the chair. ANSWERS. (a) (ii) startling and unexpected. (b) (ii) are attached to their language. (c) (iii) early enough. (d) (a) had grown physically taller. NOTICING FORM . Read

this sentence. M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles.

In the sentence above, the verb form " had said" in the first part is used to indicate an " earlier past. " The whole story is narrated in the past. M.

Hamel's " saying" happened earlier than the events in this story. This form of the verb is called the past perfect. Pick out five sentences from the story

with this form of verb and say why this form has been used. In the following sentences, two activities of past, occurring at two different points of time in

the past, are indicated. The one that happens earlier takes the " had" + past form of verb (V3), while the one that follows it takes the simple past form of

verb (V2). Sentences in past perfect form | Reason/ Explanation | 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. | The

protagonist decided to depend on the commotion to sneak into the

classroom before he encountered the quietness at the school. | Not till then,

when I had got a little over my fright, did I see that our teacher had on his

beautiful green coat ... prize days. | Getting over the fright happened before

he noticed his teacher's green coat. | ...Hauser had brought an old primer, thumbbed at the edge, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages. | Of the two actions, Hauser's bringing of the old primer happened before he held it open on his knees. | It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. | The feeling of regret comes after they realise they did not go to school more than what they did. | My books, that had seemed such a nuisance ... were old friends now that I couldn't give up. | The books were a nuisance earlier. It is only later that the protagonist talked about them in a different light. |

WRITING . 1 . Write a notice for your school bulletin board. Your notice could be an announcement of a forthcoming event, or a requirement to be fulfilled, or a rule to be followed. FUTURE VISION PUBLIC SCHOOL, DelhiNOTICEJuly 25, 2012SPORTS DAYThe school has decided to celebrate its Annual Sports Day on 25 July 2012. All those interested to participate in the various sports activities are requested to give their names to their respective class teachers latest by 6 July 2012 in the following format. Name: Class & Section: Activity 1: Activity 2: Activity 3: A copy of the list of sports activities has been sent to your class teacher. Please note that no student is allowed to participate in more than three sports activities. Rahul Sinha Head Boy | 2 . Write a paragraph of about 100 words arguing for or against having to study three languages at school. For Knowledge of additional language gives an edge — makes a person more competitive in today's fast paced world — better employment opportunities with fluency in a foreign language — multi-national companies send professionals for on-site projects to other countries — delegates from other countries coming to interact with people of our

country — can work as translators, interpreters or tourist guides, etc. — preservation of culture and tradition through native language. Against Students are already burdened with two languages — no need for a third language — no natural inclination for foreign language — foreign language not of much use in daily life and gradually gets forgotten — should not be forced on people who do not need it — can be taught only to those who demand for it — time and effort should not be wasted on something of no clear use. 3 . Have you ever changed your opinion about someone or something that you had earlier liked or disliked? Narrate what led you to change your mind. Directions: Think about something that you hated earlier but hate no more. It may be anything — eating a particular vegetable, studying a subject, going to a particular place. Or, you may think about a person whom you did not like earlier but your opinion about that person has changed now. It might be because of some misunderstanding or so. After you make your choice, recollect the reason for your dislike. Recollect what happened that made you change your opinion about the thing or person. Think about how it helped you look at things or events or people in different perspective. Write about it in a paragraph form. You may end it by talking about the learning experience or how it enriched your perspective or broadened your scope of thinking.

---

## THE LAST LESSON

(SUMMARY)

—Alphonse Daudet Franz's

apprehension Franz was hesitant about going to school that particular morning; not only was he late, he had not even prepared his lesson on participles. Nevertheless, he managed to curb the temptation to miss the

class, and hurried off to school. Bulletin-board at the town hall Franz came across a crowd in front of the infamous bulletin-board at the town hall. He walked past it wondering what could be the matter. The board was the standard mediator between the public and the government, conveying news, orders and other declarations from Berlin. The queer silence at the school

The school was unusually silent that morning. The customary commotion at the school — the sounds of opening and closing of desks, of lessons repeated in unison and that of the teacher's great ruler hitting the table — was replaced by a conspicuous stillness. The teacher, M. Hamel, was dressed in his best attire, and seemed uncommonly kind even when Franz showed up late for his class. The most surprising of all was the presence of the villagers inside the classroom occupying the usually empty backbenches. A stunning announcement M. Hamel announced that an order from Berlin had been received stating that only German was to be taught to students in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. Hence, it was going to be their last French lesson; a new teacher was to join the next day. Franz's realisation

The announcement shocked Franz. Hit by a sudden realisation about how little French he had learnt, Franz regretted missing his lessons and wasting his time in " seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar". A new fondness for his books as well as for his teacher developed in him. A pang of grief hit him as he understood the reason behind the presence of the elderly in the room: they had come to thank M. Hamel for his forty years of service and also to show " respect for the country that was theirs no more". M. Hamel's speech on the importance of learning French

When asked, Franz was unable to recite the rule for the participle. He felt guilty and genuinely regretted not

having read his lesson. But the teacher did not scold him; instead, he expressed his disappointment regarding man's general inclination towards procrastinating things. He made the audience conscious about the absurdity of not being able to speak or write one's native language. M. Hamel also pointed out parents' and his own fault in sending students on their errands. The teacher went on to talk about the importance of safeguarding their language, which according to him was the most beautiful language in the world. He explained how one's language can serve as a ray of hope in times of enslavement and captivity. M. Hamel's last lesson The last day for French in the school started with a grammar session, followed by a writing exercise and a history lesson. The teacher patiently explained the lesson to an extremely attentive audience. Franz, for the first time, seemed to enjoy the lesson taking in every bit of information effortlessly. Franz's altered view about French and his teacher He realised how French was ingrained into the whole environment and how a change in the medium of teaching can hardly eliminate the relation the people had with their native language. Franz understood the pain of his teacher as he watched him trying to capture every nook and corner of the school in his memories. " Vive la France! " The clock struck twelve indicating the end of the last French lecture. Amidst the sounds of the trumpets of the Prussian, M. Hamel's stood up but, overwhelmed by emotions, failed to say what he wanted to. So, he wrote on the blackboard " Vive la France! " (Long Live France!) and dismissed the class for the final time.