***Flamingo 1-* The last lesson**

**SAQ**

Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct option for each question:

1. Who was standing with Watcher?

a) His brother b) Franz c) His father d) His apprentice.

2. What was the narrator wondering about?

a) About the way the teacher was dressed.

b) About the strange and solemn atmosphere in the school.

c) About the village people sitting on the back benches.

d) All of three.

3. How did the teacher speak to the students?

a) In a loud and rough manner. b) In a witty and humorous way.

c) In a grave and gentle tone. d) In a proud and haughty manner.

4. What order had come from Berlin?

a) To teach only German in the schools of Berlin and Lorraine.

b) To teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.

c) To give the last lesson in German.

d) To appoint a new teacher in German.

5. Why does the narrator refer to M. Hamel as ‘Poor man’?

a) He empathizes with M. Hamel as he had to leave the village.

b) He believes that M. Hamel’s “fine Sunday clothes” clearly reflected that he was not rich.

c) He feels sorry for M. Hamel as it was his last French lesson.

d) He thinks that M. Hamel’s patriotism and sense of duty resulted in his poverty.

6. What was Frank sorry for?

a) For not learning his lessons in French. b) For disobeying M. Hamel.

c) For spending his fee money. d) a),b) & c)

7. Choose the correct set of options about why Franz was worried when he was going to the school.

A. Because he was late for school.

B. Because his teacher was there to ask questions on participles.

C. Because that day the last lesson of French was to be taught.

D. Because it was the last day of his teacher in the school.

E. Because he was not in proper uniform.

F. Because France was captured by Germans.

a) A, B b) C, D c) E, F d) C, E.

8. Franz saw a huge crowd assembled in front of bulletin board, but did not stop. How would you evaluate his reaction?

a) Franz was too little to care about the news of lost battles.

b) Nobody in Franz’s family was in the army, so did not matter.

c) Bad news had become very normal, so he went about his task.

d) It was too crowded for Franz to find out what news was up on the board.

9. When Franz passed the town hall, there …………. .

a) Were Prussian soldiers drilling.

b) Were birds chirping in the trees.

c) Was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board.

d) All of these three.

10. What could be heard usually when school began?

a) Opening and closing desks.

b) Loud noise of lessons repeated in unison.

c) Teacher’s ruler rapping on the table.

d) All of these three.

11. Choose the correct option that lists right answers to complete the following:

Franz saw that his teacher was wearing ……………. .

A. Green shirt B. Bow tie C. Frilled shirt. D. Green coat

E. Black silk cap. F. Green sweater G. T-shirt.

a) C, D, E b) A, B, F c) A, G d) A, B

12 . “I never saw him look so tall”. Which of the following best captures M. Hamel on the last day of school?

a) Cranky, miserable, dedicated, resigned. b) Patient, dignified, emotional, courageous.

c) Calm, nostalgic, disappointed, patriotic. d) Proud, reproachful, persistent, heroic.

13. Choose the option that lists the correct answers for the following questions:

(A) How did Franz feel when Mr. Hamel said that it was his last lesson at school?

(B) What did Mr. Hamel ask Franz to recite?

A. a) Franz was happy that he wouldn’t have to learn his French lessons anymore.

b) He cursed himself for not learning his lessons.

c) He felt pity for Mr. Hamel.

d) He felt sympathy for the village elders.

(B) a) Mr. Hamel asked Franz to recite the rule for participles.

b) He asked Franz to recite a song in praise of French language.

c) He asked Franz to recite the names of French freedom fighters.

d) He asked Franz to recite national anthem of his country.

14. Who was walking up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm when Franz looked through the window?

a) A German soldier. b) A Prussian soldier.

c) His French teacher, Mr. Hamel. d) The new German teacher.

15. What was Mr. Hamel expecting from the students?

a) He wanted them to enjoy themselves as it was their last lesson.

b) He wanted them to be regular in future.

c) He wanted them to be respectful to the German language.

d) He wanted them to be very attentive.

16. What did Mr. Hamel say about the French language?

a) It is the most beautiful language in the world.

b) It is the clearest language in the world.

c) It is the most logical language in the world.

d) All of these three.

17. What had been put up on the bulletin board?

a) It was an order from Berlin.

b) It said that only German would be taught in the schools.

c) It said ‘Long Live France’.

d) Both (a) and (b).

18.. What did Mr. Hamel say when Franz failed to recite the rules of participles?

a) Mr. Hamel scolded Franz.

b) He blamed Franz.

c) He blamed Franz’s parents and himself.

d) He gave him punishment.

19. What happened when the church-clock struck twelve?

a) There were sounds of the midday prayer.

b) There were sounds of trumpets played by Prussian soldiers.

c) There were sounds of French national anthem.

d) Both (a) and (b).

20. What did black smith say to Franz?

a) He asked him to hurry up as he was late.

b) He told him that he didn’t need to go fast as he had plenty of time.

c) He informed him that it was his last lesson in French.

d) He told him that he would be punished.

**SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

Q1. Why do you think little Franz was afraid of being scolded?

Ans: Franz was afraid of being scolded that day because M. Hamel, the teacher, had said that he would question them on participles. Franz frankly admits that he was totally ignorant about the topic.

Q2. “It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles.” What did Franz find much more tempting? How did he finally react?

Ans: Franz found that it was a very warm and bright day. The birds were chirping at the edge of woods. The Prussian soldiers were drilling in the open field at the back of sawmill. He could gladly spend life out of doors. However, he had the strength to resist the temptation. Finally, he hurried off to school.

Q3. “What can be the matter now?” says Franz. Why, do you think, did he make this comment?

Ans: There was a bulletin-board near the town-hall where all the important notices and orders from the government were put up. When Franz passed by it, he noticed a crowd there. He did not stop to look at it. He wondered what could be the matter then. For the last two years they had received all the bad news from the bulletin-board—the lost battle, conscription and the orders of the commanding officer.

Q4. Who was Wachter? What did he ask Franz and why? How did Franz react?

Ans: Wachter was a blacksmith. He was reading the latest news on the bulletin-board. He asked Franz not to go so fast to his school. He added that the little boy would get to his school in plenty of time. Wachter had read the latest bulletin about teaching of German. Franz thought that the blacksmith was making a fun of him. So, he ran to the school and reached there breathless.

Q5. What was the usual scene when Franz’s school began in the morning?

Ans: Usually, when the school began, there was a great bustle. The noise could be heard out in the streets. Students opened and closed their desks. They repeated the lessons together very loudly. The teacher would go on rapping the table with his great iron ruler.

Q6. How had Franz hoped to get to his desk? What had he to do and why?

Ans: Franz had hoped to get to his desk unseen during the commotion. But that day it was very quiet. So, Franz had to open the door and go in before everybody. He blushed as he was late. He was frightened that the teacher might rebuke him, but M. Hamel spoke kindly to him and asked him to occupy his seat quickly as they had been waiting for him.

Q7. What three things in school surprised Franz most that day?

Ans: First, M. Hamel, the teacher had put on his fine Sunday clothes—his beautiful green coat, frilled shirt and the little black silk cap, all embroidered. Second, the whole school seemed quite strange and solemn. Thirdly, the village people were sitting quietly like school children on the back benches that usually remained empty.

Q8. Why had the villagers come to school that day? How did they look?

Ans: The villagers had come there to thank M. Hamel for his forty years of faithful service. They also wanted to show their respect to the country that was theirs no more. They were sorry that they had not gone to school more. They were sitting quietly and looked sad.

Q9. “What a thunderclap these words were to me!” Which were the words that shocked and surprised the narrator?

Ans: M. Hamel, the teacher, told the children in a solemn and gentle tone that it was their last French lesson. Henceforth, only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master would come the next day. As that was their last French lesson, he wanted them to be very attentive. The teacher’s kind gesture and use of soft words shocked and surprised the narrator

Q10. How did Franz react to the declaration: “This is your last French lesson”?

Ans: The words appeared startling and unexpected like a thunderclap. He now understood why there was a crowd at the bulletin board, why the village people had come to school, why the teacher was dressed in his Sunday best and why there was sadness and silence in the school.

Q11. What tempted Franz to stay away from school?

Ans: It was a bright day with warm weather. The birds were chirping at the edge of woods. The Prussian soldiers were drilling in the open field at the back of sawmill. Above all, Franz was not prepared for the test on participles. These things tempted him to stay away from school.

Q12. Who did M. Hamel blame for neglect of learning on the part of boys like Franz?

Ans: He thought it was typical with the people of Alsace. They would put off learning till next day. Parents are not quite anxious to have their children learn. They put them to work on a farm or at the mills in order to have a little more money. M. Hamel too neglected their lessons. He would make the children water his garden and gave them holidays whenever he wanted to go fishing.

Q13. What did M. Hamel tell them about French language? What did he ask them to do and why?

Ans: M. Hamel told them that French was the most beautiful language in the world. It was the clearest and the most logical language. He asked them to guard it among them and never forget it. He asserted that when a people were enslaved, as long as they held fast to their language, they had the key to their prison.

Q14. Why were the elders of the village sitting in the classroom?

Ans: The elders were present in the classroom as they regretted not going to school earlier. Now that the French classes were banned, they regretted their neglect. They were present in the class as a mark of respect to their country. They also wanted to show their gratitude to the master for his forty years of faithful service.

Q15. How was the last French class conducted?

Ans: In the last French class, the teacher explained the lessons patiently and M. Hamel had new copies with the words ―France and Alsace written on them in a beautiful round hand. The boys set to work quietly. The only sound was that of the scratching of the pens over the paper. Nobody paid any attention to the beetles that flew in.

Q16. How did M. Hamel feel and behave during the last lesson?

Ans: M. Hamel was solemn and gentle. He did not rap his great iron ruler on the desk as usual and did not scold Franz for being late. He sat motionless in his chair during the writing session. He gazed at one thing or the other. Perhaps he wanted to fix in his mind how everything looked in that little school room. Surely, it must have broken his heart to leave it all after forty years.

Q17. “He had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last.” What led Franz to make this remark?

Ans: Franz noticed that M. Hamel was feeling sad on having to leave the place sifter 40 years and not being allowed to teach French any longer. Yet, he kept control on his emotions. He performed his duties faithfully. He heard every lesson to the last. The school was dismissed only at mid-day prayer time.

Q18. What happened when the lesson in history was over?

Ans: After the lesson in history was over, the babies chanted their ba, be, bi, bo, bu. Old Hauser, who was sitting at the back of the room, had put on his spectacles. He was holding his primer in both hands. He was spelling the letters with the babies.

Q19. “Ah, how well I remember it, that last lesson!” says the narrator. Which scene does he remember more vividly than the others?

Ans: The narrator remembers the scene of old Hauser spelling the letters from the primer with the babies. He too was crying. His voice trembled with emotion. It was so funny to hear him that all of them wanted to laugh and cry at the same time.

Q20. How did M. Hamel behave as the last lesson came to an end?

Ans: M. Hamel stood up in his chair. He looked very pale and tall. He wanted to say some parting words, but something choked him. Then he wrote ―Vive La France! on the blackboard with a piece of chalk. Then he stopped. He leaned his head against the wall. Without a word, he made a gesture to the students with his hand asking them to go as the school was over.

**LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

Q1. Why Franz was scared that day? What did he see on his way to school and how did he get to his desk?

Ans: Franz was not good at learning. He would rather take the day off and waste time in searching birds’ eggs or going sliding on the Saar. Franz was scared that day because M. Hamel had said that he would question them on participles. Franz did not know anything about participles. He found that the day was warm and bright. The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods. The Prussian soldiers were drilling in the open fields. There was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board near the town-hall. Franz found the school room unusually quiet. So, he had no option but to open the door and go in before everybody. He blushed and was frightened of the teacher. M. Hamel spoke very kindly to him and asked him to go to his place quickly. Franz jumped over the bench and sat down at his desk.

Q2. What order had been received from Berlin that day? What effect did it have on the life at school?

Ans: An order had been received from Berlin that only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. This order had far-reaching effects on the school. M. Hamel, who had been teaching French at the village school for the past forty years would deliver his last lesson that day. M. Hamel, had put on his best clothes to honour the last class. Old men of the village were seated quietly at the back of the classroom. They were sad as well as sorry for they had not gone to school more. They had come to thank the master for his forty years of faithful service and to show respect for the country that was theirs no more. The teacher addressed the students in a solemn and gentle tone. He asked them to be attentive and explained everything quite patiently. He appealed to them to preserve French among them. It would act as key to the prison. He felt so overwhelmed by emotion that he could not bid farewell properly. The students on their part were very attentive in class. They followed every instruction of the teacher and did their lessons well. Little Franz found the lessons very interesting and easy to understand. Thus the whole school, including the teacher and the students were very solemn and sad about the lessons and school.

Q3. What do you think is the theme of the story “The Last Lesson‟? What is the reason behind its universal appeal?

Ans: The theme of the story ‘The Last Lesson’ is linguistic chauvinism of the proud conquerors and the pain that is inflicted on the people of a territory by them by taking away the right to study or speak their own language and thus make them aliens in their own land of birth. The story has a sub-theme also. It highlights the attitudes of the students and teachers to learning and teaching. Though the story is located in a particular village of Alsace district of France which had passed into Prussian hands, it has a universal appeal. It highlights the efforts of the victors to crush their victims—the vanquished people in all possible manner—materially, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. Taking away mother tongue from the people is the harshest punishment. The proper equation between student and teacher, his focused attention, helpful and encouraging attitude and kind treatment can encourage students to learn better.

Q4. Comment on the appropriateness of the title “The Last Lesson”.

Ans: The story has an appropriate and suggestive title. It is the centre of attention throughout and the whole story revolves around it. The beginning of the story serves as preparation for it. The unusual quietness at school, presence of village elders and the teacher in his Sunday best dress—all point out to the unusual and unique occasion—the last lesson in French in a French village school in a district conquered by the Prussians. While delivering the last lesson, the teacher wants to transmit all his knowledge in one go. He explains everything with patience and the students as well as old villagers listen attentively. For the narrator it is an unforgettable experience. “―Ah, how well I remember it, that last lesson,” says he. Old Hauser is crying and his voice trembled with emotion. As the teacher is unable to express His emotions because of choked throat, he ends the lesson by writing ‘Vive La France’ on the blackboard. He makes a gesture with his hand to indicate that the school is dismissed and students can go home.

Q5. What impression do you form of M. Hamel on the basis of your study of the story “The Last Lesson”?

Ans: M. Hamel is an experienced teacher who has been teaching in that village school for forty years. He imparts primary education in all subjects. He is a hard task master and students like Franz, who are not good learners, are in great dread of being scolded by him. The latest order of the Prussian conquerors upsets him. He has to leave the place for ever and feels heart broken. He feels sad but exercises self-control. He has the courage to hear every lesson to the last. His performance during the last lesson is exemplary. He is kind even to a late comer like Franz. He uses a solemn and gentle tone while addressing the students. He has a logical mind and can analyse problems and deduce the reasons responsible for it. The problem for Alsace is that it (the district) puts off learning till the next day. He knows the emotional hold of a language over its users. He is a good communicator and explains everything patiently. Partings are painful and being human, M. Hamel too is no exception. He fails to say goodbye as his throat is choked overcome by emotions. On the whole, he is a patriotic gentleman.

**VALUE-BASED QUESTIONS**

Q1. War causes destruction and spreads hatred. People feel insecure. Discuss the disadvantages of war keeping in mind Franco-Prussian war (1870-71).

Ans: War is a great threat to mankind. Fear, anxiety, tension and hatred are some of the off springs of war. No individual is in favour of this brutal act. Innocent people lose their life because of the vested interests of some of the corrupt politicians. Moreover, war is not the solution to any problem. It only increases the hiatus between two nations. The desire to overpower the other disseminates hatred and the feelings of enmity. The aftermaths of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are evident before us. It should also be remembered that each nation is trying its level best to become a nuclear power. A nuclear bomb has the power to devastate nations. Thousands of people will lose their lives. There will not be any survivor. If someone is left alive, he/she will be crippled. There is no doubt that war has put the human existence at stake. We have heard seers say that one should shed one’s ego. The nations should also feel equally important. No nation is self-sufficient. Peace enhances creativity and productivity. The concept of a global village should be followed by all countries. Thus, war does not benefit any individual. It must not be encouraged.

Q2. It is often said that each language is unique in itself. No language is superior or inferior. People need to understand that a language is one of the means of communication. Discuss this statement in the light of the following lines: ―My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master comes tomorrow. This is your last French lesson.

Ans: Language is always considered a medium of communication. Man is a gregarious animal. He has to interact with the fellow human beings. Therefore, a set of complex symbols is designed to serve this purpose. We must ruminate over the past before discussing the status of a language. There are innumerable man-made problems. At the dawn of civilisation there was no discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, creed, language and nationality. But in this century these problems exist. Nature does not segregate nations. Scientific advancement, material prosperity, lofty aspirations, materialistic attitude, a desire to rule the world and vested interests are some of the causes of human sufferings. The concepts of all languages are similar. They have nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions. As no religion is insignificant in the same way no language is inferior. The characteristics and nature of all languages are similar. The only difference is in symbols and pronunciation. The purpose and objective of all languages are synonymous. There is a dire need to understand that there should be only one religion i.e. humanity and there should be only one language i.e. the language of love. A language must not become the cause of rift among masses. It should bring people together instead of spreading hatred. One should not despise others because of their language. It is against human dignity and grace.

Q3. The people of Alsace and Lorraine were forced to study German. They were not allowed to study French. It implies that students of the area were taught only one language. They did not follow the concept of three languages at school. Write an article on the topic Advantages of Three Language System at school.

Ans: Advantages of Three Language System

India is a democratic Country. It is replete with people who have diverse backgrounds, and culture. Their customs and traditions vary. Their languages are also different. The language of a South Indian is entirely different from that of the North Indians. People have their regional languages and dialects too. In such circumstances it becomes a herculean task to decide which language should be taught at schools. So, India opted for three language system at schools. It is a boon to the residents of a particular area. They do not feel that their language is insignificant and ignored. They are given ample opportunities to opt for the languages they intend to speak or learn. Pupils get fundamental knowledge of three languages and can appreciate the literature of all these three languages. Such students never face failure due to language barriers. They bring laurels to their parents and nations as well. They explore new avenues and horizons with an astonishing ease. Three language system must be adopted by all nations so as to acquaint the children with various language patterns. The people of Alsace and Lorraine could be taught both languages i.e. German and French. Linguistic discrimination mars the future of humanity.