

1 The Last Lesson

NCERT Books

April 20, 2020 by [Kishen \(https://www.ncertbooks.guru/author/kishen/\)](https://www.ncertbooks.guru/author/kishen/)

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The Last Lesson Textual Questions and Answers

Think-as-you-read Questions

Question 1.

What was Franz expected to be prepared with for school that day?

Answer:

Franz was expected to be prepared with the lesson on 'participles'. His teacher, M. Hamel, had announced an oral test on participles, but Franz didn't know anything about the rules of participles.

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Question 2.

What did Franz notice that was unusual about the school that day?

Answer:

When he reached the school, Franz was surprised to find everything still and quiet as if it was a Sunday morning. His teacher, M. Hamel, was dressed in his green coat, frilled shirt and black cap he used to wear this formal dress only on special days. Moreover, the last benches of the classroom were occupied by the village elders who looked very' sad.

Question 3.

What had been put up on the bulletin-board?

Answer:

An order from Berlin had been put up on the bulletin-board. It stated that from the next day only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.

Question 4.

What changes did the order from Berlin cause in the school that day?

Answer:

The order from Berlin created an atmosphere of dismay at the school. Everything became quiet and still. Everyone was shocked and upset. The teacher, M. Hamel, was highly depressed. He had put on his finest dress which he used to wear only on special days. Some elders of the village also came to attend the class as a mark of respect to their mother tongue and to the teacher.

Question 5.

How did Franz feelings about M. Hamel and school change?

Answer:

M. Hamel was a very strict teacher. Franz didn't like him and always wanted to spend his time

M. Hamel was a very strict teacher. Franz did not like him and always wanted to spend his time outside and bunk his class. But when he came to know that it was going to be their last lesson and French would no more be taught to them, he felt a great love for the language and the teacher. He started understanding whatever M. Hamel taught.

The Last Lesson Understanding the Text

Question 1.

The people in this story suddenly realise how precious their language is to them. What shows you this? Why does this happen?

Answer:

People of Alsace and Lorraine were shattered and shocked to read the order that came from Berlin. As per this order French would no more be taught in schools. Only German was to be taught. This order made them realise what they were going to miss. Their basic right to learn the mother tongue was taken away from them. This evoked patriotism and love for mother tongue in them. They were full of remorse and regretted that they had not given importance to their mother tongue earlier.

As a mark of respect to their mother tongue and the French teacher, M. Hamel, the eminent people of the village came to attend the last lesson of M. Hamel. Hauser had brought an old primer. Even the little children were shocked. Franz, who never liked to learn the language, found himself in a state of shock and suddenly started developing a liking for the language as well as for his teacher.

Question 2.

Franz thinks, "Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?" What could this mean?

Answer:

This shows the patriotic fervour and love of French people for their mother tongue. Even a small boy like Franz was very upset at the fact that he would be deprived of his own language.

He wondered if the pigeons would also be made to sing in German. In fact, it is a remark on the hollowness of man's authority. Man can exert authority only on human beings, but not on nature.

The Last Lesson – Solved Question Bank

Reference-to-Context Questions

Read the extract given below.

Question 1.

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.

Answer the following.

- (a) The speaker of these lines is _____ and he is thinking of not going to the class.
- (b) Prussian soldiers were in _____ as there was a war going on.
- (c) The speaker is in a dilemma about going to school as he has not learnt the _____ .
- (d) Find a word similar to 'withstand' from the given lines.

Answer:

- (a) Little Fran
- (b) Alsace
- (c) participles
- (d) resist

Question 2.

Reading the bulletin, called after me, "Don't go so fast, bub; you'll get to your school in plenty of time!" I thought he was making fun of me, and reached M. Hamel's little garden all out of breath.

Answer the following.

- (a) Bub here refers to _____ , who was going to school.
- (b) The speaker was nervous as he did not learn his lessons and was _____ .
- (c) M. Hamel was Bub's teacher who taught him _____
- (d) Find an expression from the extract which means 'mocking'.

Answer:

- (a) Franz
- (b) late
- (c) French
- (d) making fun of

(a) making fun of

Question 3.

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 any more! I must stop there, then.

Answer the following.

- (a) Hamel's announcement _____ Franz and he was frightened.
- (b) Town hall had a _____ that provided all the information.
- (c) 'Wretches' here refers to Germans. (True/False)
- (d) Franz was happy that his studies were over. (True/False)

Answer:

- (a) shocked
- (b) bulletin-board
- (c) True
- (d) False

Question 4.

I heard M. Hamel say to me, "/ won't scold you, little Franz; you must feel bad enough. See how it is! Every day we have said to ourselves, 'Bah! I've plenty of time. I'll learn it tomorrow.' And now you see where we've come out. Ah, that's the great trouble with Alsace; she puts off learning till tomorrow.

Answer the following.

- (a) Hamel was not _____ with Franz because it was the last lesson.
- (b) Franz would feel bad because he always learnt his lessons on time. (True/False)
- (c) 'Ourselves' here refers to all the teachers. (True/False)
- (d) Find a word for 'problem' from the extract.

Answer:

- (a) angry
- (b) False
- (c) False
- (d) trouble

Question 5.

Then, from one thing to another, M. Hamel went on to talk of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world — the clearest, the most logical; that we must guard it among us and never forget it, because 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. Then he opened a grammar and read us our lesson.

Answer the following.

- (a) M. Hamel is the speaker and he is overwhelmed with _____ for his language.
- (b) 'French people' here refers to 'they'. (True/False)
- (c) Here the word 'prison' means the real prison. (True/False)
- (d) Find a word from the passage that means the same as 'dominate'.

Answer:

- (a) love
- (b) True
- (c) False
- (d) enslave

Question 6.

But he had the courage to hear even a lesson to the very last. After the writing, we had a lesson in history, and then the babies chanted their ba, be bi, bo, bu. Down there at the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles and, holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with them.

Answer the following.

- (a) Hamel was _____ with each and every student.
- (b) Old Hauser spelled the letters from the primer. (True/False)
- (c) Babies had come to school for the first time so they had to learn alphabet. (True/False)
- (d) Find the synonym of 'bravery' from the extract.

Answer:

- (a) patient
- (b) True
- (c) False
- (d) courage

Question 7.

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.

Answer the following.

- (a) Franz was counting on _____ as he did not wish to be seen by his teacher.
- (b) Find the synonym of 'peaceful' from the extract.
- (c) Who was terrible: the teacher or the ruler.
- (d) M. Hamel had called the students on a Sunday. (True/False)

Answer:

- (a) commotion
- (b) still
- (c) The teacher
- (d) False

Question 8.

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.

Answer the follow-inn.

- (a) The school was _____ and solemn because it was the last lesson.
- (b) Franz was surprised to see a class full of villagers. (True/False)
- (c) The benches were _____ earlier but not today.
- (d) Give the synonym for 'sober' from the extract.

Answer:

- (a) strange
- (b) True
- (c) vacant
- (d) Solemn

Question 9.

Poor man! It was in honour of this last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes, and now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room. It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thanking our master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country that was theirs no more.

Answer the following.

- (a) Franz was sorry for his teacher as he was going to lose his job. (True/False)
- (b) Hamel wore Sunday clothes in honor of the _____ .
- (c) Old men came for the class in the honor of _____ services.
- (d) Pick the antonym of 'dishonor'.

Answer:

- (a) False
- (b) last lesson
- (c) Hamel's
- (d) honour

Question 10.

I was amazed to see how well I understood it. All he said seemed so easy, so easy! I think, too, that I had never listened so carefully, and that he had never explained everything with so much patience. It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give us all he knew before going away, and to put it all into our heads at one stroke.

Answer the following.

- (a) The speaker here is _____ .
- (b) The speaker felt _____ for not being inattentive in the class.
- (c) Hamel was sorry for not being regular with his classes. (True/False)
- (d) Find a word from the extract that means 'the ability to stay calm' from the extract.

Answer:

- (a) Franz
- (b) sorry
- (c) True
- (d) patience

The Last Lesson Short Questions and Answers

Question 1.

Why did Franz think of running away from school that morning? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

Franz didn't want to go to school that day because it was a fine warm day. The weather was very fine and there were birds chirping at the edge of the woods. He heard the sound of the Prussian soldiers drilling at the back of sawmill. Moreover, he was already late for the school and had not prepared his lesson on participles. He knew that he would be scolded by the teacher for that. So he wanted to run away from school.

Question 2.

What tempted Franz to stay away from school? [Delhi 2013]

Or

Why did Franz not want to go to school that day? [Delhi 2017]

Answer:

Franz was already late for school. He had not even prepared the topic of participles for which he was going to be tested that day. Moreover, it was a warm day and he was tempted by the chirping of birds and sounds of Prussian soldiers exercising at the back of the sawmill to miss the school that day.

Question 3.

What did Franz see when he passed the town hall? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

When Franz passed the town hall, he saw a large crowd around the bulletin-board. People had gathered in large numbers and they were all reading the bulletin-board. All the latest news relating to the battle between the French and the Prussians was put up on the bulletin-board. On that day the order had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. This order was put up on the bulletin-board.

Question 4.

What had Franz counted on to enter class unnoticed?

Answer:

Franz was late for the school that day. But he was quite confident to enter the class unnoticed

Franz was late for the school that day. But he was quite confident to enter the class unnoticed because usually there was a lot of confusion and noise in the beginning of the school. Every day there was a sound of opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated in unison and teacher's great ruler rapping on the table. So Franz thought that he would take the advantage of the situation and enter the class unnoticed.

Question 5.

What did Franz wonder about when he entered the class that day? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

Franz was surprised when he entered the class that day as it was unusually quiet. M. Hamel spoke to him kindly which was contrary to his expectations. M. Hamel was dressed in his formal attire which he did only on special occasions. What surprised Franz most was the fact that the village people were sitting quietly on the last benches.

Question 6.

Why was Franz not scolded for reaching the school late that day? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

Franz was not scolded that day because the scenario in the school had changed. M. Hamel spoke kindly to him and asked him to go to his seat. He blamed himself for not doing his duty faithfully and now there was the order from Berlin which had to be followed.

Question 7.

Why was M. Hamel kind to Franz even though he was late for school? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

It was the last lesson of M. Hamel in the school as the new German teacher was arriving the following day. M. Hamel was sad and sentimental as he was to leave the school after forty years of service as a teacher in French. He was very emotional, kind and understanding. So, he did not scold Franz even though he was late.

Question 8.

What was the order from Berlin and what changes did it cause in the school? [All India 2013]

Answer:

The order from Berlin said instead of French only German had to be taught in the schools of

The order from Berlin said instead of French only German had to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The order deeply shocked and upset everyone in the school. Everything became quiet and still. The teacher, M. Hamel, had put on his finest dress which he used to wear only on special occasions. All the students were quiet and the back seats of the class were occupied by the village elders.

Question 9.

‘What a thunderclap these words were to me!’ What were the words that shocked and surprised the narrator? [Delhi 2013]

Or

Why is the order from Berlin called a thunderclap by Franz?

Or

“What a thunderclap these words were to me!” (Franz). What were those words and what was their effect on Franz? [All India 2017]

Answer:

When Franz reached the school, he saw a strange stillness in the class. Then the teacher, M. Hamel, announced that it was their last lesson in French and the new German teacher will take the charge on the following day. These words of M. Hamel came as thunderclap to Franz since the announcement was unexpected and sudden for him.

Question 10.

How did Franz react to the declaration that it was their last French lesson? [Delhi 2013]

Answer:

Franz was not able to accept the fact it was their last lesson in French. He was surprised and at the same time disheartened. He regretted not learning his mother tongue when he had the opportunity. He felt a sudden love for the language and his teacher.

Question 11.

What changes did little Franz undergo after M. Hamel’s announcement?

Answer:

Franz was shocked at M. Hamel’s announcement that it was their last lesson in French. Suddenly he felt his love for his mother tongue and realised that he could hardly write well in French. He was full of remorse and regret for being so careless and unattentive in his class. Moreover, he also developed a liking for his teacher M. Hamel.

moreover, he also developed a liking for his teacher M. Hamel.

Question 12.

What was unusual about M. Hamel's dress on his last day in the school? [All India 2014]

Answer:

M. Hamel was dressed in his formal dress which he used to wear only on inspection or prize giving days. He was in his beautiful green coat, frilled shirt and embroidered silk hat.

Question 13.

Why does M. Hamel reproach himself for his students' unsatisfactory progress in studies? [All India 2014]

Answer:

M. Hamel not only blamed the parents for the neglect of learning on the part of their children, but also confessed that his personal preferences contributed to the unsatisfactory progress of his students. He sent his students to water the plants and gave them a holiday when he went for fishing.

Question 14.

Who did M. Hamel blame for the neglect of learning on the part of boys like Franz? [Delhi 2014]

Answer:

M. Hamel blamed both parents and children for neglecting the learning of their mother tongue. They always put off learning till the next day. He blamed parents for sending their children to earn money instead of school. He even blamed himself for sending his students to water his plants or to give them a holiday when he wanted to go fishing.

Question 15.

Who were sitting on the back benches during M. Hamel's last lesson? Why? [Delhi 2014, 2015]

Answer:

The village's old and eminent people were sitting on the back benches of the classroom during M. Hamel's last lesson. They all had come to attend the last lesson of M. Hamel as a mark of love and respect for their mother tongue and the teacher. They were gloomy, feeling guilty and full of repentance to recall that till that day, they had ignored their own language.

Question 16.

What was the mood in the classroom when M. Hamel gave the last French lesson?

Answer:

There was complete silence in the class. Everyone was full of regret and remorse. Children as well the village elderly were gloomy and repentant for not giving importance to their mother tongue. The order from Berlin had caused a sea change in the attitude of the people of Alsace and Lorraine to their language.

Question 17.

“He had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last.” What led Franz to make this remark? [Foreign 2013]

Answer:

When Franz came to know that it was his last lesson in French, he felt a great love for his mother tongue. He realised the loss that he was going to suffer. So, a sense of love and interest for his mother tongue emerged in him and he said that he had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last.

Question 18.

How did M. Hamel say farewell to his students and the people of the town? [All India 2012|Hots]

Answer:

M. Hamel bade farewell to his students in a very dignified and sad tone. He announced that this was their last French lesson as an order from Berlin had come that only German was to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. He urged the students and the people to keep their language alive and close to their heart. ,

Question 18.

What made M. Hamel cry towards the end of his last lesson? [All India 2014]

Answer:

M. Hamel had been teaching French for the last forty years. His love for his mother tongue

M. Hamel had been teaching French for the last forty years. His love for his mother tongue was a reflection of his patriotism. At the end of his last lesson, M. Hamel, overcome with emotions, broke down and could not speak anything with his throat choked. He wrote on the blackboard Vive La France.

Question 20.

What shows M. Hamel's love for the French language? [Foreign 2013]

Answer:

As a mark of his love for the French language, M. Hamel gave a tribute to his mother tongue in his last lesson. He called it 'the most beautiful language' in the world, the clearest and most logical. He appealed to the children and the people of the village to keep their mother tongue close to their heart.

Question 21.

What words did M. Hamel write on the board before dismissing the last class? What did they mean? [Delhi 2014.2015]

Answer:

M. Hamel wrote Vive La France which means "Long Live France". These words described his patriotic feelings and his deep-rooted love for his motherland and mother tongue.

The Last Lesson Long Questions and Answers

Question 1.

The ban on teaching French strengthened the resolve of the French to learn their language. Give evidence from the text to prove/disapprove the above statement.

Answer:

'The Last Lesson' clearly brings out the resolve of the French to hold fast to their language. The order from Berlin imposing German language on them made them more determined to respect and learn their language. This was evident in the last lesson of M. Hamel. All the backbenches were occupied by villagers, including old Hauser, former mayor, former postmaster, etc. That day students in the class were quiet and eager to make the best of the last opportunity to learn their mother tongue.

M. Hammel taught the last lesson with immense patience and told his students to safeguard their language. He reminded them that they would be able to liberate themselves only if they kept their language with them. Even the students realised the importance of their language and listened to their teacher carefully. They could not be distracted by beetles or the cooing of the pigeons.

Question 2.

How was the last lesson different from earlier lessons?

Answer:

The last lesson was different from earlier lessons in many ways. It revealed the love and respect of the teacher and students for their mother tongue. M. Hamel spoke very kindly and taught very patiently. He did not scold anybody that day. It seemed as if he wanted to give all that he knew before going away. He was in his best attire and his 'iron ruler' was no more in use. This lesson was attended by villagers to show their love and respect for their mother tongue and M. Hamel. The students listened very carefully and everybody was absolutely quiet. Franz was sorry for not learning his lesson. The last lesson was an emotional time which stirred patriotic feelings and awakened the villagers to the importance of their mother tongue.

Question 3.

Justify the title 'The Last Lesson'.

Answer:

The title 'The Last Lesson' is significant and conveys the central theme of the story. The title highlights the fact that sometimes even the most precious things in our lives are taken for granted by us. The people of Alsace never gave much thought or importance to their mother tongue. They did not insist that their children should give it wholehearted attention. They did not encourage regular attendance of their children in French classes. They thought there was plenty of time to learn it. They preferred their children to work and earn rather than learn. They received a severe jolt when orders came from Berlin to ban French and make German compulsory. This brutal order from Prussians made them realise the importance of their mother tongue. So they came in full force to attend M. Hamel's last lesson. Thus, the title 'The Last Lesson' reveals the theme of the story and is fully justified.

Question 4.

Write a character sketch of little Franz.

Answer:

Franz was a typical school boy. He was carefree and hated to go to school. He was afraid of his French teacher M. Hamel's 'iron ruler'. He was more interested in spending his time outside the school. Many times, he missed the school and went in search of 'bird's eggs' or watching the Prussian soldiers drilling at the sawmill. He did not realise the importance of learning his mother tongue till the time his country passed into Prussian hands and teaching of French was banned. This came as a thunderbolt to him when he came to school and found it to be his last French lesson. At this point, he lamented the loss of his language. His entire perspective towards the language and the teacher changed. He was surprised to learn and understand everything on the last day and did not find M. Hamel strict during the lesson. He was not able to understand the severity of war and wondered whether "the pigeons would be made to coo in German". .

Question 5.

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

Answer:

M. Hamel in his last French lesson emphasized the importance of mother tongue and how it binds everybody together. He exhorted all of them to guard their native language though he blamed himself also for neglecting French. He regretted giving them a holiday when he wanted to go fishing. He wished he had not sent them often to water his flowers instead of learning their lessons. The parents too were not very keen for their children to learn. They preferred to put them to work on a farm or at the mills for a little more money than encourage them to study. But after the announcement, all elders sat quietly at the back of the classroom with regret written large on their faces. M. Hamel appealed to them again to hold fast to their language as that was the key to their freedom.

Question 6.

How did the order from Berlin change the situation in the school? [All India 2015]

Or

The day of the last lesson was full of regret and sadness. Describe the events of the day in the

The day of the last lesson was full of regret and sadness. Describe the events of the day in the classroom in the light of the above remark. [Foreign 2012]

Or

“Order from Berlin aroused a particular zeal in the school.” Comment. [Foreign 2016]

Or

“Everybody in the last lesson is filled with regret.” Comment. [All India 2015]

Or

The entire classroom, M. Hamel as well as those present in the class, are full of regret. For what and why? [Foreign 2016]

Answer:

The order from Berlin brought a sense of shock and surprise in the class. As per the order, this was the last French class. Alsace and Lorraine had been captured by the Prussians. So only German was to be taught in the schools. This made all the distinguished village elders feel guilty of ignoring their mother tongue. So, they all came to the class to show their love and respect for their mother tongue and French teacher M. Hamel. The entire school was filled with an air of remorse and regret. There was complete silence. The teacher, M. Hamel, was in his best dress and was full of emotions. Even the students in the class, including little Franz, felt remorse for their indifference to their mother tongue. There was an atmosphere of stillness and quietness in the class.

Question 7.

Give a character sketch of M. Hamel. [Foreign 2012]

Answer:

M. Hamel was a teacher at a school in a village in the French districts of Alsace and Lorraine. He used to teach French. He had been teaching his mother tongue for the last forty years. He loved his profession from the core of his heart and had a deep sense of respect for the mother tongue. He had always been very particular and strict in imparting the knowledge of the language to his pupils. The news, that French would no more be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine and that this was going to be his last lesson, completely shattered a calm

and composed M. Hamel. He tried his level best to remain calm and composed but broke down at the end. He felt tormented by the fact that people had become indifferent to learning French and appealed to them to keep their language alive.

M. Hamel was a patriot in the real sense. He regarded the mother tongue to be a means of holding one's identity and self-respect. He blamed not only the parents and children but himself also for neglecting French. His concern and love for his country' is evident at the end of his last lesson, when, he writes on the black board "Vive La France!" in bold letters.

Question 8.

'Bah! I have plenty of time. I'll learn it tomorrow.'

Franz was shocked when he heard that it was the last lesson in French and he hardly knew his mother tongue.

Many of us find ourselves in similar situations and regret when all is over. What should we do so that we are able to achieve our goals?

Answer:

Opportunity knocks the door only once. In fact, everyone gets only one chance in life and if it is lost there is no way to redeem it. It is said that hardwork can turn the impossible into possible. But along with that, value for time is very essential. Most of us are in a habit of delaying things. Unless and until we are consistent and regular in our efforts, we cannot achieve our goals. Setting a goal is an easy task but the journey to reach that goal is tedious and demands perseverance, grit and determination. One has to be focused and consistent in one's efforts.

To achieve our goal in life, we need to understand the importance of time. Like Franz, we should not delay the efforts and sit comfortably thinking that there is enough time. As we know that time and tide wait for no man. So in order to achieve our goals, we need to be vigilant, consistent, punctual, regular, hardworking and a determined person who greatly values time.

Question 9.

The people of Alsace and Lorraine did not understand the importance of learning their language — French. Emphasising the importance and need of learning one's native language, discuss why one should learn one's native language.

Answer:

One of the major effects of Westernization is that people have started losing interest in learning their native language. One's native language is the repository of one's culture

learning their native language. One's native language is the repository of one's culture, identity, and way of living. As long as one speaks and communicates in one's language, one can be proud of oneself. Many Indians who live abroad make it compulsory for their family to speak in their native language at home so as to have a sense of belonging to their country. In fact, the native language binds us with our roots. Every language has its own speciality and the people who speak that language imbibe that speciality. Native language inculcates a sense of pride. A person who doesn't know his native language is like a slave.