

The Last Lesson
- By Alphonse Daudet
- 1840-1897

- A French novelist and a short story writer

Main Theme:-

The pain that is inflicted on the people of a territory by its conquerors by taking away the right to study or speak their own language. This lesson depicts the importance of one's own language for his/her existence. It also brings out Linguistic Chauvinism.

Sub-Theme

Student and teacher attitudes to teaching and learning and the habit of postponing learning.

Occurrences in the Story:-

1. Banning of teaching French in schools in the districts of Alsace and Lorraine.
2. M. Hamel in his best clothes on the last day of school.
3. A school student named Franz enters the silent class with fear and finds the villagers on the back benches of the class.
4. M. Hamel teaches dedicatedly and explains the importance of one's own language.
5. While addressing the gathering in the end, his throat chokes and he writes on the black board: 'Vive La France'.
6. The lesson is a fine example of love, dedication, inclination, significance of learning one's language for existence.

MAIN POINTS OF THE LESSON :

- Little Franz Late for School
- Crowd at the Town Hall
- Unusual calm at school
- Last Lesson declared by M. Hamel
- A sudden change in Franz's views
- Franz makes an effort to answer
- Importance of French Language highlighted by M. Hamel.

- M Hamel conducts his last French lesson.

- Vive La France

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:-

1. Why did Franz think of running away from the school that morning?

Ans. Franz started late for school because he had no mind to go. In addition to this, his teacher, M. Hamel had asked Franz to question him on "Participles". Franz did not know even the first word about them. So he feared scolding from his teacher. For a moment he thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. He wanted to enjoy the bright day, the chirping of the birds and the drill of the Prussian soldiers. He was tempted to run away from school.

2. What did the French teacher tell his students in his last French lesson? What impact did it have on them?

Ans. Hints- the last lesson-a thunderclap

- order from Berlin

- the new teacher coming tomorrow

- children attentive

3. What changes did the order from Berlin cause in the school? Ans. Hints- quiet like Sunday morning

- School- atmosphere strange and solemn

- M.Hamel in his best sunday clothes

- village people on the last benches in school

- all the students and their teacher upset

4. How did Franz react to the declaration that it was his last French lesson? Ans. Hints- Franz shocked

- sorry for not learning his lessons

- feelings for subject and teacher changed

- books not a nuisance, but old friends

5. What was the impact of the last lesson in grammar over Franz? How did he feel? Ans. Hints- grammar seemed to be easy

- listened attentively

- teacher taught dedicatedly

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS:-

1. Franz's attitude towards school as well towards M. Hamel changes when he comes to know about the takeover of his village by Prussians. Discuss with reference to the Last Lesson.

Ans. On arriving at school, Franz noted an unusual silence. His teacher M. Hamel was dressed nicely and asked Franz to sit so that he could start his lesson. The teacher made a startling announcement that this would be their last lesson in French as the new teacher would be arriving the following day. He reiterated about an order from Berlin that German was to be taught in schools of Alsace and Lorraine. Franz was overcome with a feeling of remorse and regretted wasting his time in trivial pursuits. He decided to pay attention to the lesson since school had become very important for him. He began to realize the real worth of his school as well as of the teacher whom they had all taken for granted all these years. Now M. Hamel became a good teacher for him rather than a boring one. For him, the teacher seemed to be a good gentleman who was leaving the village on that day. Thus, there developed a specific liking to study history and grammar in Franz since on that day M. Hamel put all his heart and soul in teaching.

2. 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 above remark.

Ans. Hints- Alsace and Lorraine taken over by the Prussians

- directive from Berlin to teach German in schools

- the people shocked at the news

- remorse expression on the missed classes by M. Hamel

- his reproach on the elders attitude

- stress on the importance of French language and keeping it alive

- the last lesson made memorable by M. Hamel

3. What did the French teacher tell his students in his last French lesson? What impact did it have on them?

Ans. Hints - French language most beautiful, clearest and logical language

- people must guard it and keep it alive

- their language would be like a key to their freedom

- village elders became emotional and repentant

- they became respectful for their language and it's teacher

4. Why did Franz start very late that morning for school? How did he resist his momentary thoughts of running away and spend the day outdoors?

Ans. Hints- Franz dreaded grammar lesson and scolding from the teacher

- pleasant and warm morning

- birds chirping outside

- drill of the Prussian soldiers

- resisted the temptation because of his virtues