

“The Last Lesson” by Alphonse Daudet

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

(From NCERT Flamingo Textbook)

Understanding the Text

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

Answer: Franz was expected to be prepared with the rules of participles, as M. Hamel had said he would question the class on that topic.

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

Answer: Franz noticed several unusual things: the school was unusually quiet as if it were a Sunday; his classmates were already seated in their places; and M. Hamel was dressed in his best clothes, which he only wore on inspection and prize days.

3. What had been put up on the bulletin-board?

Answer: A notice from Berlin had been put up on the bulletin-board stating that German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine instead of French.

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

Answer: The order led to a sense of sadness and regret. It was M. Hamel's last French lesson, and everyone—students, villagers, and even M. Hamel himself—was emotional and

solemn. M. Hamel wore his ceremonial dress, and the villagers came to pay respect.

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

Answer: Initially, Franz was afraid of being scolded and disliked studying. But upon realizing that it was the last French lesson, he felt sorry for not paying attention earlier. He developed respect and admiration for M. Hamel and a newfound love for the French language.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (SHORT & LONG ANSWERS)

◆ Short Answer Questions (30–50 words)

1. Why was Franz reluctant to go to school that day?

Answer: Franz was reluctant because he had not prepared his lesson on participles and feared being scolded by M. Hamel.

2. What did Franz see on his way to school?

Answer: Franz saw people gathered around the bulletin board and old Hauser with his reading glasses, indicating the presence of important news.

3. Why had the villagers come to attend the last lesson?

Answer: The villagers came to show their respect for M. Hamel and to express their sorrow for losing their right to learn their mother tongue.

4. Describe M. Hamel's appearance on the day of the last lesson.

Answer: M. Hamel wore his green coat, frilled shirt, and a

black embroidered silk cap—his best attire, reserved for special occasions.

5. How did M. Hamel react to Franz being late?

Answer: M. Hamel did not scold Franz for being late; instead, he gently asked him to take his seat, showing his emotional state.

6. Why does M. Hamel call French the most beautiful language?

Answer: M. Hamel calls French the most beautiful, logical, and clearest language in the world and urges the people to guard it as a key to their freedom.

7. What does the phrase "When people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison" mean?

Answer: It means that language is a source of identity and pride. Even in oppression, preserving one's language helps retain cultural freedom and dignity.

8. How does the story highlight the importance of one's language?

Answer: The story shows how people only value their language when it is taken from them. It emphasizes the emotional and cultural importance of one's mother tongue.

9. What emotions did Franz experience during the last lesson?

Answer: Franz felt regret, shame, sadness, and a deep respect for his teacher and the French language.

10. How did the villagers show their solidarity with M. Hamel?

Answer: They attended the last lesson, sat quietly with the students, and showed their grief by being present even though they were no longer students.

◆ **Long Answer Questions (120–150 words)**

11. Describe the setting of “The Last Lesson” and the changes in atmosphere on the day of the final class.

Answer: The setting is a small school in Alsace during the Franco-Prussian War. Usually noisy and chaotic, the school was unusually quiet that day. The townspeople gathered to attend the last French lesson, showing their grief over losing their language. The atmosphere was solemn, reflective, and filled with a sense of loss. Students, including Franz, became aware of the value of their language and the contribution of their teacher. M. Hamel, usually strict, became emotional and spoke gently, expressing his love for the French language and sadness over its suppression. This transformation in setting and mood reflects the theme of patriotism and the importance of one’s language and identity.

12. How does Alphonse Daudet, through “The Last Lesson,” convey the impact of language suppression?

Answer: Alphonse Daudet shows how language suppression leads to cultural loss, emotional trauma, and a loss of identity. Through the story of Franz and M. Hamel, he illustrates how people only appreciate their language when it is taken away. The imposition of German over French in

Alsace is portrayed as a form of oppression. M. Hamel's emotional farewell and the villagers' presence show the depth of the impact. The story underscores the idea that language is not just a means of communication but a symbol of heritage, unity, and resistance.

13. What role does M. Hamel play in shaping Franz's realization about the French language?

Answer: M. Hamel serves as both a strict teacher and a patriotic figure. On the day of the last lesson, his calm demeanor and passionate speech about the French language move Franz deeply. He helps Franz realize the importance of learning and the value of their native tongue. His emotional farewell, where he calls French the most beautiful language and implores everyone to preserve it, instills a sense of pride and regret in Franz. Thus, M. Hamel is the catalyst for Franz's transformation from a careless student to a thoughtful individual.

14. Explain the symbolic significance of "The Last Lesson."

Answer: "The Last Lesson" symbolizes the end of an era—freedom, cultural identity, and linguistic heritage. It represents the loss of the right to speak and learn one's language under foreign rule. M. Hamel's final class becomes a poignant farewell not only to teaching but to a way of life. The presence of villagers in the classroom symbolizes a collective awakening and regret. The story serves as a metaphor for the importance of safeguarding cultural identity and education.

15. How does Franz's attitude toward his language and teacher change during the story?

Answer: At first, Franz is indifferent toward his studies and afraid of being scolded. However, upon learning that this is the last French lesson, he feels a deep sense of loss. He begins to appreciate the beauty of the French language and the dedication of M. Hamel. He regrets not having paid attention earlier and realizes the importance of education and language. His respect for M. Hamel grows as he sees the teacher's emotional farewell and unwavering patriotism.

16. What is the theme of the story "The Last Lesson"?

Answer: The primary theme is the importance of one's language and culture. It also explores themes like nationalism, the regret of lost opportunities, the role of education, and the impact of war. The story emphasizes the emotional connection people have with their language and how its loss can lead to a loss of identity.

17. What does the story reveal about the impact of war on ordinary lives?

Answer: The story reveals that war doesn't just affect soldiers but deeply disturbs civilians too. It leads to cultural loss, emotional distress, and forced changes. Franz and the villagers are victims of such a loss—they are stripped of their language and identity. It reflects the silent suffering of communities under oppressive regimes.

18. How is the character of M. Hamel portrayed?

Answer: M. Hamel is portrayed as a stern yet dedicated and patriotic teacher. On his last day, he becomes emotional and

expresses his love for the French language. His deep concern for his students and sorrow over the loss of linguistic freedom shows his strong moral character. He serves as a symbol of resistance and pride.

19. How does Franz's experience reflect a common human behavior toward learning?

Answer: Franz's story reflects how people often take education for granted until it's no longer available. He represents many who don't realize the value of learning and language until they are about to lose them. His regret shows the importance of seizing educational opportunities while they last.

20. What message does Daudet convey through "The Last Lesson"?

Answer: Daudet conveys that language is a vital part of one's identity and cultural heritage. He warns against apathy toward education and urges readers to respect their language and teachers. The story is a reminder that we should cherish our freedom and rights, for they can be lost at any time.