

Prose - Chapter 1

The Last Lesson

Exercise : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 2

Question:

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meanings from the context.

Answer :

- *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

Think as you read : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 7

Question:

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

Answer : That day, Franz was expected to be prepared with the lesson on participles.

Question:

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

Answer : 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."

Question:

What had been put up on the bulletin-board?

Answer : 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.

Question:

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

Answer : 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.

Question:

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

Answer : 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.

Understanding the text
talking about the text
work in :
Solutions of Questions on Page Number: 9

Question:

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

Answer : 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.

Question:

"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?

Answer : 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.

(A few examples have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students develop the answer on their own.)

Question:

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

Answer :

tycoon - Japanese

tulip - French

logo – Greek

bandicoot - Telugu

barbecue - Spanish

veranda - Hindi

robot - Czech

zero - Italian

ski - Norwegian

trek – Dutch.

Question:

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

(There could be more than one answer.)

Answer : 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.

(Two model answers have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

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

Answer : 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.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

Is it possible to carry pride in one's language too far?
Do you know what 'linguistic chauvinism' means?

Answer : 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.

(This question is to be answered on the basis of students' own understanding and experience. However, a model answer has been provided for students' reference)

Working with words noticing form :

Solutions of Questions on Page Number : **10**

Question:

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.

Answer : 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 witho ut being seen; but, of course, that day	The protagonist decided to depend on the commotion to s neak into the classroom before he encountered the quietn ess at the school.

everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning.	
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, thumbed 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.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

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.

Answer :

- (a) (ii) startling and unexpected.
- (b) (ii) are attached to their language.
- (c) (iii) early enough.
- (d) (b) seemed very confident.

Things to do writing :

Solutions of Questions on Page Number : **11**

Question:

Find out about the following (You may go to the internet, interview people, consult reference books or visit a library.)

- (a) Linguistic human rights
- (b) Constitutional guarantees for linguistic minorities in India

Answer :

(This question is to be answered on the basis of students' own understanding and the research done by them. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

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.

Answer :

FUTURE VISION PUBLIC SCHOOL,
Delhi NOTICE

July 25, 2012

SPORTS DAY

The 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

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

Given below is a survey form. Talk to at least five of your classmates and fill in the information you get in the form.

<i>S.N o.</i>	<i>Langua ges you know</i>	<i>Home Langua ge</i>	<i>Neighbourh ood Language</i>	<i>City/To wn langua ge</i>	<i>School Langua ge</i>

Answer :

(This question is to be answered on the basis of students' own understanding and experience. It is strongly

recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

Write a paragraph of about 100 words arguing for or against having to study three languages at school.

Answer :

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.

(Pointers have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)

Question:

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.

Answer :

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.

(Directions have been provided for students' benefit. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the

answer on their own.)