Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: The Last Lesson**

1. Why did the narrator dread going to school that day?

Ans: The narrator dreaded going to school that day because his teacher Monsieur Hamel was going to examine them on participles but the narrator did not know anything about them.

1. What did the narrator feel like doing instead of going to school?

Ans: The narrator felt like running away and spending the day out of doors. It was very warm and bright outside.

1. What did the narrator see as he passed the town hall? What did he think to himself?

Ans: As he passed the town hall, the narrator saw crowd in front of the bulleting-board. He thought to himself what the matter was.

1. What was the significance of the town hall?

Ans: The town hall had a bulletin-board. For the previous two years all their bad news due to the war had come from there.

1. What would usually happen when the school began? Was it the same that day? What was different?

Ans: Usually at the beginning of school, there was a great uproar which could be heard in the street – desks opening and closing, lessons repeated aloud in unison and the teacher’s stout ruler beating on the desk. It was not the same that day as everything was quiet.

1. What did the narrator see through the window?

Ans: Through the open window, the narrator saw his classmates already in their places, and Monsieur Hamel walking up and down.

1. What had he counted on to get to his desk unnoticed? What did he have to do that day? What was his state of mind?

Ans: The narrator had counted on the commotion to get to his desk without being seen. That day he had to open the door and go in before everybody. He was extremely frightened.

1. Who was M. Hamel? How did he react when the narrator entered the class?

Ans: Monsieur Hamel was the narrator’s teacher. When the narrator entered the class, he looked at him and kindly told him to go to his seat quickly.

1. What had M. Hamel worn that day? Why was the narrator surprised to see him in that attire?

Ans: M Hamel had worn his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt and a little black silk cap. The narrator was surprised to see him in that attire because he had never worn those clothes except on inspection and prize days.

1. How did the whole school seem to the narrator that day? What surprised him the most?

Ans: The whole school seemed very strange and solemn that day. What surprised him the most was to see the village people sitting on the back benches like the other students.

1. What did M. Hamel tell the class? How did his words sound to the narrator?

Ans: M Hamel told that class that that was the last lesson he would be giving them as there were orders from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. He told them that that was their last French class. His words sounded like a thunderclap to the narrator.

1. What were the narrator’s feelings when he realised that it was M. Hamel’s last lecture that day?

Ans: The narrator was shocked when he realised that it was M Hamel’s last lecture

that day. He realised that he barely knew how to write and now he would never

learn. He was sorry for not having learnt his lessons and had wasted time seeking bird’s eggs and going sliding on the Saar. The books which earlier

seemed to be tiresome and heavy to carry now were like old friends from whom he

was terribly grieved to part.

1. Why were the old men of the village sitting in the back of the classroom?

Ans: The old men of the village were sitting in the back of the classroom because they were sorry that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thanking the master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country which was theirs no more.

1. What happened when it was the narrator’s turn to recite?

Ans: When it was his turn to recite, the narrator got mixed up on the first words and stood there, holding on to his desk. His heart was beating and he could not dare to look up.

1. What were M. Hamel’s views about the people of Alsace?

Ans: M Hamel believed that the people of Alsace put off learning to some later time. The parents were not anxious to have their children learn.

1. Whom did he blame for the fact that the children did not learn?

Ans: M Hamel blamed himself and the parents of Alsace for the fact that the children did not learn. The parents preferred to put their children to work on a farm or at the mills. He himself would often send them to water there flowers instead of learning their lessons and when he wanted to go fishing , he would give them a holiday.

1. What did M. Hamel say about the French language?

Ans: M Hamel said that the French language was the most beautiful language in the world – the clearest , the most logical and they must guard it among them 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.

1. Why did the narrator understand the grammar lesson very well for the first time?

Ans: Earlier , the narrator had never listened so carefully and probably M Hamel had never explained with so much patience. That day everything seemed different. The narrator was listening keenly as it was his last chance to learn. Thus he understood the grammar lesson very well for the first time.

1. Explain: we all wanted to laugh and cry

Ans: At the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles and holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with the children. He was crying and his voice trembled with emotion. It was so funny to hear him that they all wanted to laugh and cry.

1. How did M. Hamel end his class that day? What can be said about him from what he wrote?

Ans: At the end of the class, M Hamel turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk and wrote in the largest letters he could – “Vive la France” which meant long live France. This tells us that he loved his country tremendously.