Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: The Last Lesson**

**Answer the following:**

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 see as he passed the Mayor’s office? What did he think to himself? Why did he get the thought?

Ans: As the narrator passed the Mayor’s office, he noticed that there were people gathered about the little board on which notices were posted. The notice board of the Mayor’s office always displayed bad news like that of battles lost and conscription. He wondered what the reason could be.

1. Who called after the narrator as he passed the town hall? What did that person say?

Ans: The blacksmith, Wachter called after the narrator as he passed the town hall. He told him not to hurry as he would get to his school soon enough.

1. What did the narrator think on hearing the blacksmith’s words? What did the blacksmith actually mean?

Ans: On hearing the blacksmith’s words, the narrator thought that he was making fun of him. The blacksmith was actually referring to the fact that it was the last class of Monsieur Hamel.

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 – desk 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 comrades already in their places, and Monsieur Hamel walking back and forth with the terrible iron ruler under his arm.

1. What had the narrator 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 usual noise to get to his desk unnoticed. That day he had to enter in the midst of the perfect silence and was filled with shame and fear.

1. Who was Monsieur 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, M Hamel looked at him with no sign of anger and told him to go to his seat at once.

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

Ans: That day M Hamel wore a handsome coat, his plaited ruff and the black embroidered breeches. The narrator was surprised to see him in that attire because he wore that only on days of inspection or of distribution of prizes.

1. What surprised the narrator the most?

Ans: What surprised the narrator the most was that at the back of the room, some men from the village were sitting very silently. There was old Hauser, the ex- Mayor, the ex-postman and others. They all seemed depressed and Hauser had brought an old spelling book with gnawed edges.

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

Ans: M Hamel told the class that that was the last time he would be teaching them as the orders had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The narrator was overwhelmed on hearing his words.

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 angry with himself because of the time he had wasted and the lessons

he had missed , looking for nests or 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 at the end of the room probably because they regretted not having gone oftener to school. It was also a way of thanking their teacher for his forty years of faithful service and of paying their respects to the fatherland which was vanishing.

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

Ans: When it was the narrator’s turn to recite, he got mixed up at the first words and he stood there with a full heart afraid to raise his head.

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

Ans: M Hamel said that they claimed to be French but could neither speak nor write their language.

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

Ans: M Hamel said that the parents were not careful enough to see that their children were educated. They preferred to send them to work in the fields or in the factories in order to have a few more sous.

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

Ans: He said that the French language was the most beautiful language in the world and that they must retain it among themselves.

1. What did the narrator see from time to time when he raised his eyes from his paper? What according to him were M Hamel’s feelings then? Why?

Ans: When the narrator raised his eyes from his paper from time to time, he saw M Hamel sitting in his chair and staring at the objects about him. M Hamel had been there in the same school for forty years thus it must have been a heart-rending thing to leave it as well as the province forever.

1. Explain: we all wanted to laugh and cry

Ans: When M Hamel was spelling out the letters with them, his voice shook with emotion and it was funny to hear him. At the same time the students were sad that it was his last class. Thus 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 ling live France. This tells us that he loved his country tremendously.