

The last lesson

Prose section

Question & Answers :

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

Ans : Franz was expected to prepared a lesson on 'participles' . His teacher M. Hamel had said that he would ask the students question on participles.

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

Ans : Franz notice something unusual about the school that day. Usually when the school began, there was a great bustle that could be heard from the street. But that day, everything was as quiet as a Sunday morning. He was late but unlike other days M. Hamel did not scold him. He also saw some of the village people sitting at the back -benches of the class-room.

Q.3. What had been put up on the bulletin board than morning ?

Ans : Every important news or public announcement was put up on the bulletin board. For the last two years all their bad news had come from it. The news of the lost battles, the draft, the order of the commanding officer - all come out from the bulletin board. Franz wondered what could be the news that day.

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

Ans : The order from Berlin caused a great dismay in the school that day. It upset all the students. M. Hamel was disappointed. It was their last lesson in French. From next day, only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. They would no more be able to learn the French language. For the first time, they realised the value of their mother tongue after it had been banished.

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

Ans : The order from Berlin made Franz spell bound. It aroused patriotic feeling in him. He suddenly developed a strong fascination for his own language and school. His books became his old friends now. He suddenly began to respect M. Hamel. He forgot all about M. Hamel's ruler. He forgot how cranky Hamel was.

Understanding the text :

Q.1. The people in this story suddenly realise how precious their language is to them. What shows you this? Why does this happen ?

Ans : Order had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. That upset the natives of Alsace and Lorraine. They suddenly realised the value of their mother tongue. The feeling that they would have to learn a foreign language in place of their mother tongue aroused a sense of patriotism. The behaviour of the teacher, the students and the village people shows this. This happened because of German occupation of Alsace and Lorraine area.

M. Hamel describes the France language as the most beautiful, the most logical language in the world. Even Franz grew emotional. That was their last French lesson. Franz felt sorry for he could learn it no more. He felt a great love towards M. Hamel and his native tongue.

Q.2. Franz thinks, 'Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons? " What could this mean ?

Ans : The Germans had occupied Alsace and Lorraine area of France. Orders were issued to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. M. Hamel, the teacher gave his last French lesson. In this context Franz thought that the Germans might impose their language but they cannot take away French language from the tongue of the people of Alsace and Lorraine. In this context Franz made the above quoted

observation. Pigeons sing in their own tune and no one can teach them force them to sing in a language other than their own.

Talking about the text :

Q.1. "When 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 examples in history where the conquered people had their language taken away from them or had a language imposed on them ?

Ans : In America and Australia the conquered races imposed their languages on the natives. English was imposed in North America and Australia. Spanish and Portugues were imposed on the people of Latin American countries.

Q.2. 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
Gujratis in Kolkata.

Ans : A linguistic minority has to face a lot of hardship in a state. They have to speak in a language which is to them quite unfamiliar and different from their own. As a result they face the problem of expression. Education is also imparted to them in a strange language which is not

their own. As a result it hinders their progress. Because it is proven that the mother tongue is the best medium to understand, to learn and to express. The punjabis in Bangalore, the Tamilians in Mumbai, the kannadigas in Delhi and the Gujratis in kolkata have to face the problems of language. It is not an easy task to learn a different language. And so they will be like fish out of water where they have to listen to a different language. They can safe-guard their languages by virtue of their love for them. They must hold fast to their mother tongue even in the most complex situation. They should try to keep their language alive through their culture and tradition.

Q.3. Do you know what 'linguistic chauvinism ' means ?

Ans : Linguistic chauvinism means an absurdly extravagant pride in one's language. Germany of Bismarch reflected that pride. German 'Linguistic chauvinism was reflected when it imposed German on the French speaking population of Alsace and Lorraine.

Working with words :

Q.1. 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 - France kindergarten - German

Capital - Latin. Democracy - Greek

Bazaar - Hindi

Find out the origin of the following words :

Tycoon, barbecue, zero, tulip, veranda, ski, logo, robot, trek, bandicoot

Ans :

| Word | Origin |
|------------|--------------------|
| Tycoon. | Japanese(taikum) |
| Logo. | German(logos) |
| Barbecue. | Spanish(barbacoa) |
| Robot. | Czech(Robota) |
| Ski. | Norwegian |
| Tulip. | French(Tulipe) |
| Bandicoot. | Telugu(pandikokku) |
| Veranda. | Portugese(veranda) |
| Zero. | Arabic(cipher) |
| Trek. | Dutch |

Q.2. Notice the Underlined words in these sentences and tick the option that best explains their meaning.

(a) What a thunderclap these words were to me.

(a) loud and clear.

(b) Startling and unexpected.

(c) Pleasant and welcome.

Ans : (b) Startling and unexpected.

(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 language."

(a) Do not lose their language.

(b) are attached to the language.

(c) quickly learn the conqueror's language.

Ans : (b) are attached to the language.

(c) Don't go so fast ,you will get to your school in plenty of time.

(a) very late.

(b) too early.

(c) early enough.

Ans : (c) early enough

(d) I never saw him look so tall.

(a) had grown physically taller.

(b) seemed very confident.

(c) stood on the chair.

Ans : (b) seemed very confident.

Noticing form:

Read this sentence : M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles. In the sentence above, the verb from 'had said' in the first part is used to indicate an 'earlier past'. The whole story is narrated in the past tense. M. Hamel's saying happened earlier than the event in this story. This form of the verb is called 'past perfect'. Pick out five sentences from the story with this form of the verb and say why this form has been used.

Ans : (1) For the last twenty years all our bad news had come from there.....

(2) I had counted on the commotion to get to my dest without being seen.....

(3) Hauser had brought an old primer.....

(4) Not till then, when I had got a little over my fright.....

(5) It was in honour of his last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes.....

When two events take place in the past, the event completed earlier than the other, is expressed in the past perfect tense.

1. Write a notice for your school bulletin board. Your notice could be on announcement of a forthcoming event, or a requirement to be fulfilled, or a rule to be followed.

Ans : Notice
XYZ school, Guwahati
10th May 2020

'Debate Competition'

It is hereby notified that a debate competition is going to be held in our school on 12th May from 11 AM onwards. The topic of the debate is "wealth is better than learning". The students who want to take part are requested to submit their names to the secretary of debate. The submission of names after 10th May will not be entertained.

Kiran
Secretary
(Debate and symposium)

Q.2. Write a paragraph of about 100 words arguing for or against having to study three languages at school.

Ans : At school it is quite logical to teach three languages. One should learn one's mother tongue. It is the backbone of any nation and it should be kept with us. The other languages may be a national language that helps to integrate a country by increasing

understanding. There should also be a place for an international language. It helps the students to know the world where they are born, grow up. Now-a-days learning of an international language is considered a positive point everywhere. In this age of globalization we must adapt our students to the global environment. So, it is necessary to have the knowledge of three languages. The study of three languages only compliments and supplements one another.

Q.3. 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.

Ans : Yes, I had to change my opinion about my mathematics teacher. He was a strict and disciplined person. He made us practise mathematics so seriously that I felt annoyed at his method. He used to give us much advise not to fear the subject. Sometimes, he scolded the entire class for neglecting their subject. At first it seemed to me that he wanted us to read mathematics only. He behaved as if we had no other subjects to study.

But now, I understand why he behaved in that way. Though he was rough to us there always was an under current of love in his heart. I have also made out that to be good at mathematics we must work hard and everyday, through his hard endeavour he wanted to remind of this fact. Therefore, my heart is now full of respect for him