

The Last Lesson

1. What inference can you draw about Sophie's relationship with her father from the story 'Going Places'? (2024)

Ans.

- Sophie wanted her father's approval / support
- father always showed disdain /disapproval of her stories
- Sophie did not share friendly or loving relationship with father
- father was realistic and practical while Sophie was imaginative and a day dreamer
- father was aggressive and Sophie tried to avoid facing him

2. We miss a thing when we are in fear of losing it. Substantiate this statement with two examples from 'The Last Lesson', how the people in the story suddenly realised how precious their language was to them. (2024)

Ans.

- everyone looked sad and regretful about not learning French
- M. Hamel talked of importance of French language / brought new copies which looked like little flags
- Franz felt sorry for not learning lessons / realized books as old friends
- village people sat quietly in the back benches
- old Hauser, former Mayor and Former Postmaster were present
- old Hauser had tears in his eyes and his voice trembled with emotions

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

MCQ (1 mark)

1. "I had counted on the commotion to get to my desk without being seen". In the light of Franz's statement select the option that rightly brings out his intention.

- (a) He tried avoid his friends.
- (b) He tried to cheat his teacher M. Hamel.
- (c) He did not want to face the villagers the class.
- (d) He wanted to escape M. Hamel's scolding.

(Term I, 2021-22)

SA I (2 marks)

2. Why was M. Hamel dressed in formal clothes in school? **(2023)**
3. What surprises awaited Franz as he entered the classroom? **(2020 C)**
4. What tempted Franz to stay away from school? **(Delhi 2014)**
5. Why were the elders of the village sitting in the classroom? **(AI 2014)**
6. What words did M. Hamel write on the blackboard before dismissing the last class? What did they mean? **(Delhi 2014C)**
7. What made M. Hamel cry towards the end of this last lesson? **(AI 2014C)**
8. What was unusual about M. Hamel's dress on his last day in the school?
(AI 2014C)

SA II (3 marks)

9. Why were the old men of the village sitting in the classroom on the last day of the lesson? **(AI 2019)**
10. Who did M. Hamel blame for the neglect of learning on the part of boys like Franz? **(Delhi 2019)**
11. Why was Franz not scolded for reaching the school late that day?
(Delhi 2015)
12. Who occupied the back benches in the class room on the day of the last lesson? Why? **(Delhi 2015)**
13. Why did M. Hamel write 'Vive La France!' on the blackboard? **(Delhi 2015)**
14. "We've all a great deal to reproach ourselves with," said M. Hamel. Comment.
(Delhi 2015)
15. Whom did M. Hamel blame for Franz' inability to answer his questions?
(Delhi 2015C)
16. How did M. Hamel display his love for the French language? **(Delhi 2015C)**

LA I (5 marks)

17. The last lesson reflects the flaws in human character that led to the sad plight of people in Alsace. Substantiate your answer with evidences from the text.
(2023)

LA II (6 marks)

18. The order from Berlin created a great enthusiasm in the school. Comment.
(2020)

19. How did Franz's feelings about M. Hamel and school change? (2019C)

20. Our language is part of our culture and we are proud of it. Describe how regretful M. Hamel and the village elders are for having neglected their native language, French. (Delhi 2016)

21. Our native language is part of our culture and we are proud of it. How does the presence of village elders in the classroom and M. Hamel's last lesson show their love for French? (AI 2016)

22. The entire classroom, M. Hamel as well as those present in the class, is full of regret. For what and why? (Foreign 2016)

23. Everybody during the last lesson is filled with regret. Comment. (AI 2015)

24. The order from Berlin aroused a particular zeal in the school. Comment.
(Foreign 2015)

CBSE Sample Questions

MCQ (1 mark)

1. On his way to school, Franz says that he had the strength to resist and chose to hurry off to school. The underlined phrase suggests that Franz was

- (a) Hesitant
- (b) Threatened
- (c) Tempted
- (d) Repentant

(Term I, 2021-2022)

SA I (2 marks)

2. "You realise the true value of a thing only on losing it." Comment on this statement in the light of the story, The Last Lesson. (2022-23)

3. Comment on the significance of the villagers sitting at the back in M. Hamel's classroom. (2020-21)

ANSWERS

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. (d) He wanted to escape M. Hamel's scolding.
2. After Prussia took over Alsace-Lorraine, a decree was passed that only German not French would be taught in the schools. M. Hamel was a French teacher, and that day was going to be his last French lesson at the school. So, he was dressed in his best formal clothes to mark this special occasion.
3. Franz was surprised to see that not only was there silence, everyone had already been in their seats, eagerly waiting for the class to start. Moreover, he saw that their teacher, M. Hamel came properly dressed in his best clothes that he wore only for inspection or prize days. The most shocking of all was the fully occupied back benches that were always empty.
4. Franz was tempted to stay away from school because he was running late, he had not revised his lessons on participles and was dreading a scolding from his teacher, M. Hamel. Moreover, it was a warm, bright day, the birds were chirping at the edge of the woods. The Prussian soldiers were drilling in the open field at the back of the sawmill. Altogether, the outdoor seemed more interesting to Franz than going to school.
5. The elders of the village were sitting in the classroom to attend the last French lesson by M. Hamel. They were there not only to pay their respect to M. Hamel, but also to their country and mother tongue that was perhaps being taught for the last time in the village.
6. Before dismissing the last class, M. Hamel wrote "Vive La France!" on the blackboard. The French expression means "Long Live France."
7. Towards the end of the class, M. Hamel cried because he was deeply saddened by the thought that France was no longer a free country. Alsace and Lorraine had been occupied by the Germans and from now on his beloved language French would not be taught in the schools.
8. On his last day in the school, M. Hamel put on his beautiful green coat, frilled shirt and a silk cap. It was an attire he would wear on important occasions.
9. The village people, including the former Mayor, the former postmaster, old Hauser and several others, occupied the back benches in the classroom on the day of the last lesson. They had come to pay respect to the teacher, M. Hamel for his faithful service and also to the country that was no longer theirs. Being present for the last lesson was an opportunity for everybody to bid farewell to

their mother tongue and also to rid the conscience of the guilt of not having learnt the language when there was still time.

10. M. Hamel blamed the pupils, their parents and to quite an extent, himself too for the neglect of learning French. Everybody, at some point of time, thought that there was still time to learn the language.

11. On reaching the school late that day, Franz was not scolded because the atmosphere in the school was sombre; order had come from Berlin that German was to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine from now on. Everyone was sad because it was going to be their last French lesson.

12. The village people, including the former Mayor, the former postmaster, old Hauser and several others, occupied the back benches in the classroom on the day of the last lesson. They had come to pay respect to the teacher, M. Hamel for his faithful service and also to the country that was no longer theirs. Being present for the last lesson was an opportunity for everybody to bid farewell to their mother tongue and also to rid the conscience of the guilt of not having learnt the language when there was still time.

13. M. Hamel wrote "Vive La France!" on the blackboard because of the love for his country. It could also be considered as an expression of rebellion against imposition of the German.

14. M. Hamel blamed himself, the students and the parents of his students for neglecting the study of French language. They had all needlessly postponed the learning. He himself had sent his students to water his flowers and sometimes gave them a holiday when he had wanted to go fishing.

15. M. Hamel blamed the students, their parents and to some extent, himself too for Franz' inability to answer his questions. M. Hamel expressed his deep regret that for various reasons, especially thinking that there was plenty of time to learn, studying French was not given due importance by the adults, let alone the children.

16. M. Hamel taught French for last forty years. Knowing that his students and the village elders would never again learn a word of French, M. Hamel wanted to teach them everything in the last class. According to him, French was the most beautiful language in the world. It was the clearest and the most logical language. M. Hamel wanted the French people to preserve it as it would help them to be free from the foreign rule. Before ending his last French lesson, M. Hamel wrote "Vive La France!" on the board.

17. The last lesson reflects the flaws in the human character that led to the sad plight of the people of Alsace. This is evident in the story where M. Hamel talks about how the people of Alsace have the habit of putting things off for the next

day. He says, "Every day we have said to ourselves, Bah! I've plenty of time. I'll learn it tomorrow. And now you see where we've come out." He admits that "that's the great trouble with Alsace, that she puts off learning till tomorrow." This shows how the students of his language class were not anxious enough to learn, and he would also ask them to water his flowers instead of learning their lessons. It is a reflection of their lack of emphasis on the desire and need to learn, and their tendency to prioritise other activities over education. And all of this has resulted in their inability to speak or write in their language.

18. The order from Berlin had stopped the teaching of the French language in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. This shocking development suddenly aroused a great deal of enthusiasm in the school. When the order had come from Berlin that thenceforth only German would be taught in schools, people were awakened to the fact that they might not get to learn their mother tongue again. The villagers regretted that they wasted the opportunities given to them for learning French while they could. With this remorse they turned up in full strength for the last lesson. To show their affection for the language, many elderly people came, occupying the last benches, which had usually remained vacant earlier. M. Hamel, the French teacher, changed his behavior from being a cranky and strict teacher to that of a very kind person, as it would be his last lesson. He also taught with more understanding and patience. Everyone paid great attention to the last lesson.

19. Franz had never liked going to school. He preferred to be out in the fields and not study. In fact, he had even planned on skipping his French class because he was scared that his teacher, M. Hamel would scold him for not doing his homework.

On reaching school, he noticed that not only was his school full of the whole villagers, it was rather quiet and so unlike the other days. He was also surprised to find that everyone was already in their seats and even the elders of the village were seated at the last benches. He then learned that it would be their last French class and that there would no longer be M. Hamel to teach them French because of the order from Berlin that only German be taught in all the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. This shocked him, because his beloved language, French would no longer be taught in school. It was then that he realised his mistake in not taking his French lessons seriously. He was filled with remorse and regret, wishing that he had paid attention to his lessons and had obeyed M. Hamel. Franz felt sorry for M. Hamel because he knew how the man loved teaching French and how hurt he must be to stop doing it and leave the country the next day. The last lesson that Franz as well as the villagers would ever take became the most important lesson for him. He was too late in realising his mistake.

20. M. Hamel blames himself and the natives for neglecting their native language, French. He laments that the village elders and he himself too, did not give much importance to learning French. On many occasions, he gave the students holiday because he wanted to go fishing. He even asked the students to water his flowers. Hamel also found fault with the parents who sent their children to work instead of making them attend school. The village elders too were regretful. On the last day of the French lesson, they all sat silently crying on the back benches of the classroom. They came to learn French from M. Hamel and expressed their sadness and regret they felt in their heart. A deeply disheartened M.Hamel appealed to the class that they hold fast to French, their language, a key to their freedom.

21. The order from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine left a deep impact on M. Hamel as well as the villagers. Everybody was extremely hurt by the announcement because it meant that they could no longer teach, learn or speak in their native language, French. This made the last lesson, taught by M. Hamel, all the more significant and memorable. The village people who always neglected learning French felt sorry for not having gone to school more often. M. Hamel too expressed regret for not having been stricter with his students when there was still time. On the day of the last French lesson, amidst the strange solemnity, the students and the village elders present in the classroom listened to M. Hamel quite attentively. While he carried on with the lesson, he appealed to everyone to preserve French not only because it was the most beautiful language in the world, but also because holding on to their mother tongue would always keep them united. Before the class ended, overwhelmed by emotions, M. Hamel wrote "Vive La France!" on the blackboard to express his undying love for French.

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24. The order from Berlin, to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine from now on, aroused a particular zeal in the school on the day of the last French lesson.

The air that day, was mixed with pride and sorrow. Students as well as elderly members of the village came to attend the class. The ambiance was quite sombre as the children were serious and some of the elders, sitting at the back benches, were crying.

M. Hamel, who was dressed in his best attire, appeared to be in a pensive mood. His students and the village elders too paid great attention to everything that was being taught in the class. They hoped to learn as much as possible. Even Franz seemed to love his books. M. Hamel told those present in the class to hold on to French as it was the most beautiful language in the world. He said that their mother tongue was the key to their freedom. A feeling of oneness and immense love and respect for the mother tongue showed on everyone's face. The class ended with M. Hamel writing "Vive La France!" on the board.

CBSE Sample Questions

1. (c) Tempted

2. The statement "You realise the true value of a thing only on losing it," is true. Franz, the student who was never keen on learning his French lesson, was overcome with the feeling of remorse and regret when he heard that henceforth only German was to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. He wished that he hadn't spent so much time in trivial pursuits like seeking birds, eggs or going sliding in the Saar. The books that seemed such a nuisance earlier appeared like old friends now.

3. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine had fallen into the hands of Prussians. The studying and teaching of French had been banned there. M. Hamel was a teacher of the French language. He had been teaching in that school for the last forty years. Next morning he was leaving the school for good. Therefore, the old men were sitting on the back benches. It was their way of thanking M. Hamel for his faithful service.