

CBSE TEST PAPER-04
Class - 12 English Core (The Last Lesson)

General Instructions:

- All questions are compulsory
 - Question No.1 to 7 carries 3 marks each.
 - Question No. 8 to 10 carries 6 marks each.
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1. What changes came over little Franz when he heard M. Hamel's announcement?
2. What did M.Hamel tell the students about French language? What did he tell them to do and why?
3. How was the 'Last Lesson' different from the usual lessons taught on other days?
4. Why was Franz tempted to play truant from school?
5. What reasons did M Hamel give for their lack of interest in learning French?
6. Why doesn't M Hamel want the people to forget French?
7. What unusual changes did Franz notice in school that day?
8. Franz thinks, "Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?" What could this mean?
9. Describe how M Hamel conducted the last lesson.
10. Is it possible to carry pride in one's language too far? Do you know what 'linguistic chauvinism' means?

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Answers

1. Franz was taken aback at the announcement that no longer French will be taught, German will be taught in the school of Alsace and Lorraine. He felt sorry for not learning the language. He instantly started liking M.Hamel and forgot about his crankiness.
2. M.Hamel told it was the most beautiful, logical and clearest of all languages. He told them to hold on to it as it would help them to liberate themselves from the clutches of their oppressors and would keep them united.
3. The atmosphere was strange and solemn. There was no hustle and bustle. M.Hamel was soft and affectionate. Villagers were sitting at the back benches which were normally empty. He blamed the students, parents and the teachers alike for not showing interest in the language. He reminded them about the importance of it, and emphasized that how it was a key to one's own prison.
4. The French teacher M Hamel was going to ask questions on participles which Franz had not prepared. To avoid being scolded he was tempted to play truant from school and spend the day outdoors in a pleasurable manner.
5. The reasons which M Hamel gave for their lack of interest in learning French were:
 - a. Parents wanted their children to work in farm or mill to earn instead of studying French,
 - b. Some students were reluctant to learn and often put off the lesson for the next day,
 - c. At the end he blamed himself for asking the students to water the flower and giving them off when he had to go for fishing
6. M Hamel wanted them not to forget French as it is the most beautiful, clear and logical language in the world and as long as they hold fast to their language it would be as if they had the key to the prison.
7. Franz noticed an unusual silence when he entered school as it was a Sunday morning. There was no noise of lesson chanting, no noise of opening and closing of desk drawers. All students were already in class. Teacher was wearing the special fancy dress which he would usually wear only on special occasions like prize ceremonies etc.
8. The story 'The Last Lesson' very prominently raises the question of linguistic and cultural hegemony of the colonial powers and their lust for controlling the world and influencing

their cultures and identities. After Prussian acquisition of the districts of Alsace and Lorraine in Franco-Prussian War, they enforced their own language on the people of the defeated nation. They released the order that from now German would be taught in schools rather than French. The Frenchmen were highly patriotic and took a pride in their language. A strong feeling of revolt was in the air against the Germans. It shows that Franz did not accept their rules and thought that they can't forcefully ask them to follow their language as they can't tame pigeons. Franz wondered whether they would make even pigeons sing in German. It means that they had grown up using French as their language and now snatching away their language from them would be unfair and unkind. The language was as natural to them as cooing is to the pigeon. So, compulsion to speak another language is like dominating the force of nature and enslaving it. As it is next to impossible to alter the way pigeons sing, in the same way it is difficult for people to accept a language which is forcibly imposed on them. Adopting a new language causes pain and discomfort.

9. During his last French class though M. Hamel was emotional, yet he kept control over his emotions and got fully involved himself in the teaching learning process. He heard every lesson to the last sitting motionless in the chair. He was solemn and gentle. He performed his duties faithfully. He gazed at one thing or the other, perhaps he wanted to fix in his mind how things looked in that little school room. He must have been feeling heavy at heart to leave after forty years. When the church bell struck twelve he stood up pale in the chair. He wanted to say some parting words but was choked with something in heart then he wrote 'Vive La French' on the blackboard with a piece of chalk. He leaned his head against the wall and without a word made a gesture to the students with his hands to communicate that the school was dismissed.
10. 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