



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



Subject : English Lesson : The Last Lesson by Alphonse Date of Worksheet : March 2019
Daudet

Name of the Student : _____ Date: _____ Class & Div : XII Roll Number : ____

Theme – Linguistic Chauvinism

“Chauvinism” is a devotion for or against something, just based on what you feel (not necessarily what you may know). So, Linguistic chauvinism is the idea that one’s language is superior to that of others. This happens generally when the language is that of the ruling class. Linguistic chauvinism is the overt preference for one language over others. Language is considered to be the cultural identity of a particular group of people who use it. Hence, imposing some other language on the people hammers their emotions and is a step to annex their relationship with their culture. The language of any country is the pride of that country. It not only defines the culture but also tells us about the people, literature and history of the country. Language for some people is just the medium of communication but for others it is the question of life and death.

‘The Last Lesson’ very prominently raises the question of linguistic and cultural supremacy of the colonial and imperial powers and their desire for controlling the world and influencing their cultures and identities. The Last Lesson raises the burning question very innocently through the words of little Franz that “Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?” This raises the question of immorality of imposing imperial languages and cultures on the colonies. The child questions that when even the birds and animals can’t be forced to abandon their language and speak others then what forces the man to think that it would be sensible to force other human beings to forcibly accept any language other than theirs.

The language of a country is not only a medium of communication for the people but also the link for identity, once the native language is snatched away from the people. It’s not only the loss of convenient communicating medium but also the loss of identity for people for what they have been and what they might become. When a small child like Franz can think of the irrationality behind snatching away the right of language and identity from people then why can’t the war lords and colonizers understand the fact?

I Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

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1. How and why was M. Hamel dressed differently that day? (Board 2019)

M Hamel was dressed differently on that day, wearing his fine Sunday clothes, beautiful green coat, frilled shirt and the little black silk, all embroidered. He never used to wear these except on inspection and prize days. He knew that it was his last lesson and it was in honor of this last lesson that he had put on his fine clothes.

(a) Why did M Hamel write 'Vive La France' on the black board?

M Hamel wrote the words 'Vive La France!' in big letters on the blackboard before dismissing the last class. He was unable to speak as his own sorrow was choking him. He still wanted to express his feelings as he was a true patriot. He wrote the words which meant, 'Long Live France!' and couldn't say anything more and the last lesson was over.

(b) "We've all a great deal to reproach ourselves with". said M Hamel. Comment.

M Hamel reproaches himself for his student's unsatisfactory progress in studies because he has given them his own personal work to do during school time. Besides, he also gave them a holiday when he wanted to go fishing. He also tells the villagers that they should reproach themselves for not having learnt their language.

(c) What reasons did M Hamel give for their lack of interest in learning French?

The lack of interest in learning French was due to the attitude of:

(a) the parents who wanted their children to work in farm or mill to earn

(b) the students who were reluctant to learn and often put off the lesson for the next day

(c) M Hamel as he asked them to water the flower and gave them off when he had to go for fishing.

(d) How did Franz find teaching and learning that day?

Franz found teaching and learning very interesting that day. He was very attentive and careful. Franz also realized that M Hamel had never explained everything with so much patience. It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give them all he knew before going away. M Hamel wanted to put it all into their heads at one stroke as it was their last lesson.

(e) What was the narrator's greatest fear as he walked towards the school?

(f) What did M. Hamel say about the French language?

2. Answer the following questions in 120-150 words:

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- (a) How did M Hamel react when Franz failed to recite rule for the participle?

Franz's name was called to recite the rule for the participles. But he got mixed up on the first word. He was standing there, holding on to his desk, his heart beating and not daring to look up. But M. Hamel instead of scolding told Franz that he must feel bad enough. He said that every day we think that we have plenty of time and we will learn it on the next day and now you see where we have come out by putting off learning till tomorrow. Now those fellows out there will have the right to say to you, "How is it; you pretend to be Frenchman, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language?"

Then M Hamel told Franz that only he was not to be blamed. His parents were not anxious enough to have him learn. They preferred to put Franz to work on a farm or at the mills, so as to have a little more money. M. Hamel blamed himself for it also. He said that quite often he had been sending Franz to water his flowers instead of learning his lessons and when he wanted to go for fishing, he would just give him a holiday.

- (b) What impression do you form of M Hamel on the basis of your study of the story "The Last Lesson"?

We get a clear – cut portrait of a traditional teacher in Hamel. He was a hard taskmaster, sincere in his duties and a well-wisher of his students. A sudden surge of patriotic feelings in his heart made him a missionary. He appealed to the people to safeguard their own language and culture as language would keep them free and united, Hamel was a highly respected figure. The gathering of village elders in his classroom clearly proved it. Hamel was a staunch lover of France. Foreign rule and forceful imposition of German increased his patriotic fervour. He aroused patriotic feelings in the hearts of his students and the village elders alike.

- (c) What message did the writer convey in "The Last Lesson"?

The author Alphonse Daudet wants to emphasize to his readers that they should always be loyal and proud of their country and mother tongue. He wants the readers to be aware of the great importance of learning their own language and never forgetting it no matter what the circumstances. In this chapter, the Prussians order the French to speak and study only German and prohibit the learning of French. Hence, the writer wants to convey that only if people 'hold fast' to their language,

they will be able to enjoy free and respectable lives.

- (d) Franz thinks, “Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons ?” What could this mean?

Alphonse Daudet’s ‘The Last Lesson’ very prominently raises the question of linguistic and cultural supremacy of the colonial and imperial powers and their lust for controlling the world and influencing their cultures and identities. Prussians acquired the districts of Alsace and Lorraine in Franco-Prussian War , but they were not satisfied with mere political domination ,they desired to enforce their own language on the people of the defeated nation. They released the order that from then German would be taught in schools rather than French.

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.

- (e) Our native language is part of our culture and we are proud of it. How does the presence of the village elders in the classroom and M.Hamel’s last lesson show their love for France?(Board 2016)

3. WRITING SKILL

‘Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk and, bearing on with all his might, wrote as large as he could-Vive La France!’ Abraham Lincoln, a former President of America said, “I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man so that his place will be proud of him.” After reading the lesson and the above quote you begin to reflect on the lost spirit of patriotism amongst the youth in India due to which there is no respect for one’s countrymen and no determination amongst the youth to lead the country to a better future. Write an article in about 150-200 words for a national magazine on the need for revival of patriotic spirit amongst the youth in India.

Country’ youth value starved- facing a total crisis - violence, separations and inter group conflicts, political apathy- order of the day - secured freedom but not utilized in its true perspective - time for young people to wake up and create their own identity - need for good leadership and good governance - need to inculcate the spirit of nationalism along with humanism in children from the beginning – relate to the lesson.

ANSWERS

What was the narrator's greatest fear as he walked towards the school? Franz had started **late** for school and thus was **afraid** of being scolded. His fear gripped him further for he was also **unprepared**. He had not learnt his lesson regarding the rules of participles and thus dreaded the teacher's anger.

What did M. Hamel say about the French language? M. Hamel told them that French was the most beautiful language in the world. It was the clearest and the most logical language. He asked them to guard it among them and never _ forget it. He gave a reason also. When a people were enslaved, as long as they held fast to their language, they had the key to their prison

LAQ-Our native language is part of our show their love for France?(Board 2016)

That Sunday morning everything was quite normal. Franz's classmates and teacher were already in the class but there was no sound of opening and closing of desks. Either unison repetition of lessons or rapping of teacher's great ruler was absent. It was all due to the order from Berlin that from then onwards only German would be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine instead of French. Then only the people realized how precious their language was to them. That day all the villagers occupied the back benches in the classroom to attend the last French lesson and to mark the respect for their French teacher, Mr. M. Hamel, who devoted his selfless service to the society. They felt very sad. They also regretted for not learning French properly. Franz was shocked to hear this news and Hamel's words / were like thunderclaps to him. He was so sorry to have not learnt French before and for having wasted his time. His books suddenly became his friends. Even Mr. Hamel talked a lot about French language. According to him it was the most beautiful language in the world. It was the most logical one too. He asked his students never to forget this language.

WRITING SKILL- ANS: The Need for Revival of Patriotic Spirit amongst the Youth in India"-By XYZ

India has been the land of proud martyrs who embraced the gallows for their ideals, where every drop in freedom fighter's blood fought not for itself but for nation. Today, the same India stands famished and starved of the true patriotic spirit.

Our youth appears to be driven more by a crazy love for a superficial self-advancement than anything else for our young boys and girls, country holds on better value than just a geographical identity. Undoubtedly, 'patriotism' needs to be redefined and revived in India.

We probably find our patriotic spirit stirred up when there is a cricket match or act of terrorism. But we definitely forget it when we cast our vote in the elections, when a hungry beggar asks for a rupee, when we shamelessly throw garbage on the roads and so on... Patriotic emotions cannot be engendered in a windfall. They will have to be engraved on tender hearts that will remain placid. Our education policies thus needed to be revalued and reformed. More national awareness and respect should be embedded into the scholastic curriculum. This could be nothing more than a sincere devotion for making a peaceful-loving, uncorrupt, crime-free, unpolluted and patriotic India. Small actions persuaded with a notion of doing good to other countrymen is true patriotism. Today, our country wants awakened citizens to move forward and it is in this sphere where we have to exercise our true patriotic spirit

