

**St. Peter's Senior Secondary School**  
**English Core (301)**  
**Class 12**  
**Assignment 5**

TEXTBOOK: FLAMINGO

LESSON: Chapter 1: THE LAST LESSON BY AUTHOR: ALPHONSE DAUDET

**MAIN CHARACTERS:**

**Franz-** Franz is a young school boy in the French region of Alsace-Lorraine in the nineteenth century.

**M. Hamel-** The school master of a small village school in the French region of AlsaceLorraine. M. Hamel is stern and intimidating to his pupils

**Old Hauser-** One of the elder villagers who gathers with the children in M. Hamel's classroom to hear the last lesson.

- ❖ Watch a short movie on the chapter 'The Last Lesson' through the given link:

<https://youtu.be/gxtjzh4M7i4>

- ❖ Read the text and underline important words and ideas. (Refer to the dictionary to find the meaning of difficult words.)
- ❖ Revise the text through the following notes.

**BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

'The Last Lesson' written by Alphonse Daudet narrates a story about the year 1870 when the Prussian forces captured France. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine went into Prussian hands. The new Prussian rulers discontinued the teaching of French in the schools of these two districts. The French teachers, M. Hamel was asked to leave. He could no longer stay in his school. Still, he gave lesson to his students with utmost devotion and sincerity as ever.

[A quick recap of the Chapter](#)

- Franz is afraid of going to school as he has not done the homework given. He was supposed to learn participles.
- He wants to enjoy beauty of nature. The bright sunshine, the birds chirruping in the woods, Prussian soldiers drilling but resists.
- Bulletin board: all bad news, lost battles, the drafts and orders of the commanding officers: wonders what it could be now.
- The changes Franz notices in the school:
  - Instead of noisy classrooms, everything is as quiet as Sunday morning.
  - The teacher does not scold him and tells him very kindly to go to his seat.
  - The teacher is dressed up in his Sunday best.
  - Villagers occupying the last benches -To pay tribute to M. Hamel for his 40 yrs. of sincere service and also to express their solidarity with France.
- Hamel making the announcement that that would be the last French lesson; Franz realizes that, that was what was put up on the bulletin board.
- Franz:
  - Realizes that he does not know his own mother tongue.
  - Regrets why he had not taken his lessons seriously.
  - Realises the reason why teacher is dressed in his Sunday best and villagers sitting at the back.
- Hamel realizes that all three, the children, the parents and he himself are to be blamed for losing respect and regard for the mother tongue.
- M. Hamel advises: Always keep the mother tongue close to your heart as it is the key to the prison of slavery.
- Today M.Hamel teaches sincerely and patiently, students and others studying with utmost sincerity. Franz realises today he actually understood the topic being taught.

- Franz wonders sarcastically if Prussians could force pigeons to coo in German.
- Hamel overcome with emotions cannot speak and writes on the blackboard “Long Live France”.

**THEME:** Negligence of the people (children, parents, teacher) towards their own language and education of children.

Q.s 1-13 in 30-40 words.

Q.s 14-16 in 120-150 words.

1. What was Franz expected to be prepared with for school that day?
2. What did Franz notice that was unusual about the school that day?
3. What had been put up on the bulletin-board?
4. What changes did the order from Berlin cause in school that day?
5. How did Franz's feelings about M. Hamel and school change?
6. What tempted Franz to stay away from school?
7. What was unusual about M Hamel’s dress on his last day in the school?
8. “What a thunderclap these words were to me!” What were the words that shocked and surprised the narrator?
9. Why were the elders of the village sitting in the classroom?
10. What did M Hamel tell them about the French language? What did he ask them to do and why?
11. “This is your last French lesson.” How did Franz react to this declaration of M.Hamel?
12. Who did M. Hamel blame for the neglect of learning on the part of boys like Franz?

13. How was the scene in the school in the morning of the last lesson different from that on the other days?

14. The people in this story suddenly realize how precious their language is to them. What illustrates this? Why does this happen?

15. What changes did the narrator find in the school when the order from Berlin came?

16. Education of students is the collective responsibility of the society. Explain.