

Building an essay from three sources

AP French Language and Culture · Lesson

This AP French lesson explains **AP French argumentative essay** step by step, with examples in French and English. Then practise with the worksheet on AP French argumentative essay and check yourself with the quiz.

Quick answer: The AP persuasive essay asks you to read an article, study a graph or table, listen to an audio source, and then write a structured essay of about 40 minutes: a clear thesis, two or three paragraphs that cite all three sources by name, smooth connectors and a short conclusion.

Level: AP French Language and Culture · **Standards:** AP French Language and Culture (College Board CED), Presentational Writing

AP French argumentative essay: the lesson

What is the AP presentational writing essay?

In this task you answer a question such as Les réseaux sociaux aident-ils les jeunes à mieux communiquer ? You use three sources of different types and defend a point of view in a formal essay. Graders look for a clear position, accurate use of the sources, organization, and rich, accurate French.

Definition: thesis statement

A thesis is one or two sentences, usually at the end of the introduction, that state your answer to the question and preview your main arguments. Example: Bien que les écrans présentent des risques, ils aident les élèves à apprendre quand l'école les encadre.

Introduction : sujet + thèse

Paragraphe 1 : argument + source 1 + source 2

Paragraphe 2 : contre-argument + source 3

Conclusion : bilan + ouverture

A four-part essay plan that uses all three sources.

How do you cite sources in French?

Source type	Citing phrase	Meaning
Article	Selon l'article, ...	According to the article, ...
Graph or table	Comme le montre le graphique, ...	As the graph shows, ...
Audio	L'enregistrement explique que ...	The recording explains that ...
Any	D'après la deuxième source, ...	According to the second source, ...

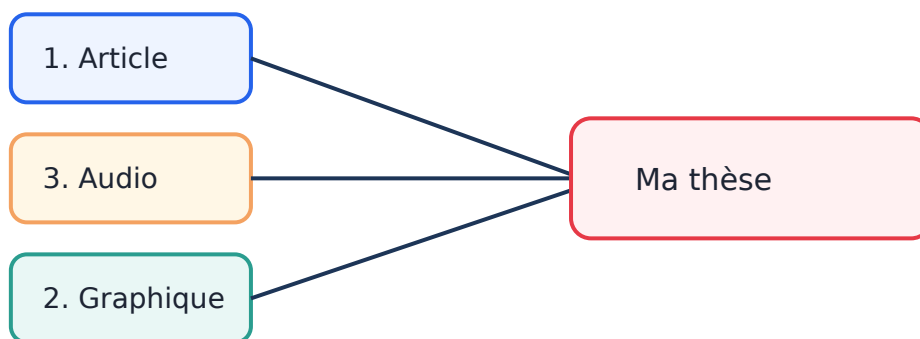
Rule: paraphrase, do not copy

Put the idea in your own words and name the source. Add data when you can: D'après le graphique, la lecture quotidienne passe de 41 % à 27 %.

Which connectors make an essay flow?

Connectors by function

- Add: de plus, en outre — moreover
- Contrast: cependant, alors que, tandis que — however, whereas
- Cause: parce que, car, puisque — because
- Result: donc, par conséquent — therefore
- Concession: bien que + subjunctive — although
- Conclusion: en somme, pour conclure — in short



Every source supports the thesis.

How should you manage your time?

Spend the first minutes reading the article and the graph, then listen to the audio twice while noting numbers and keywords. Take two minutes to draft the thesis and the plan: one argument per paragraph, with the sources assigned. Write the essay in one go, and keep the last minutes for checking accents, agreements and verb endings. A short, clear essay beats a long, disorganized one.

Finally, vary your verbs of attribution: affirmer, souligner, expliquer, montrer, indiquer.

Common mistake

English speakers often summarize each source one after the other. Instead, mix the sources inside each paragraph and keep your own argument in charge. Also avoid *Je pense que* every time; vary with *À mon avis* and *Il me semble que*.

Zoé's tip

Take notes in French while listening, using keywords and numbers only. Then write the thesis first, even if it is rough, and let everything else serve it.

Culture note

French schools teach the dissertation, a structured essay with thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The AP essay is simpler, but the same logical habit of weighing both sides is admired.

Key points to remember

- The task integrates three sources: a printed text, a chart or table, and an audio recording.
- Your essay must take a position in a thesis statement, not just summarize.
- Cite every source by name with phrases such as *selon l'article* or *comme le montre le*

graphique.

- Connectors link ideas and show contrast, cause and addition.
- Budget your time: read, listen twice, plan briefly, write most of the period, then proofread.

Building an Essay From Three Sources: frequently asked questions

How many sources must I use in the AP essay?

Use all three: the printed article, the chart or table, and the audio source. Cite each one by name at least once and connect them to your own argument.

Should I take a side or present both views?

Take a clear side in your thesis. You may acknowledge a counterargument, but the essay must defend a position consistently.

Can I include my own opinions and experiences?

Yes, as support, but sources come first. A short personal example adds depth, as long as you still integrate the three sources.

How long should the essay be?

Four to five well-organized paragraphs work well. Focus on quality, clear paragraphs and accurate sentences rather than on a fixed word count.

What if I mishear the audio?

Use what you understood and rely on the other sources. Never invent facts; paraphrase carefully and tie your comment to the part you caught.