

Climate change: writing solutions in French

French B1 (intermediate) · Lesson

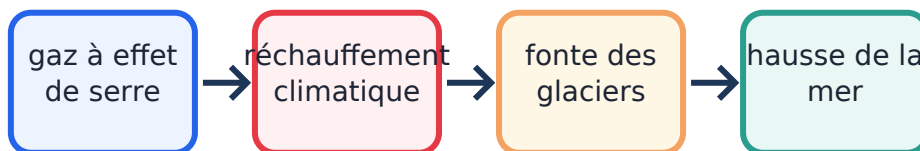
Quick answer: To write about the environment in French, name the problem with le réchauffement climatique and les gaz à effet de serre, then propose solutions. Use on pourrait + infinitive, il faudrait que + subjunctive and si + present + future. Organize the text in an introduction, arguments, solutions and a conclusion.

Level: French B1 (CEFR intermediate) · **Standards:** CEFR B1, Writing

How do you describe climate change in French?

Learn the chain of cause and effect first, then the words around it. Careful: le climat is the long-term pattern, while le temps is the weather today.

French	English
le réchauffement climatique	global warming
les gaz à effet de serre	greenhouse gases
une canicule, une sécheresse	heat wave, drought
les énergies renouvelables	renewable energy
un panneau solaire, une éolienne	solar panel, wind turbine
trier, recycler, économiser	to sort, to recycle, to save



From greenhouse gases to rising seas: a chain of causes and effects.

How do you propose solutions?

Four ways to suggest

- On pourrait + infinitive (a soft suggestion): On pourrait installer des panneaux solaires sur l'école.
- Il faudrait que + subjunctive (a strong need): Il faudrait que la ville développe le covoiturage.

- Il faut + infinitive: Il faut isoler les maisons.
- Si + present, future: Si nous prenons le train, nous polluerons moins.

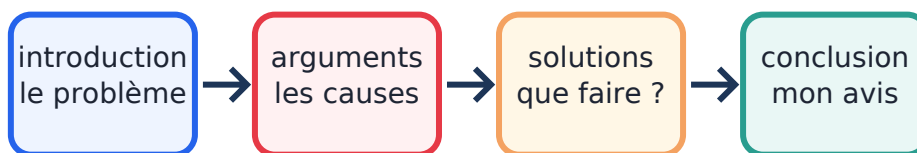
Use the conditional to sound polite and realistic. Compare the tones: Il faut agir sounds like an order, while On pourrait agir opens a discussion.

In context

À Nantes, Inès va au travail à vélo. Si la mairie construisait plus de pistes cyclables, ses collègues l'imiteraient. — In Nantes, Inès cycles to work. If the town hall built more bike lanes, her colleagues would follow her.

How do you structure an opinion text?

A clear text has four blocks. Link them with connectors: d'abord, ensuite, de plus, cependant, c'est pourquoi, enfin, en conclusion.



The four blocks of an opinion text.

Job of the connector	Examples
Order ideas	d'abord, ensuite, enfin
Add an idea	de plus, en outre
Contrast	cependant, en revanche
Cause and result	grâce à, à cause de, c'est pourquoi

A short paragraph

D'abord, les étés sont plus chauds à Marseille. De plus, la sécheresse dure longtemps. C'est pourquoi la ville devrait planter des arbres.

Watch out

English *global warming* is le réchauffement climatique, never *réchauffement global*. Also, l'énergie takes an adjective that agrees: une énergie propre, des énergies renouvelables.

Culture

The 2015 climate agreement was adopted in Paris at the COP21 conference. In France, nuclear power produces the largest share of electricity, while wind, solar and hydroelectric power make up the renewables.

Zoé's tip

In a writing task, give each solution one reason: On pourrait... car.... A suggestion with a reason always scores higher than a list of ideas.

Key points to remember

- Le réchauffement climatique is the French term for global warming.
- On pourrait + infinitive makes a polite suggestion.
- Il faut que and il faudrait que take the subjunctive.
- Si + present is followed by the future: Si on trie, on recycle.
- Link ideas with d'abord, ensuite, cependant, en conclusion.

Climate Change: Writing Solutions in French: frequently asked questions

How do you say global warming in French?

Say le réchauffement climatique. The related term le dérèglement climatique means climate disruption.

How do you suggest a solution politely?

Use the conditional: On pourrait installer des panneaux solaires or Il faudrait réduire les déchets. It sounds softer than Il faut.

Which mood follows il faut que?

The subjunctive. For example, Il faut que chacun trie ses déchets or Il faut que nous fassions un effort.

How do you build a sentence with si and the future?

Put the present after si and the future in the main clause: Si nous isolons la maison, nous économiserons de l'énergie. Never put a future right after si.

How do you organize an opinion text in French?

Write an introduction, arguments, solutions and a conclusion. Connectors such as d'abord, de plus, cependant and en conclusion show the structure.