

Writing about urban planning and city living

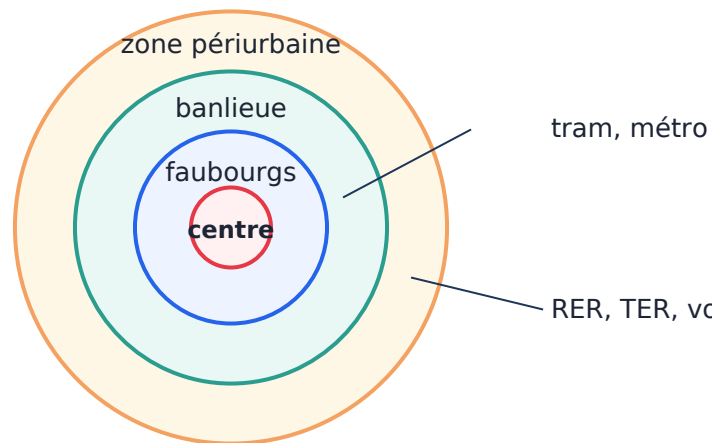
French B2 (upper intermediate) · Lesson

Quick answer: To write about cities in French at B2 level, use precise connectors: grâce à, à cause de and en raison de for causes, si bien que for consequences with the indicative, and afin que or pour que for goals with the subjunctive. Structure each paragraph as cause, consequence, then solution.

Level: French B2 (CEFR upper intermediate) · **Standards:** CEFR B2, Writing

How do you write about urban planning in French?

A written argument on city life (the **production écrite** of the DELF B2) needs facts, vocabulary and above all precise **connectors** that tie a cause to its consequence and to a goal. French is strict about the grammar of these links: some take a noun, some an infinitive, some a clause with a specific mood.



From the city center to the commuter belt.

Function	Connector	Followed by
Cause (positive)	grâce à	noun: Grâce à la nouvelle ligne de tram, le quartier revit.
Cause (negative)	à cause de	noun: À cause du bruit, des familles déménagent.
Cause (neutral)	en raison de, puisque	noun / indicative
Consequence	si bien que, de sorte que, c'est pourquoi	indicative
Goal	afin de, pour	infinitive (same subject)

Function	Connector	Followed by
Goal	afin que, pour que	subjunctive (new subject)

Which words describe housing, transport and neighborhoods?

French	English
l'étalement urbain	urban sprawl
la densification	building at higher density
les transports en commun	public transport
le logement social / une HLM	social housing
l'encadrement des loyers	rent control
la mixité sociale	social mix
une piste cyclable	bike lane
un embouteillage	traffic jam
la banlieue	the suburbs
un espace vert	green space

How do you build a convincing paragraph?

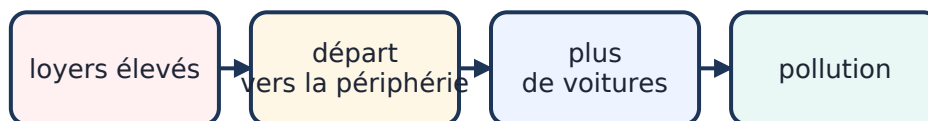
Paragraph recipe

Cause → consequence → solution. State a fact, name its effect, then propose a measure introduced by *afin que* or *pour que*.

Model paragraph

Les loyers du centre ont augmenté de 20 % en dix ans, si bien que de nombreux jeunes s'installent en banlieue. Ils prennent alors leur voiture chaque matin, ce qui provoque des embouteillages. La mairie devrait donc créer des lignes de bus afin que ces habitants puissent renoncer à l'automobile.

— Rents downtown rose 20 % in ten years, so many young people move to the suburbs. They then drive every morning, which creates traffic jams. The city should therefore open bus lines so that these residents can give up the car.



cause → conséquence → conséquence → conséquence

A chain of causes and consequences for an essay.

Common mistake

English has one "so that", but French needs two patterns. Same subject: Je prends le bus afin de gagner du temps. Different subjects: La ville baisse les tarifs afin que chacun puisse prendre le bus. Never use the indicative after afin que or pour que. Also watch the false friend une location: it is a rental, not a location.

Culture note

The word banlieue simply means the area around a city, and it covers everything from wealthy villages to large housing estates. Around Paris, the Grand Paris Express project adds automatic metro lines linking suburbs directly to each other, opening in stages. Social housing, called HLM, is encouraged by the SRU law of 2000, which sets a minimum share for many towns.

Zoé's tip

Before writing, draw a chain with three boxes: one cause, one consequence, one solution. Then link them with si bien que and afin que instead of repeating et and mais: the examiner will notice.

Key points to remember

- Grâce à is positive, à cause de is negative, en raison de is neutral.
- Si bien que and de sorte que (result) take the indicative.
- Afin que and pour que take the subjunctive; afin de takes an infinitive.
- A banlieue is simply the suburbs; une location is a rental.
- A good paragraph runs cause, consequence, solution.

Writing about urban planning and city living: frequently asked questions

What is the DELF B2 written production?

It is an argued text of about 250 words on a social issue, such as housing or transport. You must give an opinion and organize it with connectors.

What is the difference between grâce à and à cause de?

Grâce à introduces a positive cause, à cause de a negative one. En raison de is neutral and works in formal writing.

Which mood follows afin que and pour que?

The subjunctive: afin que les habitants puissent circuler. The indicative is wrong after these goal connectors.

Does si bien que take the subjunctive?

No. A real consequence takes the indicative: Les loyers montent, si bien que les jeunes partent. The subjunctive appears only with negation or doubt.

What does banlieue mean in French?

It means the suburbs: the built-up area around a city. The word is neutral, although the media sometimes use it to talk about problems in some areas.