French Writing Text Types

Writing formats

Diary (Journal intime)
A journal intime is intimate and introspective, not meant to be read by anyone else but you. A diary is used to express feelings and is reflective and often emotional. The language of a diary will reflect some of these aspects: love, disappointment, etc.

Le Blog (Blog)
It is a personal page in which emotions/opinions about a specific issue are being expressed. Your blog page is a personal page, but it on a website and will be read by others. The purpose is to share your thoughts and emotions with other. Familiar language can be used, but it depends on the nature of the audience. Your entry should be dated, and the most recent entry will be at the top. Photos can be posted on a blog, but remember that you are not judged on your artistic talent in a French exam, so don't waste your time drawing!

Article (un article)
An article is a piece of written work in which the journalist is going to give information about someone/an event etc… the tone of an article can be neutral, but it can also be subjective and therefore express a strong opinion. The register can be formal (article in Le Monde), but it can also be familiar (article in a school newspaper). It can be written in a short paragraph or in columns.

Features:

- A main title (gros titre)
- A date
- The name of the journalist
- As your article will be at least 250 words long, you should divide it into paragraphs with sub-headings (sous-titres)
- Examples to reinforce your message

Letter to a newspaper

This is a very language-specific form and it is necessary to conform to the conventions of the target language. The use of the correct cultural form and the communicative value of the writing should be rewarded.

- A letter to a school newspaper is more appropriate.
- statement of problem
- justification
- example
- Suggested solution(s).

Formal letters (une lettre officielle – lettre de réclamation, lettre de candidature, lettre à un auteur, lettre à un journal)

Features:

- Addresses—optional
- Date—recommended (according to conventions of the language)
- Greeting
- Standard formulaic introduction where applicable. Closing salutation
- Appropriate sign off
- Use of paragraphs
- Formal register; no slang or other informal language allowed

The following Internet sites provide a variety of letter sample that might be used as models or as resources:

http://www.oxfordlanguagedictionaries.com/Public/PublicResources.html?direction=b-fr-en&sp=S/oldo/resources/fr/correspondence_public.html&view=uk

Informal letter (une lettre à un ami)

- Addresses—not required
- Some form of greeting required
- Date—optional
- Punctuation—some required
- Paragraphing—necessary, but no prescribed number, depends on task set (emails have fewer paragraphing issues)
- Closing salutation necessary
- Name and signature
- Contractions and abbreviations acceptable
- "Smileys" and/or similar emoticons acceptable
- Words in text message (SMS) form not acceptable
- Strictly no swear words; extreme or inappropriate language to be penalized

Example: You have just gone back to school after the Christmas holidays. Your French pen pal Philippe has sent you a Christmas present. Write a letter in French to Philippe.

In your letter:

- Thank him for his letter and the present,
- tell him what you did during the Christmas holidays,
- give him some news about your best friend,
- tell him about your plans for your birthday,
- ask him to come and visit you next summer

Email (le courriel, courrier électronique)

Emails will be accepted as legitimate type of text to be used on paper 2. The characteristics of this type of text do not differ too much from informal letters and diaries; therefore, the same requirements apply.

Speech (le discours)

A speech is primarily written to be said, therefore, it will have to be extremely well structured and clear. A speech is also generally meant to present facts and convince an audience of something.

- Generally formal with emphasis on persuasive argument (for example, wedding speech, leaving speech, political speech).
- There should be appropriate greetings and closing remarks.
- May be backed up by factual information.

Example:

- Write a speech to inform young children about the dangers of drugs.
- Write a speech to raise awareness amongst your peers of the rise of violence in schools and the necessity to address the issue.

Guide or brochure *(le guide de recommandations/la brochure)*

These names are interchangeable; the **text types** will have the same characteristics. The main purpose of a leaflet, brochure or pamphlet is generally to give the target audience advice about something or making them aware of a specific issue; and asking for help in or to act in a certain way. A guide can often be found under the form of a leaflet. However, you will not be able to fold your exam paper on the day of the exam, but you can still make it look like a folding leaflet by dividing your page into two or three columns.

Features:

- Always has a catchy/explicit or useful title
- Must have a good introduction
- Subtitles may be used to divide into distinct columns, sections, parts or paragraph.
- Must be structured and have link words.
- Use examples and/or facts to prove what you are saying.
- Use punctuations.
- Be consistent in your use of register of language. You may use “vous” or “nous”.
- Engage your audience by asking questions, to help them think.

Example:

Write a guide to give advice to new IB students on how to organize their schedule.

Creative Writing (le récit d’imagination/d’invention)

You are often given the first line or two of the beginning of a story (or end) and are ask to continue this story. You may be asked to invent a story, but will be given certain elements/pieces of information to include in your narrative.

Features:

- Your story must be interesting
- It must be meaningful and structured. Avoid letting your imagination run too wild or you risk losing the plot and the good will of the examiner. (logical, chronological, etc.)
- Use transition words.

Example:

C'était au mois de décembre l'année dernière, j'étais dans ma chambre et je révisais ma grammaire car j'avais un examen de français le lendemain matin. Dehors il faisait froid. C'était la nuit…

Finish the story.

Summary of an event (le compte rendu)

This is a summary of an event that you might have been involved in or taken part of or something you saw happened. As it is an account, it is a factual report of an event. It should therefore be objective and as precise as possible. The information should be detailed with examples to serve as proof of what you are saying. The past tenses, other tenses and mood should be used to write your summary.

Example:

Imagine that you have just been part of a team from your school who has just returned from a charity project in Africa. The aim of the project was to go and help a well-established charity whose aim is to improve housing in depraved areas. On your return, you have been asked to write a "compte rendu" of the project to the head teacher of your school.

Statement to police (déclaration à la police)

Features:

- Chronological order of events
- Emphasis on facts not opinions
- Person writing statement should identify himself or herself
- Concise, to the point
- People involved
- Place
- Time

Example:
You were in Japan and something happened to you. Write your statement to the police about the incident, including what happened, where you were, who was involved.

Review of film, book or play (critique d'un film/livre, etc.)

A review should not retell the plot, but should include an amount of information appropriate to the task; include the genre, for example. You should identify your audience and adapt your writing to it. You should take a specific point a view, but could be asked to write a neutral one. Opinion and evaluation should be given, concluding with a recommendation (which may be implicit).

Features:

- Make sure you demonstrate your knowledge of specific vocabulary lined to films and books.
- Describe/talk about the characters/the plot/the special effects or the style of the film/book.
- Mention the writer or film director and actors
- Summarize the story/the plot
- Express your personal opinions about different aspects and justify them.
- Indicate ratings if the review is to be published in a magazine
- Make reference to previous films, novels, plays, etc.
- Structure the review, use appropriate transitions words.
- It is always better to write about a French film or book, but you can even make one up.

The following Internet sites provide a variety of film or book reviews that might be used as models or as resources:

Film Critique : http://www.telerama.fr/cinema/

Book Critique: http://www.critique-livre.fr/category/litterature/

Short account/story (l' anecdote)

An anecdote is a short account/story of an often incongruous (strange, absurd) event. This event can be historical or personal. An anecdote is often retold because of its incongruity/originality, strangeness or humoristic nature. The anecdote generally consists of the account itself, no opinion is clearly expressed.

Features:

- Structured, chronological, give lots of details and descriptions.
- Use appropriate vocabulary.

Internet page (page internet)

This type of writing must look like an internet page, but it is just an email.
Features:

- An internet address box
- A menu
- Some links to be clicked on; the internet page is meant to be an interactive page
- Boxes for pictures if necessary
- It must be clearly and attractively presented.

Interviews/dialogues

In English, an interview should be reported; a transcription of the interview will not achieve high marks. This is a characteristic of English and must not be applied in other languages. The interview is written in the form of a question and answer session which has taken place between two people. When conducting an interview you always have two sides:

- The interviewer: the person who asks the question
- The interviewee: the person/group who answers the questions
- Should be structured.
- Don't forget to thank the interviewee at the end.
- Personal view may be expressed if appropriate.

Editorials

An editorial includes comments on recent news. It should be topical and should express a very clear opinion. It is usually written at the beginning of the magazine or newspaper. It is an article in which the journalist discusses/gives his or her opinion, expresses his/her views on a specific topic. It could be on a past event, or an important issue. The journalist expresses their personal opinion. A summary about the other articles in the current issue of the magazine can be found in the editorial.

Leaflet/pamphlet (la brochure/le tract/l'appel)

"Le tract" "la brochure" is not very different form the guide, they must attract attention.Should visually attract people's attention (title/ use of capital letters/ words in bold/italics or underlined/ bullet points/punctuation.

Features:

- Be structured – clear and logical
- Convincing – persuasive language
- Use appropriate and varied vocabulary and grammar items.

Essay (la dissertation)

The starting point of the essay is the question. It is often a general question about a specific topic and you will be required to express your point of views, illustrate and defend them.

Features:

- An introduction
- A well-developed and structured argumentation.

- Divide your argumentation into paragraphs. (Development)
- You must prove and defend your arguments to be convincing, and credible.
- A conclusion in which you summarize the main ideas and main points of your argument.
- Use link words (transition words)
- An essay is usually a formal piece of writing so don't use the informal register.
- Have structure, be coherent and linguistic tools (verb tenses).

Persuasive or argumentative essays

In persuasive or argumentative writing, we try to convince others to agree with our facts, share our values, accept our argument and conclusions, and adopt our way of thinking.
Elements toward building a good persuasive essay include

- establishing facts : to support an argument
- clarifying relevant values : for your audience (perspective)
- prioritizing, editing, and/or sequencing : the facts and values in importance to build the argument
- forming and stating conclusions **:** "persuading" your audience that your conclusions are based upon the agreed-upon facts and shared values
- having the confidence : to communicate your "persuasion" in writing

Here are some strategies to complete a persuasive writing assignment:

- Write out the questions or subject in your own words.
- Think of the questions posed in the assignment: while you are reading.

Determine

- facts
- any sources that will help you determine their reliability(as well as for further reference)
- what prejudices lie in the argument or values that color the facts or the issue
- what you think of the author's argument

List out facts**;** consider their importance: prioritize, edit, sequence, discard, etc. Ask yourself "What's missing?"

What are the "hot buttons" of the issue?
List possible emotions/emotional reactions and recognize them for later use

Start writing a draft!
Starts as close as possible to your reading/research, do not concern yourself with grammar or spelling.

Write your first paragraph

- Introduce the topic
- Inform the reader of your point of view!
- Entice the reader to continue with the rest of the paper!
- Focus on three main points to develop

Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph

- Keep your voice active
- Quote sources : to establish authority
- Stay focused on your point of view throughout the essay
- Focus on logical arguments
- Don't lapse into summary in the development--wait for the conclusion

Conclusion

- Summarize, then conclude, your argument , refer to the first paragraph/opening statement as well as the main points
- does the conclusion restate the main ideas?
- reflect the succession and importance of the arguments
- logically conclude their development?

Edit/rewrite the first paragraph: to better telegraph your development and conclusion.

Take a day or two off!

- Re-read your paper : with a fresh mind and a sharp pencil - Ask yourself:
- Does this make sense? Am I convinced?
- Will this convince a reader?
- Will they understand my values, and agree with my facts?
- Edit, correct, and re-write as necessary
- Check spelling and grammar!
- Revise if necessary

Proposal (la proposition raisonnée)

This is an argued proposal whose aim is to achieve a precise goal. It is aimed at making someone or a committee, agree with a point of view or a concrete idea.

Ex. Before a new law is adopted, a proposal is submitted to explain the law and its aims.

Example:

You are a student on the principal advisory board and you would like to make a proposal for the district to continue paying for IB and AP exams that students at Warwick HS must take. Create a proposal that you will present in front of the school board.

This website has examples and explanation of different type of texts writing in French:

http://www.smeno.com/lyceens/2901_les-formes-de-discours.html