French prize seeks AI-assisted fiction

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever tried an AI writing tool? What did you do with it?
2. What makes a good fiction story for you?
3. Should prizes allow technology to help writers? Why or why not?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

manuscript
a writer's text before it is published as a book

submit
to send something for a prize, job or decision

shortlist
a final, smaller list of candidates chosen from many

jury
a group that judges entries and chooses a winner

entrepreneur
a person who starts and runs businesses

model
in AI, a system like ChatGPT that produces text

prompt
the words you type to tell an AI what to write

ethical
related to right and wrong behaviour

III. READING

The Prix Pascal de Littérature IA is a new French prize for fiction co-written with AI. Writers are invited to submit an unpublished manuscript of 10,000 to 50,000 words. Each entry must explain which AI model and prompt were used. All major models are allowed, including ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and LLaMA.

Entrants can live anywhere, but manuscripts must be in French. It was founded by technology entrepreneurs Philippe Rodriguez, Albin Serviant and Gilles Mentré. Organisers say entries should also point to an ethical, social or ecological problem facing humanity.

Applications are open on the prize website and will close at the end of November. A shortlist of 10 will be made before the winner is announced in early December. A jury of five or six writers, critics, journalists, philosophers and publishers will be confirmed in early November.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "New prize launches for books co-written...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What type of writing does the new prize reward?
2. What language must the manuscripts be written in?
3. What details about AI use must entrants include?
4. When do applications close for the prize?
5. How many entries will appear on the shortlist?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should co-written AI fiction compete with human-only books? Why?
2. Is asking for the model and prompt a fair rule? Explain.
3. What problems could AI fiction help readers think about?
4. Would you enter this prize? What idea might you submit?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Modals for past deduction

Use these to guess about a past action from evidence: must have + past participle = sure; might/could have + past participle = possible; can't have + past participle = sure it didn't happen.

"Only 10 names are posted; judges **must have selected** *a shortlist."*

"No prompt is attached; the entrant **might have missed** *that step."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with must have / might have / could have / can't have + past participle.

1. The stamp reads 1 Dec; that entry (arrive) ___ late. _____
2. The manuscript isn't in French; the writer (read) ___ the rules. _____
3. The file lists 'Claude'; they (use) ___ that model. _____
4. The email bounced; the entrant (mistype) ___ their address. _____
5. The entrant has never left Peru; she (live) ___ in France. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key items: manuscript, submit, shortlist, jury, entrepreneur, model, prompt, ethical. Check pronunciation of French names and LLaMA.
- Run the reading twice: first for gist (what the prize is), then for details (rules, dates, numbers). Pair students for the questions before brief whole-class feedback.
- For discussion, remind students to comment on the rules in the text rather than on personal beliefs about technology. If opinions clash, use timed turns so everyone speaks.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with a quick show of hands, then pair students with opposite views to share one benefit and one risk.
2. Elicit how the rule could increase transparency; ask students to propose one alternative rule.
3. Brainstorm ethical, social and ecological issues on the board first, then push for concrete story examples.
4. Give two minutes to plan a pitch, then share in groups of three; students may imagine a theme rather than share personal details.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word pitch for a story that follows the prize rules.

Role-play: Act as the jury and choose a shortlist of three from classmates' pitches, giving brief reasons.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Modals for past deduction

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What type of writing does the new prize reward?
   Fiction co-written with AI.
2. What language must the manuscripts be written in?
   French.
3. What details about AI use must entrants include?
   The AI model and the prompt used.
4. When do applications close for the prize?
   At the end of November.
5. How many entries will appear on the shortlist?
   Ten entries.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with must have / might have / could have / can't have + past participle.

1. The stamp reads 1 Dec; that entry ___ late. **must have arrived**
2. The manuscript isn't in French; the writer ___ the rules. **can't have read**
3. The file lists 'Claude'; they ___ that model. **must have used**
4. The email bounced; the entrant ___ their address. **might/could have mistyped**
5. The entrant has never left Peru; she ___ in France. **can't have lived**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use these to guess about a past action from evidence: must have + past participle = sure; might/could have + past participle = possible; can't have + past participle = sure it didn't happen. (Examples constructed.)

"Only 10 names are posted; judges **must have selected** *a shortlist."*

"No prompt is attached; the entrant **might have missed** *that step."*