

Language ab initio (Spanish, Mandarin, French and Italian)

I. Course description and aims

Language Acquisition consists of two modern language courses—Language ab initio and Language B—designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken. Offered at Standard Level only, language ab initio is a language acquisition course designed for students with no previous experience in—or very little exposure to—the target language. Language ab initio students develop their receptive, productive and interactive skills while learning to communicate in the target language in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Students develop the ability to communicate through the study of language, themes and texts. There are five prescribed themes: identities, experiences, human ingenuity, social organization and sharing the planet. While the themes are common to both Language ab initio and Language B, the language ab initio syllabus additionally prescribes four topics for each of the five themes, for a total of 20 topics that must be addressed over the two years of the course.

The following language acquisition aims are common to both language ab initio and language B:

1. Develop international-mindedness through the study of languages, cultures, and ideas and issues of global significance.
2. Enable students to communicate in the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.
3. Encourage, through the study of texts and through social interaction, an awareness and appreciation of a variety of perspectives of people from diverse cultures.
4. Develop students' understanding of the relationship between the languages and cultures with which they are familiar.
5. Develop students' awareness of the importance of language in relation to other areas of knowledge.
6. Provide students, through language learning and the process of inquiry, with opportunities for intellectual engagement and the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills.
7. Provide students with a basis for further study, work and leisure through the use of an additional language.
8. Foster curiosity, creativity and a lifelong enjoyment of language learning.

II. Curriculum model overview

The curriculum is organised around five prescribed themes and 20 prescribed topics with which the students engage through written, audio, visual and audio-visual texts.

Students develop into successful, effective communicators by considering the conceptual understandings of context, audience, purpose, meaning and variation. Communication is evidenced through receptive, productive and interactive skills.

The Language Acquisition assessment objectives are common to both Language ab initio and Language B.

- Communicate clearly and effectively in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.
- Understand and use language appropriate to a range of interpersonal and/or intercultural contexts and audiences.
- Understand and use language to express and respond to a range of ideas with fluency and accuracy.
- Identify, organize and present ideas on a range of topics.
- Understand, analyse and reflect upon a range of written, audio, visual and audio-visual texts.

Identities

Explore the nature of the self and how we express who we are.

Experiences

Explore and tell the stories of the events, experiences and journeys that shape our lives.

Human ingenuity

Explore the ways in which human creativity and innovation affect our world.

Social organisation

Explore the ways in which groups of people organize themselves, or are organized, through common systems or interests.

Sharing the planet

Explore the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world.