



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION

# DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Language *ab initio*

For first examinations in 2004

*Language Ab Initio*

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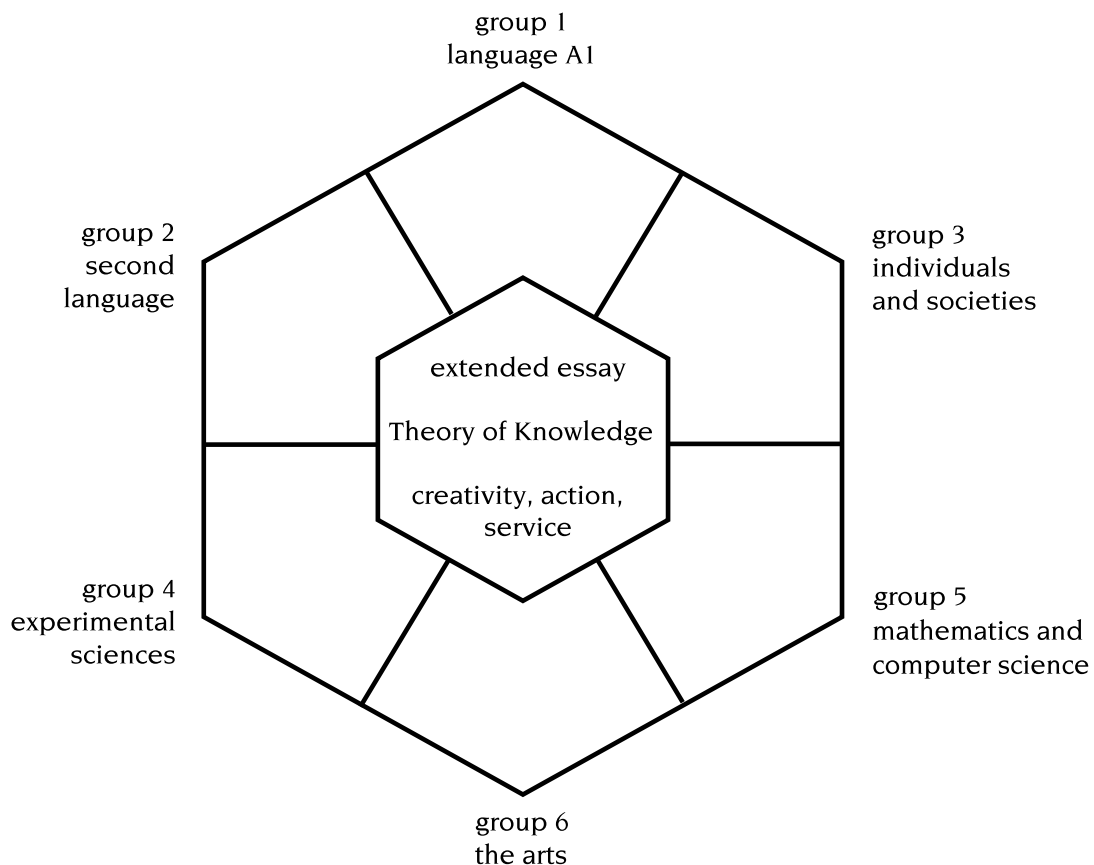
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# INTRODUCTION

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The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of studies, leading to examinations, that meets the needs of highly motivated secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum that allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of various national education systems, the Diploma Programme model is based on the pattern of no single country but incorporates the best elements of many. The Diploma Programme is available in English, French and Spanish.

The curriculum is displayed in the shape of a hexagon with six academic areas surrounding the core. Subjects are studied concurrently and students are exposed to the two great traditions of learning: the humanities and the sciences.



Diploma Programme candidates are required to select one subject from each of the six subject groups. At least three and not more than four are taken at higher level (HL), the others at standard level (SL). Higher level courses represent 240 teaching hours; SL courses cover 150 hours. By arranging work in this fashion, students are able to explore some subjects in depth and some more broadly over the two-year period; this is a deliberate compromise between the early specialization preferred in some national systems and the breadth found in others.

Distribution requirements ensure that the science-orientated student is challenged to learn a foreign language and that the natural linguist becomes familiar with science laboratory procedures. While overall balance is maintained, flexibility in choosing higher level concentrations allows the student to pursue areas of personal interest and to meet special requirements for university entrance.

Successful Diploma Programme candidates meet three requirements in addition to the six subjects. The interdisciplinary Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course is designed to develop a coherent approach to learning which transcends and unifies the academic areas and encourages appreciation of other cultural perspectives. The extended essay of some 4000 words offers the opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest and acquaints students with the independent research and writing skills expected at university. Participation in the creativity, action, service (CAS) requirement encourages students to be involved in creative pursuits, physical activities, and service projects in the local, national and international contexts.

*For first examinations in 2004*

# GROUP 2

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Group 2 consists of a broad spectrum of modern language courses and two classical languages: Latin and Classical Greek. The main emphasis of the modern language courses is on language acquisition and usage, from the comparatively elementary, practical usage at *ab initio* level to the sophisticated usage of the near-native (or bilingual) speaker who is studying a language A2. In between are the language B courses.

Each group 2 course is offered in a number of languages, which are listed on IBNET. Within each language course the syllabus and assessment details are common to all the available languages and are closely comparable in the demands that they make on students. With the exception of classical languages, the assessment is conducted in the language studied.

## Modern Languages

The study of a modern language entails acquiring a language system and applying it in four active and interrelated ways: through listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills involve exchanging ideas and effective communication. Effective communication, in turn, involves the intellectual process of understanding how ideas can best be expressed to the audience concerned. Understanding ideas, and expressing them clearly and convincingly, demands an awareness of the cultural characteristics of the audience.

The study of a modern language, at any level, should enable students to use it spontaneously and appropriately in unfamiliar as well as in familiar circumstances. Each of the group 2 modern language courses is generally set in different communicative and interactive situations, thus reflecting the different expectations of language proficiency. The situations hypothesized at *ab initio* level are, of necessity, more mundane and everyday than their relatively sophisticated equivalents in a language A2. At *ab initio* there is an emphasis on practical utility; the domains covered by language B range from the practical and social, to the expressive and intellectual; while at A2 the student explores the subtleties of the language in a wide variety of contexts, including literature. For example, the *ab initio* student should be able to give clear directions to someone looking for the beach, and understand the information in a tourist brochure. The language A2 student, on the other hand, should be able to describe in detail the beauty of the waves, and critically analyse the misleading use of language in the brochure.

It is essential that Diploma Programme coordinators and teachers ensure that students are following the course that is most suited to their present and future needs and that will provide them with an appropriate academic challenge. The degree to which students are already competent in the language, and the degree of proficiency they wish to attain by the end of the period of study, are the most important factors in identifying the appropriate placement point on the spectrum of modern language courses available. Appropriate placement is the responsibility of teachers and coordinators, not the IBO.

If students are **not** adequately challenged by their choice of group 2 course they will have been denied an educational opportunity. If, for example, they have been advised to pursue an *ab initio* course when a language B would have been more appropriate, or a language B when an A2 would have been ideal, then they will have been, in effect, advised to seek the most expedient way to amass points, in an educationally sterile fashion. Students should be encouraged to pursue a course that is rigorous and worthwhile, and that will stand them in good stead for their tertiary studies and/or careers. University admissions officers will be aware of the hierarchy of linguistic proficiency signified by the different courses.

## Language *Ab Initio*

The language *ab initio* courses are language learning courses for beginners, designed to be followed over two years by students who have **no previous experience** of learning the target language. The main focus of the courses is on the acquisition of language required for purposes and situations usual in everyday social interaction. Language *ab initio* courses are only available at standard level.

Language *ab initio* courses aim to develop a variety of linguistic skills, and a basic awareness of the culture(s) using the language, through the study of a core syllabus and language-specific syllabuses.

## Language B

Mostly available at both higher and standard levels, the language B courses occupy the middle ground of the group 2 modern languages spectrum and are language learning courses for students with **some previous experience** of learning the target language. The main focus of these courses is on language acquisition and the development of skills considerably beyond those expected of an *ab initio* candidate, up to a fairly sophisticated degree at higher level.

Language B courses give students the opportunity to reach a high degree of competence in a language and explore the culture(s) using the language. The range of purposes and situations for which and in which the language is used extends well beyond those at *ab initio*, to the domains of work, social relationships, and the discussion of abstract ideas, for example. The types of language needed for these purposes and situations are more refined.

## Language A2

The language A2 courses, at the upper end of the spectrum, are designed for students with an already **high level of competence** in the target language. Language A2 courses are based firmly on the study of both language and literature. The main focus of these courses is on the reinforcement and refinement of language skills, as distinct from language acquisition. Students will also be given the opportunity to explore the culture(s) of the language, and to make connections between other languages and cultures with which they are familiar. They will thus be able to use the language for purposes and in situations involving sophisticated discussion, argument and debate. The language A2 courses are available at both higher level and standard level.

# Classical Languages

The classical languages courses introduce students to the languages, literatures and cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. These ancient civilizations have played a vital part in shaping many modern societies and cultures. The languages themselves are versatile and finely structured, and have had a major influence on the development of most modern European languages. The two rich and varied literatures of Greece and Rome have left their mark on almost every genre of modern writing, both within Europe and far beyond. They give enormously important insights into the cultures that produced them, and offer a bridge between the contemporary world and the often alien, but always fascinating, civilizations of antiquity.

The courses also involve studying the historical development and wider cultural achievements of the Greeks and Romans, whose political, religious and legal principles still inform the thinking of many peoples around the world. They may also encompass an examination of past technological and artistic achievements, which remain an inspiration for artists, architects and engineers across the world. It is hoped that in the future it may also be possible to introduce courses in other classical languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic and Hebrew, which have all made parallel contributions of incalculable importance to modern societies.

In all the classical languages it is a fundamental principle that the surviving texts should be studied in the original language, and that linguistic skills should lie at the heart of the courses, since it is only through a visceral understanding of the workings of a language that true intellectual contact can be made with the peoples of the past. In order to broaden students' knowledge of classical literature, additional texts are set for study in translation, but the foundation remains linguistic. It is intended that through studying the classical languages in their cultural context, students will see that culture and language are symbiotic, and that they shape one another. At the same time, it is hoped that students will enjoy the intellectual challenge of these languages and appreciate as wide a range of texts and registers within them as possible. "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there": it is hoped that students will become appreciative, enthusiastic, and well-informed travellers in the classical past.



## Target Students: Which Course?

Teachers and Diploma Programme coordinators should ensure that, as far as possible, students are following the course that is most suited to their needs and that will provide them with an appropriate academic challenge. The following table is intended as a general guide and broadly indicates which group 2 language courses are appropriate for which students. A particular course may be appropriate even if not all the criteria apply.

For further advice on the choice of courses please contact the languages section at IBCA.

<i>Ab initio</i> SL	is for a beginner who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has little or no previous experience of the language</li> <li>• is taught outside the country or countries where the language is spoken.</li> </ul>
Language B SL	is for a language learner who may not intend continuing study of the language beyond the Diploma Programme and who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has 2 to 5 years experience of the target language</li> <li>• is not taught other subjects in the target language</li> <li>• is normally taught outside a country where the language is spoken</li> <li>• is a beginner or near-beginner who lives in a country where the language is spoken.</li> </ul>
Language B HL	is for a language learner who intends to study the language at this level for a future career, or to meet a Diploma Programme requirement, and who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has 4 to 5 years experience of the target language</li> <li>• is not taught other subjects in the target language</li> <li>• is normally taught outside a country where the language is spoken.</li> </ul>
Language A2 SL	is for a fluent language user who may not intend continuing study of the language beyond the Diploma Programme, and who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a native or near-native speaker wishing to study a different language as his or her language A1</li> <li>• is an almost bilingual student (in reading or writing or both)</li> <li>• lives in a country where the target language is spoken</li> <li>• is taught other subjects in the target language.</li> </ul>
Language A2 HL	is for a fluent language user who intends to study the language at this level for a future career or to meet a Diploma Programme requirement, and who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a native or near-native speaker wishing to study a different language as his or her language A1</li> <li>• is a bilingual student (in reading or writing or both)</li> <li>• lives in a country where the target language is spoken</li> <li>• is taught other subjects in the target language.</li> </ul>
Classical Languages HL & SL	are for students who wish to study either Latin or Classical Greek as well as, or instead of, following one of the above courses.

# GROUP 2 AIMS

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Group 2 consists of a range of language courses accommodating the different levels of linguistic proficiency that students have already gained when they begin. There is a single set of group 2 aims, common to all the courses, but the objectives are differentiated according to what the candidates are expected to be able to demonstrate at the end of each course.

The aims of group 2 are to:

- enable students to understand and use the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes
- enable students to use the language appropriately
- encourage, through the study of texts and through social interaction, an awareness and appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures
- develop students' awareness of the role of language in relation to other areas of knowledge
- provide the opportunity for enjoyment, creativity and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of a language
- provide students with a basis for further study, work and leisure through language
- develop students' awareness of the relationship between the languages and cultures with which they are familiar.

# NATURE OF LANGUAGE *AB INITIO*

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Learning a foreign language is much more than learning a number of sentences, a certain amount of vocabulary or a number of grammatical rules. It means being able to interact in a new cultural context that will enable us to function in a society different from our original one. It not only expands our possibilities for work, entertainment or travel, but it expands our awareness of the world as we know it today—a world that has shrunk due to international flights, the Internet, and a general understanding that cultural diversity is what makes us human.

It is within this context that the language *ab initio* course was designed. It is an opportunity for students to further their linguistic skills by taking up a second foreign language, or for students to learn a foreign language for the first time. In accordance with the international and multicultural ethos of the Diploma Programme, all candidates are expected to learn at least one foreign language. Although the International Baccalaureate Organization does not subscribe to one particular approach to the teaching of foreign languages, both the aims and assessment of language *ab initio* focus on communication through the use of the target language.

Linguistic communication takes place through oral and written language and involves a range of linguistic skills. Throughout this guide, listening, speaking, reading and writing are referred to as the four primary language skills. The language *ab initio* course aims to develop each of these four skills to a similar level of communicative competence.

Learning a foreign language also means being able to interact within the culture related to the target language. To do this, language *ab initio* students should begin to understand the differences between their own culture and that of the language they are learning. For example, in China it is considered polite to give and receive an object (a book, for instance) using both hands. It is a sign of respect for Chinese culture that the students of Mandarin *ab initio* understand this gesture.

One of the main difficulties of the language *ab initio* course is giving students enough practice in the language and acquainting them with a culture that is previously unknown and not readily accessible. A holistic attitude towards learning a foreign language is favoured. The aim is to promote the idea that French, German or Japanese, for example, are more than school subjects and that, after the two years, students will be able to carry on learning the language more independently if they wish to do so.

The course focuses on everyday situations and aspects of the culture related to them. This ensures that appropriate emphasis is placed on communication. For this reason, the course has been organized into a number of topics such as food and drink, or education, which provide both the teacher and the students with a context in which several communicative functions (or purposes) and the different grammatical structures and vocabulary can be practised.

A good command of grammatical structures is necessary in order to be able to carry out communicative tasks effectively. However, merely listing a number of verb tenses or adjective endings is not a language skill, but a memory exercise. Teachers are best placed to decide the methods that will suit students and contribute to the development of their communicative competence.

Due to the very different natures of the *ab initio* languages available, and to the short period of time that the students have to learn the new language, it was decided to provide *ab initio* teachers of each language with a document that gives guidance on the vocabulary and grammar with which students are expected to become acquainted. These are called language-specific syllabuses and are written in each of the *ab initio* languages offered.

# LANGUAGE *AB INITIO* OBJECTIVES

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**The overall objective of this course is for students to achieve communicative competence in a variety of everyday situations.**

At the end of the language *ab initio* course candidates will be expected to demonstrate an ability to:

- communicate information and some basic ideas clearly and effectively, in a limited range of situations
- understand and use accurately the essential spoken and written forms of the language in a limited range of situations
- understand and use a limited range of vocabulary in common usage
- use a register that is generally appropriate to the situation
- show an awareness of some elements of the culture(s) related to the language studied.

# SYLLABUS OUTLINE

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## Language

The four primary language skills to be developed in an integrated way are: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The balance between these four skills should be appropriate to the needs of the students, but none should be neglected.

## Core Syllabus

The core syllabus must be the foundation for any language *ab initio* course. It is divided into seven topics with which the students should become familiar in order to develop a vocabulary range that covers the most common situations in everyday life.

These topics are:

- the individual
- education and work
- town and services
- food and drink
- leisure and travel
- the environment
- health and emergencies.

## Language-specific Syllabuses

For each of the *ab initio* languages on offer, a specific syllabus has been produced. These are structured to follow the topics of the core syllabus and include both the prescribed grammar and lexicon necessary for the course.

## Texts

Language skills should be developed through the use of a wide range of material. Although the linguistic abilities of language *ab initio* students will naturally limit the teacher's choice, teachers are encouraged to use as many types of text as possible.

Teachers and students are encouraged to choose texts that address the students' needs and interests. All materials should be selected in view of their communicative purpose.

## Cultural Awareness

During the language *ab initio* course students are expected to become familiar with aspects of the everyday life and culture of the countries in which the language is spoken.

Texts should be used as a means of exploring aspects of the culture(s) related to the language studied.

The study of particular features of the culture is not an end in itself but a means by which the students learn about a different way of life, and consequently develop their language skills.

# SYLLABUS DETAILS

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The language *ab initio* course is designed around three main areas: language, texts and cultural awareness.

The core syllabus and the language-specific syllabuses have been designed to support the teacher in relation to these three areas.

Within language, special attention is paid to the four primary language skills; accuracy and fluency; and the areas of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and intonation.

## Language

### Primary Language Skills

Linguistic communication takes place in a variety of ways and through a range of different media. It also involves a range of skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Throughout this guide these are referred to as the four primary language skills. It is generally understood that the receptive skills are easier to acquire than the productive skills. Students will be expected to understand more difficult texts than they will be able to produce themselves. However, all four skills should be worked upon during the two years.

	Receptive	Productive
Oracy	Listening	Speaking
Literacy	Reading	Writing

### Listening

Students at *ab initio* level should be taught to:

- understand straightforward conversational exchanges
- understand some colloquial language in social exchange
- understand the overall idea or argument from a short speech or presentation on a prescribed topic
- participate in a conversation appropriate to context and culture.

### Speaking

Students at *ab initio* level should be taught to:

- convey straightforward, factual information and respond appropriately in spontaneous discussion
- use some colloquial language competently in social exchange
- convey information and express attitudes reasonably clearly within a brief structured presentation, and respond in spontaneous discussion on the topic
- respond with some sensitivity to social conventions.

## Reading

Students at *ab initio* level should be taught to:

- understand straightforward information that is explicitly stated
- skim and extract key points from straightforward texts, including visual material and graphics
- distinguish between key points and supporting detail in straightforward texts
- understand some details of the text
- understand some ideas implicit in the argument
- identify basic elements of genre, purpose and audience.

## Writing

Students at *ab initio* level should be taught to:

- convey straightforward information clearly
- convey some straightforward concepts clearly
- organize key points into a basic overall plan
- provide some supporting detail for the key points
- indicate personal attitudes competently
- use language generally appropriate to purpose and audience.

The language-specific syllabus includes the grammatical structures that are necessary for students to achieve the above levels of competence. It is vital for the students' ability to communicate effectively that the four skills are developed in an **integrated way**.

The following table illustrates examples of forms of communication that the language *ab initio* student may be involved in, and the receptive and productive skills required for each of them.

Communication	Skills	
	Receptive	Productive
Form	Receptive	Productive
Newspaper	Reading	Writing
Telephone	Listening	Speaking
Class discussion of a written text	Listening, reading	Speaking, writing (notes)
Informal conversation	Listening	Speaking
Conference	Listening, reading (overhead transparencies, etc)	Speaking, writing (notes)
Theatre play	Listening	Speaking
E-mail	Reading	Writing
Letter	Reading	Writing



## Accuracy and Fluency

In order to **communicate effectively** students will have to work on several areas of the language, as described below. For example, if students' grammar is poor, this will interfere with their ability to speak and write and the messages they are trying to convey may not be understood. If students' pronunciation is poor, the listeners may not understand what is being said. In both cases, communication does not take place. This is why the language *ab initio* course places emphasis on both accuracy and fluency.

Accuracy is understood as the focus on the form of the linguistic production, and is directly related to grammar, spelling and pronunciation. When teachers correct the grammar, spelling or pronunciation of a particular word or sentence they are focusing on accuracy.

Fluency, on the other hand, focuses on meaning. During the *ab initio* course, students should develop strategies that will help them:

- produce written or spoken language by concentrating on the message
- speak with a good but not necessarily perfect pronunciation and intonation
- communicate ideas effectively
- produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

A balance between accuracy and fluency will bring about the best performance and an ability to communicate effectively in a variety of everyday situations. Although accuracy is important for communication at *ab initio* level, the emphasis of the course is on the ability to communicate despite any possible linguistic mistakes (fluency).

## Areas of Language

The most important areas of the language to be worked upon as the four language skills are developed are: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and intonation. Some of these will take up more teaching time in some languages than others. For instance, grammar plays a more fundamental role in learning Spanish than pronunciation, whereas intonation is vital in learning Mandarin. By practising these areas the students will acquire higher accuracy in the use of the language, while working the four primary skills in an integrated way will increase students' fluency.

### Vocabulary and grammar

As far as possible the teaching of vocabulary and grammatical structures should be integrated into materials and communicative activities chosen by both teachers and students in a way that enables students to practise the language in context. Nevertheless, when such an approach is neither possible nor appropriate, the systematic teaching of language structures could be considered.

The grammatical structures, which appear in the language-specific syllabus, should be practised throughout the course to enable students to meet the language *ab initio* objectives and to develop their language skills to an appropriate level.

### Pronunciation and intonation

Pronunciation and intonation are necessary for developing oral skills. Depending on the language, one or the other will be more important. The teaching of pronunciation and intonation should be integrated into the course. The teacher is best placed to balance the communicative methodology with a more systematic approach when teaching the phonetic patterns of the language.

## Recommendations

- Teachers should aim to provide authentic materials that have been produced to satisfy the needs and expectations of everyday users of the target language; these may be spoken or written, printed or electronic. They may be adapted in order to suit the students' linguistic competence.
- In the case of languages that are spoken in more than one country, students should be exposed to the significant varieties of the language wherever possible.
- Students should develop ways of coping with unfamiliar language and situations and be encouraged to develop their autonomy.
- Different languages will have different needs and requirements. Teachers should decide what is most appropriate to their specific circumstances and to individual student needs.

## Core Syllabus

The core syllabus has been designed to provide a framework for the teacher and is divided into seven topics related to different areas of interest for the 16- to 18-year-old student. These topics can be explored in any order but they should be incorporated into the course in a way that encourages students to use the vocabulary acquired in previous lessons. One way to do this is to work through the topics in a cyclical way so that each of them is dealt with at different times during the two years. This method ensures that:

- the students will be encouraged to use new and more complex grammatical structures to deal with a topic they might have studied earlier in the course
- different aspects of each topic may be worked on at different times during the course
- the students develop their ability to communicate effectively in a range of different situations.

## Core Syllabus Topics

Topic	Sub-topic	Contents
The individual	The self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal identification (age, nationality, address)</li> <li>• family</li> <li>• relationships (peers and friends)</li> <li>• appearance (physical description, clothes, colours)</li> <li>• character</li> <li>• daily routine, time</li> </ul>
	The home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types of accommodation</li> <li>• life at home, household tasks</li> <li>• invitations, celebrations</li> </ul>

Topic	Sub-topic	Contents
Education and work	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types of school</li> <li>• personnel (teachers, students, other staff)</li> <li>• facilities, classroom materials</li> <li>• academic, extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• school calendar, dates, post-secondary education</li> </ul>
	Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• careers, professions</li> <li>• part-time jobs, work experience</li> <li>• future ambitions</li> </ul>
Town and services	Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types of shops</li> <li>• goods</li> <li>• customer services</li> <li>• purchases, payment</li> </ul>
	Public services and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public transport</li> <li>• banks, post office</li> <li>• telephone</li> <li>• e-mail, fax, Internet</li> </ul>
Food and drink	Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food stores</li> <li>• food names</li> <li>• grocery shopping</li> <li>• quantity, weight</li> </ul>
	Eating out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types of restaurants</li> <li>• meals in a restaurant</li> <li>• reservations, menus, orders</li> </ul>
	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meals, meal times</li> <li>• recipes</li> <li>• diets, preferences</li> <li>• special dishes</li> </ul>
Leisure and travel	Hobbies and free time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the media</li> <li>• sports</li> <li>• entertainment</li> </ul>
	The area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places, features of interest</li> <li>• location, direction</li> </ul>
	Holidays and travelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• means of transport</li> <li>• types of destination</li> <li>• holiday inquiries</li> </ul>
	Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilities</li> <li>• reservations</li> <li>• regulations</li> </ul>

Topic	Sub-topic	Contents
The environment	Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current weather conditions</li> <li>• forecast</li> <li>• climate</li> <li>• seasons and seasonal events</li> </ul>
	Physical geography/ the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• countries and continents</li> <li>• geographical features</li> </ul>
	Environmental concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ecology</li> <li>• world issues</li> </ul>
Health and emergencies	Physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fitness and good health</li> <li>• illness, injury, parts of the body</li> <li>• appointments</li> <li>• medicines and prescriptions</li> </ul>
	Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• theft and loss</li> <li>• accidents</li> <li>• repairs</li> <li>• public signs</li> </ul>

## Language-specific Syllabuses

The language-specific syllabuses, which accompany the language *ab initio* guide, consist of a lexical syllabus followed by a grammatical syllabus.

These syllabuses include the different registers the candidates should become acquainted with: in most cases this will only be general formal style and basic informal style.

## Lexical Syllabus

The lexical syllabus is usually divided into two parts.

- **Lexicon 1** consists of words directly related to the core syllabus. This is a reference for the teacher as to the minimum amount of language material that needs to be covered in the language *ab initio* course. Teachers should cover more material than is indicated in this guide.

For Mandarin and Japanese, however, lexicon 1 will contain the majority of vocabulary that the students are expected to learn within the two years of the course. Teachers should take into account that the students will be expected to understand texts that contain words that are not included in lexicon 1.

- **Lexicon 2** provides additional vocabulary (lists of link words, prepositions, etc) and includes key items listed by types (irregular verbs, numbers, etc). Some of the words in lexicon 2 may have already appeared in lexicon 1.

## Grammatical Syllabus

The grammatical syllabus consists of the prescribed grammatical items necessary to carry out the tasks listed later on in this guide.

The language-specific syllabuses are not to be taught in isolation. The teacher must integrate the core syllabus and language-specific syllabus in order to practise and develop the four primary language skills.

## Texts

Throughout this guide the word “text” refers to a more or less continuous piece of spoken or written language. Original texts might be adapted by the teacher to suit the needs of beginner students. Texts should not be very long or abstract, although teachers may decide to use these types of materials if and when they consider it appropriate for a particular lesson or topic.

The language *ab initio* syllabus aims to explore different aspects of a topic through a range of texts. The following table illustrates some types of texts and relates them to one or several communicative situations. Oral situations (speaking and listening) have been grouped together in order to emphasize the interactive nature of spoken language. Suggestions and ideas for classroom uses of reading material are provided later under “whole-class projects”.

The situations and texts in this table are neither mandatory nor exclusive. There will be a wide variation in the ways that the written and oral texts are used in different languages.

## The Individual

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce, meet people</li> <li>socialize: get to know someone; exchange personal information</li> <li>describe, exchange feelings, opinions and/or wishes about self, others, the home</li> <li>invite, accept and receive invitations</li> <li>describe/show someone around your home</li> <li>describe the buildings in your area, village, town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>write and reply to an informal letter</li> <li>write a personal letter to a friend</li> <li>write a thank-you note</li> <li>write and reply to an invitation</li> <li>write and reply to a personal message, e-mail, greeting card</li> <li>make a diary entry</li> <li>complete forms and questionnaires</li> <li>write an article describing the perfect home or bedroom</li> <li>make a “to do” list</li> <li>write a list of household instructions</li> <li>reply to a flat/home advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>correspondence: letters (formal and informal), personal messages, greeting cards, notes, e-mails</li> <li>diary entries</li> <li>encyclopedia entries, biographies</li> <li>forms, questionnaires</li> <li>lists: “things to do”, instructions</li> <li>newspaper or magazine articles and interviews</li> <li>newspaper “homes” section advertisements</li> </ul>

## Education and Work

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe, exchange information about one's school</li> <li>describe, exchange information about one's career, goals and plans</li> <li>describe, exchange information about work experience</li> <li>respond to interview questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>write an article for the school newspaper (interview, review, etc)</li> <li>write a report on a school event</li> <li>write a letter of inquiry</li> <li>produce a school poster</li> <li>write a CV/résumé</li> <li>write a brief letter of application</li> <li>complete an application form</li> <li>reply to a job advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>forms</li> <li>letters</li> <li>newspaper articles</li> <li>posters</li> <li>brochures</li> <li>advertisements</li> <li>classified advertisements</li> <li>school timetables</li> </ul>

## Town and Services

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make purchases; ask advice, availability, payment</li> <li>make local travel arrangements</li> <li>make transactions at the bank or post office</li> <li>make a telephone call</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete a coupon/form for a special offer</li> <li>send for an article in a catalogue</li> <li>take a message from a telephone call</li> <li>send an e-mail</li> <li>write a brief letter of complaint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advertisements</li> <li>shop signs</li> <li>labels on products</li> <li>catalogues</li> <li>information on the Internet</li> <li>instructions (bank machine, elevator, public telephone)</li> <li>timetables</li> </ul>

## Food and Drink

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shop for food</li> <li>arrange to go to a restaurant</li> <li>respond appropriately at the restaurant; order, request missing items, pay</li> <li>exchange information and opinions about food and drink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make a shopping list</li> <li>complete a coupon/form for a special offer</li> <li>write a menu</li> <li>write a recipe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>food and drink labels on products</li> <li>coupons, special offers</li> <li>advertisements</li> <li>menus</li> <li>recipes</li> </ul>

## Leisure and Travel

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe and recommend places of interest</li> <li>• give directions</li> <li>• exchange information and opinions about hobbies and interests</li> <li>• make arrangements for entertainment or meetings, make reservations</li> <li>• make travel arrangements, inquiries and reservations</li> <li>• describe holidays and holiday plans</li> <li>• exchange opinions and wishes about leisure and travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• send for a brochure</li> <li>• request more information</li> <li>• reserve accommodation</li> <li>• write a formal letter</li> <li>• complete a hotel registration form</li> <li>• write a message giving directions</li> <li>• write a postcard</li> <li>• write an informal letter</li> <li>• write a holiday diary entry</li> <li>• write an article about hobbies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaflets, brochures, posters, guides</li> <li>• programme guides (cinema, TV)</li> <li>• newspaper articles (reviews)</li> <li>• information on Internet (advertising local sights)</li> <li>• timetables</li> <li>• letters (formal and informal)</li> <li>• forms (accommodation, customs formalities)</li> <li>• hotel notices</li> <li>• signs</li> </ul>

## The Environment

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exchange information about local environment, country, weather</li> <li>• express opinions on environmental concerns</li> <li>• talk and exchange information about countries where the language is spoken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write an informal letter</li> <li>• write a poster</li> <li>• write an article for a newspaper</li> <li>• write the notes for a speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• weather charts, forecasts</li> <li>• tourist leaflets, guide brochures</li> <li>• maps</li> <li>• newspaper articles (reports)</li> <li>• local government leaflets</li> </ul>

## Health and Emergencies

Speaking and listening situations	Writing situations	Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make an appointment at the dentist</li> <li>• send for a doctor</li> <li>• ask for or offer help</li> <li>• describe symptoms, injuries</li> <li>• report an accident or a lost or stolen object</li> <li>• tell others something is allowed or prohibited</li> <li>• warn or advise others about dangers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write a “get well” card</li> <li>• write a report about a lost or stolen item</li> <li>• warn or advise others about dangers</li> <li>• write a letter</li> <li>• write text for a poster promoting good health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public signs (beach, swimming pool, road signs, hotel signs)</li> <li>• prescriptions</li> <li>• labels on medicine</li> <li>• information brochures</li> <li>• newspaper or magazine articles</li> </ul>

## Cultural Awareness

In the language *ab initio* context the term “culture” is intended to mean aspects of the everyday lives of the people who use the language, for example, their eating habits, customs, non-verbal behaviour, attitudes, traditions, folklore and the way they dress. The term is not intended to include the more sophisticated elements of each country’s tradition represented by literature and the visual and performing arts.

Texts, both spoken and written, should be relevant to the culture(s) of the language studied and should usually be about issues of contemporary concern. They will generally be drawn from contemporary sources, but texts from the past may be studied as long as they are not beyond the linguistic abilities of the students at this level.

In order to develop cultural awareness students will require basic information about these countries, but factual knowledge will not be formally assessed.

## Principles of Course Design

The IBO recognizes that, due to differences in language teaching traditions across countries, it might be easier for the teachers of particular languages to find textbooks to suit the language *ab initio* course. However, should appropriate textbooks not be available, the syllabus has been designed to allow teachers the freedom to construct their own course of study and schemes of work based on a range of texts linked to one or more of the topics prescribed in the core syllabus. Teachers are always encouraged to bring authentic materials into the classroom.

In designing a language *ab initio* course of study teachers should pay particular attention to variety, integration, whole-class projects, learning beyond the classroom, transparency and personal development.



## Variety

Teachers should ensure that their students :

- develop language skills through a range of individual and group tasks
- practise the language through a wide range of pair and group activities
- are introduced to the full range of types of texts appropriate to the course.

## Integration

To integrate all the relevant aspects of the course and encourage autonomy, it is necessary for the learner to develop strategies for dealing with unfamiliar situations and unfamiliar language. To achieve this, teachers should provide:

- an environment that promotes the use of the target language in the classroom, and prepares the students to communicate in a variety of everyday situations and contexts
- authentic materials for study that, although they may have been edited or simplified, have been originally produced for everyday users of the target language.

Teachers should also ensure that their course encourages students to :

- practise the four primary language skills
- interact in the target language by participating actively in oral exchanges by both listening and speaking, or responding to a piece of reading material in either a written or spoken way.

Teachers are reminded that no single part of the syllabus is an end in itself, but that all parts should complement each other and ought to be integrated. Language should be developed through the study of materials that reflect the culture(s) concerned.

## Whole-class Projects

The example on the next page shows a whole-class project that integrates a number of aspects of the syllabus.

<p>Planning and arranging a class party according to the traditions of the culture of the target language</p>	
Main topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leisure and travel</li> </ul>
Related topics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• town and services</li> <li>• food and drink</li> <li>• the individual</li> </ul>
Cultural awareness:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food and drink of the country where the language is spoken</li> <li>• music (including modern music) from the country where the language is spoken</li> </ul>
Types of texts used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invitation, letter (the individual)</li> <li>• poster</li> <li>• catalogue (shopping and food)</li> <li>• shopping list (food and drink)</li> </ul>
Grammatical structures and vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• according to the language-specific syllabus for each language</li> </ul>
<p>Development of skills</p> <p>Oracy skills: Listening and speaking activities/tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the best day, date and time to have the party.</li> <li>• Discuss whom to invite.</li> <li>• Discuss where to have the party.</li> <li>• Discuss what food, drink and music to have, and how to pay for it.</li> </ul> <p>Literacy skills: Reading and writing activities/tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read catalogues from different catering companies, identifying what food and drink is on offer and how much it costs.</li> <li>• Read advertisements from freelance disc jockeys or local bands to find out what music they play and how much they would charge.</li> <li>• Design a poster, including all the necessary information about the party, and directions to the venue where it is to be held.</li> <li>• Write a letter to the neighbours, apologizing in advance for the noise.</li> </ul>	

## Beyond the Classroom

Wherever possible, students should be encouraged to practise the language through correspondence, use of e-mail, language clubs and so on.

If the student has particular leisure interests such as sports, films, photography or music, subscriptions to specialist magazines in the target language might be considered. If there are groups of students in the class or school who share the same interest, this could be used as a starting point for projects or group activities.

The Internet offers a means of developing reading skills and awareness of culture(s) as well as stimulating the students' personal development.

## Transparency

Teachers should ensure that their students are given clear information about the course's aims and objectives, the syllabus and the assessment criteria. Students should be made aware of what is expected of them.

## Personal Development

### Pressure-free environment

Through a student-centred approach, teachers should ensure that their students are given the opportunity to develop characteristics such as self-confidence, self-expression and sensitivity to others. Mistakes are a part of the learning process, and should be regarded as such, especially at the early stages of language acquisition.

Whenever possible students should be given the opportunity to bring their own interests into the classroom. Giving students some choice regarding the texts and/or activities used in class may prove beneficial for the motivation of the whole class.

### Learner autonomy

Students should be encouraged to become independent learners. This may require some learner training, especially in the case of those students who have never studied a foreign language before. Different ways of encouraging learner autonomy are:

- eliciting grammar and/or pronunciation rules from given texts
- writing a learner's diary and reflecting on how the language works
- "reading for gist" activities, where the students are trained to deal with texts that contain previously unseen vocabulary
- role plays
- information gap activities
- extra-curricular activities.

# ASSESSMENT OUTLINE

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*For first examinations in 2004*

## External Assessment: Written Component 70%

Two written papers externally set and externally assessed

Paper 1: Text Handling 1½ hours 40%

Text-handling exercises based on four written texts

A short writing exercise in response to the fourth text

Paper 2: Written Production 1½ hours 30%

Section A: Short writing task

One writing task from a choice of two

Section B: Extended writing task

One writing task from a choice of three

## Internal Assessment: Oral Component 30%

Two oral activities to be internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IBO

Individual Oral 15%

Short interview with the teacher

Interactive Oral Activity 15%

The mark of one interactive oral activity

# ASSESSMENT DETAILS

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External Assessment: Written Component 70%

Paper 1: Text Handling 1½ hours 40%

Paper 1 is externally set and externally assessed.

The aim of the text-handling paper is to assess the candidates' abilities in understanding and using information from a range of texts. The paper consists of four texts, each followed by a number of text-handling exercises. The final text also requires a short written response. All texts are related to the prescribed list of topics.

The maximum mark is 50 for paper 1:

- 40 for text handling
- 10 for the written response.

Text-handling questions are assessed according to the markscheme, the written response is assessed according to set criteria.

All responses must be written in the target language.

Dictionaries are not permitted.

There is a variety of types of texts at a range of levels. The first part of the examination will be less difficult than the second part.

For Mandarin and Japanese, the texts in paper 1 may contain only up to 20% of vocabulary that does not appear in the language-specific syllabus. The candidates will not be tested on these words, unless their meaning can be derived from the context without difficulty.

Text-handling questions 32%

In order to answer the questions, candidates will need to use a range of reading techniques such as skimming, scanning or reading for detail. They will also be expected to:

- deduce the meaning of words from context
- understand grammatical structures and functions in context
- be aware of the cohesive devices that give coherence to a text.

Questions are varied and may include some of the following types:

- true or false exercises
- multiple-choice questions
- short-answer questions

- chart-filling exercises
- gap-filling exercises
- matching:
  - words from the text with synonyms, antonyms or definitions
  - summary sentences with different paragraphs of the text
  - two halves of one sentence
  - ideas or sequences with pictures
  - a person with a statement.

## Written response

8%

The written response integrates the skills of reading and writing. Candidates will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the text and an ability to use the information contained in it for the given communicative purpose.

- The written response will be assessed according to the written response assessment criterion.
- A minimum of 40 words, 48 characters in Mandarin and 80 in Japanese, is expected for this task.
- Candidates should spend approximately 15 minutes on this section of the paper.

### Written response exercise—some examples

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | <p><b>Topic:</b> Transport and communication</p> <p><b>Text:</b> A description of a special excursion by train from Beijing to Shanghai. The text contains all the information required in the response.</p> <p><b>Rubric:</b> “You and your Chinese friends decide to go to Beijing for a week, and you have booked tickets for all of you at the nearby travel agency. Leave a message for your friends, informing them of all the necessary travel details, where you would like to meet, etc. Don’t forget to state how much the excursion will cost.”</p> |
|----|--|

*Minimum 48 characters for Mandarin ab initio*

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 2. | <p><b>Topic:</b> The individual/leisure</p> <p><b>Text:</b> A description of a series of events or places to visit in Barcelona: restaurants, discos, etc; together with opening and closing times. It also includes travel arrival times.</p> <p><b>Rubric:</b> “You are staying in Barcelona with a Spanish friend. Basing your comments on the above text, write a postcard home stating that you are enjoying yourself and describing what you intend to do at the weekend.”</p> |
|----|--|

*Minimum 40 words for Spanish ab initio*

## Paper 2: Written Production 1½ hours 30%

Paper 2 is externally set and externally assessed using the language *ab initio* written production descriptors (see “assessment criteria”). It is divided into two sections.

**Section A:** short writing task

**Section B:** extended writing task

- All tasks are related to the list of topics specified in the core syllabus.
- The tasks offered are varied and each one requires the candidates to answer using a specific type of text, such as a formal letter or a report. For more information on the type of texts used please refer to the section “texts”, under “syllabus details” in this guide.
- All tasks are written in the target language.
- All responses must be written in the target language.
- Dictionaries are not permitted.

### Section A: Short writing task 10%

Candidates are required to complete **one** task from a choice of two.

**A minimum of 60 words, 72 Mandarin characters or 120 Japanese characters,** is expected for this task. Candidates writing fewer than the minimum number of words or characters will not be able to reach the higher descriptor levels (see “assessment criteria”).

### Section B: Extended writing task 20%

Candidates are required to complete **one** task from a choice of three.

**A minimum of 120 words, 144 Mandarin characters or 240 Japanese characters,** is expected. Candidates writing fewer than the minimum number of words or characters will not be able to reach the higher descriptor levels (see “assessment criteria”).

## Internal Assessment: Oral Component 30%

Language *ab initio* internal assessment consists of oral work that comprises **both** listening and speaking.

The internal assessment score in language *ab initio* consists of the mark granted for the individual oral, which is a compulsory activity recorded on audio-cassette tape, and the mark of one out of a minimum of three interactive oral activities.

The individual oral and the interactive oral activities are both assessed using the internal assessment criteria. When using these criteria, the references to the individual oral or the visual stimulus might or might not be relevant, depending on the type of activity. However, the criteria still apply.

## Aims

The aims of the internal assessment are to:

- ensure an overall, balanced assessment of the candidate’s oral proficiency in a variety of contexts
- take into account teacher assessment in the candidate’s overall score
- allow the inclusion of activities that may be difficult to assess externally.

## Requirements

The internal assessment must:

- take place during the second year of the course, at a time convenient to the teacher, provided it is consistent with IBO deadlines
- be based on oral work only
- be carried out by the teacher using the language *ab initio* oral descriptors (see “assessment criteria”)
- be externally moderated by the IBO.

## Individual Oral

15%

**Approximately 10 minutes  
(plus 10 minutes preparation)**

The individual oral must be scheduled during the final year of the course. Candidates should be given adequate notice of when the individual oral is to take place.

Cassette recordings of the individual oral will be required for external moderation. Procedures for the recording and sending of cassettes are provided each year in the *Vade Mecum*. It is essential that teachers obtain these details from their Diploma Programme coordinator.

The individual oral may take place in or out of the classroom context. However, care should be taken to ensure that high-quality recordings are sent for moderation.

The individual oral will consist of **two** parts.

- **Part one:** a presentation based on a visual stimulus linked to **one** of the topics in the core syllabus, with follow-up questions on the visual stimulus and issues arising from it. **Approximately 5 minutes**
- **Part two:** a general conversation between the teacher and the candidate. The general conversation should cover further language *ab initio* topics from the core syllabus. **Approximately 5 minutes**

The candidates should be allowed **10 minutes preparation time** after selecting the visual stimulus and prior to the recording of the individual oral.

The timings given for each part of the individual oral are approximate since they will depend on the flow of the conversation. The teacher is best placed to decide the appropriate moment to engage in the general conversation. However, it is imperative that the conversation **does** take place.

**The individual oral must be a spontaneous conversation and it must not be rehearsed.**



## Conduct of the individual oral

### Part one

At the beginning of the 10-minute preparation period, the candidate should be shown two **previously unseen** visual stimuli. These should be of different topics (leisure, school, food, etc) and genres (picture, photograph, cartoon, etc) provided by the teacher.

The visual stimuli should:

- allow the candidate to describe a scene or situation objectively
- allow the candidate to offer a personal interpretation of that scene or situation
- enable the teacher to lead the candidate into a wider conversation
- be relevant to 18 year olds
- be relevant to the topics prescribed in the core syllabus
- be culturally related to the language.

The candidate chooses one stimulus and prepares a presentation on that stimulus. The 10-minute preparation time should take place immediately prior to the recorded oral. Dictionaries or other resources are not permitted.

The candidate is allowed to take brief working notes (approximately ten headings) into the interview room for reference. These notes should be used for reference only and must not be read aloud.

The candidate should begin the individual oral by giving a two- to three-minute presentation based on the visual stimulus.

The teacher should then engage the candidate in conversation arising from the visual stimulus. This conversation should **not** be limited to a simple question and answer format. Questions asked by the teacher should:

- encourage the candidate to describe and comment further on elements of the visual stimulus
- elicit the candidate's opinion on the visual stimulus.

### Part two

This part of the individual oral is **essential** to assessing the candidate's ability to communicate and interact and should replicate an authentic conversation as far as linguistically possible.

Teachers should encourage interaction through a question and answer format. They should ask clear and precise questions that are adapted to the level of the candidates. There should be a variety of open questions such as "why?" and "how?". If the candidate fails to communicate, the teacher might resort to more basic "yes" and "no" questions. However, candidates who require this pattern of questioning throughout the individual oral will not score highly in the language and interaction criteria.

Questions asked by the teacher should:

- ensure discussion widens out to other prescribed topics. This will not only ensure that the candidate's progress throughout the two years is assessed but also that he or she has a chance to make several "fresh starts"
- provide each candidate with the opportunity to demonstrate language skills.

## Teacher's role

Teachers must remember that the purpose of the individual oral is to assess the candidate's ability both to speak and understand the spoken language. It is important that the teachers familiarize themselves with the assessment criteria. The level of the questions asked should be adapted to the candidate's level, to give each candidate adequate opportunities to demonstrate his or her speaking and listening abilities.

Teachers are encouraged to interact with the candidate but should avoid dominating the conversation, as this will make assessment and moderation difficult. If a candidate fails to answer, eliciting the information is an acceptable option, although this will have an effect on the marks (see "assessment criteria").

## Interactive Oral Activities

15%

During their course, students will be expected to take part in different types of oral activities as a way of practising new language structures and vocabulary. During the final year of the course, some of these activities should be used to assess the candidates' oral skills. In the situation of a class with only one student, these activities should be done either with students from a different class or with the teacher.

During these activities, teachers should ensure that a balance of speaking and listening is taking place so that both skills can be assessed. Listening skills can be assessed in several ways which may include the understanding of recorded materials (such as songs) or spoken contributions made by individuals (such as teachers, other students or outside speakers).

A written record must be kept of at least three assessed oral activities. A group 2 internal assessment record form and instructions on its use are provided each year in the *Vade Mecum* for this purpose.

The mark of **one** of these interactive oral activities (normally the best one) will be kept for the internal assessment component.

Cassette recordings of the interactive oral activities will not be required. Interactive oral activities may take the form of whole-class activities, group work or pair work.

## Whole-class activity examples

The following are some examples of classroom activities that can be used for assessment purposes. This list is by no means mandatory or exclusive.

### Pictorial stimuli

1. The teacher selects several pictures or photographs related to language *ab initio* topics and places them on his or her desk face down.
2. The class is divided into groups of four to eight students.
3. The groups take turns to pick up one picture.
4. The other groups take turns to ask questions until they can guess what is shown in the picture.
5. The group that guesses the right answer picks up a new photograph or picture from the teacher's desk.

### Class debate

The teacher and students choose a topic for discussion (at *ab initio* level the topics must be kept simple). For instance a “for and against” debate. The class is divided into two groups and each group is given the role of being either “for” or “against”.

The groups take some time to prepare their arguments in order to support or disagree with the idea. They are allowed to write down a few key points. These could then be written on the board.

A discussion follows. Either the teacher or one of the students could act as a moderator. If it is one of the students, he or she could be asked to introduce the debate at the beginning and summarize the discussion at the end.

## Group and pair work examples

Examples of possible group work activities are:

- role plays
- relaying instructions
- sequencing exercises
- problem-solving activities.

Many of the activities listed above will also be suitable for pair work. Other possibilities for pair work might include:

- find the differences
- information gap activities.

## Role plays

Role plays or simulation activities try to recreate real-life, everyday situations. The following example illustrates how these activities can relate to the language *ab initio* course.

	At the police station
Topic:	Health and emergencies
Other topics:	Emergencies—theft and loss; the individual—clothes; health—parts of the body
Groups:	Three or four students
Roles:	police officer robbery victim friend of the victim (optional) eyewitness
Activity:	The students act the following scene. <i>They are in the police station to report a robbery that has taken place on the street. They're excited. The police officer listens, asks questions and tries to calm them down. The eyewitness supports the victim's story with evidence and also answers the police officer's questions.</i>

## Relaying instructions

In relaying instructions activities, the students have to respond to a message given in the target language. The instructions can be of a very different nature. The following example illustrates how relaying instructions can relate to the language *ab initio* course.

Topic:	Leisure and travel
Sub-topic:	Sports and activities
Groups:	One to one, one to whole class, or one to group
Other topics:	Health (parts of the body)
Activity:	The teacher provides one student with a set of pictures showing different types of physical exercises or activities. The student, looking at the pictures, tells the rest of the class (in a one-to-group situation) to follow his or her instructions to re-enact the activity shown in the pictures.

## Sequencing exercises

One possible exercise is to give students a set of related photographs or pictures and ask them to put the pictures in the right order and narrate the story.

## Problem-solving activities

In problem-solving activities, groups of students are asked to reach a consensus over a particular problem, as in the example below.

	Desert island
Topic:	Environment
Related topics:	Leisure
Groups:	Groups of four or five students
Activity:	<p>Each group decides which three objects they would take if they were going to spend one month on a desert island. They must give reasons for their decisions. They can then report back to the whole class. In a class of 20, the result would be 15 objects.</p> <p>The students then have to decide as a whole class which three objects they would take. As the whole-class discussion will be very similar to the discussion in the small group, the students will have practised the language before they speak in front of their peers.</p>

## Find the differences

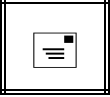




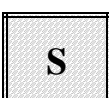
Two sets of pictures (A and B), which are very similar but contain a number of differences, are given to students. The students, working in pairs, point out the differences to each other.

## Information gap activities

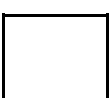
These can take the form of role plays, picture dictations or other activities. They may also be based on a variety of written or visual stimuli such as charts, timetables, pictures, surveys, street plans or maps, or advertisements. The students involved are given different bits of information. In order to fulfill the task they must exchange their information with the other student(s).

In the following example, each student would receive one of the two cards.






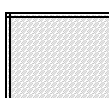
**STUDENT A**

	H I G H		
UPPER		STREET	
	S T R E E T		
LOWER		STREET	
			


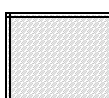
**KEY:**

post office	
town hall	<b>TH</b>
supermarket	<b>S</b>

**STUDENT B**

	H I G H		
UPPER		STREET	
	S T R E E T		
LOWER		STREET	
			

**KEY:**

hospital	
shop	<b>SH</b>
swimming pool	

By asking each other questions and giving directions in return, the students have to find out where all the places are in the town.

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: GENERAL

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The method of assessment used by the International Baccalaureate Organization is criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. It judges candidates by their performance in relation to identified assessment criteria and not in relation to the rest of the candidates.

The text-handling questions in paper 1 are assessed according to paper-specific markschemes for each language, and the written response exercise is assessed according to assessment criteria.

Paper 2 (written production) and the internal assessment (oral component) are assessed according to sets of assessment criteria and markband descriptors which are the same for all *ab initio* languages.

A number of assessment criteria have been identified for each part of the assessment for which there is no paper-specific markscheme—paper one (written response), paper 2 (written production) and internal assessment (oral). These criteria are related to the objectives established for the language *ab initio* course.

The written response in paper 1 is externally assessed according to the following assessment criterion.

<b>Criterion A</b>	<b>Communication skills</b>
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Paper 2 (written production) is externally assessed according to the following three assessment criteria.

<b>Criterion A</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>Criterion B</b>	<b>Communication skills</b>
<b>Criterion C</b>	<b>Presentation</b>

The oral component is internally assessed according to the following three assessment criteria.

<b>Criterion A</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>Criterion B</b>	<b>Communication skills</b>
<b>Criterion C</b>	<b>Interaction</b>

These assessment criteria and markband descriptors (referred to as “descriptors” in this document) appear on the following pages. They are preceded by a description of the major features of the criteria.

For each assessment criterion, six descriptors are defined, describing achievement levels 0–10. The lowest level of achievement is represented by 0; the highest level of achievement is represented by 10.

The aim is to find, for each assessment criterion, the descriptor that conveys most adequately the achievement level attained by the candidate’s work, and then to judge whether the work should be placed at the top of that band or at the bottom of it.

## Using the Assessment Criteria

When assessing a candidate's work, teachers should read the descriptors for each criterion starting with level 0, until they reach a descriptor that describes a level of achievement that the work being assessed has not attained. The work is therefore best described by one of the levels of the preceding descriptor. Having identified the markband descriptor, teachers should choose one of the two levels within the markband.

If, however, a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors and only partially fulfills the requirements of the higher descriptor, then teachers should reread both of the descriptors in question and choose the one that more appropriately describes the candidate's work.

Only whole numbers should be recorded. Partial marks, fractions and decimals are not acceptable.

Teachers should not consider the descriptors as marks or percentages. Although the descriptor levels are ultimately added together to obtain a score out of 30, teachers should not assume that there are other arithmetic relationships (for example, a level 4 performance is not necessarily twice as good as a level 2 performance).

Similarly, teachers should not think in terms of a pass/fail boundary or make comparisons with the IB Diploma Programme 1–7 grade scale, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.

## Candidates' Scores

The highest descriptors do not imply a faultless performance, but should be achievable by a foreign language learner who has not studied the language prior to beginning the language *ab initio* course. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes (level 0 and level 10) if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.

A candidate who attains a high level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily reach high levels of achievement for the other criteria. Conversely, a candidate who attains a low level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily attain low levels of achievement for other criteria.

Teachers should not assume that the scores of a group of candidates being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern.

The descriptors should be available to candidates at all times.



# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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## External Assessment

### Written Response (Paper 1)

#### Criterion A: Communication skills

*To what extent does the candidate succeed in presenting a clear message using the relevant information from the text?*

- *Does the candidate succeed in selecting the relevant information from the original text?*
- *Does the candidate link the information from the text to his or her response in a clear manner?*
- *Does the candidate succeed in using the language accurately to convey the information?*
- *Does the candidate succeed in selecting the correct register and format for the task?*

#### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved**

**1–2**      **The candidate does not present a legible message in response to the question.**

- The candidate does not select the relevant information from the text.
- The language is inaccurate, containing numerous mistakes that obscure the meaning.
- The selection of both register and format is inappropriate.

**3–4**      **The candidate's message is often unclear and the question has only been answered partially.**

- The candidate uses some of the relevant information from the text, but there are no links.
- There are frequent mistakes in the use of language that obscure the meaning.
- The selection of either register or format is inappropriate.

**5–6**      **The candidate's message is generally clear and the question has been basically answered.**

- The candidate selects and links some of the relevant information to his or her response.
- The language is generally comprehensible, although some mistakes still obscure the meaning of some sentences.
- The choice of both register and format is essentially appropriate, although there are certain inconsistencies in their usage.

**7–8 The candidate’s message is clear and the question has been answered.**

- The candidate generally selects the relevant information and links it well to his or her response.
- The language is generally clear and it contributes to a clear message.
- The choice of both register and format is appropriate.

**9–10 The candidate presents a clear message that fully responds to the question.**

- The candidate is successful in selecting all the relevant information, and the links are clear.
- The language is generally accurate and the message is conveyed effectively.
- The choice of both register and format is appropriate and effective.

# Written Production (paper 2)

## Criterion A: Language

*To what extent does the candidate demonstrate an ability to use the language effectively and accurately?*

- *Does the candidate use spelling/calligraphy correctly and accurately?*
- *Does the candidate use the relevant vocabulary in an appropriate way throughout the task?*
- *Does the candidate demonstrate a good command of grammatical structures?*
- *Does the candidate write the prescribed minimum number of words?*  
(Levels 7 to 10 may only be awarded for this criterion if at least the minimum number of words has been written)

*Note: Please refer to the language-specific syllabus for details of the suggested vocabulary and the prescribed grammatical structures.*

### Achievement

#### Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**      **The candidate's language is generally unclear and difficult to understand.**

- The high number of spelling/calligraphy mistakes makes the writing difficult to understand.
- The candidate has difficulty in using basic words: these are often omitted or misused.
- The candidate has great problems in using the most basic grammatical structures effectively.

**3–4**      **The candidate's language is often unclear and sometimes difficult to understand.**

- There are frequent spelling/calligraphy mistakes, which sometimes make understanding difficult.
- The candidate uses some basic words well, although there are still errors.
- The candidate is able to use some basic grammatical structures well. There are no successful attempts to use slightly complex structures.

**5–6**      **The candidate's language is generally clear although basic.**

- There are some spelling/calligraphy mistakes, but these do not generally obstruct understanding.
- The candidate has a good command of the basic vocabulary necessary to carry out the task.
- The candidate succeeds in the use of basic grammatical structures. There are some successful attempts at slightly complex structures.

**7–8 The candidate’s language is clear and generally easy to understand.**

- The spelling/calligraphy is generally good; occasional errors do not normally affect understanding.
- The candidate’s ability to use a limited range of vocabulary is good.
- The candidate is generally successful in the use of both basic and slightly complex grammatical structures.
- At least the minimum amount of words has been written.

**9–10 The candidate’s language is clear and easy to understand.**

- The spelling/calligraphy is generally good.
- The candidate’s ability to use a limited range of vocabulary is very good.
- The candidate is successful in the use of both basic and slightly complex grammatical structures.
- At least the minimum amount of words has been written.

## Criterion B: Communication skills

*To what extent does the candidate succeed in fulfilling the task successfully?*

- *Does the candidate provide all the information required for the task?*
- *Are the ideas relevant to the chosen task?*
- *Are these ideas developed in a clear and structured way?*

### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**     **The candidate has not completed the task.**

- The candidate does not provide the most basic information necessary to carry out the task.
- The ideas are irrelevant to the task.
- There is no evidence of a logical argument linking the ideas.

**3–4**     **The candidate has partially completed the task.**

- The candidate provides some of the basic information necessary to fulfill the task.
- Only some of the ideas are relevant to the task.
- There is some evidence of a logical argument linking some of the ideas.

**5–6**     **The candidate has basically completed the task.**

- The candidate provides the basic information necessary to carry out the task.
- The ideas are generally relevant to the task.
- There is a basic logical argument linking the ideas.

**7–8**     **The candidate has completed the task fairly well.**

- The candidate provides most of the information necessary to carry out the task.
- The ideas are relevant to the task and there is some awareness of cultural elements.
- There is a logical argument linking the ideas.

**9–10**    **The candidate has completed the task well.**

- The candidate provides all the information necessary to carry out the task.
- The ideas are relevant to the task and there is some awareness of cultural elements.
- There is a clear and logical argument linking the ideas.

## Criterion C: Presentation

*To what extent does the candidate succeed in addressing the audience in an appropriate and effective way?*

- *Does the candidate use the appropriate format?*
- *Does the candidate show an awareness of the appropriate register for the task?*
- *Does the candidate use the language's cohesive devices to give structure to the text? (In this context "cohesive devices" refers to the grammatical and/or lexical items that give coherence to the text as a whole, as well as punctuation and paragraphing.)*

### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**      **The candidate does not show an awareness of the audience.**

- The format is not appropriate to the task.
- The candidate does not show an awareness of the register that corresponds to the task.
- The candidate makes mistakes in the use of basic cohesive devices and shows no awareness of slightly complex devices.

**3–4**      **The candidate is partially aware of the audience.**

- The format is partially appropriate to the task.
- The candidate has a very limited awareness of the register that corresponds to the task.
- The candidate makes some mistakes in the use of some basic cohesive devices and shows a certain awareness of some slightly complex cohesive devices.

**5–6**      **The candidate addresses the audience in a basically appropriate way.**

- The format is generally appropriate to the task.
- The candidate shows a basic awareness of the register that corresponds to the task.
- The candidate uses basic, and some slightly complex, cohesive devices well.

**7–8**      **The candidate addresses the audience fairly well.**

- The format is appropriate to the task.
- The candidate shows a good awareness of the register that corresponds to the task.
- The candidate uses basic, and most slightly complex, cohesive devices well.

**9–10**      **The candidate is successful in addressing the audience.**

- The format is appropriate to the task, and there is some personal input.
- The candidate uses a register that generally corresponds to the task.
- The candidate uses both basic and slightly complex cohesive devices with ease.

# Internal Assessment

## Oral Component

These criteria apply to both the individual oral and the interactive oral activities.

### Criterion A: Language

*To what extent does the candidate demonstrate an ability to use the language effectively and accurately?*

- *Does the candidate's pronunciation and intonation contribute to the effectiveness of the language?*
- *Does the candidate's handling of vocabulary contribute to the fluency of the conversation?*
- *Does the candidate's command of grammar enhance the understanding of the message?*

#### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**      **The candidate's speech is difficult to understand throughout the oral.**

- Pronunciation and intonation mistakes make understanding difficult throughout the individual oral.
- The candidate is often unable to find the words to elaborate a clear message.
- There are errors in basic grammatical structures.

**3–4**      **The candidate's speech is sometimes difficult to understand.**

- There are frequent pronunciation and intonation mistakes, some of which make understanding difficult.
- The candidate is able to use basic vocabulary although some errors lead to misunderstandings.
- There are some errors in basic grammatical structures, and these are repeated throughout the oral.

**5–6**      **The candidate's speech is generally clear.**

- Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear, although there are mistakes.
- The candidate uses the appropriate basic vocabulary well.
- The candidate uses basic grammatical structures well. There are some successful attempts at slightly complex structures.

**7–8**      **The candidate's speech is clear and usually flows with certain ease.**

- Pronunciation and intonation generally facilitate communication.
- The candidate's ability to use a limited range of vocabulary is good.
- The candidate uses both basic, and slightly complex grammatical structures, although there are some errors in the more complex structures.

**9–10**      **The candidate's speech is clear and flows well throughout the oral.**

- Pronunciation and intonation facilitate communication.
- The candidate's ability to use a limited range of vocabulary is very good.
- The candidate uses both basic and slightly complex grammatical structures well.

## Criterion B: Communication skills

*To what extent does the candidate demonstrate an ability to use the language to communicate his or her ideas effectively?*

- *Is the information given by the candidate relevant to the visual stimulus?*
- *Are the candidate's responses appropriate during the conversation?*
- *Does the candidate present his or her ideas as part of a logical argument or sequence?*

### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**      **The candidate does not succeed in communicating his or her ideas.**

- The majority of information presented by the candidate is not relevant to the visual stimulus.
- The candidate's responses are usually not relevant to the questions.
- There is no evidence of a logical argument. The candidate moves swiftly from one idea to the next without an explanation or obvious link.

**3–4**      **The candidate manages to communicate some basic ideas, although with difficulty.**

- Some of the information presented by the candidate is not relevant to the visual stimulus.
- Some of the candidate's responses are relevant to the questions.
- There is some evidence of a logical argument, although this is often lost.

**5–6**      **The candidate manages to communicate basic and some slightly complex ideas, although these prove difficult.**

- The information presented by the candidate is generally relevant to the visual stimulus.
- The candidate's responses are generally relevant to the questions, although sometimes brief.
- There is evidence of a logical argument. Although there are some gaps in information, these do not affect communication greatly.

**7–8**      **The candidate communicates both basic and slightly complex ideas fairly well.**

- The information presented by the candidate is relevant to the visual stimulus.
- The majority of the candidate's responses are relevant to the questions and there is some awareness of cultural elements.
- There is a clear logical argument in the candidate's responses.

**9–10**      **The candidate communicates both basic and slightly complex ideas well.**

- The information presented by the candidate is relevant and thorough.
- The candidate's responses are relevant to the questions and there is some awareness of cultural elements.
- There is a clear logical argument in the candidate's responses and it shows some insight on the part of the candidate.



## Criterion C: Interaction

*To what extent does the candidate demonstrate an ability to interact and keep the flow of the conversation?*

- *Does the candidate show that he or she understands the conversation?*
- *Is the candidate able to interact independently, with little or no prompting from the teacher?*
- *Does the candidate use the appropriate language and show an awareness of register?*

### Achievement Level

**0**      **Level 1 is not achieved.**

**1–2**      **The candidate is unable to keep the flow of the conversation throughout the oral.**

- The candidate has difficulty understanding most of the teacher's questions or comments at a slow pace, and needs frequent repetition.
- The candidate needs constant prompting from the teacher.
- The candidate often uses inappropriate expressions and shows no awareness of register.

**3–4**      **The candidate manages to keep the flow of the conversation at times.**

- The candidate has difficulty in understanding some of the basic questions or comments, and needs some repetition of basic questions.
- The candidate needs frequent prompting.
- The candidate uses inappropriate expressions at times and shows little awareness of register.

**5–6**      **The candidate is able to keep the flow of the conversation, although he or she needs some repetition.**

- The candidate understands basic questions and comments well. There are certain difficulties with slightly complex questions and comments and some repetition of these at a slow pace is needed.
- The candidate needs some prompting with slightly complex answers.
- The candidate occasionally uses inappropriate expressions but shows some awareness of register.

**7–8**      **The candidate keeps the flow of the conversation most of the time.**

- The candidate understands both basic and slightly complex comments without repetition, although occasionally he or she misunderstands a word or expression.
- The candidate needs little prompting.
- The candidate uses mostly appropriate expressions and shows an awareness of register.

**9–10**      **The candidate keeps the flow of the conversation with ease and at a fairly normal pace of speech.**

- The candidate understands both basic and slightly complex comments well.
- The candidate does not need prompting and provides some personal input.
- The candidate uses appropriate expressions and shows a good awareness of register.