Language Ab Initio Topics: chosen from the syllabus outline below – *To be determined.*

The language ab initio course is organised into three themes

-Individual and society
-Leisure and work
-Urban and rural environment

Each theme has a list of topics that provide the students with opportunities to practise and explore the language as well as to develop intercultural understanding. Through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills, students should be able to respond and interact appropriately in a defined range of everyday situations.

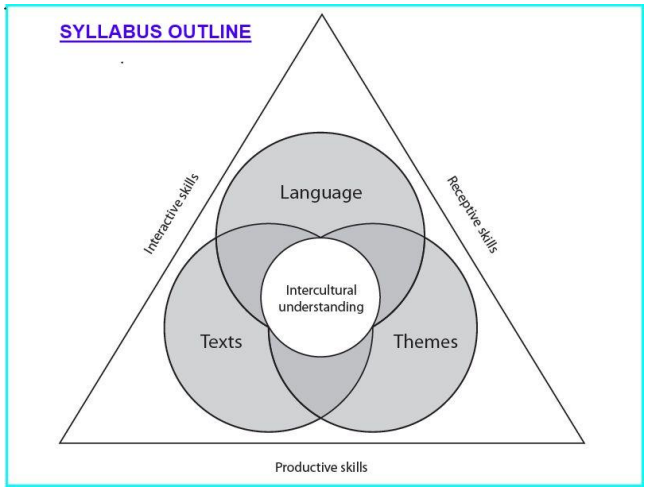
Assessment objectives

There are five assessment objectives for the language ab initio course. Students will be assessed on their ability to:

1. demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the intercultural elements related to the prescribed topics
2. communicate clearly and effectively in a range of situations
3. understand and use accurately the basic structures of the language
4. understand and use an appropriate range of vocabulary
5. use a register and a format that are appropriate to the situation.

Syllabus outline

Three areas of study—language, texts and themes—provide the basis of the two-year language ab initio course. These three fundamental areas are interconnected and should be studied concurrently. Interactive, productive and receptive skills are developed through study in these three areas and are of equal importance.
The language ab initio course is displayed above in a diagram with intercultural understanding at its heart to demonstrate both its importance and its interrelatedness within the areas of language, texts and themes. Intercultural understanding is defined as an ability to demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity and/or similarity between the target culture(s) and the student's own. The student develops a greater awareness of his or her own culture(s) through learning about another. Intercultural understanding provides both the link between the three areas of the course and the lens through which they should be addressed. It is essential that teachers are allowed the prescribed minimum number of teaching hours necessary to meet the requirements of the language ab initio course. The course is available at SL only.



Syllabus content

The language ab initio syllabus is defined in two documents: the *Language ab initio guide* and the language specific syllabus.
The language-specific syllabus is a document containing both the prescribed grammar and lexicon necessary in order for students to meet the assessment objectives of the language ab initio course. Each language ab initio course has its own language-specific syllabus. The three common elements in each language-specific syllabus are:

• vocabulary lists under topic headings
• a list of prescribed grammar
• a list of the instructions for the written examination papers.

The language ab initio syllabus comprises three interconnected areas: language, themes and texts.

Themes

The three themes (individual and society, leisure and work, urban and rural environment) are made up of a series of 20 topics. These serve as the foundation for the acquisition of the language and the study of different text types (listed in "External assessment details"). Through the study of the three interrelated themes, students will develop the skills necessary to fulfill the assessment objectives of the language ab initio course.
It is important to note that the order of the content is **not** an indication of how the themes and topics should be taught. They are interrelated and teachers are encouraged to adopt an integrated and cyclical approach to teaching. The topic of shopping, for example, may be treated under any of the three themes and could be revisited at several stages of the two-year course.

Prescribed topics

Individual and society	**Leisure and work**	**Urban and rural environment**
Daily routines	Employment	Environmental concerns
Education	Entertainment	Global issues
Food and drink	Entertainment	Neighbourhood
Personal details, appearance and character	Holidays	Physical geography
Physical health	Media	Town and services
Relationships	Sport	Weather
Shopping	Technology	
	Transport	

Assessment outline

Assessment component	**Weighting**
External assessment	75%
Paper 1 (1 hour 30 minutes): Receptive skills Understanding of four written texts. (40 marks) Text- handling exercises.	30%

Paper 2 (1 hour): Productive skills Two compulsory writing exercises. (25 marks) Section A (7 marks): One question to be answered from a choice of two. Section B (18 marks): One question to be answer from a choice o three	25%
Written assignment (2 hours): Receptive and productive skills **A piece of writing** , 200-300 words, in the target language carried out in class under teacher supervision. (20 marks)	20 %
Internal assessment (10 minutes): Interactive skills **Individual oral** (25 marks) **Three-part oral internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB towards the end of the course.** **-Part 1:** Presentation of a visual stimulus (from a choice of two) by the students **-Part 2:** Follow-up questions on the visual stimulus **-Part 3:** General conversation including at least two questions on the written assignment	25%

<u>External assessment details</u>

Paper 1: Receptive skills
Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Weighting: 30%
Paper 1 is externally set and externally assessed. The aim of this text-handling paper is to assess, through a variety of exercises, the student's ability to read and understand a range of authentic texts. These texts may have been adapted. The text booklet consists of four texts, and the question and answer booklet contains up to 40 text-handling exercises.
All three themes are represented (see "Syllabus content"). There is a variety of types of texts at a range of levels, with the penultimate text (text C) being the most difficult. For language ab initio courses with vocabulary lists provided, the texts in paper 1 will contain some vocabulary that does not appear in the language-specific syllabus. Students will not be tested on these words unless their meaning can be derived from the context.
All texts and questions are in the target language and all responses must be written in the target language.
Use of dictionaries and reference material is not permitted in the examination.
Text-handling responses are assessed according to the markscheme. The maximum mark for paper 1 is 40.

<u>Text-handling exercises</u>

In order to complete the exercises, students will need to use a range of reading techniques such as skimming, scanning or reading for detail. They will be expected to respond to a variety of text-handling exercises, some of which require a short response, for example:

• true or false exercises
• multiple-choice questions
• short-answer questions
• table-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.

Students are also expected to:

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

Paper 2: Productive skills
Duration: 1 hour
Weighting: 25%

Paper 2 is externally set and externally assessed using the productive skills criteria (see "External assessment criteria"). It is divided into two sections.

• **Section A: Short writing task**—Students answer one question from a choice of two.
• **Section B: Extended writing task**—Students answer one question from a choice of three.

All tasks are related to the twenty prescribed topics from the three themes, as described in "Syllabus content". The tasks offered are varied and require students to answer using a specific text type (see table that follows). All tasks are written in the target language and all responses must be written in the target language. Use of dictionaries and reference material is not permitted in the examination.

External assessment
Section A: Short writing task (7 marks)
A minimum of 50 words.
Section B: Extended writing task (18 marks)
A minimum of 100 words.

Written assignment: Receptive and productive skills
Weighting: 20%

The formal writing of the written assignment should not exceed two hours and should be conducted in a single session.

The written assignment is the culmination of independent research that the student has carried out on one of the prescribed topics of the language ab initio course in the second year of the programme. Teachers are encouraged to orient students in selecting an appropriate topic and a suitable title for the assignment, guidance for which can be found in the teacher support material. The aim of the assignment is for students to describe the chosen topic before identifying differences and/or similarities between their own culture(s) and the target culture(s). Lastly, students are required to reflect on these differences and/or similarities by responding to a set of guiding questions. The description, comparison and reflection are presented in the target language in one continuous piece of handwritten work under three separate headings: description, comparison and reflection.

The research process is student driven and guided by teachers. There is no formal amount of time for the research process other than the stipulation that it cannot begin in the first year of the programme. Sources (any text that contributes to the research process) may be generated by the student or the teacher or a combination of both,

and can be in any language. Sources from the classroom may be included as part of the research process, as can externally generated sources.

External assessment

The written assignment is externally assessed and must be the independent work of the student. The written assignment must be **handwritten** (unless special authorization has been obtained) in the **target language** in class under the supervision of the teacher. The title of the written assignment and theme from which it comes (individual and society, leisure and work, urban and rural environment) should be the choice of the student with guidance from the teacher. The use of a bilingual or monolingual dictionary and reference material **is** permitted in the classroom.

During the language ab initio course, the student will become familiar with the everyday life and culture(s) of the country (or countries) in which the language is spoken. The student will thus become aware of the similarities and differences between societies and come to better appreciate the complex web of relationships that define and link us.

The student is expected to develop a knowledge and understanding of some aspects of intercultural diversity and similarity. Texts should be used as a means of exploring and reflecting on aspects of both the target language culture(s) and the student's own culture(s).