

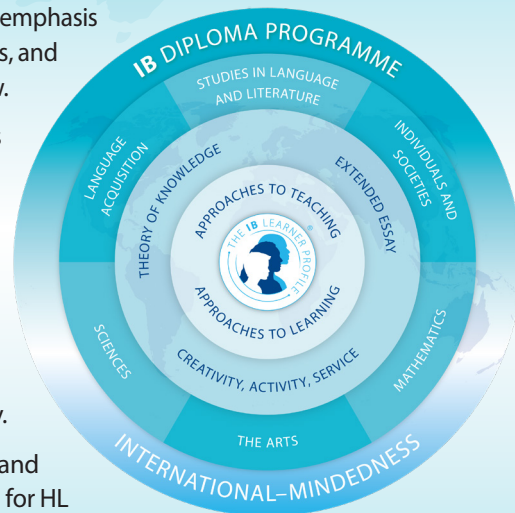
Language acquisition: Language ab initio

First assessment 2029

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. Instead of an arts subject, students can choose two subjects from another area. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



I. Course description and aims

The DP language ab initio course is designed for students with no prior experience of the target language or for students with very limited previous exposure. Language ab initio is only available at SL.

Language ab initio is designed to develop the competences and intercultural understanding needed for successful communication within and outside of the classroom in contexts in which the target language is used. Understanding the relationship between language and culture, and their inseparability, provides insight into how users of the target language view the world and how the evolving world view influences language. Learning and using the target language develops international-mindedness, fosters respect for cultural diversity, and is central to the IB mission of education for a better, more peaceful world.

Language ab initio students will view language through the lenses of cultures, communication and perspectives. They will develop sociolinguistic skills (the use of language appropriate to the context), linguistic skills (the knowledge and understanding of the language system), and pragmatic skills (the handling of ideas for the construction and communication of messages). In learning how language works, students will use and develop critical-thinking skills. In experimenting with language, students will use and develop creative-thinking skills.

The aims for language ab initio are as follows.

- Develop international-mindedness through the study of languages, cultures, and ideas and issues of global significance.
- Enable students to communicate in the target language in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.

- Encourage an awareness and appreciation of a variety of perspectives of people from diverse cultures through the study of texts, and through social interaction.
- Develop students' understanding of the relationship between the languages and cultures with which they are familiar.
- Develop students' awareness of the importance of language in relation to other areas of knowledge.
- Provide students with opportunities for intellectual engagement and the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills through language learning and the process of inquiry.
- Provide students with a basis for further study, work and leisure through the use of an additional language.
- Foster curiosity, creativity and a lifelong enjoyment of language learning.

II. Curriculum model overview

The DP language ab initio course has communication as its focus. As students develop in the target language, communication becomes more successful and effective, and is evidenced through the demonstration of receptive, productive and interactive skills across a range of contexts and purposes appropriate to the level of the course.

Students develop the ability to communicate in the target language by engaging with language, themes, texts and concepts. Communication becomes more successful and effective with the continued development of receptive, productive and interactive skills.

Language ab initio has five prescribed themes which provide relevant contexts for study and opportunities for students to communicate about matters of personal, local, national and global interest. They allow students to compare the target language and culture(s) to other languages and cultures with which they are familiar.

Because a structured learning environment is crucial for the success of beginning language learners, the language ab initio syllabus prescribes four topics for each of the five themes.

| Theme | Guiding principle | Prescribed topics |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Experiences | Explore and tell the stories of the events, experiences and journeys that shape our lives. | Daily routine Leisure Holidays Festivals and celebrations |
| Human ingenuity | Explore the ways in which human creativity and innovation affect our world. | Transport Entertainment Media Technology |
| Identities | Explore the nature of the self and what it is to be human. | Personal attributes Personal relationships Eating and drinking Physical wellbeing |
| Sharing the planet | Explore the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world. | Climate Physical geography The environment Global issues |

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|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social organization | Explore the ways in which groups of people organize themselves, or are organized, through common systems or interests. | Neighbourhood Education The workplace Social issues |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|

III. Assessment model

There are five assessment objectives for language ab initio.

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

Assessment at a glance

| Type of assessment | Format of assessment | Weighting of final grade |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| External | | 75% |
| Paper 1 (productive skills) | Two written tasks of 70–150 words, each from a choice of three questions, using an appropriate text type from the options given | 25% |
| Paper 2 (receptive skills) | Comprehension exercises on three audio passages and three written texts, based on the five prescribed themes | Listening: 25% Reading: 25% |
| Internal | | 25% |
| Individual oral assessment (productive, receptive and interactive skills) | A student presentation based on a visual stimulus, a student–teacher discussion, and a conversation that includes at least one additional course theme | 25% |

About the IB: For over 50 years, the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and are able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

For further information on the IB Diploma Programme, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/dp>.

Complete subject guides can be accessed through the programme resource centre or purchased through the IB store: <https://www.ibo.org/new-store>.

For more on how the DP prepares students for success at university, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/university-admission>.