

IB Language ab initio

STANDARD LEVEL

What are the aims of the course?

All IB students must study a second language at either Higher or Standard Level. Language ab initio is a foreign language programme for students who have little or no previous experience of learning the language. The courses available at Rossall are in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin.

What does it involve?

The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed through the study of a range of oral and written material alongside the further study of grammatical structures. At the end of the courses students should be able to communicate accurately and effectively, in speech and in writing, and be able to understand and respond to the language in a range of contexts. The courses, through a list of core and optional topics, study the life and culture of the countries where the language is spoken.

How is it assessed?

External assessment (2 hours 45 minutes) 75%

- **Paper 1** (1 hour) 25% Productive skills – writing (30 marks)
Two written tasks of 70–150 words each from a choice of three, choosing a text type from among those listed in the examination instructions.
- **Paper 2** (1 hour 45 minutes) 50% Receptive skills – separate sections for listening and reading (65 marks) Listening comprehension (45 minutes) (25 marks) Reading comprehension (1 hour) (40 marks) Comprehension exercises on three audio passages and three written texts, drawn from all five themes.

Internal assessment 25%

- This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.
Individual oral assessment – A conversation with the teacher, based on an extract from one of the literary works studied in class, followed by discussion based on one or more of the themes from the syllabus. (30 marks)

Are there any specific entry requirements?

Language ab initio is designed for students who possess little knowledge of the target language, or complete beginners.

Why is it a useful qualification?

It will open doors for you (the ability to speak a second language is an acknowledged and proven competitive advantage in the work place. With a second language you can do just about anything (translating, politics, law, teaching, business, working for National Agencies, diplomacy etc.).

It will open your mind (understanding other cultures and changing your view on the world, teaching you to be flexible and mobile). It will open your heart (meeting new people, making friends and possibly changing your life!).

In brief, in the words of Nelson Mandela:

“If you speak to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you speak to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”

