

IB German B



“Those who know nothing of an additional language know nothing of their own”

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

What is the course about?

German ab initio and German B Standard level (SL) and Higher level (HL) are language courses designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken. German B develops students' linguistic abilities through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills. International-mindedness is central to the IB philosophy and instrumental in aspiring to a more peaceful world. German B courses do not have as their only goal the development of language skills, but also fostering intercultural understanding and global engagement. The nature of the language acquisition process supports international-mindedness and is, in turn, supported by it. The flexibility of IB course design allows language acquisition teachers to incorporate ideas and resources that encourage students to view aspects of the language and culture from different (and sometimes differing) perspectives, to make nonjudgmental comparisons of language and culture, and to view language and culture in a global context.

Five prescribed themes are common to the syllabuses of language B and language ab initio; the themes provide relevant contexts for study at all levels of language acquisition in the DP, and opportunities for students to communicate about matters of personal, local or national, and global interest.

The five prescribed themes are:

- **Identities.** Explore the nature of the self and what it is to be human.
- **Experiences.** Explore and tell the stories of the events, experiences and journeys that shape our lives.
- **Human ingenuity.** Explore the ways in which human creativity and innovation affect our world.
- **Social organization.** Explore the ways in which groups of people organize themselves, or are organized, through common systems or interests.
- **Sharing the planet.** Explore the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world.

How is the course structured?

On the one hand, the course focuses on the five prescribed themes. It is divided into units which last approximately 4- 6 weeks. Each unit has a topic such as:

- Lifestyles • Health and wellbeing • Beliefs and values • Subcultures **(Identities)**
- Leisure activities • Holidays and travel • Life stories • Migration **(Experiences)**
- Entertainment • Communication and media • Scientific innovation **(Human ingenuity)**
- Community • Social relationships and engagement • Education **(Social organization)**
- Globalization • The environment • Human rights • Peace and conflict • Ethics **(Sharing the planet)**

On the other hand, the course focuses on developing key language skills, such as: listening, speaking, writing, reading. Students are expected to extend the range and complexity of the language they use and understand in order to communicate. They continue to develop their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

What distinguishes German ab initio course from German B Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL)

At all levels of German B “ab initio”, SL and HL, students learn to communicate in the target language in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. They describe situations, narrate events, make comparisons, explain problems, and state and support their personal opinions on a variety of topics relating to course content. The distinction can be seen in **the level of competency** the student is expected to develop in the receptive, productive and interactive skills.

| | Standard Level | Higher Level |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Receptive skills | Students understand a range of written and spoken authentic texts. They understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes; they understand comparisons and recognize a straightforward, linear argument. They use context to deduce the meaning of sentences and unknown words and phrases. | Students understand and evaluate a wide variety of written and spoken authentic texts; they understand fundamental elements of literary texts . They analyse arguments, distinguishing main points from relevant supporting details and explanations. They use a variety of strategies to deduce meaning. The study of two literary works originally written in the target language is required only at HL. |
| Productive skills | Students write texts for a variety of purposes and make oral presentations. They write descriptive texts and personal correspondence; they make comparisons, narrate stories, provide detailed accounts, and express their thoughts and opinions on abstract or cultural topics. | Students present and develop their ideas and opinions on a variety of topics, both orally and in writing. They construct and support arguments with explanations and examples. They speak and write at length, and with purpose, in order to meet a wide range of communicative needs: describing, narrating, comparing, explaining, persuading, justifying, evaluating. |

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| Interactive skills | Students initiate and maintain the flow of conversations and discussions. They express and respond to opinions and feelings. Students use a variety of strategies to negotiate meaning and foster communication. | Students initiate, maintain and close oral exchanges, displaying some ability to make adjustments in style or emphasis. Students are adept in negotiating meaning and fostering communication. |
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Great care should be taken to select a German B course that is most appropriate for an individual student. The choice depends on level of language skills at the start of the course.

- **Ab Initio** – language learning courses for beginners, designed to be followed over two years by students who have no previous experience of learning the target language. Students at CEFR (Common European Framework for Languages) A1 should take the German B ab initio course.
- **Standard** – language learning course for students with some previous experience of learning the target language. Students at A2 or B1 can comfortably take the German B Standard Level course.
- **Higher Level** - courses for students with good background in the target language. Students with B1 or B2 can comfortably take the German B Higher Level course.

How is the course assessed?

The following assessment objectives are common to both German B and German ab initio. The level of difficulty of the assessments, and the expectations of student performance on the tasks, are what distinguishes the three level: ab initio, SL and HL.

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

Class activities, homework, written tests after every chapter are parts of the formative assessment of a student's progress and encourage them to work systematically. Results will be given as a percentage of total marks and as a grade from 1 to 7.

The End of Year Exam at the end of the first year of the course will be structured in a way similar to a real exam and marked using the same criteria to give students an opportunity to know their level and decide about them being promoted to IB2. Students will be given Paper 1 and Paper 2 containing topics of core syllabus studied in the first year.

The final IB Diploma assessment is as follows:

Internal Assessment (during the second year of the course, date to be confirmed):

Individual oral (25%) – recording of conversation with teacher, based on a picture or photograph (SL) or an extract from one of the books we have studied (HL).

Final Examinations

Paper 1 – Writing (25%). One writing task from a choice of three.

Paper 2 – Listening and Reading (50%). Comprehension questions based on three audio texts and three written texts.

Are there any requirements?

It is very important to adjust the course to the current student's skills. The IB guidelines suggest that:

- students at CEFR (Common European Framework for Languages) A1 should take the German B ab initio course
- Students at A2 or B1 can comfortably take the German B Standard Level course.
- and students with CEFR B1 or B2 can comfortably take the English B Higher Level course.

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| 0 – 2 years of learning | 3 – 5 year of learning | 5-7 year of learning |
| Ab initio | Standard level | Higher Level |

At the beginning of the year, a **test** will be carried out to check the level of knowledge that will help students decide on the appropriate level selection.

What materials will I need?

Students will be provided with textbooks and A4 format notebooks. Textbooks will have to be returned to the school library at the end of the 2-years' course. Students should buy their own folders and binders in order to keep all the additional materials well-organized for study.

What will I learn?

You will learn to communicate in the language you have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes and to understand reading and listening texts. You will also develop your vocabulary and understanding of German grammar. By studying languages, cultures, ideas, and topics of global importance, you will develop international thoughts as well as your understanding of the relationship between the languages and cultures you are familiar with.

You will get a basis for further study, work and leisure through the use of an additional language.

In what ways does the Language B syllabus promote the attributes of the IB learner profile?

International-mindedness also provides opportunities for students to progress in the development of IB learner profile traits. Through exposure to, examination of, and reflection on, texts from cultures other than their own, students nurture their curiosity (*inquirers*), engage with issues and ideas of global significance (*knowledgeable*), use critical-thinking skills (*thinkers*) and listen carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups (*communicators*). They learn to show respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere (*principled*), critically appreciate the values and traditions of others (*open-minded*), show empathy, compassion and respect (*caring*), recognize their interdependence with other people and the world in which they live (*balanced*), consider the world thoughtfully (*reflective*) and explore new ideas (*risk-takers*).

How can German B be an inspiration for an extended essay question?

Writing an extended essay (EE) in a language of acquisition provides students with an excellent opportunity to explore one aspect of their chosen language in greater depth and to increase their intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

Students must select one of the three distinct categories outlined below in order to develop a manageable research question for their EE.

- Category 1 (“language”) offers the opportunity to engage with a particular linguistic aspect in greater detail.
- Category 2 (“culture and society”) allows the student to focus on one aspect of the target culture, linked to either a linguistic detail or a cultural artifact,
- Category 3 (“literature”) provides an opportunity for students to explore one or more works of literature in order to widen their understanding of the target language and culture from a literary angle.

Can an interest in German B lead to a CAS project?

CAS and language acquisition can complement each other in a variety of ways. Students can enhance intercultural understanding through the active and purposeful use of their acquired language within the specific real-life contexts provided by their CAS experiences. Students may also draw on their CAS experiences to enrich their involvement in language acquisition.

- In a series of CAS experiences relating to the language acquisition theme of “social organization” (for example, social engagement), more advanced students can help other students learn a language.
- Students can develop a CAS project linked to the language acquisition theme of “experiences” (for example, migration) in which they engage with members of a local, migration population. The students could collaborate in an investigation of how migrants balance negotiating a new culture with maintaining their cultural heritage.
- Students can extend engagement with the language acquisition theme of “sharing the planet” (for example, environment) by conducting a separate activity in learning the names of organic and human-made materials in the target language. The student could then walk around the school to collect human-made waste (for example, plastic).

What is the relationship between Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and Language B?

Theory of knowledge (TOK) is one of the three core elements of the Diploma Programme (DP). It plays a special role in the programme by providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the fundamental question of how they know what they know.

Language is itself one of the specific ways of knowing that is identified in the TOK course. In addition to this explicit exploration of language, the skills and wider conceptual understandings that students develop in TOK can make an extremely positive contribution to their study of language acquisition. TOK develops higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, and also helps students to make connections and comparisons across their subject areas and the DP core. In this way, language acquisition both supports and is supported by TOK.

As well as using the skills developed in TOK in acquiring an additional language, students will also benefit from guiding questions that can connect TOK to the five themes of the language B curriculum.

In Language B and in TOK classes students will be looking for answers to questions like:

- Is it possible to think without language?
- If people speak more than one language, is what they know different in each language?
- What would be lost if the whole world shared one common language?
- Does language describe our experience of the world, or does it actively shape our experience of the world?
- To what extent is our perspective determined by our membership of a particular culture?
- To what extent are we aware of the impact of culture on what we believe or know?
- Is there anything that is true for all cultures?

Where can I find more information about the course?

For more information you can download the Language B guide. First assessment 2020. Please also feel free to email the German teacher, Anna Sondej, at a.sondej@bisc.krakow.pl.

Bibliography

Language B guide. First assessment 2020. Published February 2018.

Website: www.ibo.org

Images: <https://goo.gl/images/vXvKxE>