

## Language Learning in Years 12-13

### What are the basic requirements?

- All students must take a **Group 2 language course**, in a foreign language or second language if they are studying for the **IB Diploma**. The only exception is if they take two Group 1 languages then a group 2 is not needed. Some students following the **Applied Learning pathway** choose to complete an IB certificate in a language to complement their BTEC courses.
- Some IB students may consider taking yet another language as their Group 6 option.

### Which languages / levels are there?

- **Language A (standard/higher)**
  - for **bilingual** students with a native-speaker standard of reading and writing in the language.
  - Available in **Chinese** at Island School.
  - Available as a **school-supported, self-taught course** in any other language at Island School - currently co-ordinated by Ms Andrea Walsh, Head of English as an Additional Language.
  - Available in **French, Korean, German, Japanese (and possibly Hebrew)** if studied at the ESF Language Centre in Quarry Bay.
- **Language (standard/higher)**
  - for students with a high **foreign language** IGCSE grade or who are at an equivalent level.
  - Available in **Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and French** at Island School.
- **Ab Initio Standard Level**
  - for **beginners or near-beginners** - those who have completed just one or two years of study in the language.
  - Available in **Japanese and Spanish** at Island School.

### Who is Language A for?

- This course is for **bilingual and biliterate** students - your reading and writing skills need to be excellent as well as your speaking and listening.
- It qualifies you for a **Bilingual IB Diploma**, which is an excellent qualification to have. It may not have an immediate impact on your life but it could easily help you with future employment. It is also valued by top US / UK universities.

### Who is Language B for?

- For the majority of our students.

### Who is Ab Initio for?

- You can do Ab Initio Spanish or Japanese as a total beginner OR if you studied that language in Year 8-9, but NOT in Year 10-11.

- The course is very condensed as you are expected to reach a level slightly higher than IGCSE within 5 terms. There is a lot of work to do! If you are worried about workload, you may prefer to stick to your present language at B Standard Level.
- Seven points are available for Ab Initio just as for any other level or subject.
- You might want to do Ab Initio if you do not want to take your present language to a higher level – some people would prefer a basic knowledge of two foreign languages than a deeper knowledge of one

### Who decides which level a student can take?

- **The school** has a responsibility to make sure that there is a **level of challenge**. The IB Guide states:
  - *It is essential that Diploma Programme coordinators and teachers ensure that students are following the course that is best 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 course. Coordinators, in conjunction with teachers, are responsible for the placement of students. The most important consideration is that the course should be a challenging educational experience for the student.*
- In each level a student can gain a maximum 7 points so it is tempting for students to give themselves the least challenge possible. However, universities look closely at the level at which the language has been studied, and will disregard any language qualification which they deem to be at an unsuitable level of challenge.
- The school will give students **a choice but within limits**. It would not be suitable, for example, for a first-language Chinese student to be studying Language B (foreign language) Standard Level Chinese. All depends on the individual student, but as a *general rule for Chinese*:
  - IGCSE first language leads to IB Lang A or IB Lang B Higher
  - IGCSE second language leads to IB Lang B Higher
  - IGCSE foreign language leads to IB Lang B Standard