



A-Z for French Ab Initio: an independent teacher review

Two years ago, when I was teaching IB SL French for the first time, I was lucky enough to come across Danièle Bourdais' *A-Z for French B* book. In amongst the plethora of material there is for IB, this book quite literally saved my life and it became known as the 'bible' in class!

Unsurprisingly, I was overjoyed to hear that Danièle was creating an A-Z book for the Ab Initio course and couldn't wait for it to be published. Apologies are due to Danièle for my constant hassling her for a publication date. I cannot recommend this book highly enough. It is a little gem! I have used it to inform and create my course content and it sits by my computer every time I make a lesson plan. The book is pitched at the right level and provides support or extension for learners of all abilities. These books are now a mandatory purchase for our year 12 and 13 IB students, who have commented often on how helpful it is.

The book is divided into five nicely coloured, easy-to-follow sections related to the five themes of the course which are then broken down into the sub themes. I find the vocabulary lists relevant and extensive and I use them for my weekly vocabulary quizzes. I use the sentences in my sentence builders and like the fact that the sentences provided start out simple but use increasingly more elaborate language as you get to the end of the section. This allows the students to access sample sentences which match their abilities. I particularly like how, as you proceed through the book, examples of increasingly more complicated grammatical structures and expressions are provided, giving students the opportunity to learn and use language which will allow them to access the top marks in the exam.

I especially appreciate the section '*Pour l'examen oral*' which contains an example of a good photo presentation. It takes the student through all the relevant steps and provides useful language for the students to use. This is invaluable for the speaking exam practice. Equally, the section '*Pour l'examen écrit*' is great and gives examples of vocabulary specific to the text types. I ask my students to refer to this section whenever they have a written task to do.

A-Z for French Ab Initio is a vocabulary book, grammar book, model sentences and exam support book all rolled into one, presented in a lovely, easy-to-follow format. For teachers and students alike, this book is a godsend!

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