

# Starting a language from scratch at university

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# MML Cambridge course choices: ab initio options

## Languages in MML:

**French – German – Italian – Portuguese – Russian – Spanish**  
**ab initio: all except French**

- Two languages, either two post A Level or one post A Level and one ab initio
- MML language and History
- MML language and Classical language
- MML language and Middle Eastern language

(additional languages in second and final years)

# MML Cambridge ab initio courses

[www.mml.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk)

→ 'Subjects' → Year 1 Part IA Option A: ab initio

**German – Italian – Portuguese – Russian – Spanish**

Admission: A\*AA; one modern language at A Level or equivalent

# Teaching and assessment: first year ab initio

- Normally 4 - 5 hours contact hours per week (Faculty teaching in combination with College supervision)
- 20 teaching weeks / vacation study / language courses abroad
- Course book and own / online resources (Moodle worksites)
- A1: Use of FL (textual comprehension / writing / grammar)
- A2: Translation
- A3: Literature and Culture
- Oral examination



# Courses in Part I (first and second year)

ab initio	post A-level
First year	
Oral A A1 Use of FL A2 Translation into and out of FL A3 Introduction to Literature and Culture	Oral B B1 Use of FL B2 Translation out of FL non-language module
Second year	
Oral B B1 Use of FL B2 Translation out of FL	B3 FL through Audiovisual Media plus Translation into FL (= one module)
plus 2 or 3 non-language modules	

## Courses in Part II (Year Abroad and final year)

### ab initio / post A-level

Year abroad

Year Abroad Project

Final year

Oral Examination C [about Year Abroad Project]

C1 Translation into and out of FL

C2 Text and Culture: commentary in FL on text in FL

plus 3 non-language modules

# Learning a language from scratch: preparation

How can students prepare to be interviewed about a language they haven't started learning yet?

<http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/applying/how>

# Learning a new language from scratch: preparation

How can they make a start?



# Learning a new language from scratch

- → [www.mml.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk)
- → 'Subjects'
- → language of choice
- → Go to 'Undergraduates' (or 'Courses')
- → **Year 1 - Part IA Option A: *ab initio***

# Elements taught and assessed

- Reading/listening comprehension
- Guided/free writing
- Grammar
- Translation in and out of the language
- Oral proficiency
- Literary analysis and commentary

# GeA2 Translation in and out of the language

- The poetry slam is a US import that young Germans have found extremely attractive. Slam nights in Berlin – the capital of the German scene – are chaotic and lively. Not only do the new poets present their poems and stories, the audience also gets involved by making loud noises.
- „Poetry Slams“ – das sind Dichter-Wettkämpfe, wo jeder, der Lust hat, seine Werke in Kneipen oder Bars vor einem Publikum präsentieren kann. Die Idee ist ein Import aus den USA, der auch in Europa immer mehr Anhänger und Aktive findet.