

# Indicator D1. How does time spent by students in the classroom vary over the years?

## Highlights

- In most OECD and partner countries, the number of hours of instruction in compulsory primary and lower secondary education does not change much from year to year. However, between 2014 and 2019 the instruction time regulations have changed at least once in a majority of the countries with available data.
- The total number of compulsory instruction hours in primary and general lower secondary education changed in three-quarters of the countries with available data between 2014 and 2019. The changes exceeded 5% in Australia, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain.
- Changes in instruction time regulations could influence one or more aspects of students' compulsory instruction time: the number of grades in different levels of compulsory education, the length of school year and the distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject and/or by grade.

## Context

Providing instruction in formal classroom settings accounts for a large portion of public investment in education. Countries make various choices concerning the overall amount of time devoted to instruction and which subjects are compulsory. These choices reflect national and/or regional priorities and preferences concerning what material students should be taught and at what age. These priorities and preferences may change over time to adapt to the changes in the society or education policy. Changes may also be implemented further to specific crisis, such as the pandemic due to COVID-19 (Box D1.2). Almost all countries have statutory or regulatory requirements regarding hours of instruction. These are most often stipulated as the minimum number of hours of instruction a school must offer and are based on the understanding that sufficient time is required for good learning outcomes. Matching resources with students' needs and making optimal use of time are central to education policy. Teachers' salaries, institutional maintenance and the provision of other educational resources constitute the main costs of education. The length of time during which these resources are made available to students (as partly shown in this indicator) is an important factor in determining how funds for education are allocated (see Box D2.3 in Indicator D2 on the factors influencing the salary cost of teachers per student). There is growing awareness of the importance of time spent outside the classroom during the school day in activities other than instruction, including recesses and breaks. In addition to formal instruction time, students may participate in extracurricular activities before and/or after the school day or during school holidays, but these activities (as well as examination periods) are outside the scope of this indicator.

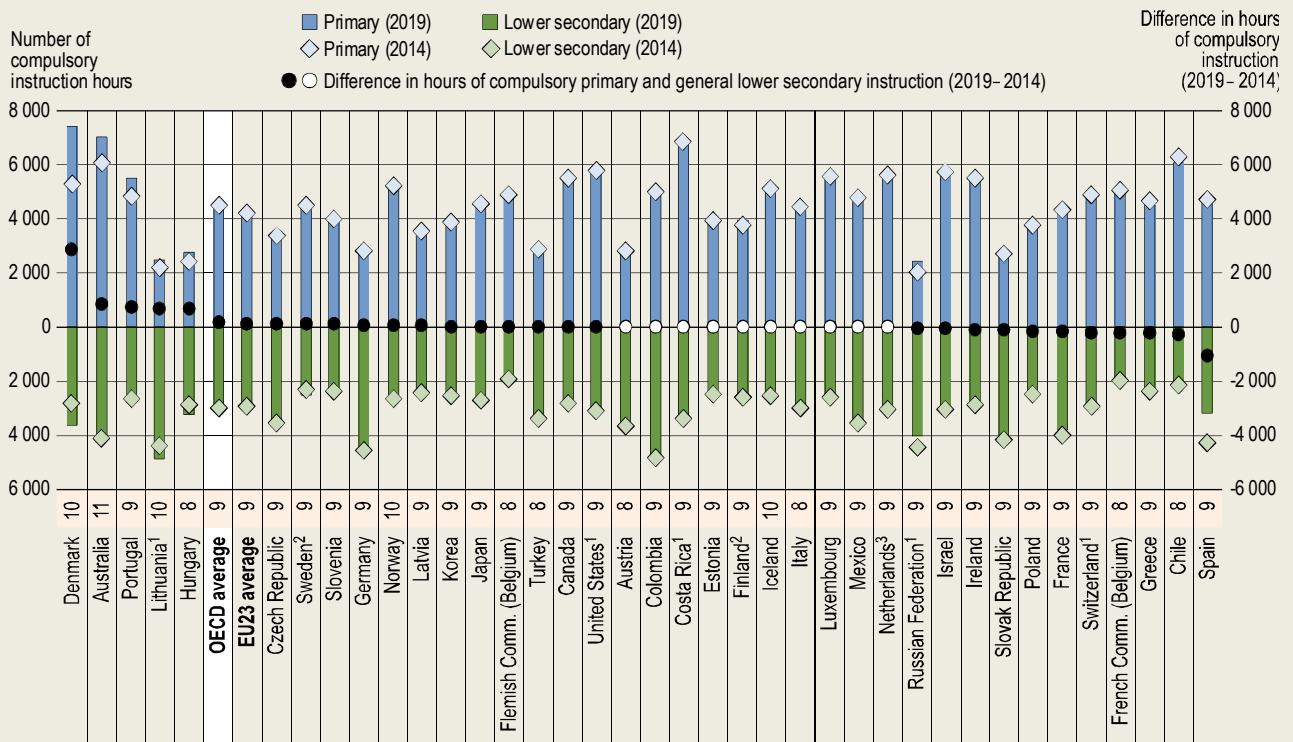
## Other findings

- On average across OECD countries in 2019, the compulsory primary and lower secondary curriculum is defined over six grades at primary level and three grades at lower secondary level. Between 2014 and 2019, the number of grades changed only in Australia at primary level and in Spain at general lower secondary level.
- Between 2014 and 2019, most of the countries with available information changed the distribution of compulsory instruction time devoted to individual subjects in primary and general lower secondary education. However, only about one-third of them had significant changes (of 5 percentage points or more) in the share of instruction time devoted to some subjects: Australia, Canada (primary), Denmark, Greece (lower secondary), Hungary, Ireland,

Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Spain. In many of these countries, the share of compulsory instruction time devoted to the flexible curriculum changed by more than 5 percentage points between 2014 and 2019.

Figure D1.1. Compulsory instruction time in general education (2014 and 2019)

Primary and lower secondary education, in public institutions



**Note:** Light-coloured circles indicate no change in instruction time (primary and general lower secondary education) between the two reference years. Values next to country names refer to the duration (in years) of primary and lower secondary education in 2019.

1. Reference year differs from indicated year. Refer to the sources table for details.
2. Estimated number of hours by level of education based on the average number of hours per year as, for some subjects, the allocation of instruction time across multiple levels is flexible.
3. The number of grades in lower secondary education is three or four, depending on the track. The fourth year of pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) was excluded from the calculation.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the difference between the total number of compulsory instruction hours in 2019 and in 2014.

**Source:** OECD (2020), Tables D1.1 and D1.2. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

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## Analysis

### ***Changes in number of grades in compulsory primary and lower secondary general education***

Both annual instruction time and the length of compulsory education have an impact on the total instruction time during compulsory education. In some countries, the duration of compulsory education is shorter, and students could face a heavier annual workload based on statutory requirements. In other countries, the workload is distributed evenly over more years. This indicator focuses on changes in compulsory education at primary and lower secondary levels. However, in some countries such as the Netherlands, pre-primary education is also compulsory, so the starting age for compulsory education is below the age at which primary education starts (see Annex 3 for more details on the length of compulsory education). Moreover, in around three-fifths of countries and economies with available data, compulsory full-time education includes at least one year of upper secondary education (see Figure X3.D1.1 in Annex 3 for more details).

On average across OECD countries the compulsory curriculum in primary and lower secondary education was defined over six grades at primary level and three grades at lower secondary level in 2019 (Table D1.1 and Table D1.2). Even though there may be differences among countries, the number of grades in primary and lower secondary levels does not change much from year to year. Between 2014 and 2019, only a few countries with available information changed the total number of years of compulsory primary and lower secondary education. Only Australia and Spain changed the total number of grades in compulsory primary or lower secondary general education (Tables D1.5 and D1.6, available on line).

In Australia, the number of grades in primary education changed from six grades in 2014 and 2015 to seven grades from 2016, which contributed to an increase in total instruction time in primary education of more than 15% between 2014 and 2019 (Table D1.1). However, the number of grades in primary and lower secondary education that are part of the 10 years of compulsory education varies across jurisdictions in the country (6-7 years for primary and 3-4 years for lower secondary) and the figures reported for 2014 and 2015 referred to the minimum number of years of primary education, whereas they referred to typical values for other reference years. In Spain, the total length of compulsory lower secondary instruction time fell by 26% between 2014 and 2019 (Table D1.2). Most of this reduction resulted from the fact that Spain had four lower secondary grades until 2015 (Grades 7 to 10) and only three from 2016 when the final grade was moved to upper secondary level, although it remains compulsory.

Poland has also decided to change the distribution of grades across compulsory education. A major reform of the country's national education system was begun since 2016/17 and is still ongoing as it is implemented in a process covering several years. This transition will entail a major change in the number of grades in each ISCED level.

### ***Changes in compulsory instruction time***

In most countries, official documents define compulsory and non-compulsory instruction time either by level of education or by grade in each level of education. Neither the curriculum nor the number of instruction hours is expected to change each year in any given country. As a consequence, only few countries show changes in compulsory instruction hours between two reference years. However, the pattern changes when a longer period is considered, as more countries are likely to have changed their regulations at least once over this time.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total number of instruction hours in compulsory primary and general lower secondary education has changed in three-quarters of the countries with available data (28 out of 38 countries and economies). Six of these countries showed significant changes in instruction time (more than 5%) during this period: Australia, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain (Figure D1.1).

In Australia and Spain, the significant changes in the total number of instruction hours in compulsory primary and general lower secondary education resulted mainly from the changes to their grade structures discussed above. However, the number of hours of compulsory instruction time per year also changed slightly (by less than 5%) between the years when the number of grades changed.

In the other four countries, new regulations implemented between 2014 and 2019 resulted in a significant increase (10-36%) in total number of compulsory instruction hours in primary and general lower secondary education.

The increase in compulsory instruction time resulted from an increase in the number of instruction days in a school year in Lithuania (by 15 days at primary level and 17 days at lower secondary level between 2016 and 2019) and in Portugal (by 5 days in Grade 6 at primary level only between 2014 and 2019). Since the compulsory instruction time is defined weekly in

these two countries, increasing the number of instruction days directly translated into an increase of the total annual instruction time (Tables D1.5 and D1.6, available on line).

An increase in compulsory instruction time can also result from increasing the number of hours of compulsory instruction, without any change in the number of instruction days per school year. This implies longer instruction days on average. In Denmark, a reform of its *Folkeskolen* (integrated primary and general lower secondary school) implemented for 2014/15 and 2015/16 extended the average length of a school day. Although instruction time increased by 36% between 2014 and 2019 in total across these levels, the typical number of instruction days remained at 200 days per year. In Hungary, during the four-year phased transition to the new Framework Curricula, compulsory instruction time increased by about 13% in both primary and lower secondary education although the number of instruction days remained at about 180 days per year (Table D1.1, Table D1.2, and Tables D1.5 and D1.6, available on line).

### Box D1.1. Comparability of data on instruction time across countries and over time

Data on (intended) instruction time as established in public regulations are gathered through a data collection exercise based on agreed international standards and methodologies to ensure the comparability of the data reported. However, comparability issues can arise not just because of deviations from these guidelines, but due to differences in the way instruction time is defined in official documents. Moreover, changes and revisions in the data collection on instruction time over years may hinder comparability issues on instruction time trend data.

#### **Type of information on instruction time**

Intended instruction time often refers to the minimum required instruction time, but it can also refer to recommended instruction time. Both may imply that schools or local levels have some flexibility to adjust the number of hours of instruction. In some countries, the data can be a mix of different types of data. For example, Denmark reports minimum instruction time for three subjects (reading, writing and literature; mathematics; and history) for each grade, but recommended instruction time for other subjects.

Intended instruction time is usually similar across schools throughout the whole country. However, in some countries it is a weighted average based on various regulations. This is the case when intended instruction time varies for different groups of the population (e.g. in Latvia and Lithuania, for schools for minority groups), or for different tracks within general programmes (e.g. in Chile for tracks with or without *Jornada Escolar Completa*, and in Italy for various upper secondary programmes in *Licei*) or between subnational entities (often the case in federal countries such as Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States). In these countries small variations in instruction time over time may result from changes in the weights used to compute the average for the whole country, rather than from changes in the minimum or recommended instruction in the subnational entities.

#### **Number of days of instruction per year**

Most countries regulate the length of a school year as a number of days of instruction (either a number of days per school year, or a number of days per week combined with a number of weeks per year). These numbers do not take into account the fact that the (statutory) length of one school day may vary. For example in Austria, Denmark and Korea, the number of lessons per week and therefore the length of the school day varies from one grade to another within primary level. Few countries take into account the different lengths of the school day to determine the number of days of instruction per year. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and France, 4.5 days of instruction per week are considered, as students do not go to school on Wednesday afternoon. This may result in fewer days of instruction compared to countries where the length of the school day does not change over the week or year.

#### **Number of hours of instruction**

Instruction time is given in hours (of 60 minutes) to ensure the comparability of data across countries. However, official documents can define instruction time based on other units of time. About half of countries define instruction time as a number of periods of instruction and/or for a different reference unit of time than the school year. Converting this information into hours per year may raise difficulties. In some countries, the length of a period of instruction is not uniform across the country. In this case, an average (for example in Costa Rica and Greece) or the most prevalent value (in Latvia) is used to convert periods into hours of instruction. About one-third of countries and economies also define instruction

time per week or day rather than per school year, so the weekly or daily values are multiplied by the defined or estimated number of weeks or days in the school year.

To ensure the comparability of hours of instruction, breaks between period/sessions are excluded. However, in some countries, breaks with educational activities are included in the prescribed intended instruction time at the national level, although they are excluded from reported intended instruction time to comply with the international definition. For example in Denmark, breaks have been a part of regulated compulsory instruction time in both primary and lower secondary education since 2014/15, although they are not included in the reported data. Similarly, in Spain, primary education legislations in autonomous communities includes breaks in compulsory instruction time (87.5 hours per year), which has been excluded from the reported data since 2014.

### ***Distribution of instruction time by subject***

Instruction time is devoted to various subjects and the distribution of instruction time by subject is displayed by level of education for the different countries. To improve comparability across countries, definitions of some subjects have been clarified over time. For example, “reading, writing and literature” has been further clarified to only include reading, writing and literature in another national language when it is also a language of instruction in almost every public school. The definition “foreign languages” was revised to “second and other languages” to include time spent on other national languages. These clarifications resulted in changes in the proportion of instruction time devoted to these subjects in Ireland and Luxembourg, although the statutory regulations on the number of hours devoted to these subjects did not change.

Several countries also revised subject categories over time to better reflect the curriculum contents of these subjects. In lower secondary general education in Finland, home economics, once classified under “other subjects”, is now classified as “practical and vocational skills”. In Greece, geography (at primary level) and geology-geography (at lower secondary level) have been moved from “social studies” to “natural sciences”. In primary education in Japan, instruction time spent on living environment studies, which was previously included in both “social studies” and “natural sciences”, is now included in “other subjects”.

For more information on comparability issues, see notes for specific countries and/or specific years in Annex 3 in the relevant editions of *Education at a Glance*.

### ***Changes in intended instruction time***

Total intended instruction time is the estimated number of hours during which schools are obliged to offer instruction in compulsory and, if applicable, non-compulsory subjects. Most of the OECD countries and economies only have compulsory instruction subjects and so did not have non-compulsory subjects over the period 2014-19. In these countries, all the changes in total intended instruction time between 2014 and 2019 can be explained by the change in compulsory instruction time between these years.

However, one-fifth of the OECD countries and economies include non-compulsory subjects in their intended instruction time, which is another factor that could explain the change in total intended instruction time between 2014 and 2019. Among these countries, instruction time devoted to non-compulsory subjects increased by 10% or more in five countries between 2014 and 2019: Canada (lower secondary but non-compulsory instruction time amounts to less than 10 hours per year), Finland, France (lower secondary), Greece (primary) and Slovenia. Non-compulsory curriculum hours have been increased for various purposes, from remedial/supplementary classes (Greece) to optional subjects such as second and other languages (Finland, France and Slovenia), or for classes working on projects (lower secondary education in Greece). Only Portugal recorded a large decrease in non-compulsory instruction time of 32% (359 hours) in primary education (Table D1.1 and Table D1.2).

### ***Changes in the distribution of instruction time by subject***

Changes in the compulsory instruction time devoted to some subjects may affect the total number of hours of instruction, but also the distribution of instruction time by subject. Countries can also make changes in the distribution of instruction time by subject without changing the number of hours of compulsory instruction time.

The distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject may change over time due to the combination of multiple instruction time regulations (see Box D1.1). This combination of different regulations may result from the existence of different levels of governance responsible for education as in countries like Canada, Germany and Spain. Different regulations may also apply to different types of schools. This is the case in Austria (at lower secondary level), Chile, Greece (in primary education before

2017), Israel, Latvia and Turkey (lower secondary). Similar issues can also arise in countries undergoing transition between two sets of regulations, as in Poland (for more information, see Annex 3).

Other than the instruction time on specific subjects set at central level, instruction time can be allocated in ways that allow local authorities, schools, teachers and/or students to have freedom in organising instruction time or in choosing subjects. Changes in the proportion of compulsory flexible curriculum (compulsory instruction time set for subjects within a flexible timetable, or subjects chosen by schools and/or students) signal how much freedom schools or students are allowed in organising instruction time or choosing subjects. Between 2014 and 2019, this change was notable (exceeding 5 percentage points) in Australia, Denmark (lower secondary), Hungary, Ireland (lower secondary), Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Spain (lower secondary) (Table D1.3 and Table D1.4).

### *Primary education*

At primary level, most of the 31 countries with available information made changes to the distribution of compulsory instruction time devoted to different subjects between 2014 and 2019 (Table D1.3). However, only in nine countries did the changes in the proportion of instruction time devoted to any specific subject exceed 5 percentage points (Figure D1.2).

In four of these countries (Australia, Denmark, Hungary and Portugal), the number of hours of instruction devoted to some compulsory subjects increased (together with an increase of total compulsory instruction time) with some impact on the distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject. In these countries, the changes led to an increase in total compulsory instruction time of 12-39% (Table D1.3).

The number of compulsory instruction hours in primary education increased the most in Denmark (by 39% or 2 080 hours) as a result of an additional 510 hours of instruction devoted to a number of compulsory subjects (reading, writing and literature; mathematics; natural sciences; second and other languages etc.) and 1 570 hours to various compulsory learning activities (included in the “other subjects” category). This led to a large change in the distribution of instruction time by subject, with a reduction of 13 percentage points in the proportion of time devoted to reading, writing and literature; mathematics; natural sciences; and the compulsory flexible curriculum, counterbalanced by an increase in the proportion of compulsory instruction time devoted to other compulsory curriculum subjects (Table D1.1, Table D1.3 and Figure D1.2).

In Australia and Portugal, there were also large changes in the distribution of instruction time among subjects in parallel to the significant increase of instruction time between 2014 and 2019 (Table D1.3). However, while the proportion of instruction time devoted to the compulsory flexible curriculum increased by more than 50 percentage points in Portugal, it decreased by more than 70 percentage points in Australia. In Australia, the change resulted from the introduction of a national curriculum that provides guidelines on the time to be spent on specific compulsory subjects. Previously individual schools had full autonomy over how to organise the instruction time for a set of compulsory subjects. In Portugal, a decree-law in 2018 provided more autonomy to individual schools: compulsory instruction time is no longer allocated to specific subjects (except reading, writing and literature; mathematics; and physical education and health in some grades), and the majority of compulsory instruction time is allocated to flexible arrangements such as subjects with flexible timetables and compulsory subjects chosen by schools.

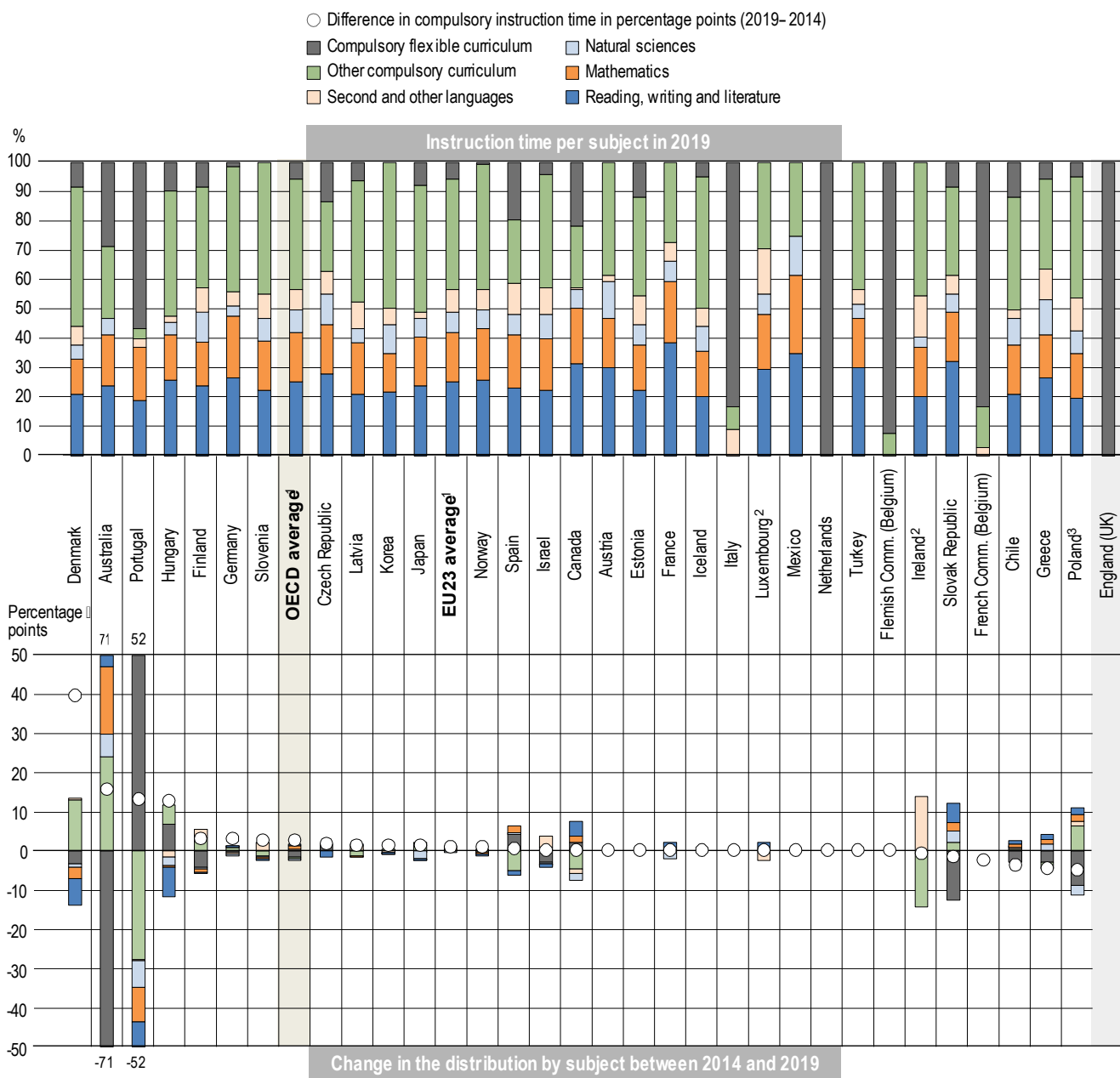
In Hungary, the implementation of the new Framework Curricula increased the proportion of compulsory instruction time devoted to physical education and health, arts, and compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools. As a result, the proportion of compulsory instruction time devoted to the flexible curriculum and to other subjects increased by more than 5 percentage points, balanced by a decrease in other subjects, mostly in reading, writing and literature (Table D1.3).

In three countries (Ireland, Poland and the Slovak Republic), there were changes in the proportion of instruction time devoted to a specific subject which exceeded 5 percentage points and total compulsory instruction time decreased slightly (by 1-5%). In both Poland and the Slovak Republic, the main changes in the distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject relate to the reduction in time devoted to the flexible curriculum (by 9-13 percentage points). This was balanced by increases in all other subjects except natural sciences in Poland and all other subjects except second and other languages in the Slovak Republic. Unlike in Hungary and Portugal, schools in Poland and the Slovak Republic have seen a reduced degree of autonomy in choosing subjects. However, for Poland, comparing the distribution of instruction time between these two reference years should be done with caution, due to the gradual implementation of its ongoing reform, as discussed above. The instruction time allocated to compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools fell by nearly 9 percentage points as of 2019, with minor changes (less than 2 percentage points) in various compulsory subjects. In addition, the reform accounted for about a 5% decrease in the number of hours of compulsory instruction in primary education (Table D1.1 and Table D1.3).

**Figure D1.2. Instruction time per subject in primary education in 2019 and change in the distribution by subject between 2014 and 2019**

As a percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions

**Instruction time per subject in 2019**



**Note:** No marker for a country indicates that there are no data on the total number of compulsory instruction hours for one of the two corresponding reference years.

1. Excludes Australia, England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community of Belgium, the French Community of Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal.

2. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught in 2019.

3. Excludes the first three years of primary education for which a large proportion of the time allocated to compulsory subjects is flexible.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage-point change in total compulsory instruction hours since 2014.

**Source:** OECD (2020), Tables D1.1 and D1.3. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).



In the two remaining countries, Canada and Spain, the total number of hours of compulsory instruction time stayed generally constant between 2014 and 2019, but the distribution of instruction time by subject changed significantly, especially in some compulsory subjects. In these two countries, the changes arise from varying proportions of subnational-level regulations on instruction time being taken into account, as discussed above (Table D1.1 and Table D1.3).

Other than these large changes between 2014 and 2019, there were also small changes in the number of instruction hours devoted to new or existing subjects (in the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Japan, Latvia, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia) and changes in the distribution of instruction time by subjects resulting from changes in the combination of multiple instruction time regulations over time (in Chile, Germany, Greece, Israel, and Latvia) (Table D1.3). Changes were also implemented in how some subjects are classified in the subject categories in Greece, Ireland, Japan and Luxembourg (see Box D1.1).

### *General lower secondary education*

In lower secondary general education, changes to the distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject occurred in the majority of the 31 countries with available information (Table D1.4). However, the proportion of instruction time devoted to a specific subject category changed by more than or equal to 5 percentage points in 9 of these 31 countries (Figure D1.3).

In Denmark, Hungary, Poland and Portugal, new regulations on instruction time implemented in lower secondary education increased the total number of instruction hours (by 2-29%) as a result of significant changes in the number of instruction hours devoted to many subjects. The distribution of instruction time by subject changed significantly in these four countries. The variation in the proportion of instruction time devoted to a specific subject only reached or exceeded 5 percentage points for a few subjects, but in all four countries there was a significant change in the time devoted to compulsory flexible curriculum. In Denmark and Poland, the share of the compulsory curriculum devoted to the compulsory flexible curriculum fell by 9-11 percentage points, whereas the proportion increased by 7 percentage points in Hungary and 58 percentage points in Portugal. As a result, Portugal has the fourth largest proportion of instruction time devoted to compulsory flexible curriculum among OECD countries and economies in 2019, while the proportion does not exceed 10% in the three other countries (Table D1.2 and Table D1.4).

Spain is the only country combining a significant decrease in the total number of hours of compulsory instruction (by more than 2%) and significant changes (by over 5 percentage points) in the distribution of instruction time devoted to specific subjects. The distribution of instruction time by subject in Spain has mainly changed following the move of one grade from lower secondary level to upper secondary level (as indicated by the 26% reduction in total compulsory instruction time at lower secondary level). As this grade had a very different distribution of instruction time by subject compared to the other grades that are still part of the lower secondary level, moving it into upper secondary level had a significant impact on the distribution of instruction time by subject. Changes in regulations regarding compulsory curriculum chosen by students and compulsory flexible curriculum chosen by schools have also had an impact (Table D1.2 and Table D1.4).

In Australia, Greece, Ireland, and the Slovak Republic, the total number of hours of compulsory instruction did not change by more than 2% between 2014 and 2019, but the distribution of compulsory instruction time by subject changed significantly, and by at least 5 percentage points in a few subjects. The changes in the distribution are especially large in Australia and Ireland. In Ireland, subject selection and the competence to decide instruction time has been significantly delegated to individual schools at lower secondary level since the school year 2014/15 (from 12% of compulsory instruction time in 2014 to 60% in 2019). Thus, similar to Portugal, the level of autonomy of individual schools on the organisation of instruction time and on the choices of subject increased between 2014 and 2019, leading to an increase of 48 percentage points in the share of the compulsory curriculum devoted to compulsory flexible subjects. The changes in the distribution of instruction time by subject were in the opposite direction in Australia. As for primary education, the share devoted to compulsory flexible curriculum decreased by more than 60 percentage points. However, in 2019 Australia and Ireland remain among the few countries devoting at least 40% of the compulsory curriculum to compulsory flexible curriculum at the lower secondary level (Table D1.4).

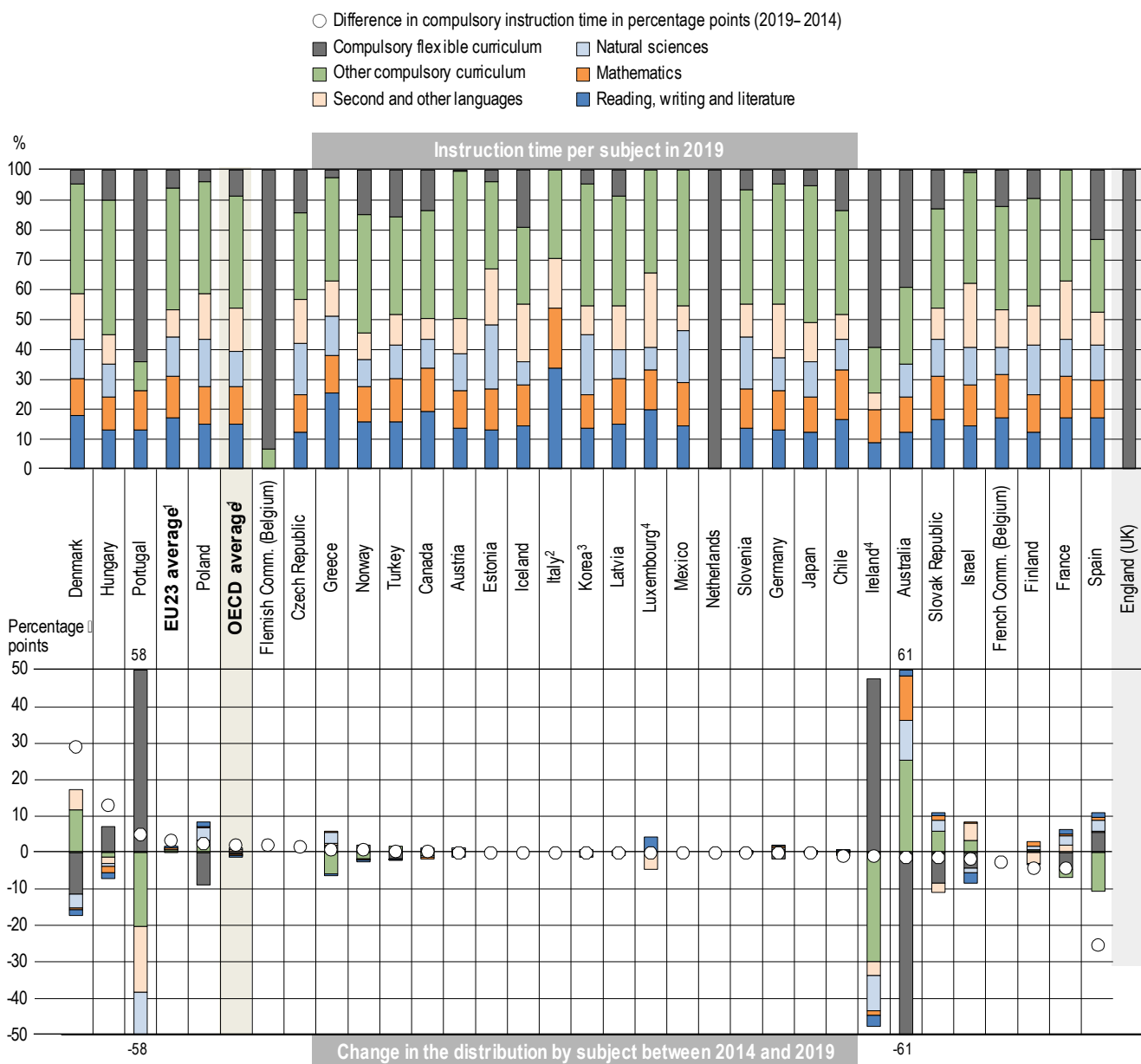
In Greece and the Slovak Republic, the changes in the share of compulsory curriculum devoted to specific subjects changed to a lesser extent. The largest changes (by 5 percentage points or more) occurred in one or two categories: compulsory flexible curriculum and other compulsory curriculum for the Slovak Republic, and other compulsory curriculum for Greece (Figure D1.3). In Greece, a reform rearranged compulsory instruction time for numerous compulsory subjects in order to reduce students' weekly study load by 9% since 2016/17 (Table D1.4). However, this change did not reduce total compulsory



instruction as this reduction was offset by 9% increase (13 days) in the number of instruction days in the school year at lower secondary level (Table D1.6, available on line).

**Figure D1.3. Instruction time per subject in general lower secondary education in 2019 and change in the distribution by subject between 2014 and 2019**

As a percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions



**Note:** No marker for a country indicates that there are no data on the total number of compulsory instruction hours for one of the two corresponding reference years.  
 1. Excludes Australia (in 2014 only), England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community of Belgium, Ireland (in 2019 only), the Netherlands and Portugal (in 2019 only).  
 2. Reading, writing and literature includes social studies. Mathematics includes natural sciences.  
 3. Natural sciences includes information and communication technologies and practical and vocational skills.  
 4. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught in 2019.  
 Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage-point change in total compulsory instruction hours since 2014.  
**Source:** OECD (2020), Tables D1.2 and D1.4. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

In addition to the significant changes above, four countries had small changes in the categories other compulsory curriculum and compulsory flexible curriculum: France, the French Community of Belgium, Korea and Mexico (Figure D1.3 and Table D1.4). Combinations of multiple instruction time regulations resulted in small changes over time in the distribution of instruction time in Austria, Canada, Chile, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Spain and Turkey (Table D1.4). In Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg, there were changes in how some subjects are classified into subject categories (see Box D1.1).

### **Changes in flexible allocation of instruction time across multiple grades**

In one-quarter of countries with available data in 2019, the allocation of instruction time across grades is flexible, i.e. the instruction time for a specific subject is defined across a certain number of grades or even the whole of compulsory education, without specifying the time to be allocated within each grade. Between 2014 and 2019, only four countries have made changes in the flexibility of the allocation of subjects over multiple grades (Luxembourg (primary only), Poland, Portugal and the Slovak Republic). For example, in the Slovak Republic, since 2015/16, instruction time on compulsory subjects is no longer allocated across multiple grades in primary and lower secondary general education (Tables D1.5 and D1.6, available on line).

In Finland and Sweden, although instruction time for most subjects continues to be flexibly allocated in primary and lower secondary education, new regulations changed the grouping of grades in which instruction time of a specific subject can be flexibly arranged at the discretion of individual schools. For example, in Sweden, instruction time for most subjects was once allowed to be flexibly allocated across all grades in primary and lower secondary education, but now is allocated within two 3-year stages in primary education and one 3-year stage in lower secondary education (Table D1.1 and Table D1.2).

In these countries, it is not possible to estimate the impact of these changes on the flexibility of the curriculum on the number of annual hours of compulsory education, because individual schools/local authorities decide how to allocate instruction hours across multiple grades.

#### **Box D1.2. Impact of COVID19 on instruction time**

Out of the 38 OECD countries and 8 partner countries covered in this edition of *Education at a Glance*, the People's Republic of China was the first to impose a school closure in response to the COVID19 pandemic. School closures were imposed on 16 February 2020 in some parts of China, where the scheduled spring semester starts earlier, and extended nationwide about a week later. Other countries also began to close schools (closure of school premises, without necessarily a complete cessation of teaching/learning) as the pandemic expanded. Preliminary information from various sources (see below) provides a snapshot of responses during this ongoing and evolving global pandemic.

By the end of March, school closures had been implemented to some extent in all 46 countries covered here, but to a different extent: countrywide in 41 countries and at a subnational or local level in 5 (Australia, Iceland, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States). However, not all countries hit by the pandemic closed all of their schools. For example, primary schools in Iceland remained open if class sizes were below 20 students. In Sweden, most primary and lower secondary schools remained open, while upper secondary schools switched to mainly distance learning from mid-March (UNESCO, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>).

#### **Impact on the number of instruction weeks at school**

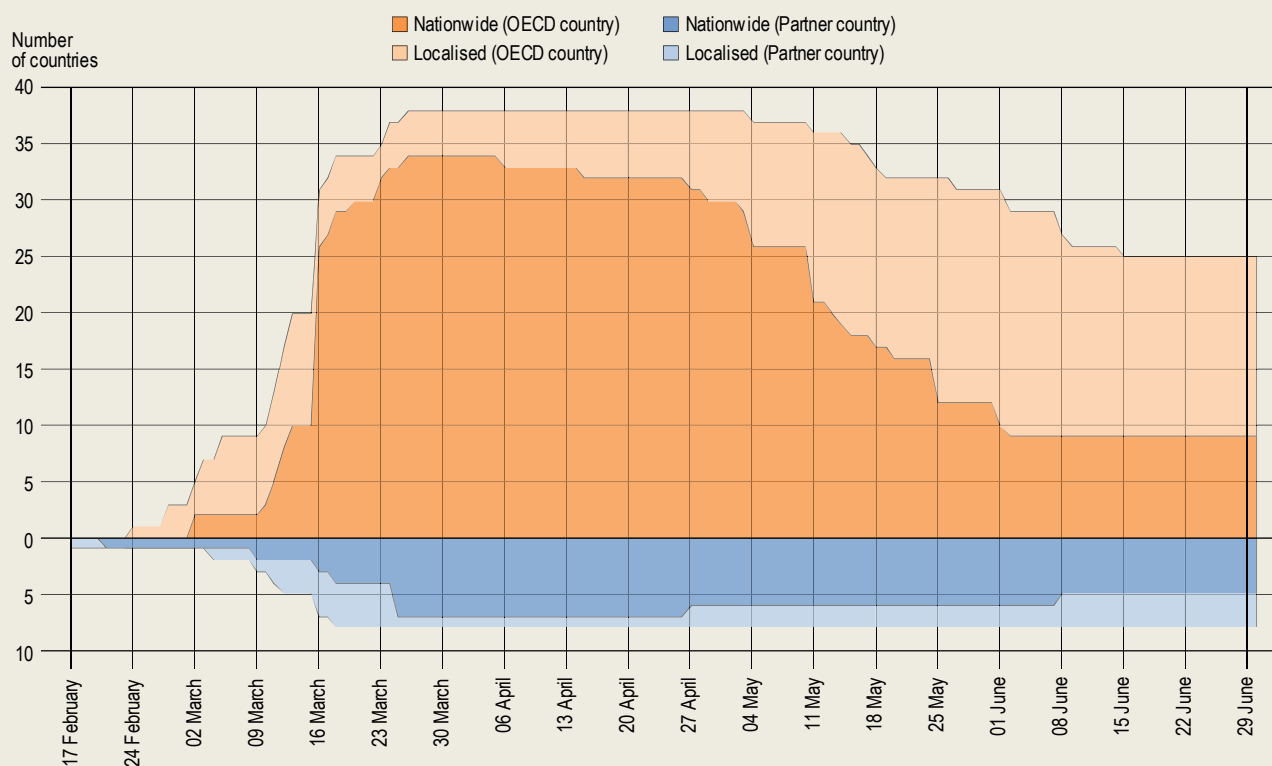
It is difficult to estimate accurately the number of instruction weeks affected in all countries as in some countries individual schools or local authorities have autonomy over the organisation of the school year schedule and the re-opening of schools. However, by the end of June 2020, out of these 46 countries, some degree of school closure was effective for at least 7 weeks in 2 countries (4%), 8-12 weeks in 6 countries (13%), 12-16 weeks in 24 countries (52%), 16-19 weeks in 13 countries (28%) and more than 19 weeks in China (UNESCO, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>).

However, the actual impact may have been less severe as some of these periods included scheduled school breaks. In many European and Southern Hemisphere countries, Easter holidays scheduled in mid-April and/or spring vacation between April and early May mitigated the impact of school closure by up to 2 weeks. In Japan for example, there is a two-week spring vacation in late March (see Figure X3.D1.2 in Annex 3 for more information) (UNESCO, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019<sub>[2]</sub>).

Moreover, some countries have reorganised their school years to minimise the impact on the number of instruction weeks. For example, in Australia (in some jurisdictions) and Chile the winter school holidays were brought forward; in Korea the school year started in April (about one month later than the typical start) by shortening the summer vacation, and in Lithuania two-week compulsory school holidays were introduced in the last two weeks of March (OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>).

**Figure D1.4. Number of countries with school closures due to COVID19**

Data covers the period between 17 February 2020 and 30 June 2020



**Note:** This figure covers educational institutions from early childhood education to tertiary education. Localised school closure refers to school closures of some levels of education only and/or for some subnational entities.

**Source:** UNESCO (2020<sup>[1]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934165301>

### **Measures to continue students' learning during school closure**

Countries used different instructional resources to support students' learning while they were unable to come to school, including instructional packages (textbooks, worksheets and printouts), radio education, educational television and online instructional resources. Countries usually used several tools, to reach the largest proportion of students possible. In the OECD and partner countries, online platforms were the most popular tool used during school closures (Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

Online platforms were used in nearly all the OECD and partner countries, through various online learning tools, ranging from educational content which students can explore at their own discretion and formalised learning programmes conducted at their own pace, to real-time lessons led by their teachers through virtual meeting platforms. For example, Estonia has collaborated with private services to provide a wealth of educational content free to students during school closure. In France, already-existing distance learning programme *Ma classes à la maison* (My classes at home) became available for all students in primary and secondary schools (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>).

In Greece, virtual real-time classes with teachers were conducted in conjunction with other online learning tools (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2020<sup>[6]</sup>; Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

Another popular learning arrangements in many OECD countries were television broadcasts providing educational content to continue students' learning. In some countries, TV programmes mostly catered for younger children in primary schools (for example, in Greece, Korea and Portugal), who may have difficulty using online learning platforms or conducting self-directed learning. TV broadcasts are also another way to reach students who do not have adequate resources for online instruction. Despite their advantages, broadcasts can be limited to covering only a few subjects due to short time designated for these TV programmes. For example, two channels in Spain covered one of the five subjects (Spanish, mathematics, social science, natural sciences and arts and/or physical education) per day during a one-hour slot (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>; Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

Other measures were also taken to help students in their learning at home. For example in Luxembourg, the government set up a new support system for students and parents to support home schooling. In Mexico, a telephone line "Your Teacher Online" has been activated to offer mentoring to students (OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>).

In the majority of the OECD and partner countries, these measures were conducted by the government with active involvement from individual schools. However, in Estonia, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands, individual schools had more autonomy in organising these alternative education arrangements (Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

### **Re-opening of schools**

After mid-April, some OECD countries gradually started to re-open schools for some levels of education. By the end of May, more than two months after the school closures began in most OECD countries, schools were re-opened (at least partially) in two-thirds of the OECD countries (UNESCO, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>; Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

In most countries, where schools have re-opened, attendance is not compulsory for all students, to take into account students who are sick or have at-risk family members, or because schools could not welcome all students with the new sanitary measures to maintain sufficient distance between students and teachers in classrooms (see Box D2.2). For example, in the Czech Republic, lower secondary schools re-opened for students in Grade 9, organised in small groups of up to 15 people with voluntary attendance. Neither students nor their teachers have to wear face masks if a two-metre social distance is kept (Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>).

Many countries re-opened schools gradually, setting out a process with a number of phases by grade or level of education. For example, younger students were the first to return to school in Denmark (childcare and primary schools with additional measures such as reduced class sizes and physical distancing), France (primary schools in most regions with limitations on the number of children in a classroom), the Netherlands (primary schools) and Norway (kindergarten and grades 1 to 4 primary schools with additional measures such as reduced class sizes and physical distancing). In contrast, schools re-opened first for older students in Greece and Korea, especially for final year students who were sitting for secondary school qualification examinations or entrance examinations for tertiary education (OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>; Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>; UNESCO, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>).

While schools in many countries began to re-open in April and May, the plans are for primary and secondary schools in Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal (except grades 11 and 12) and Spain (schools re-open for grades 10 and 12 with voluntary attendance) to be closed until June (inclusive), that is to say the end of the school year 2019/20 (UNESCO, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>; Schleicher and Reimers, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>; OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>).

## **Definitions**

**Compulsory instruction time/curriculum** refers to the amount and allocation of instruction time that has to be provided in almost every public school and must be attended by almost all public sector students. The compulsory curriculum may be flexible, as local authorities, schools, teachers and/or students may have varying degrees of freedom to choose the subjects and/or the allocation of compulsory instruction time.

**Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools** refers to the total amount of compulsory instruction time indicated by the central authorities, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to subjects of their choice (or

subjects they chose from a list defined by central education authorities). It is compulsory for the school to offer one of these subjects, and students must attend.

**Compulsory options chosen by the students** refers to the total amount of instruction time in one or more subjects that pupils have to select (from a set of subjects that are compulsory for schools to offer) in order to cover part of their compulsory instruction time.

**Compulsory subjects with a flexible timetable** refers to the total amount of instruction time indicated by the central authorities for a given group of subjects, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to individual subjects. There is flexibility in the time spent on a subject, but not in the subjects to be taught.

**Flexible allocation of instruction time across multiple grades** refers to the case where the curriculum only indicates the total instruction time for a specific subject for a certain number of grades, or even the whole of compulsory education, without specifying the time to be allocated to each grade. In such cases, schools/local authorities are free to decide how much time should be assigned for each grade.

**Instruction time** refers to the time a public school is expected to provide instruction to students on all the subjects integrated into the compulsory and non-compulsory curriculum, on school premises or in before-school/after-school activities that are formal parts of the compulsory programme. Instruction time excludes breaks between classes or other types of interruptions, non-compulsory time outside the school day, time dedicated to homework activities, individual tutoring or private study and examination periods (days for non-school-based examinations, e.g. national examinations).

**Intended instruction time** refers to the number of hours per year of the compulsory and non-compulsory part of the curriculum that students are entitled to receive in public schools. The intended curriculum can be based on regulations or standards of the central (or top-level) education authorities or may be established as a set of recommendations at the regional level.

The **non-compulsory part of the curriculum** refers to the total amount of instruction time that public schools must offer on top of the compulsory instruction time, but which is not mandatory for all students. Subjects can vary from school to school or from region to region and take the form of optional subjects. Additional activities before/after classes offered by the school are not per se part of the non-compulsory curriculum, for instance, if there is no obligation upon public schools to provide this instruction time or it is not part of the official curricula. In particular, non-compulsory education excludes morning care classes or after-school care classes, even if they are officially regulated.

## Methodology

This indicator captures intended instruction time (as established in public regulations) as a measure of learning in formal classroom settings. It does not show the actual number of hours of instruction that students receive and does not cover learning outside of the formal classroom setting. Differences may exist across countries between the regulatory minimum hours of instruction and the actual hours of instruction received by students. Given such factors as school timetables, lesson cancellations and teacher absenteeism, schools may not consistently attain the regulatory minimum instruction time (see Box D1.1 in OECD (OECD, 2007<sup>[8]</sup>)).

The indicator also illustrates how minimum (and/or recommended) instruction hours are allocated across different curricular areas. It shows the intended net hours of instruction for those grades that are part of compulsory full-time general education. Although the data are difficult to compare among countries because of different curricular policies, they nevertheless provide an indication of how much formal instruction time is considered necessary for students to achieve the desired educational goals.

When the allocation of instruction time across grades is flexible (i.e. instruction time for a specific subject is defined for a certain number of grades, or even the whole of compulsory education, without specifying the time to be allocated to each grade), instruction time per age or level of education was estimated by assuming equal distribution of the total number of instruction hours between grades.

For more information please see the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparable Education Statistics (OECD, 2018<sup>[9]</sup>) and Annex 3 for country-specific notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

## Source

Data on instruction time are from:

- the 2012 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the school year 2010/11.
- the 2013 to 2018 Joint Eurydice-OECD Instruction time data collection and refer to instruction time during compulsory primary and full-time lower secondary general education for the school years 2013/14 to 2018/19.

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## Indicator D1 Tables

<b>Table D1.1</b>	Instruction time in compulsory primary education (2011, 2014 to 2019)
<b>Table D1.2</b>	Instruction time in compulsory general lower secondary education (2011, 2014 to 2019)
<b>Table D1.3</b>	Instruction time per subject in compulsory primary education (2014 and 2019)
<b>Table D1.4</b>	Instruction time per subject in compulsory general lower secondary education (2014 and 2019)
<b>WEB Table D1.5</b>	<i>Organisation of compulsory primary education (2011, 2014 to 2019)</i>
<b>WEB Table D1.6</b>	<i>Organisation of compulsory general lower secondary education (2011, 2014 to 2019)</i>

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2020. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eqg-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

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Table D1.1. Instruction time in compulsory primary education<sup>1</sup> (2011, 2014 to 2019)

In public institutions

	Number of grades that are part of compulsory education	Average hours per year						Total number of hours						
		Compulsory instruction time			Intended instruction time			Compulsory instruction time			Intended instruction time			
		2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019
		(1)	(2)	(4)	(8)	(16)	(18)	(22)	(23)	(25)	(29)	(37)	(39)	(43)
<b>OECD</b>	<b>Countries</b>													
	Australia <sup>2</sup>	7	953	1 000	1 000	953	m	m	6 674	6 000	7 000	6 674	m	m
	Austria	4	705	705	705	750	m	m	2 820	2 820	2 820	3 000	m	m
	Canada	6	919	919	920	919	919	920	5 512	5 516	5 518	5 512	5 516	5 518
	Chile	6	1 007	1 039	1 008	1 007	1 039	1 008	6 042	6 231	6 047	6 042	6 231	6 047
	Colombia	5	m	1 000	1 000	m	m	1 000	m	5 000	5 000	m	m	5 000
	Costa Rica	6	m	m	1 147	m	m	1 147	m	m	6 880	m	m	6 880
	Czech Republic	5	694	687	687	m	m	687	3 469	3 434	3 434	m	m	3 434
	Denmark	7	754	954	1 051	754	1 051	1 051	5 280	6 680	7 360	5 280	7 360	7 360
	Estonia	6	650	661	661	650	661	661	3 898	3 964	3 964	3 898	3 964	3 964
	Finland <sup>3</sup>	6	626	632	651	654	661	683	3 755	3 794	3 905	3 926	3 965	4 100
	France	5	864	864	864	864	864	864	4 320	4 320	4 320	4 320	4 320	4 320
	Germany	4	702	703	724	702	703	724	2 806	2 812	2 896	2 806	2 812	2 896
	Greece	6	756	786	748	756	1 065	1 144	4 536	4 715	4 488	4 536	6 387	6 864
	Hungary	4	572	646	692	655	646	692	2 289	2 583	2 769	2 618	2 583	2 769
	Iceland	7	857	729	729	857	729	729	6 000	5 100	5 100	6 000	5 100	5 100
	Ireland <sup>2</sup>	6	869	915	905	869	915	905	6 954	5 490	5 430	6 954	5 490	5 430
	Israel	6	956	972	958	956	972	958	5 738	5 831	5 751	5 738	5 831	5 751
	Italy	5	891	891	891	891	891	891	4 455	4 455	4 455	4 455	4 455	4 455
	Japan	6	754	763	770	754	763	770	4 521	4 575	4 621	4 521	4 575	4 621
	Korea	6	632	648	655	632	648	655	3 795	3 885	3 928	3 795	3 885	3 928
	Latvia	6	m	594	599	m	m	m	m	3 566	3 595	m	m	m
	Lithuania	4	m	m	613	m	m	650	m	m	2 452	m	m	2 600
	Luxembourg	6	924	924	924	924	924	924	5 544	5 544	5 544	5 544	5 544	5 544
	Mexico	6	800	800	800	800	800	800	4 800	4 800	4 800	4 800	4 800	4 800
	Netherlands	6	940	940	940	940	m	940	5 640	5 640	5 640	5 640	m	5 640
	New Zealand	6	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Norway	7	748	748	753	748	748	753	5 234	5 234	5 272	5 234	5 234	5 272
	Poland	6	649	635	603	703	693	661	3 893	3 807	3 619	4 215	4 156	3 967
	Portugal	6	891	806	910	924	995	1 039	5 347	4 838	5 460	5 544	5 971	6 234
	Slovak Republic	4	691	673	670	698	673	670	2 765	2 693	2 678	2 793	2 693	2 678
	Slovenia	6	664	664	682	664	778	822	3 986	3 986	4 091	3 986	4 669	4 931
	Spain	6	875	793	792	875	793	792	5 250	4 757	4 750	5 250	4 757	4 750
	Sweden <sup>3</sup>	6	741	754	733	m	m	m	4 444	4 523	4 400	m	m	m
	Switzerland	6	m	819	797	m	m	m	m	4 912	4 782	m	m	m
	Turkey <sup>2</sup>	4	720	720	720	864	720	720	5 760	2 880	2 880	6 912	2 880	2 880
	United States	6	m	970	m	m	m	m	m	5 820	m	m	m	m
	<b>Economies</b>													
	Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	6	831	821	819	831	821	819	4 984	4 928	4 916	4 984	4 928	4 916
	French Comm. (Belgium)	6	840	849	826	930	849	826	5 040	5 096	4 956	5 580	5 096	4 956
	England (UK)	6	861	m	m	861	m	m	5 168	m	m	5 168	m	m
	Scotland (UK)	7	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	OECD average	6	792	801	804	m	m	m	4 710	4 578	4 598	m	m	m
	EU23 average	6	772	768	769	m	m	m	4 393	4 293	4 258	m	m	m
<b>Partners</b>														
	Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Brazil	5	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Indonesia	m	660	m	m	660	m	m	3 961	m	m	3 961	m	m
	Russian Federation	4	470	517	598	470	m	m	1 881	2 068	2 393	1 881	m	m
	Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: Columns showing the data for 2014 and 2016 to 2018 and non-compulsory instruction time are available for consultation on line. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at <http://stats.oecd.org>, Education at a Glance Database.

- Refers to full-time compulsory education and excludes pre-primary education, even if compulsory.
- The number of grades that are part of compulsory primary education have changed: in 2016 in Australia, in 2014 in Ireland and in 2014 in Turkey following the split of a single structure between primary and lower secondary levels. For more information, see Table D1.5.
- Estimated number of hours by level of education based on the average number of hours per year as, for some subjects, the allocation of instruction time across multiple levels is flexible.

Source: OECD (2013 to 2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934165168>

Table D1.2. Instruction time in compulsory general lower secondary education<sup>1</sup> (2011, 2014 to 2019)

In public institutions

	Number of grades that are part of compulsory education	Average hours per year						Total number of hours						
		Compulsory instruction time			Intended instruction time			Compulsory instruction time			Intended instruction time			
		2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019	2011	2015	2019
		(1)	(2)	(4)	(8)	(16)	(18)	(22)	(23)	(25)	(29)	(37)	(39)	(43)
<b>OECD</b>	<b>Countries</b>													
	Australia	4	1 009	1 000	1 000	m	m	m	4 035	4 000	4 000	m	m	m
	Austria	4	900	899	900	945	m	m	3 600	3 597	3 600	3 780	m	m
	Canada	3	923	924	924	923	930	927	2 770	2 773	2 771	2 770	2 790	2 780
	Chile	2	1 083	1 067	1 052	1 083	1 067	1 052	2 166	2 134	2 103	2 166	2 134	2 103
	Colombia	4	m	1 200	1 200	m	m	1 200	m	4 800	4 800	m	m	4 800
	Costa Rica	3	m	m	1 120	m	m	1 120	m	m	3 360	m	m	3 360
	Czech Republic	4	897	888	888	m	m	888	3 587	3 550	3 550	m	m	3 550
	Denmark	3	930	1 120	1 200	930	1 200	1 200	2 790	3 360	3 600	2 790	3 600	3 600
	Estonia	3	770	823	823	770	823	823	2 310	2 468	2 468	2 310	2 468	2 468
	Finland <sup>2</sup>	3	856	844	808	913	901	894	2 569	2 533	2 423	2 740	2 704	2 683
	France	4	982	991	946	1 081	1 090	1 135	3 928	3 964	3 784	4 324	4 360	4 540
	Germany <sup>3</sup>	5	890	907	904	890	907	904	4 449	4 536	4 521	4 449	4 536	4 521
	Greece	3	796	785	791	796	785	1 044	2 387	2 356	2 374	2 387	2 356	3 132
	Hungary	4	659	743	801	859	743	801	2 636	2 970	3 204	3 436	2 970	3 204
	Iceland	3	987	839	839	987	839	839	2 960	2 516	2 516	2 960	2 516	2 516
	Ireland	3	935	935	924	935	935	924	2 806	2 806	2 772	2 806	2 806	2 772
	Israel	3	981	1 023	984	981	1 023	984	2 943	3 070	2 952	2 943	3 070	2 952
	Italy	3	990	990	990	990	990	990	2 970	2 970	2 970	2 970	2 970	2 970
	Japan	3	866	895	893	866	895	893	2 598	2 684	2 680	2 598	2 684	2 680
	Korea	3	850	842	842	850	842	842	2 550	2 525	2 525	2 550	2 525	2 525
	Latvia	3	m	794	794	m	m	m	2 381	2 381	2 381	m	m	m
	Lithuania	6	m	m	804	m	m	923	m	m	4 826	m	m	5 539
	Luxembourg <sup>4</sup>	3	900	845	845	900	845	845	3 600	2 535	2 535	3 600	2 535	2 535
	Mexico	3	1 167	1 167	1 167	1 167	1 167	1 167	3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500
	Netherlands <sup>5</sup>	3	1 000	1 000	1 000	m	m	1 000	4 000	3 000	3 000	m	m	3 000
	New Zealand	4	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Norway	3	855	874	874	855	874	874	2 566	2 622	2 622	2 566	2 622	2 622
	Poland	3	746	810	829	800	875	893	2 239	2 430	2 488	2 399	2 624	2 678
	Portugal	3	924	892	918	950	919	945	2 772	2 675	2 754	2 851	2 756	2 834
	Slovak Republic	5	821	819	815	832	819	815	4 104	4 095	4 073	4 161	4 095	4 073
	Slovenia	3	817	766	766	817	911	944	2 451	2 298	2 298	2 451	2 733	2 833
	Spain <sup>4</sup>	3	1 050	1 059	1 054	1 050	1 059	1 054	4 200	4 234	3 161	4 200	4 234	3 161
	Sweden <sup>2</sup>	3	741	754	830	m	m	m	2 222	2 262	2 490	m	m	m
	Switzerland	3	m	963	945	m	m	m	m	2 888	2 836	m	m	m
	Turkey	4	a	840	843	a	840	843	a	3 360	3 371	a	3 360	3 371
	United States	3	m	1 019	m	m	m	m	m	3 057	m	m	m	m
	<b>Economies</b>													
	Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	2	955	947	945	955	947	945	1 909	1 893	1 890	1 909	1 893	1 890
	French Comm. (Belgium)	2	960	971	944	1 020	971	944	1 920	1 941	1 888	2 040	1 941	1 888
	England (UK)	3	912	m	m	912	m	m	2 736	m	m	2 736	m	m
	Scotland (UK) <sup>4</sup>	3	a	a	m	a	a	m	a	a	m	a	a	m
	OECD average	3	908	921	922	m	m	m	2 977	2 994	3 030	m	m	m
	EU23 average	3	883	890	892	m	m	m	3 008	2 948	3 002	m	m	m
<b>Partners</b>	Argentina	m	744	m	m	896	m	m	2 232	m	m	2 688	m	m
	Brazil	4	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Indonesia	m	1 020	m	m	1 020	m	m	3 060	m	m	3 060	m	m
	Russian Federation	5	877	877	803	877	m	m	4 384	4 384	4 016	4 384	m	m
	Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: Columns showing the data for 2014 and 2016 to 2018 and non-compulsory instruction time are available for consultation on line. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at <http://stats.oecd.org>, Education at a Glance Database.

- Refers to full-time compulsory education.
- Estimated number of hours by level of education based on the average number of hours per year as, for some subjects, the allocation of instruction time across multiple levels is flexible.
- Excludes the last year of compulsory education, which can be classified as either lower secondary or upper secondary level.
- The number of grades that are part of compulsory lower secondary education have changed: in 2014 in Luxembourg and in 2016 in Spain and Scotland (United Kingdom). For more information, see Table D1.6.
- The number of grades in lower secondary education is three or four, depending on the track. The fourth year of pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) was excluded from the calculation.

Source: OECD (2013 to 2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934165187>

Table D1.3. Instruction time per subject in compulsory primary education (2014 and 2019)

As a percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions

	Reading, writing and literature		Mathematics		Natural sciences		Second language		Other languages		Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable		Compulsory options chosen by the students		Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools		Total compulsory curriculum	
	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)	(32)	(33)	(34)
<b>OECD Countries</b>																		
Australia <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	24	x(27)	17	x(27)	6	x(27)	x(32)	x(27)	x(32)	100 <sup>d</sup>	x(32)	x(27)	m	x(27)	29 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Austria	30	30	17	17	13 <sup>d</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>	2	2	0	a	a	a	0	a	a	a	100	100
Canada	27	31	18	19	8	6	2	1	0	a	16	17	0	a	3	5	100	100
Chile	20	21	16	17	9	9	3	3	x(31)	x(32)	a	a	0	a	15 <sup>d</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Costa Rica	m	23	m	19	m	14	m	12	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	100
Czech Republic	30	28	17	17	10 <sup>d</sup>	10 <sup>d</sup>	8	8	0	a	a	a	x(31)	x(32)	12 <sup>d</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Denmark	27	21	15	12	6	5	6	5	0	1	11	8 <sup>d</sup>	0	a	0	a	100	100
Estonia	23	23	15	15	7	7	8	8	2	2	a	a	a	a	12 <sup>d</sup>	12 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Finland <sup>2</sup>	24	23	16	15	11	10	6	7	0	1	6	4	a	a	7	4	100	100
France	37	38	21	21	9 <sup>d</sup>	7 <sup>d</sup>	6	6	0	a	0	a	0	a	0	a	100	100
Germany	26	27	20	21	4	4	5	5	a	a	a	a	2	1	a	a	100	100
Greece	25	27	13	14	10	12	8	8	2	2	a	a	a	a	8	6	100	100
Hungary	33	25	16	16	6	4	3	2	0	a	a	a	a	a	3	10	100	100
Iceland	20	20	16	16	8	8	6 <sup>d</sup>	6 <sup>d</sup>	x(9)	x(10, 30)	0	a	5 <sup>d</sup>	5 <sup>d</sup>	a	x(30)	100	100
Ireland <sup>3</sup>	20	20	17	17	4 <sup>d</sup>	4 <sup>d</sup>	0	14	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	a	100	100
Israel	23	22	18	18	9 <sup>d</sup>	8	6	6	0	3	0	a	0	a	7	4	100	100
Italy <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	9	9	0	a	84 <sup>d</sup>	84 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	a	x(34)	100	100
Japan	24	24	17	16	8	7	1	2	a	a	7	7	0	a	m	a	100	100
Korea	22	21	14	14	9 <sup>d</sup>	9 <sup>d</sup>	6	6	0	a	0	a	0	a	0	a	100	100
Latvia	21	21	17	17	5	5	7	8	1	1	a	a	a	a	6	6	100	100
Lithuania	m	32	m	19	m	4	m	8	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	100
Luxembourg <sup>3</sup>	26 <sup>d</sup>	29	19	19	7	7	x(1)	15	18	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	100
Mexico	35	35	27	27	13	13	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	100
Netherlands <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	0	a	100 <sup>d</sup>	100 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	a	a	100	100
New Zealand	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Norway	26	26	17	17	6	7	7	7	0	a	a	a	0	a	1	1	100	100
Poland <sup>4</sup>	18	20	14	15	10	8	10	12	0	a	0	a	a	a	13	5	100	100
Portugal <sup>1</sup>	27	18	27	18	7	x(28)	3	3	0	a	a	53 <sup>d</sup>	0	a	5	4 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Slovak Republic	27	32	15	17	3	6	6	6	x(31)	x(32)	a	a	x(31)	x(32)	21 <sup>d</sup>	8 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Slovenia	23	22	17	17	8	8	6	8	0	a	a	a	0	a	a	a	100	100
Spain	24	23	16	18	7	7	10	11	0	x(32)	a	a	7 <sup>d</sup>	x(32)	9	20 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Sweden <sup>2</sup>	m	27	m	19	m	8	m	6	m	1	m	a	m	6	m	a	m	100
Switzerland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	m
Turkey	30	30	17	17	5	5	5	5	0	a	a	a	0	a	a	a	100	100
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
<b>Economies</b>																		
Flemish Comm. (Belgium) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	a	a	93 <sup>d</sup>	93 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	x(27)	x(28)	100	100
French Comm. (Belgium) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	2	2	0	a	83 <sup>d</sup>	83 <sup>d</sup>	0	a	0	a	100	100
England (UK) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	a	a	100 <sup>d</sup>	100 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	a	a	100	100
Scotland (UK) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	0	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	m
OECD average <sup>1</sup>	25	25	16	17	8	8	5	6	1	0	2	1	1	0	5	4	100	100
EU23 average <sup>1</sup>	25	25	16	16	7	7	6	7	1	1	1	1	1	0	6	5	100	100
<b>Partners</b>																		
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	0	a	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Russian Federation	m	36	m	16	m	8	m	6	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	9	m	100
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: The averages were adjusted to add up to 100% and do not correspond exactly to the average of each column. Columns showing other subjects areas and non-compulsory instruction time are available for consultation on line. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

1. Australia, England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community of Belgium, the French Community of Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland (United Kingdom) are not included in the averages.

2. For some subjects, allocation of instruction time across multiple levels of education is flexible.

3. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught in 2019. In Ireland, the second language is included in "Other subjects" in 2014.

4. Excludes the first three years of primary education for which a large proportion of the time allocated to compulsory subjects is flexible.

Source: OECD (2014 and 2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Table D1.4. Instruction time per subject in compulsory general lower secondary education (2014 and 2019)

As a percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions

	Reading, writing and literature		Mathematics		Natural sciences		Second language		Other languages		Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable		Compulsory options chosen by the students		Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools		Total compulsory curriculum	
	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)	(32)	(33)	(34)
<b>OECD</b>																		
<b>Countries</b>																		
Australia <sup>1,2</sup>	x(27)	12	x(27)	12	x(27)	11	x(27)	x(32)	x(27)	x(32)	100 <sup>d</sup>	x(32)	x(27)	18	x(27)	22 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Austria	14	13	14	13	12	12	12	12	0	x(30)	a	a	1	1 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	100	100
Canada	19	19	15	15	10	9	7	7	0	a	4	0	1	4	8	10	100	100
Chile	16	16	16	16	11	11	8	8	x(31)	x(32)	a	a	0	a	14 <sup>d</sup>	14 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Costa Rica	m	12	m	12	m	12	m	7	m	7	m	a	m	a	m	2	m	100
Czech Republic	12	12	12	12	17	17	10	10	5	5	a	a	x(31)	x(32)	15 <sup>d</sup>	15 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Denmark	19	18	13	13	17	13	10	8	x(29)	8	0	a	12 <sup>d</sup>	5 <sup>d</sup>	4	a	100	100
Estonia	13	13	14	14	21	21	10	10	10	10	a	a	a	a	4 <sup>d</sup>	4 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Finland <sup>3</sup>	12	12	12	13	16	16	9	8	7	5	4	6	a	a	5	4	100	100
France	15	17	14	14	10	12	12	12	5	7	0	a	4 <sup>d</sup>	a	1	a	100	100
Germany	13	13	12	13	11	11	12	12	6	6	a	a	7	5	a	a	100	100
Greece	26	25	11	12	10	13	6	6	6	6	a	a	a	a	1	3	100	100
Hungary	15	13	13	11	12	11	12	10	0	a	a	a	a	3	10	100	100	
Iceland	14	14	14	14	8	8	19 <sup>d</sup>	19 <sup>d</sup>	x(9)	x(10, 30)	0	a	20 <sup>d</sup>	20 <sup>d</sup>	a	x(30)	100	100
Ireland <sup>1,4,5</sup>	12	9	12	11	10	x(32)	10	6	m	x(32)	m	a	m	a	12	60 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Israel	17	14	14	14	14 <sup>d</sup>	13	11	11	6	10	3	a	0	a	2 <sup>d</sup>	0	100	100
Italy	33 <sup>d</sup>	33 <sup>d</sup>	20 <sup>d</sup>	20 <sup>d</sup>	x(3)	x(4)	10	10	7	7	0	a	a	a	a	x(34)	100	100
Japan	12	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	a	a	6	5	0	a	m	a	100	100
Korea	13	13	11	11	19 <sup>d</sup>	20 <sup>d</sup>	10	10	0	a	0	a	x(31)	x(32)	6 <sup>d</sup>	5 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Latvia	15	15	16	16	10	10	8	8	6	6	a	a	a	a	9	9	100	100
Lithuania	m	18	m	13	m	13	m	10	m	5	m	a	m	a	m	a	m	100
Luxembourg <sup>4</sup>	15	19	13	13	8	8	17	12	13	13	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	100
Mexico	14	14	14	14	17	17	9	9	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	100
Netherlands <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	100 <sup>d</sup>	100 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	a	a	100	100
New Zealand	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Norway	15	15	12	12	10	9	9	8	x(29)	x(30)	a	a	13 <sup>d</sup>	15 <sup>d</sup>	0	x(30)	100	100
Poland <sup>6</sup>	14	15	12	12	12	16	14 <sup>d</sup>	11	x(9)	4	0	a	a	a	13	4	100	100
Portugal <sup>1</sup>	13	13	13	13	18	x(28)	9	x(28)	9	x(28)	a	61 <sup>d</sup>	0	a	7	3 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Slovak Republic	16	16	13	14	10	12	10	10	3	x(32)	a	a	x(31)	x(32)	21 <sup>d</sup>	13 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Slovenia	13	13	13	13	17	17	11	11	x(29)	x(30)	a	a	7 <sup>d</sup>	7 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	100	100
Spain	16	17	12	13	8	11	11	11	0	x(32)	a	a	18	x(32)	0	23 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
Sweden <sup>3</sup>	m	12	m	12	m	11	m	8	m	11	m	a	m	5	m	a	100	100
Switzerland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	m	m	m	a	m	m
Turkey	16	16	14	14	11	11	10	10	0	x(30)	a	a	17	16 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	100	100
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
<b>Economies</b>																		
Flemish Comm. (Belgium) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	73 <sup>d</sup>	73 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	20	20	100	100
French Comm. (Belgium)	17	17	14	14	9	9	13	13	0	a	0	a	13 <sup>d</sup>	x(32)	0	13 <sup>d</sup>	100	100
England (UK) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	x(27)	x(28)	a	a	100 <sup>d</sup>	100 <sup>d</sup>	a	a	a	a	100	100
Scotland (UK) <sup>1</sup>	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	x(27)	m	0	m	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	m
OECD average <sup>1</sup>	15	15	13	12	12	12	10	10	4	5	1	0	4	4	4	5	100	100
EU23 average <sup>1</sup>	15	15	13	13	12	12	10	10	5	6	0	0	4	1	4	5	100	100
<b>Partners</b>																		
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Russian Federation	m	22	m	16	m	17	m	10	m	a	m	a	m	m	7	m	100	100
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: The averages were adjusted to add up to 100% and do not correspond exactly to the average of each column. Columns showing other subjects areas and non-compulsory instruction time are available for consultation on line. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

1. Australia (2014 only), England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community of Belgium, Ireland (2019 only), the Netherlands, Portugal (2019 only) and Scotland (United Kingdom) are not included in the averages.

2. The intended instruction time derived from the Australian Curriculum assumes that certain subjects, which may be considered compulsory in years 7 and 8, could be delivered to students as electives in years 9 and 10.

3. For some subjects, allocation of instruction time across multiple levels of education is flexible.

4. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught in 2019.

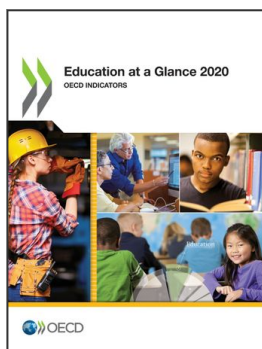
5. Actual instruction time in 2014.

6. Instruction time for other languages is included in instruction time for the second language for grade 9 in 2019.

Source: OECD (2014 and 2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

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