

Indicator D1. How much time do students spend in the classroom?

Highlights

- Students in OECD countries and economies receive an average of 7 638 hours of compulsory instruction during their primary and lower secondary education, ranging from 5 334 hours in Poland to almost double that in Australia (11 060 hours).
- Across OECD countries and economies, compulsory instruction time for primary students averages 807 hours per year, while lower secondary students receive an average of 116 more hours of compulsory education per year than primary students (923 hours).
- On average across OECD countries and economies, instruction in reading, writing and literature and in mathematics represents 42% of compulsory instruction time for primary school students, but only 27% of compulsory instruction time for lower secondary school students.

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. 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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, actual practices on organisation of the school year and distribution of instruction time across subjects may have differed from the statutory requirements in some countries due to school closures and changes in learning environment (e.g. remote learning, sanitary restrictions upon school reopening) (see *The state of global education – 18 months into the pandemic* (OECD, 2021^[1]) and Annex 3 for more information).

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 Indicator C7, which shows the factors influencing the salary cost of teachers per student, and Indicator D6 on the allocation of funding to schools). 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

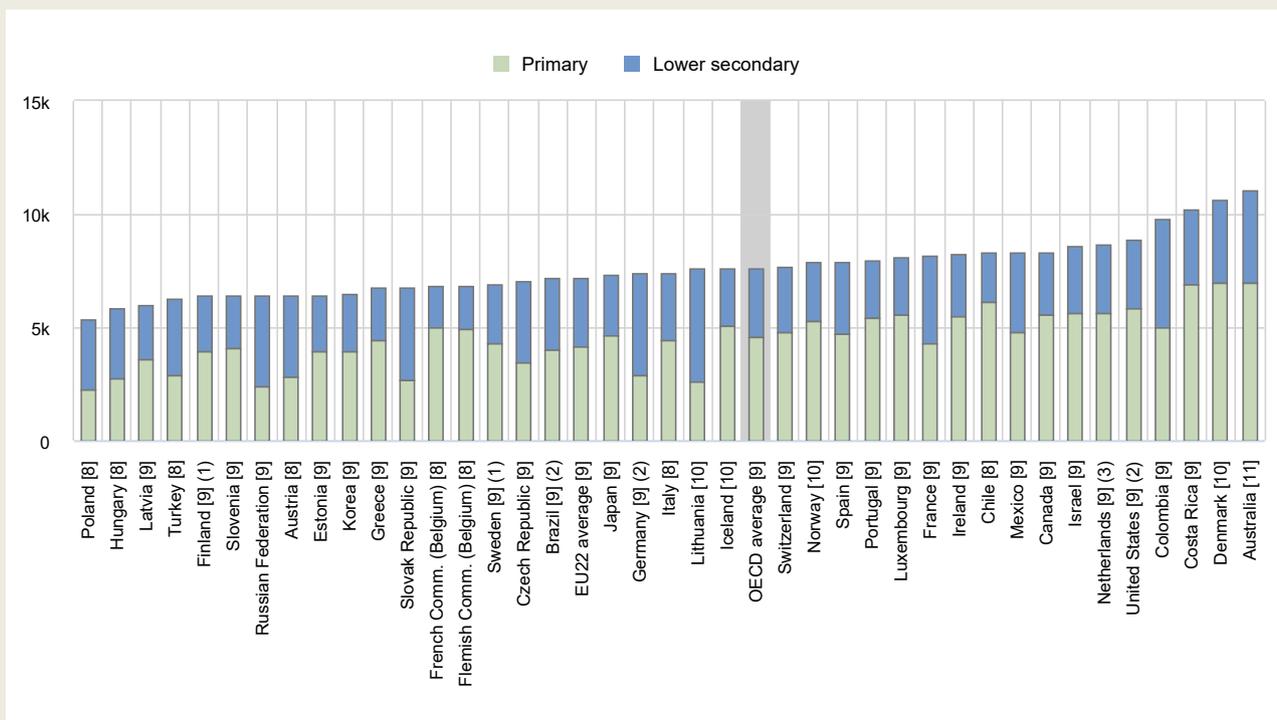
- Primary education lasts six years on average across OECD countries and economies, ranging from four to seven years. Lower secondary general education lasts three years on average across OECD countries and economies,

ranging from two to five years. In three out of five OECD and partner countries and economies, at least one year of upper secondary education is part of compulsory full-time general education.

- Excluding a few countries where the compulsory curriculum is mostly devoted to subjects with a flexible timetable, no compulsory instruction time for primary students and lower secondary students is devoted to subjects with a flexible timetable in most other OECD countries and economies. An average of 4% of compulsory instruction time both at the primary level and at the lower secondary level is devoted to flexible subjects chosen by schools.
- In about one-quarter of countries with available data, 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).

Figure D1.1. Compulsory instruction time in general education (2021)

In hours, in primary and lower secondary education, in public institutions



Note: Numbers in square brackets refer to the total number of years for primary and lower secondary education.

1. 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.
2. Year of reference 2020.
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 was excluded from the calculation.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the total number of compulsory instruction hours.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D1.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

Analysis

Compulsory 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 bear a heavier annual workload based on statutory requirements. In other countries, the workload is distributed evenly over more years. This indicator focuses on compulsory education at primary and lower secondary levels. However, in 19 OECD and partner countries, at least one year of pre-primary education is also compulsory, so the starting age for compulsory education is younger than the age at which primary education starts (see Figure X3.D1.1 in Annex 3 for more details on the number of years of compulsory education). Moreover, in around three out of five countries and economies with available data, at least one year of upper secondary education is part of compulsory full-time education (Table D1.1).

In around three out of four countries and economies with available data, students are required to start primary education at the age of 6. In most other countries, students are not required to start until they are 7, as in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden. Only in Australia, England (United Kingdom), New Zealand and Scotland (United Kingdom) does primary education start at age 5.

There is also substantial variation in the duration of primary education. On average across OECD countries and economies, primary education lasts six years, but it ranges from four years in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and Turkey to seven years in Australia, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Scotland (United Kingdom). Lower secondary education averages three years, but ranges from two years in Chile and the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium to five years in Germany, the Russian Federation and the Slovak Republic, and six years in Lithuania (Table D1.2). However, the number of grades allocated to each level of compulsory education may differ within countries, across subnational entities, for example in federal countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States (Box D1.2).

Countries allocate annual instruction time differently over the year. The number of instruction days and the way they are distributed across the school year can vary significantly between countries, as countries organise holidays differently (Box D1.1). The distribution of instruction time during the week also varies between countries. For example, whereas students go to primary and lower secondary school five days per week in most countries, in Belgium and France, students typically do not go to school on Wednesday afternoon (see Box D1.2 in OECD (2019_[2])). Countries also vary in the way they organise recess and breaks within the school day (see Box D1.2 in OECD (2018_[3])).

Box D1.1. Organisation of breaks within the school year in lower secondary education (2021)

The length of the school year varies greatly between countries, implying that there is also wide variation in the number of weeks students are not at school across countries. Countries organise the school year in different ways, in terms of the frequency and length of school breaks during the school year.

In 26 out of 40 OECD countries and economies, the total length of school breaks is harmonised for the whole country, and varies from about 10 weeks in Mexico to about 18 weeks in Ireland, with an average of 14 weeks. However, the distribution of breaks during the school year can be flexible across subnational entities. For example, dates for school breaks are defined according to three zones in France, and similar flexibility occurs in Austria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and the Slovak Republic (see Figure X3.D1.3 in Annex 3 for the organisation of the school year at lower secondary level).

In another 14 OECD countries, the total length and the distribution of school breaks can differ between subnational entities (especially in federal countries), types of educational programmes (e.g. Chile) and/or individual schools (e.g. Italy), even if decisions related to these school breaks should be taken following some higher level guidelines. For example, schools in Italy autonomously organise school breaks under regional guidelines.

In all countries, the longest break is the one between two successive school years. This break varies from 5 weeks in some *cantons* in Switzerland to over 13 weeks in Chile (programmes with *Jornada Escolar Completa*), some regions in Italy, Latvia, Portugal (for grade 9) and the Russian Federation. In nearly all countries with available information, this break between two school years represents at least half of the school holiday time (Figure D1.2).

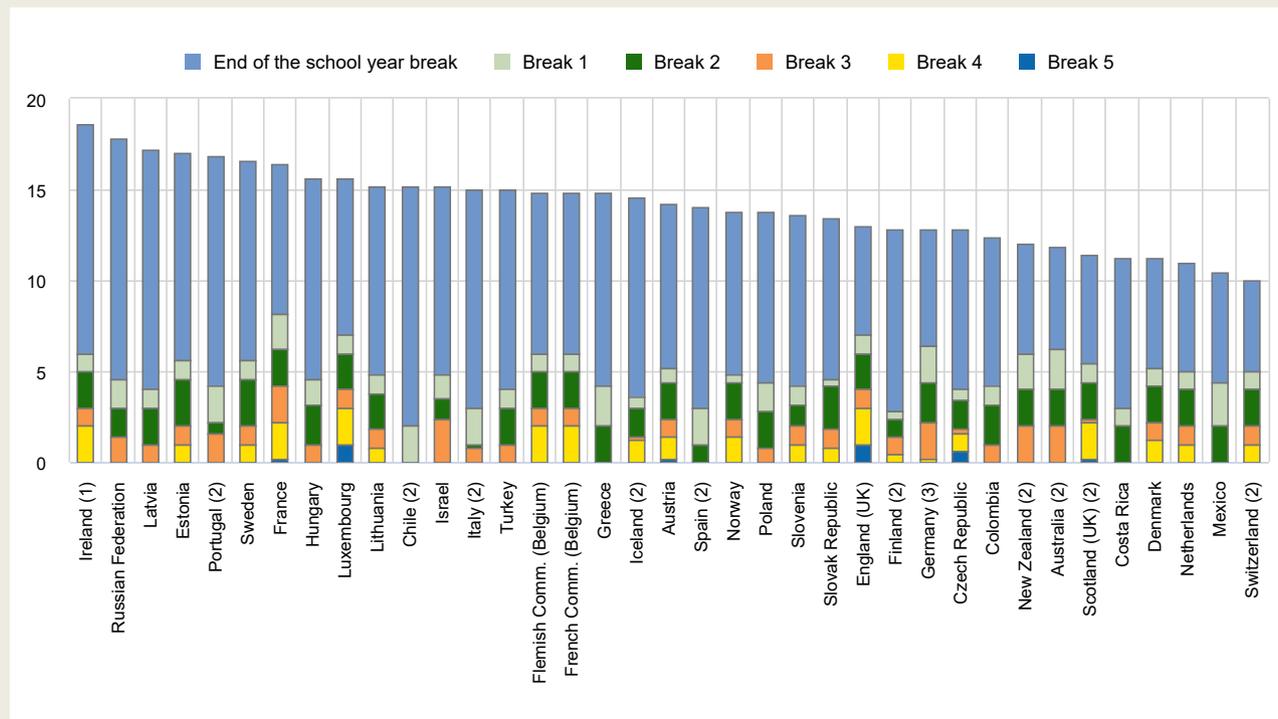
In addition to this long break, students usually have three to four other shorter holiday periods during the school year. Austria, the Czech Republic, England (United Kingdom), France, Luxembourg and Scotland (United Kingdom) as well as some *Länder* in Germany offer a fifth break. Only in Chile is there one additional break other than the long break (Figure D1.2).

Breaks during the school year differ in both length and timing, but the main common break period is at the end of calendar year, corresponding to either an approximately two-week break (in the northern hemisphere) or the end of the school year break in the southern hemisphere.

In most countries, the length of the different breaks within the school year varies, from a few days to two weeks. Exceptions to this pattern are Slovenia with four one-week breaks, and Australia, France, Greece and New Zealand with two-week breaks (from two breaks in Greece to four in France). Belgium, England (United Kingdom), Ireland and Luxembourg alternate one-week and two-week breaks during the school year (Figure D1.2).

Figure D1.2. School breaks in compulsory general lower secondary education (2021)

In weeks, in public institutions



Note: Breaks exclude public/religious days, except if these days are included in longer breaks.

1. End-of-year break includes examination periods.

2. Minimum length of breaks. Length of breaks may vary by region, by programme and/or by individual school.

3. Data for Nordrhein-Westfalen. The length and number of breaks for Germany are indicative only as variation between and among jurisdictions can occur.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the total number of weeks of breaks for a school year.

Source: Estimated from Eurydice (2020) and OECD (2021). See *Source* section and Annex 3 for more information (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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In most countries, the organisation of breaks is usually similar at primary and lower secondary levels. However, breaks at the end of the school year are shorter at lower secondary level than at primary level by two weeks in Greece and Lithuania, and one week shorter in the Russian Federation. On the contrary, they are about one week longer in Israel, two weeks longer in Portugal, and three weeks longer in Ireland (see Figure X3.D1.2 in Annex 3 for the organisation of school year at the primary level).

During the school year 2020/21, some countries rescheduled some of the school breaks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, some school breaks during the school year were extended for three to five days in the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovenia (see Annex 3 for details). In France, the dates of spring break were harmonised across all three zones as an exceptional national measure.

Intended instruction time

Intended instruction time is the total number of hours during which schools are obliged to offer instruction in compulsory and, if applicable, non-compulsory subjects. However, intended instruction time could be different from actual instruction time.

In most countries, total statutory number of hours of intended and/or compulsory instruction time is defined at the national level (i.e. uniform across the country). Total statutory number of hours on intended and/or compulsory instruction time are defined at the subnational level in some federal countries (e.g. Belgium, Canada, Germany, the United States) and in some countries with a decentralised education system (e.g. Spain, the United Kingdom) (Box D1.2).

Box D1.2. Subnational variation in instruction time at the primary and lower secondary levels (2021)

Primary and lower secondary education is part of compulsory education in OECD countries. It is thus expected that all children enrolled in compulsory education receive a similar amount of instruction time within each country. However, subnational data provided by four countries (2021 data for Belgium and the United Kingdom, 2020 data for the United States and 2019 data for Canada) show that instruction time varies significantly among subnational entities within a single country.

Among the three countries with available information, the number of grades in primary and lower secondary education is similar across subnational entities in two countries only (Belgium and the United States). In the United Kingdom, the number of grades at the primary and at the lower secondary level varies by one year between subnational entities. The number of grades varies from six to seven years at the primary level, and from three to four years at the lower secondary level. Considering that the number of grades of compulsory education at the upper secondary levels also varies from one to two years at the subnational level, the total number of years of compulsory education varies at the subnational level, from 11 years in England, Scotland and Wales to 12 years in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, as the theoretical starting age for primary education also varies by one year between Northern Ireland and other subnational entities, the theoretical ending age of compulsory education is similar for all students in the United Kingdom.

Despite a similar number of grades at primary and lower secondary levels at the subnational level in most countries, the number of compulsory instruction hours varies at the subnational level to various extents. At the primary level, the annual number of compulsory instruction hours varies by less than 2% in Belgium (11 hours, from 824 hours in the Flemish Community to 835 hours in the French Community), by 9% in the United Kingdom (74 hours among the two subnational entities with available data, from 787 hours in Northern Ireland to 861 hours in Wales) and by 75% in the United States (540 hours, from an estimated 720 hours in New Jersey to 1 260 hours in Texas). These variations in the annual amount of instruction hours can translate into significant variation in the total number of hours of instruction over the whole duration of primary education. Belgium has the smallest variation in the total number of compulsory instruction hours between subnational entities: the total number of compulsory instruction hours varies by 65 hours between the French and Flemish Communities (5 012 hours compared with 4 947 hours). The difference between subnational entities is 342 hours in the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland only). In Canada, the variation in intended instruction hours (compulsory and non-compulsory hours) between subnational entities reaches 745 hours. It is even larger in the United States, where the difference between the lowest and highest total compulsory instruction hours reaches 3 240 hours.

Variations are similar at the lower secondary level: the annual number of compulsory instruction hours varies by 3% in the United Kingdom, 6% in Belgium and 75% in the United States, although all three countries have smaller subnational variations at this level than at the primary level. The total number of compulsory instruction hours at the lower secondary level varies between subnational entities by 86 hours in the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland only), 112 hours in Belgium and 1 620 hours in the United States. In Canada, intended instruction time varies by 13% (353 hours) across subnational entities.

The extent of these variations may be related to differences across subnational entities in the number of annual days of instruction at both the primary and lower secondary levels, except in the United Kingdom, where the number of instruction days does not vary between subnational entities. In 2020, the annual number of instruction days at the primary level varies by 6% in Canada (10 days, from 180 days in Quebec to 190 days in Saskatchewan), 13% in Belgium (20 days, from 159 days in the Flemish Community to 179 days in the French Community, mostly due to differences in the way instruction time is defined in official documents, while the actual instruction time is similar) and 16% in the United States (26 days, from 160 days in Colorado to 186 days in Kansas). Similar variations are observed at the lower secondary level.

Source: *Education at a Glance Database*, <http://stats.oecd.org>.

Instruction may also occur outside compulsory school hours and outside the classroom or school, which is not covered in this indicator. In some countries, lower secondary school students are encouraged to take after-school classes in subjects already taught in school to help them improve their performance. Students can participate in after-school lessons in the form of remedial catch-up classes or enrichment courses, with individual tutors or in group lessons provided by school teachers, or in other independent courses (see Box D1.2 in OECD (2017)^[4] and *Organisation of the School Day* in Annex 3 for more information).

Compulsory instruction time

Compulsory instruction time refers to the amount and allocation of instruction time that must be provided in almost every public school and must be attended by almost all public sector students, as per public regulations.

Across OECD countries and economies, total compulsory instruction time in primary and lower secondary general education averages 7 638 hours spanning across 9 years on average. This ranges from 5 334 hours in Poland (in 8 years) to 11 060 hours in Australia (in 11 years) (Figure D1.1). In England (United Kingdom), New Zealand and Scotland (United Kingdom), the regulations do not prescribe compulsory instruction time in schools. However, schools are required to be open for instruction for a minimum number of hours per day (New Zealand) or to allow sufficient instruction time to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that includes all statutory requirements (England and Scotland [United Kingdom]).

On average across OECD countries and economies, students receive 4 590 hours of compulsory instruction over 6 years of primary education and 3 049 hours during 3 years of lower secondary general education. The average annual number of compulsory instruction hours tends to increase with level of education in most countries (from 807 hours in primary education to 923 hours in lower secondary general programmes on average across OECD countries and economies), except in Costa Rica (2% decrease), Luxembourg (9% decrease) and Portugal (8% decrease) (Table D1.1).

Compulsory instruction time per year generally increases with age (e.g. 783 hours at age 7, 843 hours at age 10 then 928 hours at age 13). In Korea, Latvia, Mexico and Poland, the average annual number of compulsory instruction hours increases by more than 40% between ages 7 and 13 (Table D1.5, available on line).

Compulsory instruction time, by definition, only captures the time spent by students in formal classroom settings (as established in public regulations). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation of instruction was adapted in some countries to allow distance learning. In more than two-thirds of OECD countries and economies (21 out of 33 countries and economies at primary level and 25 countries and economies at lower secondary level), instruction was delivered via distance learning during school closures in 2020 (OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB, 2021^[5]). In some countries, statutory requirements on the organisation of the school year were adjusted. For instance, in Brazil, it was not mandatory for schools to cover the minimum statutory number of school days, but only to provide the minimum annual number of instruction hours required by regulation.

Non-compulsory instruction time

In about three out of five countries and economies with available data, there is no non-compulsory instruction time, so intended and compulsory instruction time are the same (i.e. intended instruction time is fully compulsory) for primary and lower secondary students. In another two-fifths of the countries and economies, intended instruction time includes both compulsory instruction time and a specified amount of non-compulsory instruction time (which must be provided in almost every public school, but which is not compulsory for almost all students in public schools): six countries at primary level and seven at lower secondary level (Table D1.1).

Among countries with available data, non-compulsory instruction time represents more than 20% of compulsory instruction time in a few countries. At the primary level, non-compulsory time accounts for 21% of total compulsory instruction time in Slovenia and 53% in Greece. At the lower secondary level, non-compulsory time accounts for 31% of total compulsory instruction time in Greece, 29% in France and 23% in Slovenia (Table D1.3 and Table D1.4). However these values need to be interpreted with caution. In France, for example, lower secondary students enjoy a wide variety of courses in non-compulsory curriculum, and they cannot physically attend all the subjects and hours indicated.

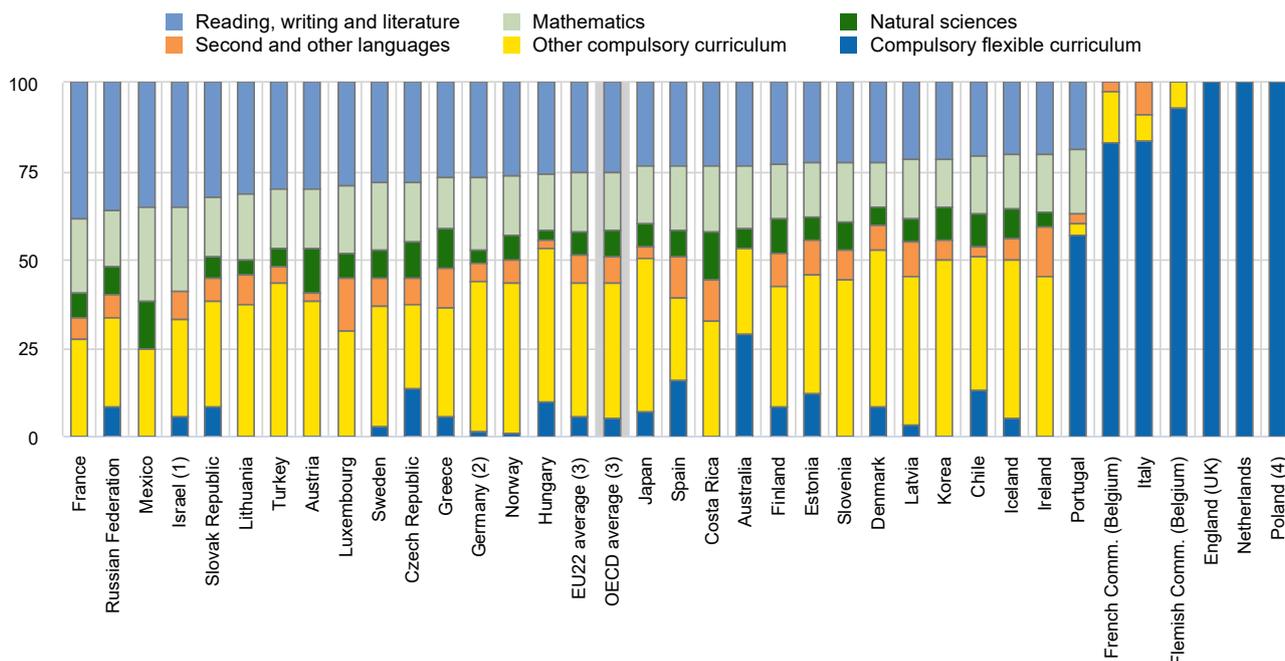
Instruction time per subject

On average across OECD countries, 42% of the compulsory instruction time is devoted to providing students with fundamental skills in literacy and numeracy: 25% on reading, writing and literature and 17% on mathematics. In particular, France, Israel (in Israel, it also includes time devoted to natural sciences, social studies and other languages), Lithuania, Mexico and the Russian Federation specifically allocate more than a half of compulsory instruction time on reading, writing and literature (first language), and mathematics (Ireland and Luxembourg could also be included in the list as instruction time on second language includes other national languages). Together with arts (10%), physical education and health (9%), natural sciences (7%), second and other languages (7%), and social studies (6%), these seven study areas form more than 80% of compulsory instruction time on average across OECD countries where instruction time per subject is specified (Table D1.3 and Figure D1.3).

Religion, ethics and moral education; information and communication technologies (ICT); technology; practical and vocational skills; and other subjects make up the remainder of the non-flexible compulsory curriculum at the primary level, representing about 12% of the compulsory instruction time on average across OECD countries (Table D1.3).

Figure D1.3. Instruction time per subject in primary education (2021)

In percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions



Note: Some subject categories include subjects in different categories. See source table for details.

1. Reading, writing and literature includes social studies and other languages. Mathematics includes natural sciences.
2. Year of reference 2020.
3. Excludes England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community (Belgium), the French Community (Belgium), Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal.
4. Excludes the last year of primary education (first four years of primary school) for which the instruction time is allocated to specific compulsory subjects.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D1.3. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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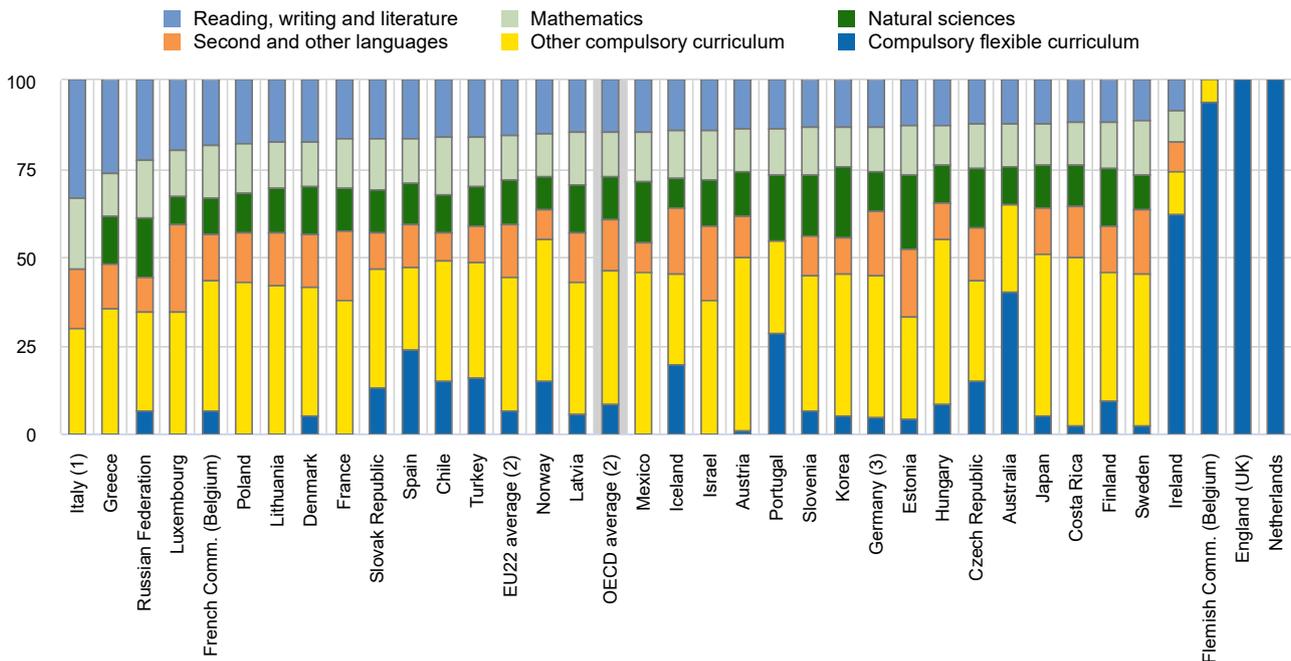
At the lower secondary level, the seven major study areas at the primary level continue to represent the major part of the curriculum (79%), but with a significant shift in the allocation of time from primary education as the curriculum generally becomes more subject-specific. On average across OECD countries and economies where instruction time per subject is

specified, reading, writing and literature (14%) and mathematics (13%) make up 27% of the compulsory curriculum: 15 percentage points lower than that in primary education. Proportions of time allocated to physical education and health (8%) and to the arts (7%) also decreased from those at the primary level. Conversely, the proportions of compulsory instruction time in natural sciences climbs from 7% to 12%, in social studies from 6% to 11%, and in second and other languages from 7% to 15%. Religion, ethics and moral education; ICT; technology; practical and vocational skills; and other subjects make up the remainder (about 14%) of the non-flexible compulsory curriculum for lower secondary students (Figure D1.4, Table D1.3 and Table D1.4).

At the lower secondary level, there is substantial variation in how countries allocate time to the different subjects within the compulsory curriculum. For example, reading, writing and literature account for 12% or less of compulsory instruction time in Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Japan and Sweden, but more than 25% of compulsory instruction time in Greece and Italy (in Italy, this also includes time devoted to social studies). In Ireland, reading, writing and literature are taught in two national languages, and therefore the combined instruction time of the two languages could reach around 15% of the total compulsory instruction time. Natural sciences account for 10% or less of compulsory instruction time in Iceland, Luxembourg and Norway, but 20% or more of compulsory instruction time in Estonia and Korea (in Korea, this also includes time devoted to ICT, technology, and practical and vocational skills). Compulsory instruction time devoted to second and other languages also varies widely between countries. Second-language instruction accounts for 7% or less of compulsory instruction time in Costa Rica and Greece and 13% or more in the French Community of Belgium, Iceland and Japan. In addition, more than four out of ten countries with available data allocate some compulsory instruction time for lower secondary students to instruction in another language in addition to a second language (Figure D1.4, Table D1.3 and Table D1.4).

Figure D1.4. Instruction time per subject in general lower secondary education (2021)

In percentage of total compulsory instruction time, in public institutions



Note: Some subject categories include subjects in different categories. See source table for details.

1. Reading, writing and literature includes social studies. Mathematics includes natural sciences.
2. Excludes England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community (Belgium), Ireland and the Netherlands.
3. Year of reference 2020.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the proportion of instruction hours devoted to reading, writing and literature.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D1.4. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

As the difference between the primary and lower secondary levels shows, there are significant differences in how time is allocated to school subjects as students grow older. For example, on average across OECD countries, 28% of instruction time is devoted to reading, writing and literature for 7-year-olds, 19% for 11-year-olds and 12% for 15-year-olds. In contrast, while an average of 4% of instruction time for 7-year-olds is devoted to a second language, 11% of instruction time for 11-year-olds is spent studying a second language and 1% studying other languages, while for 15-year-olds, the percentages are 10% and 5%, respectively. The proportion of instruction time devoted to other subjects also changes in a similar way across ages (Table D1.6, available on line).

Flexibility in the curriculum

In most countries, central and state authorities establish regulations or recommendations regarding instruction time and the curriculum. However, local authorities, schools, teachers and/or students also have varying degrees of freedom in organising instruction time or in choosing subjects.

In about one-quarter of countries with available data, the allocation of instruction time across grades is flexible in primary and lower secondary general education (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). In such cases, schools/local authorities are free to decide how much time should be allocated for each grade (Table D1.2).

Setting compulsory subjects within a flexible timetable is the practice for most subjects in a few countries and economies. In Portugal, more than half of the compulsory curriculum at the primary level is organised within a flexible timetable, and the proportion exceeds 80% in the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium and in Italy. In England (United Kingdom), the Netherlands and Poland (in each of the first three grades), the entire curriculum at the primary level is organised as a flexible timetable. At the lower secondary level, similar patterns are found in the Flemish Community of Belgium, England (United Kingdom) and the Netherlands. In these countries and economies, compulsory subjects and/or total instruction time are specified, but not how time should be allocated to each subject. Local authorities, schools and/or teachers are free to decide how much time to allocate to each compulsory subject. In Scotland (United Kingdom), at both primary and lower secondary levels, some compulsory subjects are specified, but there is no regulation on total instruction time, which is the responsibility of local authorities and schools themselves. Excluding these countries and economies, compulsory subjects with flexible timetables account for 1% of the compulsory instruction time at both primary and lower secondary levels, even if they are a significant part of the curriculum in some countries (Table D1.3 and Table D1.4).

Flexibility in the choice of subjects is less common across OECD countries. On average, 4% of compulsory instruction time is allocated to subjects chosen by schools at the primary level. At the lower secondary level, 4% of compulsory instruction time is allocated to subjects chosen by schools and another 3% to subjects chosen by students. However, some countries allocate a substantial part of the compulsory instruction time to flexible subjects. For example, about 10% or more of compulsory instruction time is allocated to subjects chosen by schools in Chile, the Czech Republic, Estonia (primary), the French Community of Belgium (lower secondary), Hungary (primary), the Slovak Republic (lower secondary) and Spain (primary). At least 20% of compulsory instruction time is allocated in this way in Australia (29% at the primary level and 22% at lower secondary level), Ireland (62% at lower secondary level) and Spain (24% at lower secondary level). In Australia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey, 15-20% of compulsory instruction time is allocated to subjects chosen by lower secondary students (Table D1.3 and Table D1.4).

Flexibility in the curriculum may allow more agile interventions to minimise the impact of learning interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in Israel, the latest change in instruction time regulations in primary education and lower and secondary education illustrate different types of flexible allocation of compulsory instruction time to accommodate for unexpected changes in the organisation of instruction. At the primary level, compulsory instruction time for each grade is recommended to be distributed across a few clusters of similar subjects. Schools and teachers are then free to decide how much time to allocate to each compulsory subject within each cluster. At the secondary level, compulsory instruction hours for each compulsory subject are allocated across multiple grades. Schools and teachers are then free to adapt the education programmes for a period longer than one year.

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 (2007^[6])).

This 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^[7]) and Annex 3 for country-specific notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

Source

Data on instruction time are from the 2020 Joint Eurydice-OECD Instruction time data collection and refer to instruction time during compulsory primary and full-time (lower and upper) secondary general education for the school year 2020/21.

References

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- OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB (2021), *Special Survey on COVID Database*, <https://www.oecd.org/education/Preliminary-Findings-COVID-Survey-OECD-database.xlsx> (accessed on 17 May 2021). [5]

Indicator D1 tables

Tables Indicator D1. How much time do students spend in the classroom?

Table D1.1	Instruction time in compulsory general education (2021)
Table D1.2	Organisation of compulsory general education (2021)
Table D1.3	Instruction time per subject in primary education (2021)
Table D1.4	Instruction time per subject in general lower secondary education (2021)
WEB Table D1.5	<i>Instruction time in compulsory general education, by age (2021)</i>
WEB Table D1.6	<i>Instruction time per subject for 6-17 year-olds (2021)</i>

StatLink  <https://stat.link/3ruxib>

Cut-off date for the data: 17 June 2021. Any updates on data can be found on line at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at: <http://stats.oecd.org>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

Table D1.1. Instruction time in compulsory general education¹ (2021)

By level of education, in public institutions

	Number of grades that are part of compulsory education	Primary						Lower secondary							
		Average hours per year			Total number of hours			Average hours per year			Total number of hours				
		Compulsory instruction time	Non-compulsory instruction time	Intended instruction time	Compulsory instruction time	Non-compulsory instruction time	Intended instruction time	Compulsory instruction time	Non-compulsory instruction time	Intended instruction time	Compulsory instruction time	Non-compulsory instruction time	Intended instruction time		
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)=(2)+(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)+(6)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)=(9)+(10)	(12)	(13)	(14)=(12)+(13)
OECD	Countries														
	Australia	7	1 000	m	m	6 998	m	m	4	1 016	m	m	4 062	m	m
	Austria	4	705	m	m	2 820	m	m	4	900	m	m	3 600	m	m
	Canada	6	922	a	922	5 530	a	5 530	3	923	a	923	2 770	a	2 770
	Chile	6	1 026	a	1 026	6 156	a	6 156	2	1 065	a	1 065	2 131	a	2 131
	Colombia	5	1 000	a	1 000	5 000	a	5 000	4	1 200	a	1 200	4 800	a	4 800
	Costa Rica	6	1 147	a	1 147	6 880	a	6 880	3	1 120	a	1 120	3 360	a	3 360
	Czech Republic	5	690	a	690	3 452	a	3 452	4	892	a	892	3 569	a	3 569
	Denmark	7	1 000	a	1 000	7 000	a	7 000	3	1 200	a	1 200	3 600	a	3 600
	Estonia	6	661	a	661	3 964	a	3 964	3	823	a	823	2 468	a	2 468
	Finland ²	6	660	33	693	3 962	195	4 157	3	808	87	894	2 423	261	2 683
	France ³	5	864	a	864	4 320	a	4 320	4	958	279	1 237	3 832	1 116	4 948
	Germany ^{4,5}	4	725	a	725	2 900	a	2 900	5	900	a	900	4 502	a	4 502
	Greece	6	740	392	1 131	4 437	2 349	6 786	3	772	238	1 011	2 317	715	3 032
	Hungary	4	678	a	678	2 712	a	2 712	4	792	a	792	3 168	a	3 168
	Iceland	7	729	a	729	5 100	a	5 100	3	839	a	839	2 516	a	2 516
	Ireland	6	915	a	915	5 490	a	5 490	3	924	a	924	2 772	a	2 772
	Israel	6	938	a	938	5 629	a	5 629	3	989	a	989	2 968	a	2 968
	Italy	5	891	a	891	4 455	a	4 455	3	990	a	990	2 970	a	2 970
	Japan	6	778	a	778	4 669	a	4 669	3	890	a	890	2 669	a	2 669
	Korea	6	655	a	655	3 928	a	3 928	3	842	a	842	2 525	a	2 525
	Latvia	6	599	m	m	3 596	m	m	3	788	m	m	2 365	m	m
	Lithuania	4	645	54	699	2 578	216	2 794	6	834	119	952	5 003	712	5 715
	Luxembourg	6	924	a	924	5 544	a	5 544	3	845	a	845	2 535	a	2 535
	Mexico	6	800	a	800	4 800	a	4 800	3	1 167	a	1 167	3 500	a	3 500
	Netherlands ⁶	6	940	a	940	5 640	a	5 640	3	1 000	a	1 000	3 000	a	3 000
	New Zealand	6	m	m	m	m	m	m	4	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Norway	7	753	a	753	5 272	a	5 272	3	874	a	874	2 622	a	2 622
	Poland	4	567	57	624	2 268	227	2 495	4	767	65	831	3 066	258	3 324
	Portugal	6	905	146	1 051	5 429	877	6 307	3	835	25	860	2 505	75	2 580
	Slovak Republic	4	673	a	673	2 693	a	2 693	5	819	a	819	4 095	a	4 095
	Slovenia	6	682	140	822	4 091	840	4 931	3	766	179	944	2 298	536	2 833
	Spain	6	792	a	792	4 750	a	4 750	3	1 056	a	1 056	3 167	a	3 167
	Sweden ²	6	714	m	m	4 283	m	m	3	869	m	m	2 607	m	m
	Switzerland	6	800	m	m	4 801	m	m	3	961	m	m	2 884	m	m
	Turkey	4	720	a	720	2 880	a	2 880	4	843	a	843	3 371	a	3 371
	United States ⁴	6	973	m	m	5 837	m	m	3	1 022	m	m	3 066	m	m
	Economies														
	Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	6	824	a	824	4 947	a	4 947	2	951	a	951	1 902	a	1 902
	French Comm. (Belgium)	6	835	a	835	5 012	a	5 012	2	895	a	895	1 790	a	1 790
	England (UK)	6	m	a	m	m	a	m	3	m	a	m	m	a	m
	Scotland (UK)	7	m	a	m	m	a	m	3	m	a	m	m	a	m
	OECD average	6	807	m	m	4 590	m	m	3	923	m	m	3 049	m	m
	EU22 average	5	766	m	m	4 189	m	m	3	886	m	m	3 024	m	m
Partners	Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Brazil ⁴	5	800	m	m	4 000	m	m	4	800	m	m	3 200	m	m
	China	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
	Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Russian Federation	4	598	m	m	2 393	m	m	5	803	m	m	4 016	m	m
	Saudi Arabia	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
	G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: Columns showing instruction time combined for compulsory primary and lower secondary education (i.e. Columns 15-18) and compulsory upper secondary education (i.e. Columns 19-25) 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. Refers to full-time compulsory education and excludes pre-primary education, even if compulsory.

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. Non-compulsory instruction time are theoretical maximum limits.

4. Year of reference 2020.

5. Excludes the last year of compulsory education, which can be classified at either the lower secondary or the upper secondary level.

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 was excluded from the calculation.

Source: OECD (2021). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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

Table D1.2. Organisation of compulsory general education¹ (2021)

By level of education, in public institutions

	Primary				Lower secondary			
	Number of grades that are part of compulsory education	Theoretical starting age	Average number of instruction days per year	Flexible allocation of instruction time across multiple grades	Number of grades that are part of compulsory education	Theoretical starting age	Average number of instruction days per year	Flexible allocation of instruction time across multiple grades
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
OECD								
Countries								
Australia	7	5	200	No	4	12	200	No
Austria	4	6	180	No	4	10	180	No
Canada	6	6	185	No	3	12	185	No
Chile	6	6	186	No	2	12	185	No
Colombia	5	6	200	No	4	11	200	No
Costa Rica	6	6	200	No	3	12	200	No
Czech Republic	5	6	195	Yes	4	11	195	Yes
Denmark	7	6	200	No	3	13	200	No
Estonia	6	7	175	Yes	3	13	175	Yes
Finland ²	6	7	189	Yes	3	13	189	Yes
France	5	6	162	No	4	11	162	No
Germany ^{3,4}	4	6	188	No	5	10	188	No
Greece	6	6	174	No	3	12	162	No
Hungary	4	6	179	No	4	10	179	No
Iceland	7	6	170	Yes	3	13	170	Yes
Ireland	6	6	183	No	3	12	165	No
Israel	6	6	214	No	3	12	205	Yes
Italy	5	6	200	No	3	11	200	No
Japan	6	6	203	No	3	12	203	No
Korea	6	6	190	Yes	3	12	190	Yes
Latvia ⁵	6	7	169	No	3	13	173	No
Lithuania	4	7	175	Yes	6	11	185	Yes
Luxembourg	6	6	180	No	3	12	169	No
Mexico	6	6	200	No	3	12	200	No
Netherlands ⁶	6	6	m	Yes	3	12	m	Yes
New Zealand	6	5	195	m	4	11	193	m
Norway	7	6	190	Yes	3	13	190	Yes
Poland	4	7	180	No	4	11	180	No
Portugal	6	6	179	No	3	12	167	No
Slovak Republic	4	6	187	No	5	10	187	No
Slovenia	6	6	190	No	3	12	185	No
Spain	6	6	175	No	3	12	175	No
Sweden ²	6	7	178	Yes	3	13	178	Yes
Switzerland	6	6	188	No	3	12	188	No
Turkey	4	6	180	No	4	10	180	No
United States ³	6	6	180	m	3	12	180	m
Economies								
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	6	6	159	No	2	12	161	No
French Comm. (Belgium)	6	6	179	No	2	12	179	No
England (UK)	6	5	190	m	3	11	190	m
Scotland (UK)	7	5	190	m	3	12	190	m
OECD average	6	6	186	a	3	12	184	a
EU22 average	5	6	181	a	3	12	179	a
Partners								
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil ³	5	6	200	No	4	11	200	No
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Russian Federation	4	7	169	No	5	11	175	No
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: Students go to school five days a week (six days in some schools in Israel and secondary education in Italy). In some countries, the statutory length of the school day varies within the school week. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, statutory requirements on organisation of the school year may be adjusted in some countries (e.g. in Brazil, it was not mandatory to cover the minimum statutory number of school days). Columns showing the organisation of compulsory upper secondary education (i.e. Columns 9-12) 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. Refers to full-time compulsory education and excludes pre-primary education, even if compulsory.

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

3. Year of reference 2020.

4. Excludes the last year of compulsory education, which can be classified at either the lower secondary or the upper secondary level.

5. Flexible allocation of instruction time across three consecutive grades, is applicable for grades 1, 4 and 7 only in 2020/21.

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 was excluded from the calculation.

Source: OECD (2021). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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

Table D1.3. Instruction time per subject in primary education (2021)

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

	Reading, writing and literature	Mathematics	Natural sciences	Social studies	Second language	Other languages	Physical education and health	Arts	Religion/ethics/moral education	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	Technology	Practical and vocational skills	Other subjects	Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	Compulsory options chosen by the students	Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Total compulsory curriculum	Non-compulsory curriculum
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
OECD																		
Countries																		
Australia	23	18	6	8 ^d	x(16)	x(16)	8	5	x(4)	x(11)	4 ^d	x(11)	x(16)	x(16)	m	29 ^d	100	m
Austria	30	17	13 ^d	x(3)	2	a	11	9	9	x(17)	x(3)	6	4	a	a	a	100	m
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a
Chile	20	17	9	9	3	x(16)	9	10	6	x(16)	2	x(16)	2	a	a	13 ^d	100	a
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a
Costa Rica	23	19	14	9	12	a	5	5	5	a	a	a	9	a	a	a	100	a
Czech Republic	28	17	10 ^d	x(3)	8	a	8	10	x(13)	1	4 ^d	x(11)	x(16)	a	x(16)	14 ^d	100	a
Denmark	22	13	5	3	5	2	5	9	3	x(14)	a	6	19	9 ^d	a	a	100	a
Estonia	23	15	7	5	8	2	11	15	x(16)	x(16)	3	a	a	a	a	12 ^d	100	a
Finland ¹	23	15	10	4	8	1	9	16	5	x(17)	a	a	a	4	a	4	100	5
France	38	21 ^d	7 ^d	3	6	a	13	8	4	x(2, 3)	x(3)	a	a	a	a	a	100	a
Germany ²	27	21	4	6	5	a	11	13	6	0	2	0	4	a	1	a	100	a
Greece	27	14	11	6	9	2	9	10	3	3	a	a	a	a	a	6	100	53
Hungary	26	16	3	a	2	a	20	16	4	a	4	a	a	a	a	10	100	a
Iceland	20	16	8	13 ^d	6 ^d	x(5, 15)	9	19 ^d	x(4)	3	a	x(8)	a	a	5 ^d	x(15)	100	a
Ireland ³	20	17	4 ^d	8	14	a	4	12	10	x(17)	x(3)	a	11	a	a	a	100	a
Israel	35 ^d	24 ^d	x(2)	x(1)	8	x(1)	x(12)	x(12)	8	a	a	19 ^d	a	a	a	6	100	a
Italy ⁴	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	9	a	x(14)	x(14)	7	a	x(14)	a	a	84 ^d	a	x(17)	100	a
Japan	23	16	7	6	3	a	10	12	3	a	a	a	13	7	a	a	100	a
Korea	21	14	9 ^d	9 ^d	6	a	7	9	x(4,13)	x(12,13)	x(12)	x(3)	25 ^d	a	a	a	100	a
Latvia	21	17	6	6	8	2	8	11	1	2	1	3	9	a	a	3	100	m
Lithuania	31	19	4	4	8	a	13	17 ^d	4	a	x(8)	a	a	a	a	a	100	8
Luxembourg ³	29	19	7	2	15	a	10	11	7	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	a
Mexico	35	27	13	10	m	a	5	5	5	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	a
Netherlands ⁴	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	100 ^d	a	a	100	a
New Zealand	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Norway	26	17	7	7	7	a	11	14	8	a	a	2	a	a	a	1	100	a
Poland ^{4,5}	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	100 ^d	a	a	100	10
Portugal ⁴	18	18	x(14)	x(14)	3	a	3	x(14)	a	x(17)	x(14)	a	x(16)	53 ^d	a	4 ^d	100	16
Slovak Republic	32	17	6	3	6	x(16)	8	10	4	2	a	2	x(16)	a	x(16)	8 ^d	100	a
Slovenia	22	17	8	7 ^d	8	a	14	15	x(4)	x(17)	5	2	1	a	a	a	100	21
Spain	23	18	7	7	12	x(16)	10	x(16)	6	a	a	a	0	a	x(16)	16 ^d	100	a
Sweden ¹	28	19	8	12	7	1	7	7	a	a	3	5	a	a	3	a	100	m
Switzerland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	m	m
Turkey	30	17	5	13	5	a	14	7	2	a	a	1	7	a	a	a	100	a
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Economies																		
Flemish Comm. (Belgium) ⁴	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	7	x(17)	x(3)	a	x(17)	93 ^d	a	x(14)	100	a
French Comm. (Belgium) ⁴	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	2	a	7	x(14)	7	a	x(14)	a	a	83 ^d	a	a	100	a
England (UK) ⁴	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	a	100 ^d	a	a	100	a
Scotland (UK)	m	m	m	m	m	a	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	m	a
OECD average ⁴	25	17	7	6	7	0	9	10	5	1	1	2	4	1	0	4	100	3
EU22 average ⁴	26	17	7	5	7	1	10	11	5	1	2	1	3	1	0	4	100	6
Partners																		
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil	m	m	m	m	a	a	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	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	36	16	8	a	6	a	12	8	1	a	4	a	a	a	a	9	100	m
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. Please refer to Table D1.6, available on line, for instruction time per subject for each age (see *StatLink* at the end of the indicator). See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at: <http://stats.oecd.org>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

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

2. Year of reference 2020.

3. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught.

4. England (United Kingdom), Flemish Comm. (Belgium), French Comm. (Belgium), Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal are not included in the averages.

5. Excludes the last year of primary education (first four years of primary school) for which the instruction time is allocated to specific compulsory subjects.

Source: OECD (2021). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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

Table D1.4. Instruction time per subject in general lower secondary education (2021)

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

	Reading, writing and literature	Mathematics	Natural sciences	Social studies	Second language	Other languages	Physical education and health	Arts	Religion/ethics/moral education	Information and communication technologies (ICT)	Technology	Practical and vocational skills	Other subjects	Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	Compulsory options chosen by the students	Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Total compulsory curriculum	Non-compulsory curriculum
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
OECD																		
Countries																		
Australia ¹	12	12	11	9 ^d	x(16)	x(16)	8	4	x(4)	x(11)	4 ^d	x(11)	x(16)	x(16)	18	22 ^d	100	m
Austria	13	13	12	11	12	x(15)	12	13	7	x(17)	a	7	x(15)	a	1 ^d	a	100	m
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a
Chile	16	16	11	11	8	x(16)	5	8	5	x(16)	3	x(16)	3	a	a	15 ^d	100	a
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a
Costa Rica	12	12	12	14	7	7	5	10	2	5	a	7	5	a	a	2	100	a
Czech Republic	12	12	17	9	10	5	8	8	x(13)	1	2 ^d	x(11)	x(16)	a	x(16)	15 ^d	100	a
Denmark	18	13	13	8	8	8	5	x(15)	3	x(15)	x(15)	2	19	a	5 ^d	a	100	a
Estonia	13	14	21	11	10	10	6	6	x(16)	x(16)	5	a	a	a	a	4 ^d	100	a
Finland ²	12	13	16	8	8	5	12	7	4	x(17)	a	6	a	6	a	4	100	11
France ³	16	14	12	12 ^d	12	7	12	8	x(4)	x(17)	4	1	1	a	a	a	100	29
Germany ⁴	13	13	11	11	12	6	8	9	5	1	2	2	2	a	4	a	100	a
Greece	26	13	14	8	6	6	6	6	6	4	3	1	a	a	a	a	100	31
Hungary	13	11	11	9	10	a	17	8	3	3	3	a	3	a	a	8	100	a
Iceland	14	14	8	8 ^d	19 ^d	x(5, 15)	8	8 ^d	x(4)	2	a	x(8)	a	a	20 ^d	x(15)	100	a
Ireland ^{5, 6}	9	9	x(16)	5	9	x(16)	5	x(16)	x(16)	x(16)	x(16)	x(16)	2	a	a	62 ^d	100	a
Israel	14	14	13 ^d	19	11	10	6	5	9	x(3)	x(3)	a	a	a	a	a	100	a
Italy	33 ^d	20 ^d	x(2)	x(1)	10	7	7	13	3	a	7	a	a	a	a	x(17)	100	a
Japan	12	12	12	11	13	a	10	7	3	a	3	a	12	5	a	a	100	a
Korea	13	11	20 ^d	15 ^d	10	a	8	8	x(4)	x(3)	x(12)	x(3)	9	a	x(16)	5 ^d	100	a
Latvia	15	15	14	14	8	6	7	6	a	1	1	3	6	a	a	5	100	m
Lithuania	18	13	13	14	10	5	8	7	3	3	5	a	1	a	a	a	100	14
Luxembourg ⁵	19	13	8	11	12	13	8	9	7	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	100	a
Mexico	14	14	17	12	9	a	6	6	8	a	11	a	3	a	a	a	100	a
Netherlands ⁶	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	100 ^d	a	a	100	a
New Zealand	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Norway	15	12	9	9	8	x(15)	9	9	6	x(15)	x(15)	7	x(15)	a	15 ^d	x(15)	100	a
Poland	18	14	11	13	11	4	14	5	a	4	2	0	4	a	a	a	100	8
Portugal	13	13	19	16	x(14)	x(14)	10	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	a	a	28 ^d	a	a	100	3
Slovak Republic	16	14	12	11	10	x(16)	7	6	3	3	x(16)	3	x(16)	a	x(16)	13 ^d	100	a
Slovenia	13	13	17	15 ^d	11	x(15)	9	8	x(4)	x(17)	4	a	2	a	7 ^d	a	100	23
Spain	16	13	12	10	12	x(16)	7	x(16)	4	a	x(16)	a	3	a	x(16)	24 ^d	100	a
Sweden ²	11	15	10	14	8	10	11	7	a	a	3	9	a	a	2	a	100	m
Switzerland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	m	a	m	m
Turkey	16	14	11	8	10	x(15)	5	6	8	3	3	1	a	a	16 ^d	a	100	a
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Economies																		
Flemish Comm. (Belgium) ⁶	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	6	a	x(14)	a	a	75 ^d	x(16)	19 ^d	100	a
French Comm. (Belgium)	18	15	10	13	13	a	10	3	7	x(16)	3	x(16)	a	a	x(16)	7 ^d	100	a
England (UK) ⁶	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	a	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	x(14)	100 ^d	a	a	100	a
Scotland (UK)	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	m	a
OECD average⁶	14	13	12	11	10	5	8	7	4	2	3	2	3	1	3	4	100	4
EU22 average⁶	15	13	13	11	9	6	9	7	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	4	100	7
Partners																		
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	a	m	m	a	a	m	a	a	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	22	16	17	9	10	a	7	5	a	2	5	1	a	a	m	7	100	m
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. Please refer to Table D1.6, available on line, for instruction time per subject for each age (see *StatLink* at the end of the indicator). See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Data available at <http://stats.oecd.org>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

1. 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.

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

3. Non-compulsory instruction time are theoretical maximum limits.

4. Year of reference 2020.

5. The second language of instruction includes other national languages taught.

6. England (United Kingdom), Flemish Comm. (Belgium), Ireland and the Netherlands are not included in the averages.

Source: OECD (2021). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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

StatLink  <https://stat.link/qmaz1o>



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