

Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models

Flan-PaLM
540B

Paper: H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

Motivation

Pretraining has driven NLP progress **GPT-3**

instruction finetuning brings further gains

InstructGPT **FLAN** **T0**

This work: scaling up instruction finetuning

Key findings:

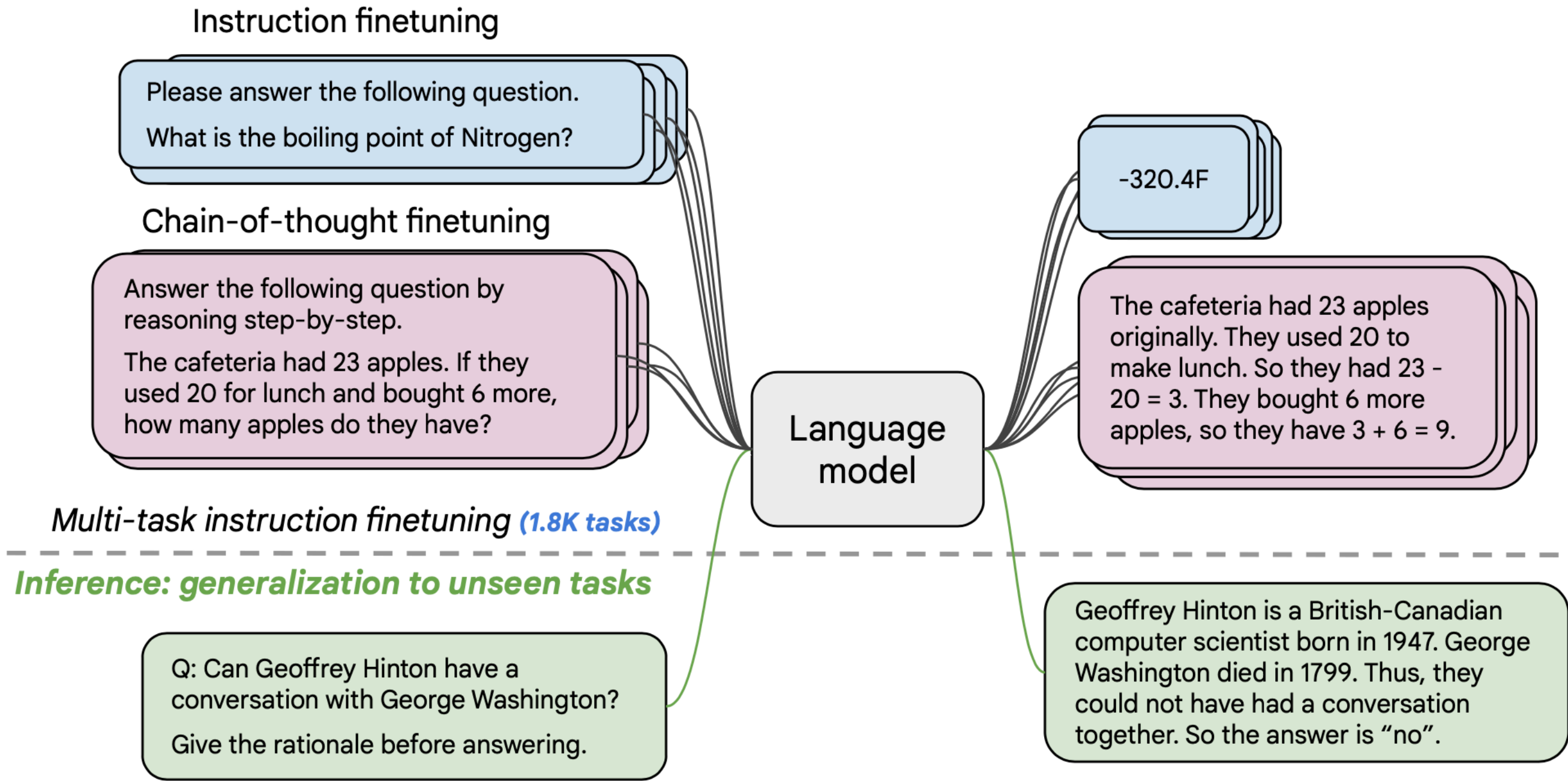
scaling up the model

scaling up the number of tasks

both yield performance gains

chain-of-thought (CoT) in finetuning mix: useful

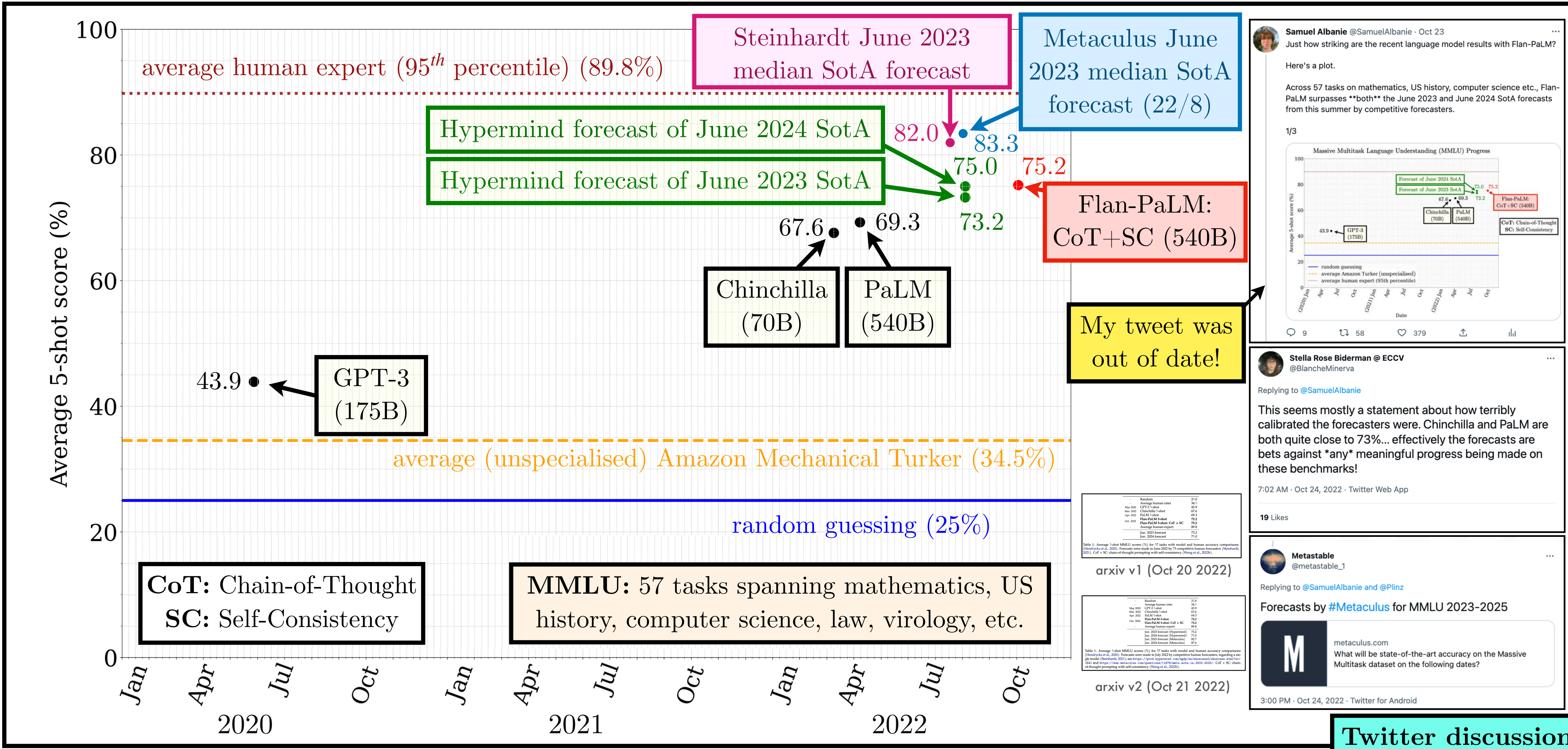
Highlight: **Flan-PaLM 540B** finetuned on 1.8K tasks beats SotA (**PaLM 540B**) +9.4% across 4 benchmarks



References/image credits:
(GPT-3) T. Brown et al., "Language models are few-shot learners", NeurIPS (2020)
(InstructGPT) L. Ouyang et al., "Training language models to follow instructions with human feedback", arxiv (2022)
(FLAN) J. Wei et al., "Finetuned Language Models are Zero-Shot Learners", ICLR (2022)

(T0) V. Sanh et al., "Multitask Prompted Training Enables Zero-Shot Task Generalization", ICLR (2022)
H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)
(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)

Progress on Massive Multitask Language Understanding (MMLU)



References

(MMLU) D. Hendrycks et al., "Measuring Massive Multitask Language Understanding", ICLR (2020)

(Code to reproduce plot) <https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1plhkdUhQB-ljHAQTXlQaGollgcBGGrfe?usp=sharing>

(GPT-3) T. Brown et al., "Language models are few-shot learners", NeurIPS (2020)

(Chinchilla) J. Hoffmann et al., "Training Compute-Optimal Large Language Models", arxiv (2022)

(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)

(Forecasts) <https://prod.hypermind.com/ngdp/en/showcase2/showcase.html?sc=JSAI> (challenges updated 15th August 2022)

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(SC) X. Wang et al., "Self-consistency improves chain of thought reasoning in language models", arxiv (2022)

(Twitter thread for discussion of forecasts) <https://twitter.com/SamuelAlbanie/status/1584257440891416576>

Background on the June 2023 MMLU Hypermind Forecast

Commissioned by J. Steinhardt and his team as part of an effort to **forecast AI progress**

Topics: **geopolitics** & **future capabilities** (5K USD prize/benchmark for 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)

Funded by **Open Philanthropy** and run on the **Hypermind prediction market platform**

Structure of competition:

	Resolution & Reward					Forecasting Period						
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
2021												
2022												
2023												

Recommended reading

AI Forecasting: One Year In

JUL 3, 2022 • 7 MIN READ

How were results **one year in**? **Not very good** (2/4 forecasts outside **90% credible intervals**)

Question: "Was progress surprising, or were the forecasters bad?"

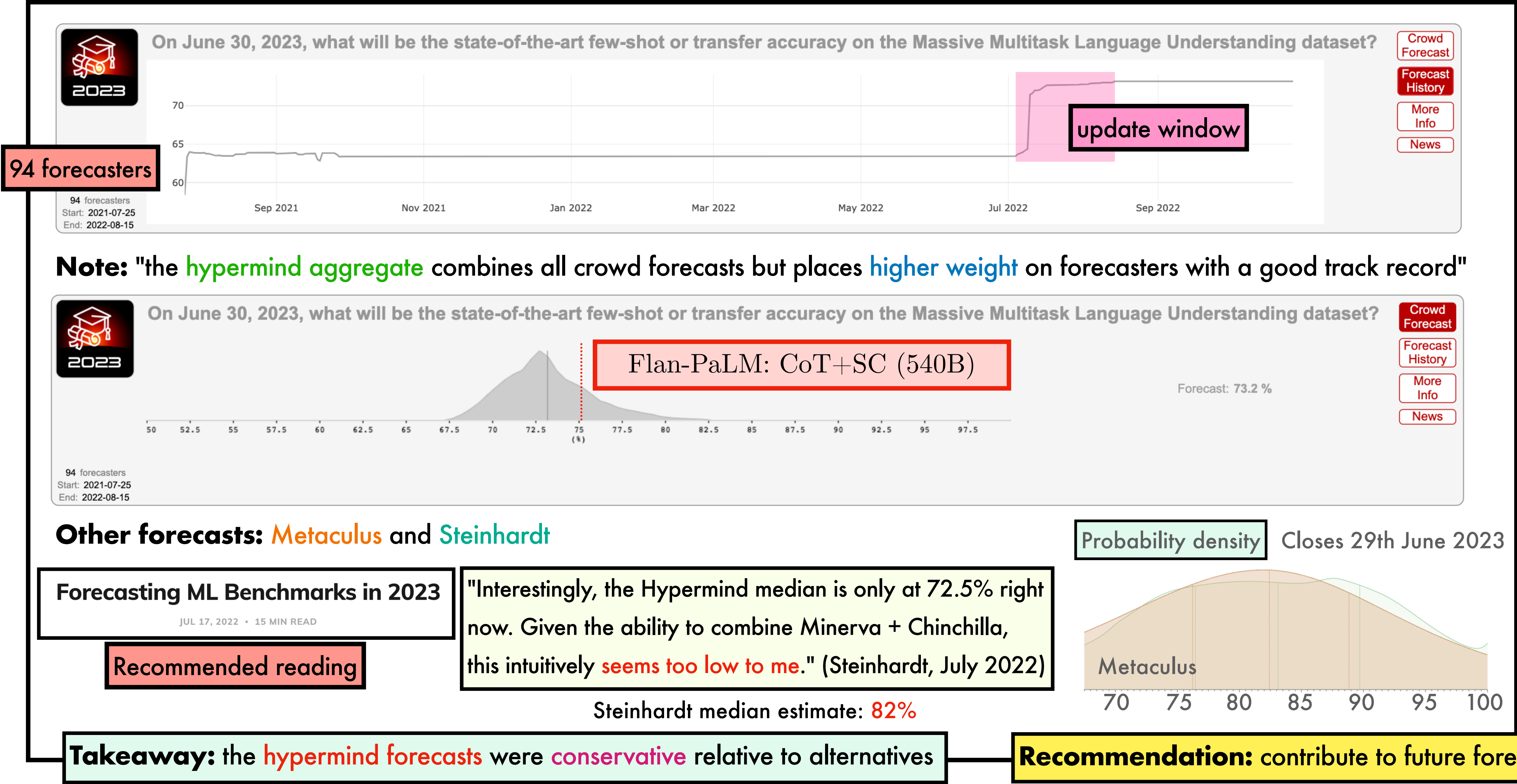
Possible **limitations**: \$5K prize per benchmark (4 questions) - not enough **incentive**

Interface does not allow **arbitrary** prob. distributions

Forecasters just **not skilled enough**

Subjective assessment from Steinhardt: progress until June 30th 2022 was still "**surprising**"

The MMLU June 2023 Forecast (updated August 2022)



Flan Finetuning: Data and Language Models

Data

Finetuning tasks

TO-SF

Commonsense reasoning
Question generation
Closed-book QA
Adversarial QA
Extractive QA
Title/context generation
Topic classification
Struct-to-text
...

**55 Datasets, 14 Categories,
193 Tasks**

Muffin

Natural language inference	Closed-book QA
Code instruction gen.	Conversational QA
Program synthesis	Code repair
Dialog context generation	...

69 Datasets, 27 Categories, 80 Tasks

CoT (Reasoning)

Arithmetic reasoning	Explanation generation
Commonsense Reasoning	Sentence composition
Implicit reasoning	...

9 Datasets, 1 Category, 9 Tasks

Natural Instructions v2

Cause effect classification
Commonsense reasoning
Named entity recognition
Toxic language detection
Question answering
Question generation
Program execution
Text categorization

**372 Datasets, 108 Categories,
1554 Tasks**

- ❖ A **Dataset** is an original data source (e.g. SQuAD).
- ❖ A **Task Category** is unique task setup (e.g. the SQuAD dataset is configurable for multiple task categories such as extractive question answering, query generation, and context generation).
- ❖ A **Task** is a unique <dataset, task category> pair, with any number of templates which preserve the task category (e.g. query generation on the SQuAD dataset.)

Language models

T5 (2020)

PaLM (2022)

U-PaLM (2022)

Model sizes studied

80 million parameters

↓ *up to*

540 billion parameters

Note: finetuning uses at
most **1.6% of compute**
(relative to pretraining)

References/image credits:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(Muffin) based on J. Wei et al., "Finetuned Language Models are Zero-Shot Learners", ICLR (2022) and other datasets

(TO-SF) based on V. Sanh et al., "Multitask Prompted Training Enables Zero-Shot Task Generalization", ICLR (2022)

(Natural Instructions v2) Y. Wang et al., "Benchmarking generalization via in-context instructions on 1,600+ language tasks", arxiv (2022)

(T5) C. Raffel et al., "Exploring the limits of transfer learning with a unified text-to-text transformer", JMLR (2020)

(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)

(U-PaLM) Y. Tay et al., "Transcending Scaling Laws with 0.1% Extra Compute", arxiv (2022)

Evaluation data

Objective: assess Flan-PaLM on world knowledge and reasoning tasks

Do not evaluate on **GPT-3** test suite (training sets are included in Flan-PaLM finetuning mixture)

MMLU

exam questions across 57 tasks (mathematics, law, medicine etc.)

BBH

23 tasks from **BIG-Bench** (where PaLM is worse than average human rater)

TyDiQA

question answering across 8 typologically diverse languages

MGSM

multilingual benchmark of **mathematics problems** translated to 10 languages

Note: benchmarks also used by PaLM (did not find **data contamination**)

References:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(GPT-3) T. Brown et al., "Language models are few-shot learners", NeurIPS (2020)

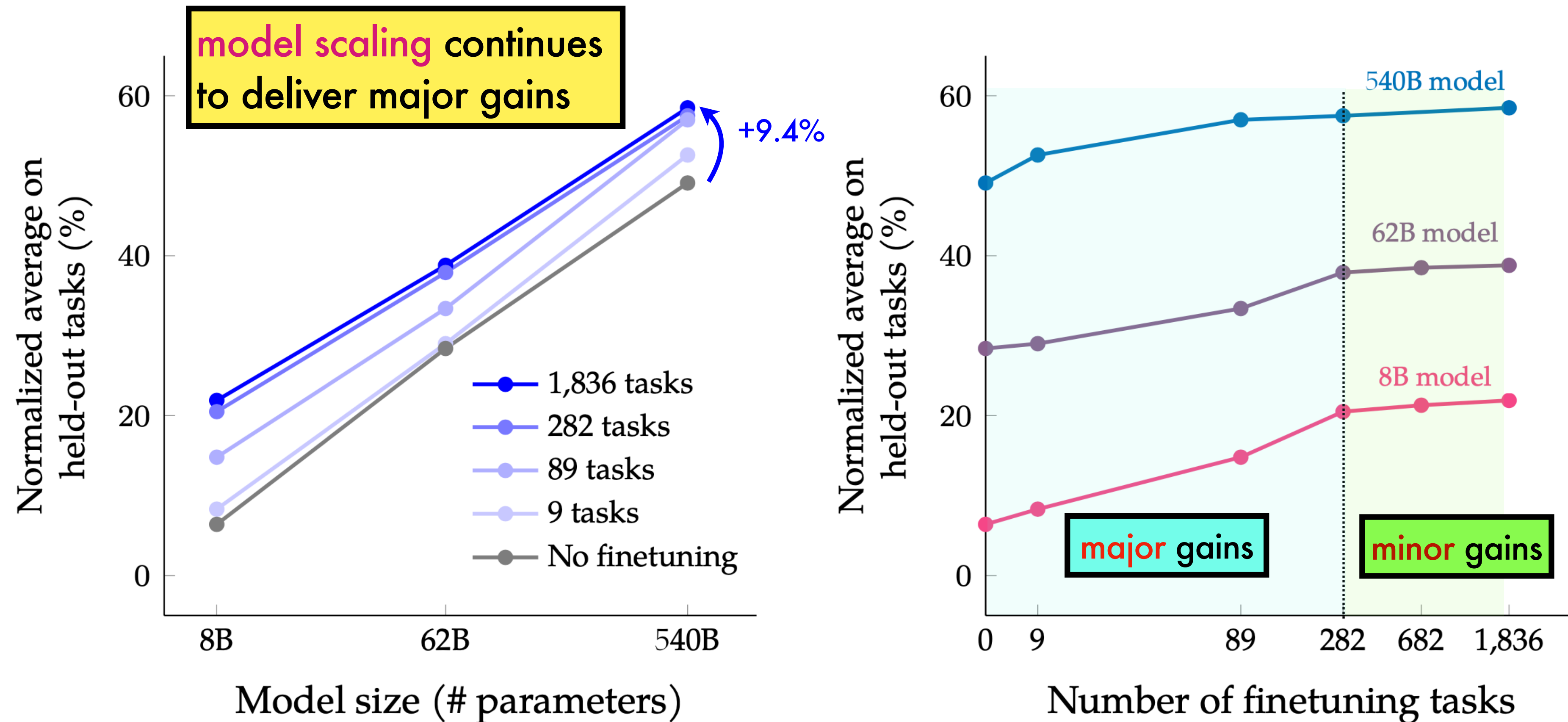
(MMLU) D. Hendrycks et al., "Measuring Massive Multitask Language Understanding", ICLR (2020)

(BBH) M. Suzgun et al., "Challenging BIG-Bench Tasks and Whether Chain-of-Thought Can Solve Them", arxiv (2022)

(TyDiQA) J. Clark et al., "TyDi QA: A benchmark for information-seeking question answering in typologically diverse languages", ACL (2020)

(MGSM) F. Shi et al., "Language Models are Multilingual Chain-of-Thought Reasoners", arxiv (2022)

Scaling up to 540B parameters and 1.8K tasks



Why do gains flatten?

Possible **explanations**:

1. Extra tasks not **diverse**
2. Gains come from eliciting **existing knowledge**

Note: **finetuning** contributes only **0.2%** of total tokens

Experiments on **PaLM** architectures **few-shot prompted accuracy** (exact match) on held-out tasks

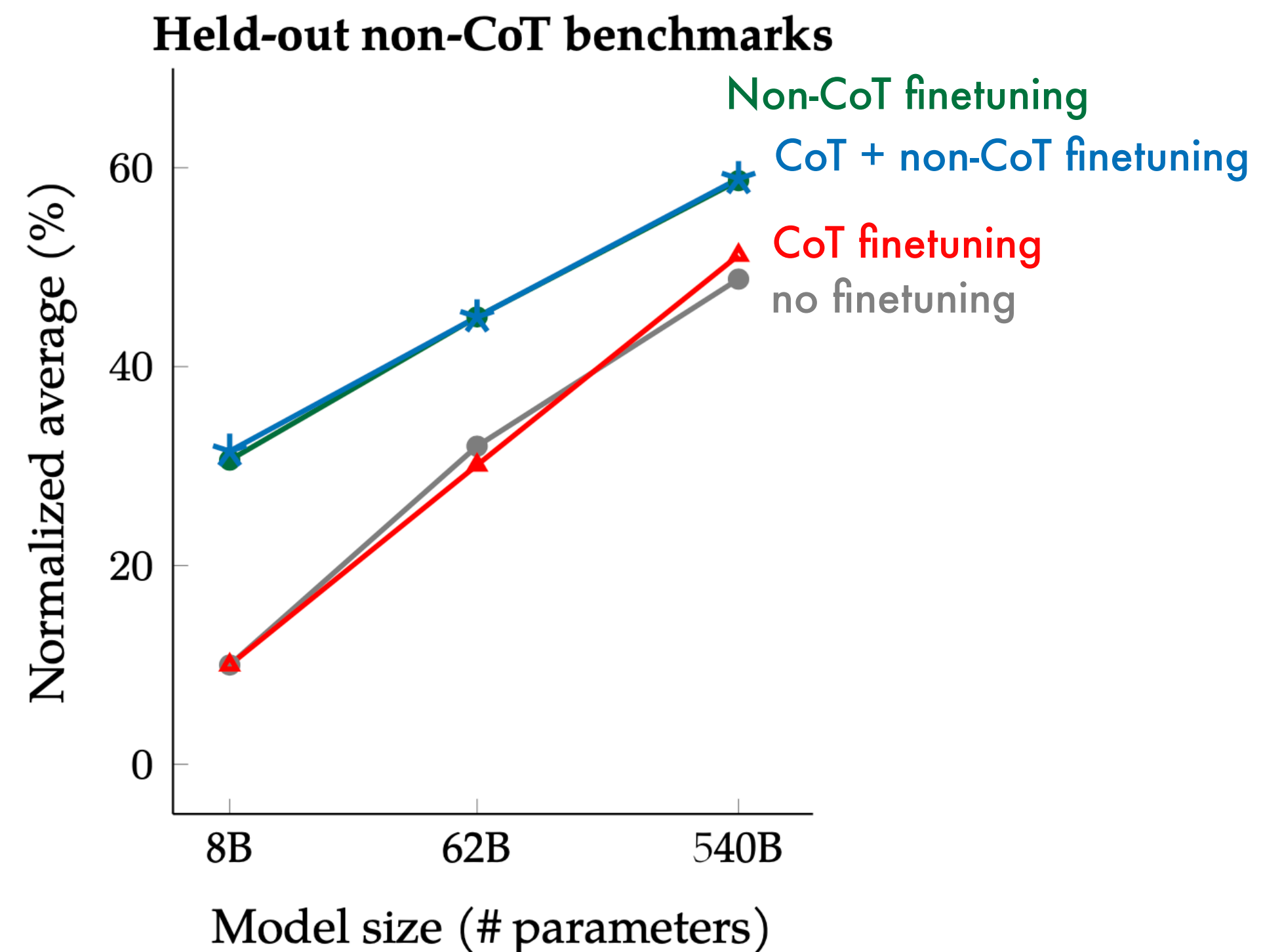
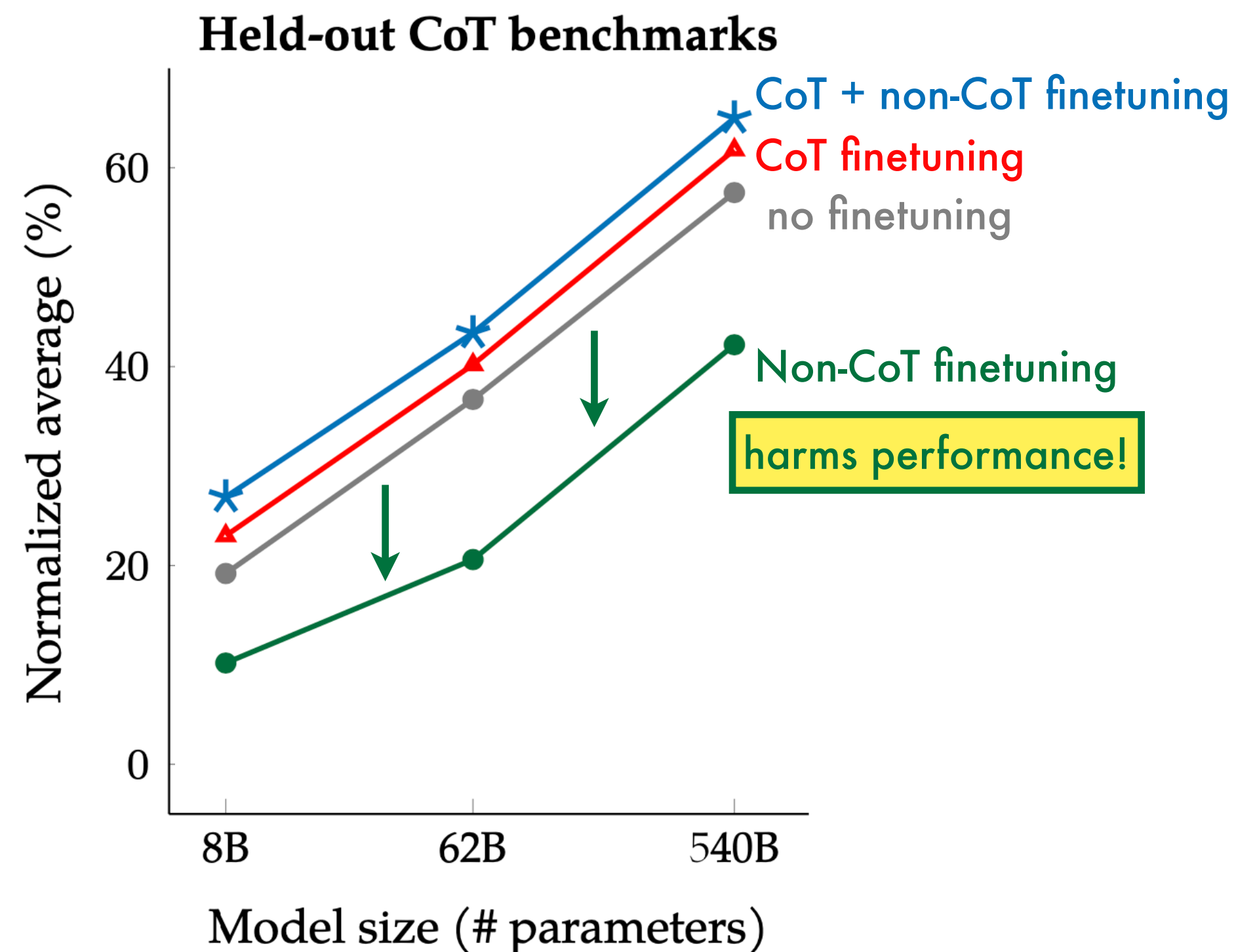
Metric: **normalised average** on MMLU, BBH, TyDiQA, MGSM (various direct/CoT combinations)

Flan-PaLM CoT finetuning (comparison to SotA)

	MMLU	BBH-nlp	BBH-alg	TyDiQA	MGSM
Prior best	69.3	73.5	<u>73.9</u>	<u>81.9</u>	55.0
	PaLM (direct)	code-davinci-002 +CoT	code-davinci-002 +CoT	ByT5	PaLM + translate + CoT
PaLM 540B					
- direct prompting	69.3	62.7	38.3	52.9	18.3
- CoT prompting	64.5	71.2	57.6	-	45.9
- CoT + self-consistency	69.5	78.2	62.2	-	57.9
Flan-PaLM 540B					
- direct prompting	72.2	70.0	48.2	67.8	21.2
- CoT prompting	70.2	72.4	61.3	-	57.0
- CoT + self-consistency	<u>75.2</u>	<u>78.4</u>	66.5	-	<u>72.0</u>

References/image credits:
H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)
(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)
(code-davinci-002) M. Chen et al. "Evaluating large language models trained on code", arxiv (2021)
(ByT5) L. Xue et al., "ByT5: Towards a token-free future with pre-trained byte-to-byte models", TACL (2022)
(PaLM+translate+CoT) F. Shi et al., "Language models are multilingual chain-of-thought reasoners", arxiv (2022)
(SC) X. Wang et al., "Self-consistency improves chain of thought reasoning in language models", arxiv (2022)

Including chain-of-thought data in finetuning



Note: there are only 9 CoT finetuning datasets, but 496 non-CoT finetuning datasets

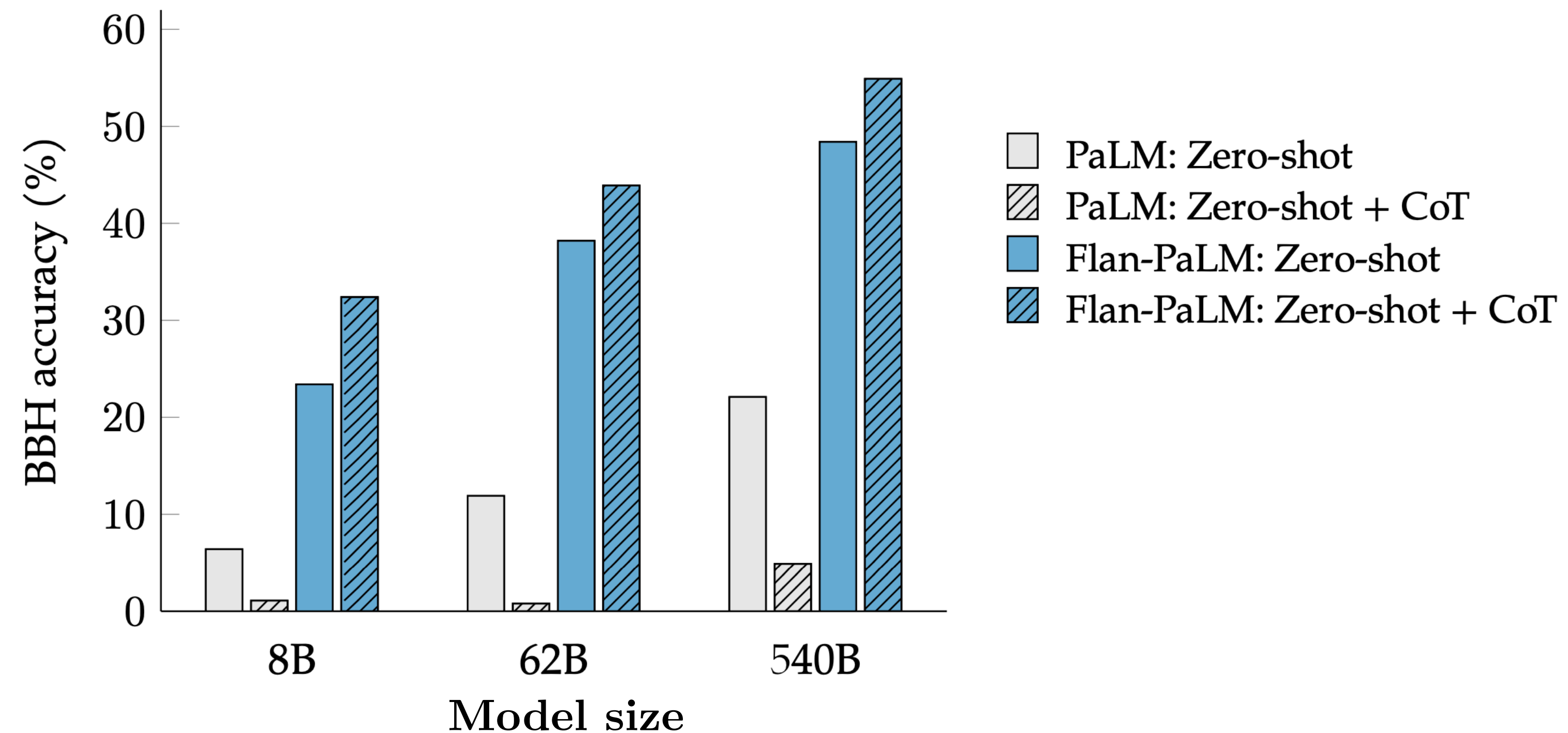
Takeaway: instruction finetuning improves unseen tasks in the same prompting paradigm

Both CoT and non-CoT required for good results in both paradigms

Zero-shot chain-of-thought reasoning

Zero-shot CoT reasoning useful since **few-shot CoT exemplars** require prompt engineering

The phrase **"let's think step by step"** is used for **zero-shot CoT prompting**



Takeaway: **Finetuning** on CoT data enables **zero-shot CoT reasoning**

References/image credits:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

("Let's think step by step") T. Kojima et al., "Large Language Models are Zero-Shot Reasoners", arxiv (2022)

Results: instruction finetuning for different models

Params	Model	Norm.	avg.	MMLU		BBH		TyDiQA	MGSM
				Direct	CoT	Direct	CoT	Direct	CoT
80M	T5-Small	-9.2	+6.1	26.7	5.6	27.0	7.2	0.0	0.4
	Flan-T5-Small	-3.1		28.7	12.1	29.1	19.2	1.1	0.2
250M	T5-Base	-5.1	+11.6	25.7	14.5	27.8	14.6	0.0	0.5
	Flan-T5-Base	6.5		35.9	33.7	31.3	27.9	4.1	0.4
780M	T5-Large	-5.0	+18.8	25.1	15.0	27.7	16.1	0.0	0.3
	Flan-T5-Large	13.8		45.1	40.5	37.5	31.5	12.3	0.7
3B	T5-XL	-4.1	+23.2	25.7	14.5	27.4	19.2	0.0	0.8
	Flan-T5-XL	19.1		52.4	45.5	41.0	35.2	16.6	1.9
11B	T5-XXL	-2.9	+26.6	25.9	18.7	29.5	19.3	0.0	1.0
	Flan-T5-XXL	23.7		55.1	48.6	45.3	41.4	19.0	4.9
8B	PaLM	6.4	+15.5	24.3	24.1	30.8	30.1	25.0	3.4
	Flan-PaLM	21.9		49.3	41.3	36.4	31.1	47.5	8.2
62B	PaLM	28.4	+10.4	55.1	49.0	37.4	43.0	40.5	18.2
	Flan-PaLM	38.8		59.6	56.9	47.5	44.9	58.7	28.5
540B	PaLM	49.1	+9.3	71.3	62.9	49.1	63.7	52.9	45.9
	Flan-PaLM	58.4		73.5	70.9	57.9	66.3	67.8	57.0
62B	cont-PaLM	38.1	+8.6	61.2	57.6	41.7	53.1	45.7	32.0
	Flan-cont-PaLM	46.7		66.1	62.0	51.0	53.3	62.7	40.3
540B	U-PaLM	50.2	+8.9	71.5	64.0	49.2	62.4	54.6	49.9
	Flan-U-PaLM	59.1		74.1	69.8	59.3	64.9	68.3	60.4

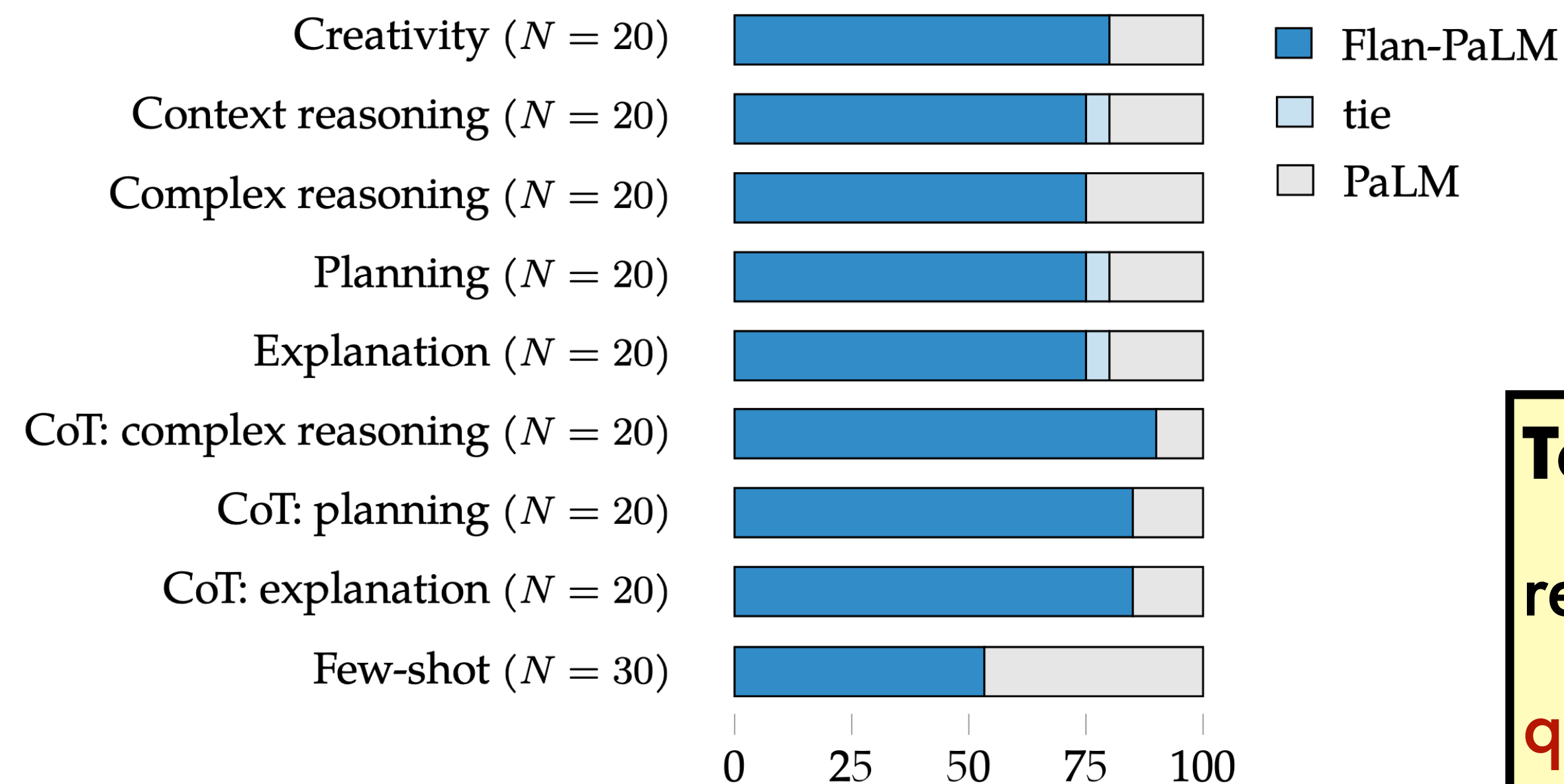
References/image credits:
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(T5) C. Raffel et al., "Exploring the limits of transfer learning with a unified text-to-text transformer", JMLR (2020)
(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)
(U-PaLM) Y. Tay et al., "Transcending Scaling Laws with 0.1% Extra Compute", arxiv (2022)

Evaluating open-ended generation

Standard **benchmarks** may not correlate with **human preferences** about **model outputs**

Human study is run on outputs on **190 open-ended questions** spanning creativity, reasoning etc.

Compare **PaLM 540B** and **Flan-PaLM 540B** (sample 5 responses with $\tau = 0.7$, rank and filter)



Takeaway: **instruction-finetuning** produces responses to **open-ended zero-shot questions** that are **preferred by humans**

References/image credits:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(observation that human preferences can differ from benchmark rankings) L. Ouyang et al., "Training language models to follow instructions with human feedback", arxiv (2022)

Qualitative Examples

Zero-shot humor and poetry

Input text

Write me a funny poem about a cat driving car.

Flan-PaLM output

I've seen a cat driving a car.
I saw it on my way to the bar.
I stopped to look and say hi.
I asked if he could give me a ride.
He looked at me and said no.
Then he drove off very slow.
I wonder where he was going.
Maybe he was just going bowling.

Flan-PaLM responses to open-ended questions

Zero-shot reasoning

Input Text

There are two words making up a common phrase. The first word is the answer to Q1: Marathon is to race as hibernation is to what? And the second word is the answer to Q2: What is running but slower? A: The common phrase is:

Flan-PaLM output

sleep walk

Zero-shot commonsense reasoning

Input text

I am riding a bicycle. The pedals are moving fast. I look into the mirror and I am not moving. Why is this?

Flan-PaLM output

I am on a stationary bike.

Related Work

Instruction finetuning

InstructGPT (2022) Flan (2022) T0 (2022)

Differences to prior work:

- Build on mixtures of prior datasets (and add new CoT data etc.)
- Explore larger model scaling (up to 540B params vs 137B)
- Finetune on a mixture of zero-shot and few-shot instruction formats

Reasoning via finetuning

Prior work has either:

- finetuned on a single reasoning dataset Ling et al. (2017)
- explored models of smaller scale e-SNLI (2018)

Flan-PaLM: finetuning mixture (inc. CoT) helps unseen reasoning tasks

Also related, finetuning on self-generated CoT datasets LMSI (2022)

Flan-PaLM: finetune jointly on both CoT and non-CoT data

Compute-efficient LM improvements

Scaling LMs brings gains but is costly Scaling laws (2020)

Improvements via compute-efficient alternatives

Chinchilla (2022) Task Transferability (2022) UL2R (2022)

Flan-U-PaLM shows that UL2R is complementary

Other improvements:

- architectures Primer (2021)
- training objectives UL2 (2022)
- better data GLAM (2022)

References:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)
(InstructGPT) L. Ouyang et al., "Training language models to follow instructions with human feedback", arxiv (2022)
(FLAN) J. Wei et al., "Finetuned Language Models are Zero-Shot Learners", ICLR (2022)
(T0) V. Sanh et al., "Multitask Prompted Training Enables Zero-Shot Task Generalization", ICLR (2022)
L. Ling et al., "Program induction by rationale generation: Learning to solve and explain algebraic word problems", ACL (2017)
(e-SNLI) O-M. Camburu et al., "e-snli: Natural language inference with natural language explanations", NeurIPS (2018)
(LMSI) J. Huang et al., "Large Language Models Can Self-Improve", arxiv (2022)

J. Kaplan et al., "Scaling laws for neural language models." arXiv preprint arXiv:2001.08361 (2020)
(Chinchilla) J. Hoffmann et al., "Training Compute-Optimal Large Language Models", arxiv (2022)
V. Padmakumar et al., "Exploring the Role of Task Transferability in Large-Scale Multi-Task Learning", arxiv (2022)
(UL2R) Y. Tay et al., "Transcending Scaling Laws with 0.1% Extra Compute", arxiv (2022)
(Primer) D. So et al., "Searching for Efficient Transformers for Language Modeling", NeurIPS (2021)
(UL2) Y. Tay et al., "Unifying Language Learning Paradigms", arxiv (2022)
(GLAM) N. Du et al., "Glam: Efficient scaling of language models with mixture-of-experts", ICML (2022)

Key findings

Instruction finetuning benefits from model scale and increasing the number of tasks

- Scaling number of tasks brings diminishing gains, but finetuning (vs not) is effective at all scales

Instruction finetuning on joint CoT and non-CoT data brings substantial benefits for reasoning tasks

Instruction finetuning generalises across scales, model families (e.g. T5, PaLM) & objectives (UL2R)

Instruction finetuning improves usability (as assessed by human annotators)

Instruction finetuning is efficient (e.g. 0.2% of total compute for PaLM 540B for +9.4% gain)

⇒ It is likely that instruction finetuning will be broadly useful for pretrained language models

References:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(T5) C. Raffel et al., "Exploring the limits of transfer learning with a unified text-to-text transformer", JMLR (2020)

(PaLM) A. Chowdhery et al., "Palm: Scaling language modeling with pathways", arxiv (2022)

(UL2R) Y. Tay et al., "Transcending Scaling Laws with 0.1% Extra Compute", arxiv (2022)

Flan finetuning: nuts and bolts

Each model uses the **same hyperparameters** except **learning rate** **batch size** **dropout** **finetuning steps**

Learning rate schedule is **constant**

Finetuning is performed with **Adafactor**

Packing (like T5) combines examples into a **single sequence**

<EOS> token used to separate **inputs** from **targets**

Masking used to prevent tokens attending **across boundaries** in the pack

For each model, **one checkpoint** is used for **all evaluations**

The implementation uses the **JAX-based T5X** framework

References:

H. Chung et al., "Scaling Instruction-Finetuned Language Models", arxiv (Oct. 2022)

(Adafactor) N. Shazeer et al., "Adafactor: Adaptive learning rates with sublinear memory cost." ICML (2018)

(T5) C. Raffel et al., "Exploring the limits of transfer learning with a unified text-to-text transformer", JMLR (2020)

(T5X) A. Roberts, "Scaling Up Models and Data with t5x and seqio", arxiv (2022)

Flan finetuning architecture configurations

Params	Model	Architecture	pre-training Objective	Pretrain FLOPs	Finetune FLOPs	% Finetune Compute
80M	Flan-T5-Small	encoder-decoder	span corruption	1.8E+20	2.9E+18	1.6%
250M	Flan-T5-Base	encoder-decoder	span corruption	6.6E+20	9.1E+18	1.4%
780M	Flan-T5-Large	encoder-decoder	span corruption	2.3E+21	2.4E+19	1.1%
3B	Flan-T5-XL	encoder-decoder	span corruption	9.0E+21	5.6E+19	0.6%
11B	Flan-T5-XXL	encoder-decoder	span corruption	3.3E+22	7.6E+19	0.2%
8B	Flan-PaLM	decoder-only	causal LM	3.7E+22	1.6E+20	0.4%
62B	Flan-PaLM	decoder-only	causal LM	2.9E+23	1.2E+21	0.4%
540B	Flan-PaLM	decoder-only	causal LM	2.5E+24	5.6E+21	0.2%
62B	Flan-cont-PaLM	decoder-only	causal LM	4.8E+23	1.8E+21	0.4%
540B	Flan-U-PaLM	decoder-only	prefix LM + span corruption	2.5E+23	5.6E+21	0.2%

References:

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 (T5) C. Raffel et al., "Exploring the limits of transfer learning with a unified text-to-text transformer", JMLR (2020)
 (Flan) J. Wei et al., "Finetuned Language Models are Zero-Shot Learners", ICLR (2022)

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 (U-PaLM) Y. Tay et al., "Transcending Scaling Laws with 0.1% Extra Compute", arxiv (2022)

Finetuning data formats

Formats

Without chain-of-thought

Instruction
without
exemplars

Answer the following
yes/no question.

Can you write a whole
Haiku in a single tweet?

→ yes

With chain-of-thought

Answer the following yes/no question
by reasoning step-by-step.

Can you write a whole Haiku in a
single tweet?

→

A haiku is a japanese
poem three-line
poem. That is short
enough to fit in 280
characters. The
answer is yes.

Instruction
with exemplars

Q: Answer the following
yes/no question.
Could a dandelion suffer
from hepatitis?

A: no

Q: Answer the following
yes/no question.
Can you write a whole Haiku
in a single tweet?

A:

→ yes

Q: Answer the following yes/no question by
reasoning step-by-step.
Could a dandelion suffer from hepatitis?
A: Hepatitis only affects organisms with livers.
Dandelions don't have a liver. The answer is no.

Q: Answer the following yes/no question by
reasoning step-by-step.
Can you write a whole Haiku in a single tweet
A:

→

A haiku is a japanese
poem three-line
poem. That is short
enough to fit in 280
characters. The
answer is yes.

Evaluation methods and metrics

MMLU

BBH

evaluate under both **direct** and **Chain-of-Thought (CoT)** prompting

TyDiQA

only measure **direct prompting** exact-match score (not **passage highlighting**)

MGSM

only measure **CoT prompting** (**direct prompting** scores poorly)

Few-shot configurations follow **prior work**:

MMLU

5-shot

BBH

3-shot

TyDiQA

1-shot

MGSM

8-shot

A **"normalised average"** is reported for each model (in the style of **BIG-Bench**)

The **normalised average** is the macro-average over **six normalised scores**:

MMLU-Direct

MMLU-CoT

BBH-Direct

BBH-CoT

TyDiQA-Direct

MGSM-CoT

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(MGSM) F. Shi et al., "Language Models are Multilingual Chain-of-Thought Reasoners", arxiv (2022)

(Big-Bench) A. Srivastava et al., "Beyond the Imitation Game: Quantifying and extrapolating the capabilities of language models", arxiv (2022)