





**U.S. Individual Income Tax: Personal Exemptions and Lowest and Highest Tax Bracket --- contd.**  
**Tax Rates and Tax Base for Regular Tax, Tax Years 1913-2012**  
**(Footnotes --- contd.)**

- [3] The definition of the income base (and, thus, the tax "bracket" boundaries) to which the tax rates were applied differs over the years, depending on how the following were determined and figured: statutory adjustments to or exclusions from income; personal exemptions; itemized deduction expenditures, which were sometimes described as income "credits"; standard deductions; the various thresholds and ceilings; and statutory "taxable income" (and its predecessor "net income"). Therefore, the lowest and highest taxable income amounts, as shown in Table 23, are not comparable for all years, and the amounts described as for statutory taxable income for tax years preceding 1954 are actually for statutory net income. (Statutory net income was income after subtracting deductions but, for most years, was before subtracting personal exemptions. Statutory taxable income was after subtracting both deductions and personal exemptions. Taxable income is the tax base for recent years. Net income required certain adjustments to arrive at the tax base, depending on whether the income was subject to normal tax, surtax, or both). See also footnote 2, above.
- [4] For 1921-1923, the personal exemption amount for married couples (column 2) increased to \$2,000 if statutory "net income" exceeded \$5,000.
- [5] For 1923, the tax rates shown (columns 4 and 6) are after a 25-percent statutory credit or refund.
- [6] For 1924, the lowest tax rate (column 4) is after reduction by an "earned income credit," equal to 25 percent of the "normal tax" on the first \$5,000 of total statutory "net income" and the normal tax on the first \$10,000 of "earned net income," but limited to 25 percent of the normal tax on total net income.
- [7] For 1925-1927, the lowest tax rate (column 4) is after reduction by an "earned income credit" equal to 25 percent of the total tax on the first \$5,000 of total statutory "net income" and the total tax on the first \$20,000 of "earned net income," but limited to 25 percent of the total tax on earned net income (not to exceed 25 percent of the sum of "normal tax" on total net income plus the "surtax" on earned net income.)
- [8] For 1928-1931, the lowest tax rate (column 4) is after reduction by an "earned income credit" equal to 25 percent of the total tax on the first \$5,000 of total statutory "net income" and the total tax on the first \$30,000 of "earned net income," but subject to the same limitations described in footnote 7, above. For 1929 only there was a special reduction in normal tax rates as provided for in a joint resolution of Congress.
- [9] For 1934-1943, the tax rate (column 4) excludes the effect of an "earned income credit," allowed as a deduction equal to 10 percent of the first \$14,000 of "earned net income" (before credit) and the first \$3,000 of total statutory "net income" (before credit), but limited to 10 percent of earned net income (not to exceed 10 percent of total net income).
- [10] For 1940, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) include "defense tax," computed as 10 percent of the total "regular" tax, but limited to 10 percent of statutory "net income" in excess of the total regular tax.
- [11] For 1944-1945, the personal exemption amounts (columns 1-3) were for "surtax" purposes only. The exemption for basic "normal tax" purposes was \$500 per tax return, augmented by the "earned income" of the spouse, up to \$500, on joint returns.
- [12] For 1944-1945, the highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 90 percent of statutory "net income."
- [13] For 1946-1947, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) are the effective rates after a statutory 5-percent reduction of combined "tentative normal tax and surtax." The highest rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 85.5 percent of statutory "net income."
- [14] For 1948-1986, in addition to the personal exemptions (columns 1-2), there were additional personal exemptions for blind taxpayer(s) and for taxpayers(s) age 65 or over.
- [15] For 1948-1949, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) are the effective rates after statutory reductions ranging from 17.0 percent of the first \$400 of combined "tentative normal tax and surtax" to 9.75 percent of combined tentative normal tax and surtax over \$100,000. The highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 77.0 percent of statutory "net income."
- [16] For 1950, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) are the effective rates after statutory reductions ranging from 13.0 percent of the first \$400 of combined "tentative normal tax and surtax" to 7.3 percent of combined tentative normal tax and surtax over \$100,000. The highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 87.0 percent of statutory "net income."
- [17] For 1951, the highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 87.2 percent of statutory "net income."
- [18] For 1952-1953, the highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 88.0 percent of statutory "net income."
- [19] For 1954-1963, the highest tax rate (column 6) was subject to a maximum effective rate limitation equal to 87.0 percent of statutory "taxable income."
- [20] For 1968, the highest tax rate (column 6) includes a Vietnam War surcharge equal to 7.5 percent of tax (as defined for this purpose). However, this surcharge did not apply to "regular" tax generated at the lowest rate.
- [21] For 1969, the highest tax rate (column 6) includes a Vietnam War surcharge equal to 10 percent of tax (as defined for this purpose). However, this surcharge did not apply to "regular" tax generated at the lowest rate.
- [22] For 1970, the highest tax rate (column 6) includes a Vietnam War surcharge equal to 2.5 percent of tax (as defined for this purpose). However, this surcharge did not apply to "regular" tax generated at the lowest rate.
- [23] For 1971, "earned net income" was subject to a "maximum tax" of 60 percent (not shown in column 6).
- [24] For 1972-1981, "earned net income" (broadened to become "personal service net income" after 1976) was subject to a "maximum tax" of 50 percent (not shown in column 6).
- [25] For 1974, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) do not take into account a statutory rebate of 10 percent of total income tax after credits. In general, the minimum rebate was \$100 and the maximum, \$200, but could not exceed the tax liability.
- [26] For 1975, a \$30-per-capita tax credit was allowed in addition to the personal exemptions shown in columns 1-3.
- [27] For 1976-1978, a tax credit was allowed, in addition to the personal exemptions shown in columns 1-3, that was equal to the larger of \$35 per capita or 2 percent of the first \$9,000 of statutory "taxable income."
- [28] For 1977-1986, in order to help preserve the conceptual comparability of the amounts shown with those for earlier and later years, the lowest tax rates in column 4 and the lowest "taxable income" amounts in column 5 exclude the so-called "zero tax rate" and the "zero bracket amount," which were unique to the tax computation for these 10 years.
- [29] For 1981, tax rates (columns 4 and 6) are after a 1.25-percent statutory tax credit.
- [30] Starting with 1985, the personal exemption amounts (columns 1-3) reflect annual adjustments for inflation, using the U.S. Department of Labor Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers ("CPS-U").
- [31] Starting with 1985, tax "bracket" boundaries (columns 5 and 7) were indexed for inflation, using the U.S. Department of Labor Consumer Price Index (as described in footnote 30).
- [32] Starting with 1988, the amount eligible to be deducted for personal exemptions (columns 1-3) was phased out for certain high-income taxpayers. For 1988-1990, this was accomplished as part of the tax computation (see footnote 34, below).
- [33] For 1988-1990, excludes the effect on certain high-income taxpayers of the phaseout of the amount deductible for personal exemptions (columns 1-3).
- [34] For 1988-1990, the tax rates (columns 4 and 6) exclude the effects on certain high-income taxpayers of the phaseout both of the benefit of the 15-percent tax rate (compared to the 28-percent rate) and the amount deductible for personal exemptions. This phaseout was accomplished by imposing an additional, 5-percent tax on income above certain levels, based on filing status, thus creating a "temporary" 33-percent tax rate. At the point where the taxpayer had completely phased out the two benefits by use of the 33-percent rate, the tax rate on any remaining taxable income above the phaseout range returned to 28 percent (see also footnote 35). As Table 23 shows, beginning with 1991, this phaseout was replaced by including an additional, 31-percent, graduated rate for taxable incomes above certain levels. Two other, higher, graduated rates were subsequently added, starting with 1993, the higher of which is shown in Table 23.
- [35] For 1988-1990, the 15-percent tax rate (column 4), which applied to the first \$29,750 of statutory "taxable income" (column 5), gradually increased to the top "brackets" rate, 28 percent (column 6), when taxable income (included in column 7) reached between \$71,900 and \$149,250. This was the range at which the 15-percent rate was phased out for certain high-income taxpayers, all of whose incomes were then effectively taxed at the higher 28-percent rate through use of the "temporary" 33-percent rate (see footnote 34, above, for additional information). The boundaries of the phaseout range were adjusted for inflation for 1989-1990, although the top tax rate on the taxable income above that covered by the phaseout range remained 28 percent. Therefore, the top taxable income and top tax bracket rate shown in Table 23 for 1988-1990 do not take into account the higher, 33-percent, "temporary" phaseout rate.
- [36] For 2000, the tax rates (columns 4 and 6) do not reflect a special statutory refund, partially offset for 2001, of between \$300 and \$600, depending on the size of income tax for 2000 and filing status. See also footnote 37, below.
- [37] For 2001, the tax rate (columns 4 and 6) does not reflect a 5-percent tax credit of up to \$300, \$500, or \$1,000, depending on the filing status. This credit effectively reduced the lowest rate on the income shown in column 5 from 15 percent to 10 percent, in lieu of an explicit 10-percent rate. However, the credit was reduced by the amount of the special statutory refund made in 2001 (based on tax for 2000), described in footnote 36, above. The 10-percent rate was only for dependents.
- [38] For the change in the lowest tax "bracket" boundary (columns 5 and 7) for 2001, see footnotes 36 and 37, above.
- [39] For 2006-2007, the phaseout of the personal exemption was reduced by one-third (to a minimum of \$1,100 per exemption).
- [40] For 2008-2009, the phaseout of the personal exemption was reduced by two-thirds (to a minimum of \$2,333 per exemption).
- [41] For 2010, 2011 and 2012, the phaseout of the personal exemption was eliminated.
- SOURCE: IRS, Statistics of Income Division, Historical Table 23; IRS, Revenue Procedure 2008-55, downloaded November 3, 2008 from <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-08-66.pdf>; IRS, Revenue Procedure 2009-50, downloaded October 21, 2009 from <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-09-50.pdf>; IRS Revenue Procedure 2011-12, downloaded January 17, 2011 from <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-08-66.pdf> and IRS Revenue Procedure 2011-52, downloaded January 10, 2012 from <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-11-52.pdf>.