

## § 1.121-2

## 26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-02 Edition)

section 121(a) since he did not use the residence for the requisite period.

*Example (5).* Assume the same facts as in example (1) except that during the three summers from 1977 through 1979, A left his residence for a 2-month vacation each year. Although, in the 5 year period preceding the date of sale, the total time spent away from his residence on such vacations (6 months) plus the time spent away from such residence from January 1, 1980, to September 30, 1981 (21 months) exceeds 2 years, he may make an election under section 121(a) since the 2-month vacations are counted as periods of use in determining whether A used the residence for the requisite period.

[T.D. 7614, 44 FR 24839, Apr. 27, 1979]

### § 1.121-2 Limitations.

(a) *Dollar limitation*—(1) *Amount excludable.* Under section 121(a), an individual may exclude from gross income up to \$100,000 of gain from the sale of his or her principal residence (\$50,000 in the case of a separate return by a married individual).

(2) *Example.* The provisions of this paragraph are illustrated by the following example:

*Example.* Assume that A sells his principal residence for \$160,800, that the amount realized is \$160,400 (selling price reduced by selling expenses, described in paragraph (b)(4)(i) of § 1.1034-1, of \$400); and that A's gain realized from the sale is \$107,900 (amount realized reduced by adjusted basis of \$52,500). The portion of the gain which is taxable is \$7,900 (\$107,900) - (\$100,000). Thus \$100,000 is the portion of the gain excludable from gross income pursuant to an election under section 121(a).

(b) *Application to only one sale or exchange.* (1) Except as provided in paragraph (c), a taxpayer may not make an election to exclude from gross income gain from the sale or exchange of a principal residence if there is in effect at the time the taxpayer wishes to make such election—

(i) An election made by the taxpayer, under section 121(a), in respect of any other sale or exchange of a residence, or

(ii) An election made by the taxpayer's spouse (such marital status to be determined at the time of the sale or exchange by the taxpayer, see paragraph (f) of § 1.121-5) under the provisions of section 121(a) in respect of any other sale or exchange of a residence (without regard to whether at the time

of such sale or exchange such spouse was married to the taxpayer).

If the taxpayer and his spouse, before their marriage each owned and used a separate residence and if (after their marriage) both residences are sold, whether or not in a single transaction, an election under section 121(a) may be made with respect to a sale of either residence (but not with respect to both residences) if, at the time of sale, the age, ownership, and use requirements are met.

(2) The provisions of this paragraph are illustrated by the following examples:

*Example (1).* While A and B are married, A sells his separately owned residence and makes an election under section 121(a) in respect of such sale. Pursuant to the requirement of section 121(c), B joins in such election. Subsequently, A and B are divorced and B married C. While B and C are married, C sells his residence. C is not entitled to make an election under section 121(a) since an election by B, his spouse, is in effect. It does not matter that B obtained no personal benefit from her election.

*Example (2).* The facts are the same as in example (1) except that after the sale of C's residence, A and B, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (c) of § 1.121-4, revoke their election. B and C, subject to the other provisions of this section, may then make an election with respect to any gain realized on the sale of C's residence.

*Example (3).* The facts are the same as in example (1) except that C marries B after C sells his residence but before he makes an election under section 121(a) with respect to any gain realized on such sale. C, if there is not in effect an election made by him under section 121(a) with respect to a prior sale, may make an election with respect to his sale since B does not have to join with him in such election. (In the case of a sale of property jointly held by husband and wife, see paragraph (a) of § 1.121-5.)

(c) *Additional election if prior sale was made on or before July 26, 1978.* In the case of any sale or exchange after July 26, 1978, section 121 shall be applied by not taking into account any election made with respect to a sale or exchange on or before such date.

[T.D. 7614, 44 FR 24840, Apr. 27, 1979]

### § 1.121-3 Definitions.

(a) *Principal residence.* The term "principal residence" has the same meaning as in section 1034 (relating to