

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.2-1

parent to the child so that the child can properly file his or her return.

[T.D. 8158, 52 FR 33579, Sept. 4, 1987; 52 FR 36133, Sept. 25, 1987]

§ 1.2-1 Tax in case of joint return of husband and wife or the return of a surviving spouse.

(a) *Taxable year ending before January 1, 1971.* (1) For taxable years ending before January 1, 1971, in the case of a joint return of husband and wife, or the return of a surviving spouse as defined in section 2(b), the tax imposed by section 1 shall be twice the tax that would be imposed if the taxable income were reduced by one-half. For rules relating to the filing of joint returns of husband and wife, see section 6013 and the regulations thereunder.

(2) The method of computing, under section 2(a), the tax of husband and wife in the case of a joint return, or the tax of a surviving spouse, is as follows:

(i) First, the taxable income is reduced by one-half. Second, the tax is determined as provided by section 1 by using the taxable income so reduced. Third, the tax so determined, which is the tax that would be determined if the taxable income were reduced by one-half, is then multiplied by two to produce the tax imposed in the case of the joint return or the return of a surviving spouse, subject, however, to the allowance of any credits against the tax under the provisions of sections 31 through 38 and the regulations thereunder.

(ii) The limitation under section 1(c) of the tax to an amount not in excess of a specified percent of the taxable income for the taxable year is to be applied before the third step above, that is, the limitation to be applied upon the tax is determined as the applicable specified percent of one-half of the taxable income for the taxable year (such one-half of the taxable income being the actual aggregate taxable income of the spouses, or the total taxable income of the surviving spouse, as the case may be, reduced by one-half). For the percent applicable in determining the limitation of the tax under section 1(c), see § 1.1-2(a). After such limitation is applied, then the tax so limited is multiplied by two as provided in section 2(a) (the third step above).

(iii) The following computation illustrates the method of application of section 2(a) in the determination of the tax of a husband and wife filing a joint return for the calendar year 1965. If the combined gross income is \$8,200, and the only deductions are the two exemptions of the taxpayers under section 151(b) and the standard deduction under section 141, the tax on the joint return for 1965, without regard to any credits against the tax, is \$1,034.20 determined as follows:

1. Gross income	\$8,200.00	
2. Less:		
Standard deduction, section 141	\$820	
Deduction for personal exemption, section 151	1,200	2,020.00
3. Taxable income	6,180.00	
4. Taxable income reduced by one-half	3,090.00	
5. Tax computed by the tax table provided under section 1(a)(2) (\$310 plus 19 percent of excess over \$2,000)	517.10	
6. Twice the tax in item 5	1,034.20	

(b) *Taxable years beginning after December 31, 1970.* (1) For taxable years beginning after December 31, 1970, in the case of a joint return of husband and wife, or the return of a surviving spouse as defined in section 2(a) of the Code as amended by the Tax Reform Act of 1969, the tax shall be determined in accordance with the table contained in section 1(a) of the Code as so amended. For rules relating to the filing of joint returns of husband and wife see section 6013 as amended and the regulations thereunder.

(2) The following computation illustrates the method of computing the tax of a husband and wife filing a joint return for calendar year 1971. If the combined gross income is \$8,200, and the only deductions are the two exemptions of the taxpayers under section 151(b), as amended, and the standard deduction under section 141, as amended, the tax on the joint return for 1971, without regard to any credits against the tax, is \$968.46, determined as follows:

1. Gross income	\$8,200.00	
2. Less:		
Standard deduction, section 141	\$1,066.00	
Deduction for personal exemption, section 151	1,300.00	2,366.00
3. Taxable income	5,834.00	

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4. Tax computed by the tax table provided under section 1(a) (\$620 plus 19 percent of excess over \$4,000)	968.46
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(3) The limitation under section 1348 with respect to the maximum rate of tax on earned income shall apply to a married individual only if such individual and his spouse file a joint return for the taxable year.

(c) *Death of a spouse.* If a joint return of a husband and wife is filed under the provisions of section 6013 and if the husband and wife have different taxable years solely because of the death of either spouse, the taxable year of the deceased spouse covered by the joint return shall, for the purpose of the computation of the tax in respect of such joint return, be deemed to have ended on the date of the closing of the surviving spouse's taxable year.

(d) *Computation of optional tax.* For computation of optional tax in the case of a joint return or the return of a surviving spouse, see section 3 and the regulations thereunder.

(e) *Change in rates.* For treatment of taxable years during which a change in the tax rates occurs see section 21 and the regulations thereunder.

[T.D. 7117, 36 FR 9398, May 25, 1971]

§ 1.2-2 Definitions and special rules.

(a) *Surviving spouse.* (1) If a taxpayer is eligible to file a joint return under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 without regard to section 6013(a) (3) thereof for the taxable year in which his spouse dies, his return for each of the next 2 taxable years following the year of the death of the spouse shall be treated as a joint return for all purposes if all three of the following requirements are satisfied:

(i) He has not remarried before the close of the taxable year the return for which is sought to be treated as a joint return, and

(ii) He maintains as his home a household which constitutes for the taxable year the principal place of abode as a member of such household of a person who is (whether by blood or adoption) a son, stepson, daughter, or stepdaughter of the taxpayer, and

(iii) He is entitled for the taxable year to a deduction under section 151 (relating to deductions for dependents)

with respect to such son, stepson, daughter, or stepdaughter.

(2) See paragraphs (c)(1) and (d) of this section for rules for the determination of when the taxpayer maintains as his home a household which constitutes for the taxable year the principal place of abode, as a member of such household, of another person.

(3) If the taxpayer does not qualify as a surviving spouse he may nevertheless qualify as a head of a household if he meets the requirements of § 1.2-2(b).

(4) The following example illustrates the provisions relating to a surviving spouse:

Example: Assume that the taxpayer meets the requirements of this paragraph for the years 1967 through 1971, and that the taxpayer, whose wife died during 1966 while married to him, remarried in 1968. In 1969, the taxpayer's second wife died while married to him, and he remained single thereafter. For 1967 the taxpayer will qualify as a surviving spouse, provided that neither the taxpayer nor the first wife was a nonresident alien at any time during 1966 and that she (immediately prior to her death) did not have a taxable year different from that of the taxpayer. For 1968 the taxpayer does not qualify as a surviving spouse because he remarried before the close of the taxable year. The taxpayer will qualify as a surviving spouse for 1970 and 1971, provided that neither the taxpayer nor the second wife was a nonresident alien at any time during 1969 and that she (immediately prior to her death) did not have a taxable year different from that of the taxpayer. On the other hand, if the taxpayer, in 1969, was divorced or legally separated from his second wife, the taxpayer will not qualify as a surviving spouse for 1970 or 1971, since he could not have filed a joint return for 1969 (the year in which his second wife died).

(b) *Head of household.* (1) A taxpayer shall be considered the head of a household if, and only if, he is not married at the close of his taxable year, is not a surviving spouse (as defined in paragraph (a) of this section, and (i) maintains as his home a household which constitutes for such taxable year the principal place of abode, as a member of such household, of at least one of the individuals described in subparagraph (3), or (ii) maintains (whether or not as his home) a household which constitutes for such taxable year the principal place of abode of one of the individuals described in subparagraph (4).