

The \$40 trillion debt, on one page

Goes with the lesson *The \$40 Trillion Question*.

\$40.05T

Total U.S. federal debt on **August 18, 2026**: every deficit the government has ever run, added up and not yet paid back.

Held by the public · \$32.27T · 80.6%

\$7.78T · 19.4%

Owed to investors, banks, foreign governments and the Fed

Owed to itself (trust funds like Social Security)

DON'T MIX THESE UP

Deficit

This year's gap: the government spends more than it collects. A *flow*, measured each year.

Debt

All the deficits stacked up over time. A *stock*, the running total. Borrow to cover the gap, and the debt grows.

\$1.99T

Deficit in fiscal year 2026 (Oct. 1, 2025 to Sept. 30, 2026)

≈\$5.5B

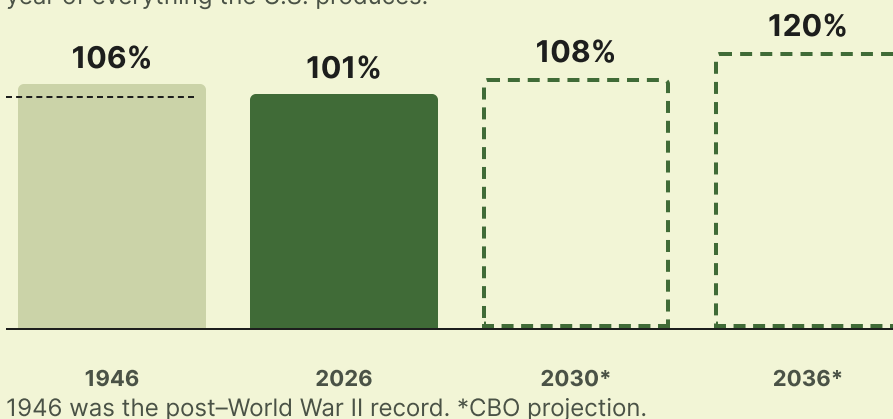
Added per day, on average, in fiscal year 2026 (\$1.99T ÷ 365 days)

\$1.14T → \$2.1T

Interest on the debt in fiscal year 2026, and CBO's projection for 2036

Debt compared with the whole economy

Debt held by the public, % of GDP. The dashed line is 100%: debt equal to one year of everything the U.S. produces.



Don't trust, verify.

Today's total is posted every business day at fiscaldata.treasury.gov → Debt to the Penny.