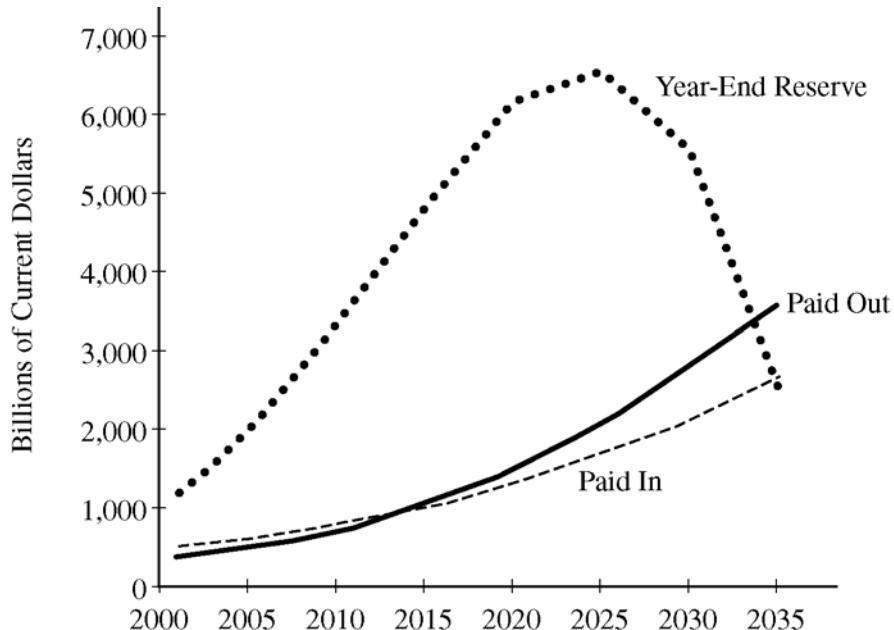


2006 AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

SOCIAL SECURITY RECEIPTS, SPENDING, AND RESERVE ESTIMATES, 2001–2035



Source: 2001 OASDI Trustees Report

2. In recent decades, entitlement programs have constituted a substantial portion of the United States federal budget. Social Security is the largest entitlement program in the United States. From the information in the chart above and your knowledge of United States government and politics, perform the following tasks.
- Define entitlement program.
 - What is the primary source of revenue for the Social Security program?
 - Identify one threat to the future of the Social Security program should the trends depicted in the chart above continue.
 - Describe one demographic trend that threatens the future of the Social Security program AND explain how it is responsible for the threat that you identified in (c).
 - Explain how any one of the trends in the chart above would change if the age of eligibility for Social Security were raised.

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

3. The United States Congress and the President together have the power to enact federal law. Federal bureaucratic agencies have the responsibility to execute federal law. However, in the carrying out of these laws, federal agencies have policy-making discretion.

- (a) Explain two reasons why Congress gives federal agencies policy-making discretion in executing federal laws.
- (b) Choose one of the bureaucratic agencies listed below. Identify the policy area over which it exercises policy-making discretion AND give one specific example of how it exercises that discretion.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Federal Reserve Board

- (c) Describe two ways in which Congress ensures that federal agencies follow legislative intent.
-

4. The framers of the United States Constitution created a legislative system that is bicameral. However, it is not just bicameral; the framers also established two houses of distinctly different character and authority.

- (a) Discuss two reasons why the framers created a bicameral legislature.
- (b) Identify one power unique to the House of Representatives and explain why the framers gave the House that power.
- (c) Identify one power unique to the Senate and explain why the framers gave the Senate that power.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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Question 2

6 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a definition: Entitlement programs are government-sponsored programs providing mandated/guaranteed/required benefits to those who meet eligibility requirements/qualifications.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for identifying the primary source of revenue for Social Security. Acceptable responses may include:

- Payroll taxes.
- Wages from existing wage earners.
- Tax based on earned income.
- Targeted/earmarked taxes.

Note: The response must indicate that the tax is related to work/jobs in order to receive the point.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for identifying a threat to the future of Social Security based on the trends indicated in the chart. Acceptable responses may include:

- Run out of money.
- Outputs exceed inputs.
- Declining reserve.

Part (d): 2 points

One point is earned for describing one demographic trend that threatens the future of Social Security. One point is earned for explaining how the demographic trend is responsible for the threat identified in (c).

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- More older people/“baby boom” generation.
- People living longer/greater life expectancy.
- Declining birth rates.

Acceptable explanations may include:

- The number of workers who fund Social Security is decreasing, but the number of people eligible for Social Security is increasing.
- The number of working people cannot support the large population who will soon reach the age of eligibility to receive Social Security.
- The ratio of workers to retirees is becoming more unequal. With fewer workers, less money is being paid in, and with more retirees, more money is being paid out.

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Question 2 (continued)

Notes:

- Response cannot get the explanation point without a valid description of the demographic trend.
- The explanation must address the number of younger people in comparison to the number of older people in order to earn the point.

Part (e): 1 point

One point is earned for explaining how, if people were to work longer, less money would be paid out/more money would be paid in/the reserve would not decline as rapidly or as much.

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank or off-task answer.