

FINE PRINT: W-4 Form

You will need to fill out a W-4 form on your first day of work. Make sure you know how to complete it properly, since it can impact your federal tax return.

Part I: Read The Fine Print

Analyze this sample W-4 and answer the questions that follow.

Employee's Withholding Certificate

Complete Form W-4 so that your employer can withhold the correct federal income tax from your pay.

Give Form W-4 to your employer.

Your withholding is subject to review by the IRS.

OMB No. 1545-0074

2026**Step 1:**
Enter
Personal
Information

(a) First name and middle initial

MAXWELL

Last name

SMART

(b) Social security number

111-11-1111

Address

123 MAIN STREET

City or town, state, and ZIP code

SMALL TOWN, MA 01004

Does your name match the name on your social security card? If not, to ensure you get credit for your earnings, contact SSA at 800-772-1213 or go to www.ssa.gov.(c) ☐ Single or Married filing separately☒ Married filing jointly or Qualifying surviving spouse☐ Head of household (Check only if you're unmarried and pay more than half the costs of keeping up a home for yourself and a qualifying individual.)**Caution:** To claim certain credits or deductions on your tax return, you (and/or your spouse if married filing jointly) are required to have a social security number valid for employment. See page 2 for more information.

TIP: Consider using the estimator at www.irs.gov/W4App to determine the most accurate withholding for the rest of the year if you: are completing this form after the beginning of the year; expect to work only part of the year; or have changes during the year in your marital status, number of jobs for you (and/or your spouse if married filing jointly), dependents, other income (not from jobs), deductions, or credits. Have your most recent pay stub(s) from this year available when using the estimator. At the beginning of next year, use the estimator again to recheck your withholding.

Complete Steps 2–4 ONLY if they apply to you; otherwise, skip to Step 5. See page 2 for more information on each step, who can claim exemption from withholding, and when to use the estimator at www.irs.gov/W4App.

Step 2:
Multiple Jobs
or Spouse
Works

Complete this step if you (1) hold more than one job at a time, or (2) are married filing jointly and your spouse also works. The correct amount of withholding depends on income earned from all of these jobs.

Do **only one** of the following.(a) Use the estimator at www.irs.gov/W4App for the most accurate withholding for this step (and Steps 3–4). If you or your spouse have self-employment income, use this option; **or**(b) Use the Multiple Jobs Worksheet on page 3 and enter the result in Step 4(c) below; **or**(c) If there are only two jobs total, you may check this box. Do the same on Form W-4 for the other job. This option is generally more accurate than Step 2(b) if pay at the lower paying job is more than half of the pay at the higher paying job. Otherwise, Step 2(b) is more accurate ☒

Complete Steps 3–4(b) on Form W-4 for only ONE of these jobs. Leave those steps blank for the other jobs. (Your withholding will be most accurate if you complete Steps 3–4(b) on the Form W-4 for the highest paying job.)

Step 3:
Claim
Dependent
and Other
Credits

If your total income will be \$200,000 or less (\$400,000 or less if married filing jointly):

(a) Multiply the number of qualifying children under age 17 by \$2,200

3(a) \$ 4,400

(b) Multiply the number of other dependents by \$500

3(b) \$

Add the amounts from Steps 3(a) and 3(b), plus the amount for other credits. Enter the total here

3 \$ 4,400

Step 4:
Other
Adjustments(a) **Other income (not from jobs).** If you want tax withheld for other income you expect this year that won't have withholding, enter the amount of other income here. This may include interest, dividends, and retirement income

4(a) \$

(b) **Deductions.** Use the Deductions Worksheet on page 4 to determine the amount of deductions you may claim, which will reduce your withholding. (If you skip this line, your withholding will be based on the standard deduction.) Enter the result here

4(b) \$

(c) **Extra withholding.** Enter any additional tax you want withheld each pay period

4(c) \$ 50

Exempt from
withholdingI claim exemption from withholding for 2026, and I certify that I meet **both** of the conditions for exemption for 2026. See *Exemption from withholding* on page 2. I understand I will need to submit a new Form W-4 for 2027 ☐**Step 5:**
Sign
Here

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that this certificate, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is true, correct, and complete.

Maxwell Smart

01/04/26

Employee's signature (This form is not valid unless you sign it.)

Date

Employers
Only

Employer's name and address

BIG CITY OFFICE FURNITURE, BIG CITY, MA
01002First date of
employment

01/04/2026

Employer identification
number (EIN)

10-1234567

1. What is Maxwell's filing status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married filing jointly
 - c. Head of household
 - d. Dependent
2. Which statement can you assume is TRUE?
 - a. Maxwell and his spouse plan to itemize their deductions this year
 - b. Maxwell and his spouse both work, or Maxwell himself has two jobs
 - c. Maxwell and his spouse work at Big City Office Furniture
 - d. Maxwell and his spouse are the owners of Big City Office Furniture
3. In order to fill out this W-4 form, Maxwell needed to know all of this information EXCEPT...
 - a. His Social Security number
 - b. His address
 - c. The amount of taxes he's paid in the last five years
 - d. The number of dependents he plans to claim on his tax return
4. Maxwell and his spouse file their taxes jointly and entered \$4,400 on line 3. What does that tell you?
 - a. Maxwell and his spouse make less than \$400,000 and have zero children
 - b. Maxwell and his spouse make less than \$400,000 and have two children
 - c. Maxwell and his spouse make more than \$400,000 and have zero children
 - d. Maxwell and his spouse make more than \$400,000 and have two children
5. How many other dependents does Maxwell have?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
6. If Maxwell had other income from interest or dividends which step might he want to complete on the W-4 form?
 - a. Step 1
 - b. Step 2(b)
 - c. Step 3
 - d. Step 4(a)

7. In June, Maxwell's father comes to live in their home and can count as Maxwell's dependent. What does Maxwell need to do on the new W-4 form he submits to reflect this change?
- a. Maxwell does not need to change anything on the new W-4 form
 - b. Claim \$500 more in Box 3
 - c. Claim \$2,200 more in Box 3
 - d. Verbally tell the HR department at Big City Office Furniture
8. How much EXTRA money is Maxwell withholding from each paycheck?
- a. \$0
 - b. \$10
 - c. \$50
 - d. Cannot tell from this form
9. Which statement below is TRUE?
- a. Maxwell started working at this job during the 2025 tax year
 - b. Maxwell signed the W-4 form a few days before he started
 - c. Maxwell lives and works in the same city
 - d. Maxwell completed this W-4 for his job at Big City Office Furniture
10. When Maxwell completes this W-4, who should he submit it to?
- a. Big City Office Furniture
 - b. The IRS
 - c. No one - he keeps it for his records
 - d. His spouse

Part II: What Did You Learn?

11. Why is it important to read the fine print of your W-4 form?