

## National Debt Clock Adds a Digit to Accommodate Growing Deficit

Sara Bonisteel | FOX NEWS

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**NEW YORK** - In these uncertain financial times, one thing remains certain the ever-expanding national debt. But it's growing at such an accelerated rate, the clock that has kept track of the deficit since 1989 has had to add a digit. The National Debt Clock switched its digital dollar sign to a 1 on Monday to accommodate the nation's ballooning deficit, past the \$10 trillion mark, thanks to Congress' \$700 billion bank stimulus package. The estimated population of the United States is 304,857,428 so each citizen's share of this debt is \$33,325.66. The National Debt has continued to increase an average of \$3.24 billion per day since September 28, 2007 (Ref: [www.brillig.com/debt\\_clock](http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock)).



Few passersby looked up at the billboard Wednesday afternoon, as the clock tallied each American family's share of the debt at just past the \$86,000 mark. But one man on a cell phone stopped to tell the person on the other end just how much they owed.

Real-estate developer Seymour Durst first began publicly clocking the nation's deficit in 1989, erecting the digital billboard a block from Times Square. "Early in the 1980s, he recognized that the national debt was a problem and was going to be a burden for his children and grandchildren and the next generation of Americans," said Jordan Barowitz, a spokesman for the Durst Organization, which owns the clock. "So he put it up to call attention to the problem that we can't borrow our way out of bad times."

The United States has had public debt since its inception. Debts incurred during the American Revolutionary War and under the Articles of Confederation led to the first yearly reported value of \$75,463,476.52 on January 1, 1791. Over the following 45 years, the debt grew, briefly contracted to zero on January 8, 1835 under President Andrew Jackson but then quickly grew into the millions again. The first dramatic growth spurt of the debt occurred because of the Civil War. (Ref: United States Department of the Treasury).

**How large is one trillion?** A trillion minutes ago is 31,688 years ago, close to the beginning of human history. If you spent a dollar per minute, you could barely spend a trillion dollars during all of known human history. Even if you spent \$100 per minute, you would not be able to spend \$1 trillion in 300 years. Packed in bales of \$100 bills (each weighing a gram), a trillion dollars would be 10 billion \$100 bills, or about 10 million kilograms, 22 million pounds, or over 10,000 tons of cash (at 2000 pounds per ton). A trillion dollars in \$100 bills would occupy a million cubic feet of space. It would fill a football field 6 feet deep. (Ref: <http://sci.rutgers.edu/forum/showthread.php?t=78957>).

1. In appropriate paragraph form, analyze and interpret the reasons outlined in the passage above for the recent and rapid escalation in the national debt. Describe the impact the national debt will inevitably possess upon future generations from a financial perspective. **(GPS – Grades 6 – 8: MRC a, d)**
2. As a fraction, decimal, and percent, what portion of the overall national debt is represented by Congress' bank stimulus package? Determine the LCD and GCF between the depth (in feet) of a football field consumed by \$100 bills and the number of pounds (expressed in millions) when each figure equates to \$1 trillion respectively. **(GPS - Grade 6: M6P1 – M6P5; MRC; M6N1 a, c, f, g)**
3. Translate the contents of the final paragraph from verbal phrases into a series of algebraic expressions. Communicate your mathematical thinking clearly and coherently via interpreting and solve these equations using either the communicative, associative, and/or distributive properties as appropriate. Explain the process of converting words into variables and algebraic expressions. **(GPS Grade 7: M7P1 – M7P5; MRC; M7A1 a, b, c; M7A2 a)**
4. Translate all of the applicable verbal phrases in question three into a series of algebraic expressions and solve. At a constant rate of growth of equivalent to what we have witnessed daily since September 28, 2007, create a table and graph the results of the national debt for the following time frames: 30 days, 45 days, and 70 days. What inferences may be made regarding this transition? Interpret the slope as a rate of change and determine if a linear or nonlinear relationship exist. **(GPS Grade 8: M8P1 – M8P5; M8A1 a, b, d, e; M8A4 a – c, f, g; M8A5d; M8D4a)**
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2008-09 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer interchangeably as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and circle graph. **(GPS – Grade 6: M6N1f, g; M6D1c; Grade 7: M7D1f)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *deficit*, *stimulus*, *erecting*, *burden*, and *coincidence* obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(GPS – Grades 6 –8: MRC a, c, d)**

**Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)** adapted from [georgiastandards.org](http://georgiastandards.org). Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with the curriculum map and annotated adjacent to the respective grade level inquiry.

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