Understanding your Social Security calculations: You need to be somewhat Excel proficient to follow this, I think.

Step by Step

Create a spreadsheet.

Give it a name and save it. Leave it open.

Gather the data

Log onto SSA.gov

Home page of ssa.gov, go into 'My Social Security'

You will need to create an account (follow the directions)

Copy your earnings data

Select the 'Earnings Record' tab. (Upper RH side- 'Overview')

Place your cursor to the left of 'Work Year' so that you get a cursor.

Click and drag such that you highlight from 'Work Year' to the last line of your earning years.

'Ctrl C' to copy the data

Paste the data into your spreadsheet.

Click Cell C3 on your excel spreadsheet.

Paste what you have copied. You may need to adjust column widths to get it to look right. I use the 'Match Destination Formatting' option, but I believe any of the paste formats will work.

You now have a spreadsheet with your earnings for each year.

Find the Indexed Value number relative to your years of earning.

http://www.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/awiFactors.cgi

Select the 'submit request' for with the default current year.

The next page will give you the factors for each year.

Similar to how we copied the earnings data, copy the index factors.

Select from 'Year' to the last row of data.

Paste the index data into your spreadsheet.

Select cell O3 on your excel spreadsheet.

Paste what you have copied. You may need to adjust column widths to get it to look right. I use the 'Match Destination Formatting' option, but I believe any of the paste formats will work.

You now have a spreadsheet with the index values for each year.

Sort the index values so they match your earnings format.

The earnings data starts with the most recent year, and ends with the first year of your earnings. The index values start with 1953, and go through the past year.

Select from the first Year to the last index factor. (In my case, from O4 to P64)

Select 'Data' tab, then 'Sort', then sort by 'Year' and 'Order' = 'Largest to Smallest' Now 'OK'.

This should sort the index values so that the most recent are at the top, and the 1953 is at the bottom.

Save your spreadsheet.

Paste the index values next to the Earnings.

Select the range of index values that correspond to your years of 'Taxed Social Security Earnings'. I copy the year and the factor. 'Ctrl C' to copy.

Paste such that the years line up. I paste into cell 'H4' so that the 2018 lines up with the 2018 in cell 'C4'. Copy and Paste (or just type) Year and Factor into cells H3 and J3.

Calculate the indexed value

Label cell 'K3' 'Indexed Value' Label Cell 'J3' 'Year'

Click cell J4. Type '= H4' Enter. This will make that column the year.

Click cell K4. Type '= D4 * I4' Enter. This will multiply the earnings from column D with the index factor in column I.

Select from 'J4' to 'K68' or wherever your first year of earnings was reported.

While that is selected, 'Ctrl D'. This copies the formulas Down. Column K now contains the indexed value of each year of your earnings.

Now we are going to identify the top 35 years of earnings. We will leave the existing data alone so that it could be updated in the future.

Select the data from cell J4 to the last index earnings such as 'K52'. 'Ctrl C'

Select cell T4. Right click, Paste Special, Values.

Select cell 'S4'. Enter '1' Select cell 'S5'. Enter 2. Select S4 and S5, drag the green square down to S38. This should number those cells from 1 to 35.

Select your earnings data and the year (from 'T4' to 'U64', for example).

Select tab 'Data', 'Sort', Sort by Column U, Order = 'Largest to smallest'

You know have identified your highest 35 years of social security earnings.

Find the average of those 35 years. Divide by twelve to get the monthly average.

Now we need to determine the 'bend formula". Go to https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/autoAdj.html

For the first $xxx, you get 90%

For the next $xxxx you get 32%

Anything over $xxxx you get 15%

Currently (2019) the formula looks like this:

For the first $926, you get 90%

For the next $(5583-926) you get 32%

Anything over $5583 you get 15%

I could put up a template spreadsheet, but you really need to be able to manipulate the data to make it work. If folks really wanted this in a spreadsheet, I suppose we would right some macros. But that has its own issues.