

## Practicing CW – A Beginners Guide

As a new CW operator, it can be very daunting to tackle the first QSO 'on air'. What do I send? How do I start the QSO? How do I handle the abbreviations? The list goes on!

Here is a quick guide to get you started:

First of all, you have to decide which band you are using and whereabouts on the band you call CQ.

Generally, all CW operation is within the lower portion of each band.

You will need to find a clear frequency before you start, sending QRL? A couple of times may help you establish if the frequency is active. If someone replies with a 'yes', simply move elsewhere and try again with a QRL?

### Calling CQ

Don't make incessantly long calls (like a CQ parrot), it simply is not required and it also irritates listeners.

Here is an example of a CQ call:

CQ CQ CQ DE GW4OKT GW4OKT AR K

Where AR indicates end of transmission and the K invites other stations to transmit back to you. There is still some heated debate, particularly amongst ex military service people, whether or not to send AR (or indeed K!). Ultimately - it is up to you.

Anyway, back to the CQ, keep calling until you are called (or you get fed up!). If nobody returns you CQ call, try and different frequency.

The next question is, what exactly do I send once I've established contact?

This depends enormously on what sort of response you get from the calling station and of course, how long YOU want to keep the QSO going.

Below is a typical 'RAG CHEW' QSO in a style I prefer:

CQ CQ CQ DE GW4OKT GW4OKT AR K

GW4OKT DE G3UFO AR K

G3UFO DE GW4OKT TNX FER CALL UR RST 5NN 599 ES NAME IS KEITH KEITH QTH IS CHESTER CHESTER HW? G3UFO DE GW4OKT AR K

GW4OKT DE G3UFO FB KEITH ES TNX RPRT UR ALSO 5NN  
NAME DAVID ES QTH WEST KIRBY WEST KIRBY RNG 1TTW TO DIPOLE HW? BK

BK FB DAVID HR RNG 1TTW TO VERTICAL ES RIG IS K3  
WX HR SUNNY ES TEMP 22C 22C  
HW?  
BK

BK DE G3UFO RR KEITH FB COPI HR GUD SIG FROM UR K3  
BND CONDX GUD TDAY ES HOPING FER SOME DX HI  
TNX FER FB QSO WILL SEE WHAT IS ABOUT TDAY ON 20M  
GW4OKT DE G3UFO AR K

G3UFO DE GW4OKT RR DAVID NICE TO MEET U ON CW ES HPE CUAGN  
WILL QSL VIA LOTW 73 FER NOW AND GL  
G3UFO DE GW4OKT SAR SK DIT DIT

RR KEITH FB ON LOTW TNX FOR NICE QSO ES CUAGN 73  
DE G3UFO AR SK DIT DIT

DIT DIT

So you can see how fluid the whole QSO can be, with the use of abbreviations etc. There are many variants around this type of QSO and you will eventually develop your own preferred style. It may simply be a quick 599 report to a Russian station or just a small limited QSO, but you will decide what you feel comfortable with and..... DON'T WORRY ABOUT MAKING A FEW MISTAKES!

What I like, is that old phrases are still popular, such as fine business and cheerio!

Here are some common abbreviations and Q codes:

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| FB DR OC    | BCNU    |
| SRI OM QSB  | CUL     |
| PSE AGN RST | STN     |
| CFM         | CUAGN   |
| UFB         | WX CLDY |
| QLF?        |         |
| SRI QSD     |         |
| QRX         |         |
| AS (WAIT)   |         |
| QRG         |         |

Can you work out what they mean?

Cheers  
Keith GW4OKT

K