

Contest Setup

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Once your one-time items are done, there are only a very few items that need to be completed for EACH contest you work.

First, open WriteLog and select the contest module that you will work. As a refresher:



The save the file to a directory that will be easy for you to find. For example, I save my contests to the \contest sub-folder.

There are three items to complete before each contest. Here they are:

1. [Setup Automated Messages](#)

- [SSB Messages](#)
- [CW/RTTY Messages](#)

2. [Verify Sound Card Parameters](#)

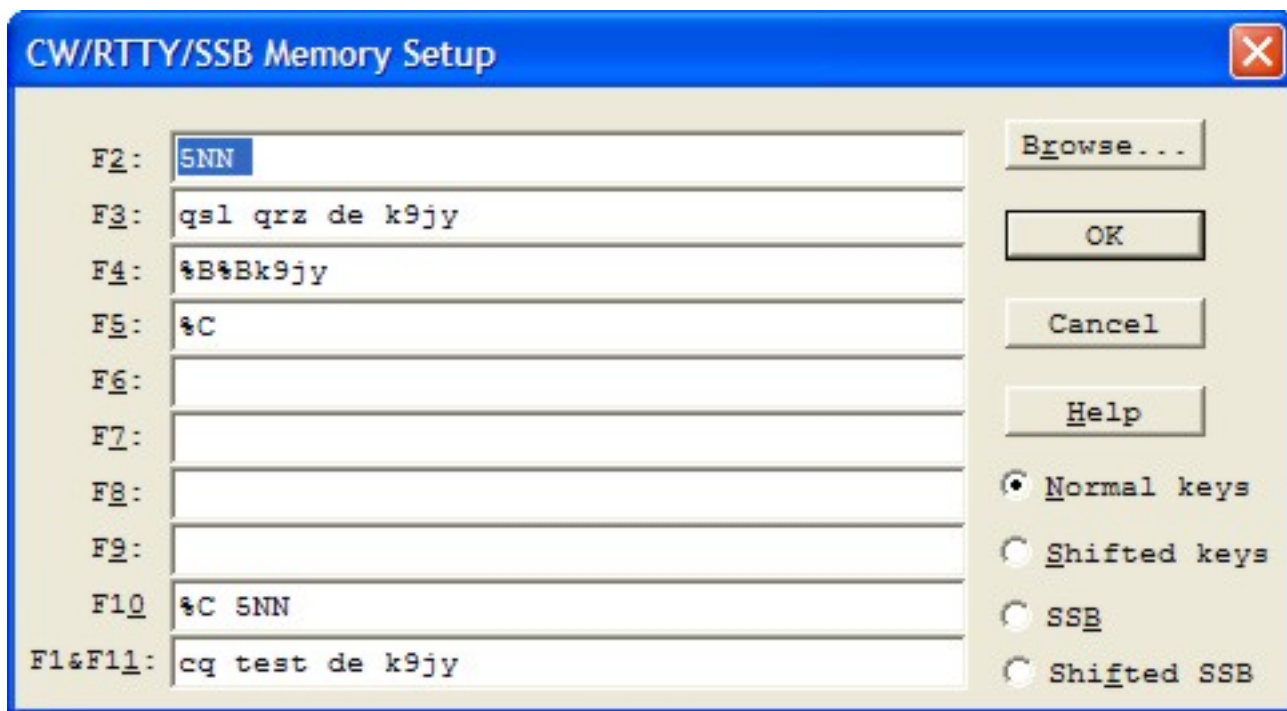
3. [Set Contest Parameters](#)

Let's get going.

Setup Automated Messages [Top of Page](#)

Once you have selected your contest, the next item you need to do is setup your Automated Messages for the contest. This is WriteLog's capability to send automated messages by pressing a function key on your computer. You do this by selecting 'Setup|CW/SSB/RTTY messages..' from the WriteLog Tool Bar.

Once selected, you'll get the following dialog box:



WriteLog supports twenty CW/RTTY and SSB messages each for a contest. The Automated Messaging supports some automatic variables as well. See F5 where %C is noted? To WriteLog, that means to send whatever the call is in the QSO Entry window. Also note that CW/RTTY messages are the Normal and Shifted keys while SSB messages are stored in the SSB and Shifted SSB areas.

SSB Messages [Top of Page](#)

SSB Messaging is done by recording .wav files, naming them in a particular format, and storing the .wave files so WriteLog can find them via the 'Setup|Ports|Wave File Location' dialog box as noted in the initial setup section. I strongly suggest that you become familiar with the 'WriteLog Windows|Automated Messages' portion of the web site for this function.

However, if you're like most of us, you want to quickly set up your callsign, exchange, etc.

for the contest. To do so, just record your messages on-the-fly as noted from the WriteLog Help files below.

Recording a new message on-the-fly

WriteLog enables you to record messages quickly. Type SHIFT+F2 to start the recording of a new message for F2 (or SHIFT+F3 for the F3 message, etc), and, after you have finished the message, touch ESCAPE to save the recording. Touching SHIFT+F2 instead of ESCAPE cancels the recording and leaves the old message unchanged. Message recording is automatically cancelled after 60 seconds if you fail to touch ESCAPE.

The names of the files created by the SHIFT function keys are:

MSG2.WAV will be recorded when you press SHIFT+F2.

MSG3.WAV will be recorded when you press SHIFT+F3.

...

MSG11.WAV will be recorded when you press SHIFT+F11.

NOTE: your radio must be in a voice mode to record and play SSB messages.

CW/RTTY Messages [Top of Page](#)

For CW and RTTY messaging, you must type in what you want sent in the CW/SSB/RTTY dialog box above. The variables you can input and invoke depend upon the contest module you select. Hint: you will normally want to add a space character as the last character in the memory so that if you type message keys in succession, a space is sent between them.

There are specific variables only associated with RTTY. For good examples of RTTY messaging for RTTY contests, I strongly suggest you visit Don, AA5AU's, [RTTY Contesting](#) web site where he offers specific messages for RTTY contests for users of WriteLog.

For CW or RTTY contesting, the specific variables and their meanings follow (from the WriteLog Help file):

The memories have the following special properties if there is a "%" character followed by a:

- digit n (in the range 1 through 5)

- the current QSO number is substituted for the % when that message is sent.

- The number sent will be preceded by enough "T" characters in Morse (or "0" digits in RTTY) to ensure that at least n characters are sent in the number. For example, if the sequence number is one, and there is a "%3" in the F3 field,

then pressing F3 will send "TT1". This is for contests that require a "three digit serial number".

the letter "B"

The characters in the memory between a %B and a following %B are ignored (and not sent) unless the current Entry window has at least one character in its CALL field and that call sign is a duplicate on the Entry window's current band. Under these conditions, the characters between the %B's are sent, and any characters following the final %B are ignored. If there is a %C before the %B in the memory, then when the "Special case" for %C described above is in effect, the dupe check is also held until you tab or space out of the CALL field. In this special case, only one pair of %B characters will be correctly processed, and they must appear after the %C.

the letter "C"

the contents of the "CALL" field in the entry window are sent. If the CALL field is blank, then the CALL from the previous QSO is sent.

Special case: If, when you press the function key corresponding to a memory with %C in it, you also have the cursor in the CALL field of the Entry window, then WriteLog switches to live CW transmission from the Entry window. Each key you type not only is recorded in the CALL field but is also transmitted as CW at the appropriate time. WriteLog shows you it has entered this mode by drawing a red rectangle around the CALL box. Typing BACKSPACE attempts to not send the last character. (Some CW keyer options (PK-232 and W5XD keyer) do not support this option.) Any characters following the %C in the memory are held until you tab or space out of the CALL field, or until the message being sent catches up to your typing, or if you stop typing for more than 1 second. (You can extend or shorten the 1 second delay using the LiveCwDelayMs entry in the [configuration] section of WRITELOG.INI.)

the letter "D"

Like "C", the contents of the "CALL" field in the entry window are sent, but the special handling when the cursor is in the CALL field does not happen, and, if the CALL field is blank, it does not send the previously logged call.

the letter "E"

an end-of-transmission character is added to the transmit buffer to switch back to receive mode (only useful for RTTY).

the letter "F" followed by a digit n

the exchange field number n from the entry window is sent. The numbering of exchange fields is left to right starting with one. If the name of field n is "SNT", then "599" is sent as "5NN".

the letter "H"

The callsign in the Entry window is looked up in "Friend.ini". If it is found then

the text corresponding to the call is sent. So if, for example, Friend.ini contains the entry "W5XD=HI WAYNE", then, if W5XD is the call in the Entry window, then "HI WAYNE" is sent instead of the "%H". By default, the section in Friend.ini that is used is "[HI]", but the "HI_SECTION" entry in the "[Configuration]" section of WriteLog.ini can be edited such that WriteLog will lookup some other section in "Friend.ini".

the letter "I"

A type-in box pops up and any characters typed into the box are inserted in the message in place of the "%I". Clicking the Cancel button on the type-in box cancels the entire message.

the letter "M" followed by digit(s) n

the entire contents of the memory Fn are inserted into this message. For example, %M2 inserts the message for F2. Add 20 for shifted memories, so %M22 inserts the message for SHIFT+F2.

the letter "N" optionally followed by a digit n

the serial number is sent, padded with leading zeros if necessary to get to n digits. If the mode is CW, the digits are translated to letters according the [\[Cut-Numbers\]](#) section in WRITELOG.INI.

the letter "P" followed by a digit n

the exchange field number n from the previous QSO is sent. The numbering of exchange fields is left to right starting with one. If the digit n is zero, then the previously logged serial number is sent.

the letter "R"

a newline character is sent (only useful for RTTY).

the letter "T"

the time of day in four digits is sent.

the letter "X"

In two-radio operation, this retains the current transmit focus rather than switching to the radio with the keyboard. The %X sequence is ignored if it appears anywhere other than the very beginning of the message, and it is ignored if the transmit focus and keyboard focus are already the same. (This command interacts with the [Auto-Resume CQ](#) function). You should only program the %X sequence in the CW memories, and its appearance in the CW memories applies to phone as well.

the letter "O"

The RIT is cleared on the connected radio (if its radio interface supports this function).

the letter "W"
The Entry Window is cleared.

the letter "L"
The QSO in the Entry Window is logged.

any other character
the current QSO number using the minimum number of digits is sent.

The programming of the memories can get a little complex. Here is an example for the Sweepstakes exchange:

```
"%C %BQSO B4%BNR % B W5XD 71 STX"
```

This means: send the other station's call followed by a space. Then do a dupe check on the call in the current Entry window. If the station is a dupe, then send "QSO B4", otherwise send NR, compute the next sequence number and send it, followed by "B W5XD 71 STX". There is no way to override the dupe check. If you want to send the exchange to someone that is a dupe in your log, then you must program an additional function key without the %B characters.

Messaging is the most complex setup item for individual contests. Be assured that they won't be done just once, either. I typically modify my messages (quickly) 4-5 times during a contest adjusting to conditions. But the basic setup for the contest is done before the contest starts.

Verify Sound Card Parameters [Top of Page](#)

Verify the settings of your sound card at 'Tools|Sound Board Options...' if you use your sound card for sending CW, RTTY, and/or SSB.

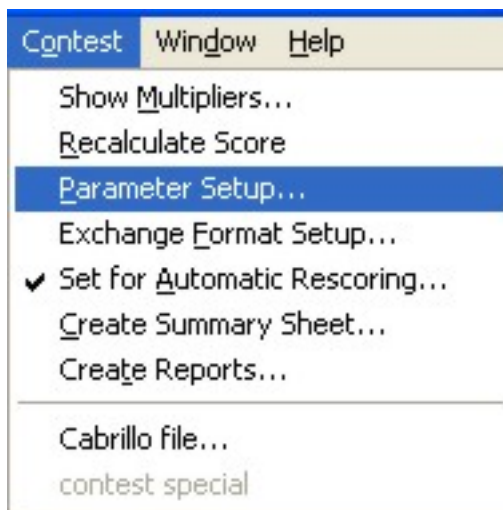
If you are in an SSB contest, the settings should look like this, where the Echo Microphone should be checked:



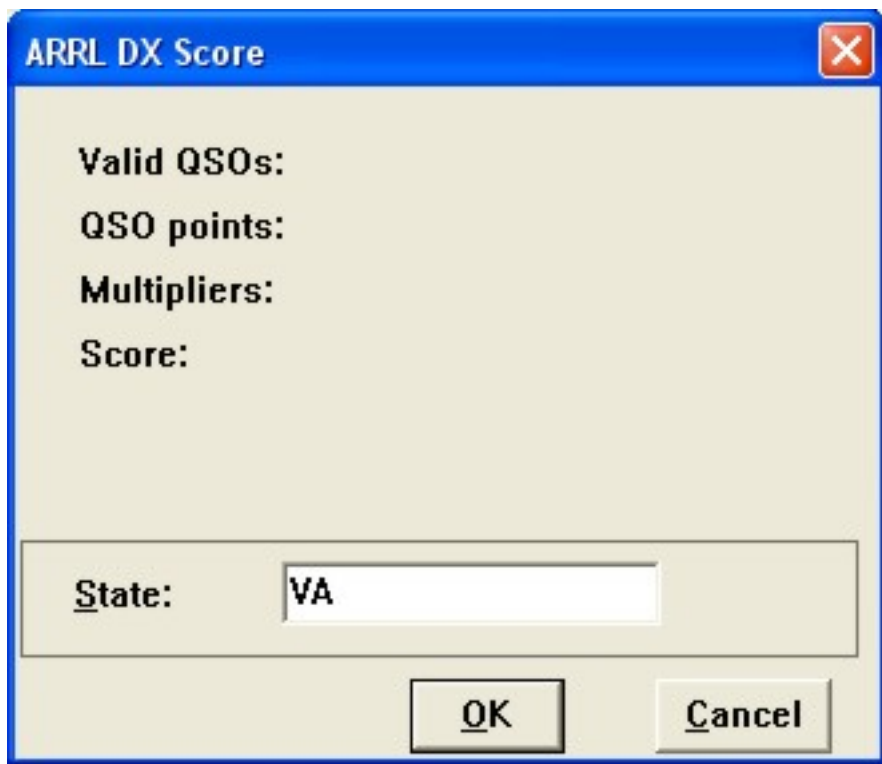
If you are in a CW/RTTY contest and use your sound card, the settings should look as above, but with Echo Microphone unchecked.

Contest Parameters [Top of Page](#)

The Contest Parameter Dialog Box tells WriteLog your multiplier exchange so it knows how to score the contest. If the contest exchange, for example, requires you to give your CQ zone, you will typically need to enter your CQ zone in the Contest Parameter Dialog box. The contest parameter changes for every contest and usually carries over to the Cabrillo file information as well. The Contest Parameter Dialog Box can be found off the tool bar at 'Contest|Parameter Setup' as shown below.



Here, for example, is the dialog box for the ARRL Contest if you contest from Virginia:



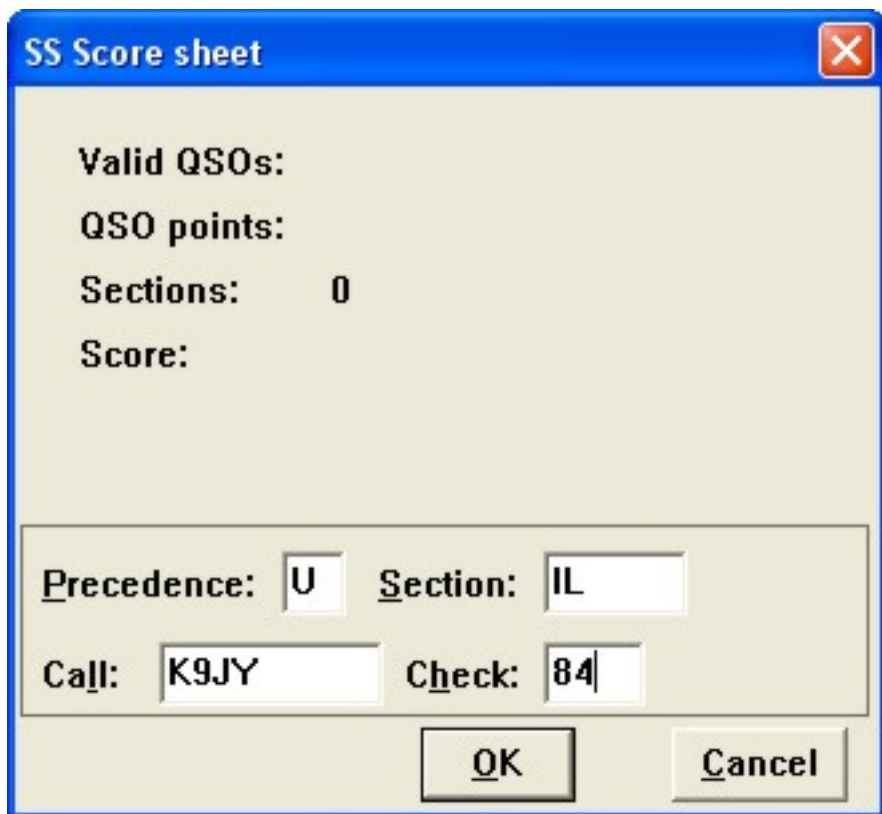
ARRL DX Score

Valid QSOs:
QSO points:
Multipliers:
Score:

State: VA

OK Cancel

The Sweepstakes one is more complex. It looks like this:



SS Score sheet

Valid QSOs:
QSO points:
Sections: 0
Score:

Precedence: U Section: IL

Call: K9JY Check: 84

OK Cancel

This dialog box needs to be filled out for every contest.

Once you have completed your one-time setup options, only these three things vary for the contests you operate.

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