

## **METHODS OF LEARNING MORSE CODE - [FROM AC6V's Book - DX101x](#)**

There is no one way to learn the code that will work for everyone. Beware of the ham who says "here is a sure fire way to learn the code". Here are several methods – choose the one that works best for you.

**AUDIBLE** - Probably the most popular and effective method. For many, the instant recognition of a SOUND and the association with a character (letter, number, punctuation, prosign) or whole word is usually recommended. The less interpretation needed between the initial hearing and recognition, the better. As you progress - try not to repeat the sound -- just strive for instant recognition.

Most USA tests are given in the Farnsworth method - that is 12 WPM character speed, 5 WPM overall speed. BEFORE ANYTHING -- check with your local testing group FIRST to determine if you are tested in Farnsworth -- then study that way -- many who have studied straight 5 WPM - couldn't copy a darn thing in Farnsworth. [Super Morse](#) has provision for Farnsworth. Also see [Farnsworth](#) below.

**MUSICALLY OR LANGUAGE ASSOCIATED** -- Some learn musically or language associated- some learn it as a song or word --  
dah dah ditit -- The zebra did it - letter Z.  
dah dah di dah here comes the bride - she is a queen - letter Q.  
Dog did it," "dah-di-di!" Letter D - See Code Quick

One musician recommends: As for the music and CW, it may appeal to you. It's the rhythm that does it. Tap your foot to a 4 x 1 cadence. Then tap your finger on the desk in sequence with it. Tape it three times and you have a "S" tape it four times you have a "H" tape it five times you have a "5". Now do this. Keeping the foot going. Send a "V" di di dit dah. Keep in cadence. Catch the rhythm ? great isn't it ?

**VISUAL** -- some learn best by seeing it on the screen as they hear it.

**AUDIBLE - INVERSE** - Some study the opposites A (didah) then N (dahdit), K then R, etc. Some find this confusing -- try it if it works for you.

**AUDIBLE PHONETICS** - Some learn by associating it with the NATO Alphabet i.e, dit-dah followed by A or ALPHA after a while you will hear dit dah and A or alpha pops into the brain.

**PATTERNS** -There are patterns in morse code letters. For example: the letter A is similar to the letter W except that the letter W has an additional dah to it. One might study A (didah), W (didadah), J (didahdah), 1 (didahdahdah) in order, then mixed. This is effective if one has difficulty in discerning J from 1 etc.

**TYPING** - some find that they have an automatic reflex to hearing a character and hitting the right key on a keyboard. Check with your VEC if they will allow you to take the test this way. One of our local examiners does allow this as well as a Braille keyboard for the blind.

**SENDING** – Some folks learn better by sending with a key. Others read signs while driving on the highway and mentally send the characters. This is usually in conjunction with a listening method.

**CHARACTERS** - at 5 WPM (non-farnsworth) it is feasible to repeat (or count) the dits and dahs in your head and pass the test --- this is the hard way and Farnsworth makes this tough – NOT RECOMMENDED but may be the only way for some. Best to have the characters sent at 12 wpm with 5 wpm spacing. Below this speed, the mind perceives the sound of the individual elements, and not the sound of the whole element.

**PLAIN TEXT VS MIXED RANDOM CHARACTERS.** Studying Morse in plain text gives the advantage of being able to anticipate what is coming next where mixed random characters – ya gotta know them all. Maybe practice both if that works for you.

**KOCH METHOD** - Learn morse code using high speed random characters.

**FARNSWORTH** - Farnsworth morse is composed of *higher* speed characters sent with *longer than standard spacing* between them. This means that the mind gets used to hearing the "right sounds" while having plenty of time to think about them. *All* the great code schools of the past used Farnsworth teaching. See ARRL URL: <http://www.arrl.org/files/info/tech/code-std.txt>

**BRAIN SOAK** – Some folks give up on methods and just plain listen to code practice until one day it just all comes together. The impediment to increasing speed and proficiency is called a barrier which you may feel you will never hurdle, but is amazing when one day after brain soaking – it magically all comes together. Your mileage may vary.

**COMPUTER PROGRAMS AND COURSES** - There are many available -- see **Morse Programs** and try them out -- choose the one that works the best for you. Remember that the one that works for your buddy or elmer may or may not be the best for you.

FOR MANY -- **studying EVERY day for 15 to 30 minutes is successful.** Leaving long periods between study sessions is usually counter-productive. Studying for long periods at a session - frazzles many a brain.

One long time code instructor advises; "Most people's problems with the code stem from trying to learn it too fast without sufficient drilling before they move on to each new letter. The average person needs about 30 hours of study and practice on the code to hit 5 wpm. Now this is an average. Some will take longer and some will take less." So a half hour in the morning, a half hour in the evening and in a month -- you should have it.

Another advises: Whatever method you use, try to *\*hear\** the code directly as a letter. IOW, don't try to translate the sound into dot-dash and translate that into A, just hear the dot-dash and think A. Easier said than done, but when you master it your receiving speed will increase dramatically.

**IN SUMMARY - THERE IS NO ONE SURE FIRE WAY -- THE LEARNER IS ENCOURAGED TO TRY THE METHODS AND PROGRAMS THAT GIVE THE BEST RESULTS.**

**Also Excellent Reading ["The Art & Skill of Radio Telegraphy"](#) By William G. Pierpont N0HFF -- Available for downloading in PDF**