

# Morse code abbreviations

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**Morse code abbreviations** are used to speed up Morse communications by foreshortening textual words and phrases. Morse abbreviations are short forms representing normal textual words and phrases formed from some (fewer) characters *borrowed* from the words or phrases being abbreviated. Aside: Morse code abbreviations are not the same as the so-called Prosigns for Morse code. Morse abbreviations are composed of (normal) textual alpha-numeric character symbols with normal Morse code inter-character spacing; the character symbols in abbreviations, unlike the delineated character groups representing Morse code prosigns, are not "run together" or concatenated in the way most prosigns for Morse code are formed.

From 1845 until well into the second half of the 20th century, commercial telegraphic code books were used to shorten telegrams, e.g. "Pascoela = Natives have plundered everything from the wreck".<sup>[1]</sup>

The following Table of Morse code abbreviations and further references to Brevity codes such as the Q code, Z code and RST code serve to facilitate fast and efficient Morse code communications.

## Contents

- 1 Table of Selected Morse Code Abbreviations
- 2 An amateur radio Morse code conversation example
- 3 Informal Language Independent Conversations
- 4 See also
- 5 References

## **Table of Selected Morse Code Abbreviations**



AA	All after (used after question mark to request a repetition)
AB	All before (similarly)
ARRL	American Radio Relay League
ABT	About
ADR	Address
AGN	Again
ANT	Antenna
ARND	Around
BCI	Broadcast interference
BCNU	Be seeing you
BK	Break (to pause transmission of a message, say)
BN	All between
BTR	Better
BTU	Back to you
BUG	Semiautomatic mechanical key
BURO	Bureau (usually used in the phrase PLS QSL VIA BURO, "Please send QSL card via my local/national QSL bureau")
B4	Before
C	Yes; correct
CBA	Callbook address
CFM	Confirm
CK	Check
CL	Clear (I am closing my station)
CLG	. . . Calling
CQ	Calling . . . (any station, when nothing is specified)
CQD	Original International Distress Call, fell out of use before 1915
CS	Callsign
CTL	Control
CUD	Could

CUL	See you later
CUZ	Because
CW	Continuous wave (i.e., radiotelegraph)
CX	Conditions
DE	From (or "this is")
DN	Down
DR	Dear
DSW	Goodbye (Russian: до свидания [ <i>Do svidanya</i> ])
DX	Distance (sometimes refers to long distance contact), foreign countries
EMRG	Emergency
ENUF	Enough
ERE	Here (more commonly: HR)
ES	And
FB	Fine business (Analogous to "OK")
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FER	For
FM	From
FREQ	Frequency
FWD	Forward
GA	Good afternoon or Go ahead (depending on context)
GE	Good evening
GG	Going
GL	Good luck
GM	Good morning
GN	Good night
GND	Ground (ground potential)
GUD	Good
GX	Ground
HEE	Humour intended or laughter (often repeated, e.g. HEE HEE)

HI	Humour intended or laughter (originates from American Morse "HO")
HR	Here, hear
HV	Have
HW	How
II	I say again
IMP	Impedance
K	Over
$\overline{KN}$	Over; only the station named should respond (e.g. W7PTH DE W1AW $\overline{KN}$ )
LID	Poor operator
MILS	Milliamperes
MNI	Many
MSG	Message
N	No; nine
NIL	Nothing
NM	Name
NR	Number
NW	Now
NX	Noise; noisy
OB	Old boy
OC	Old chap
OK	Okay
OM	Old man (any male amateur radio operator is an OM regardless of age)
OO	Official observer
OP	Operator
OT	Old timer
OTC	Old timers club (ARRL-sponsored organization for radio amateurs first licensed 20 or more years ago)
OOTC	Old old timers club (organization for those whose first two-way radio contact occurred 40 or more years ago; separate from OTC and ARRL)
PLS	Please

PSE	Please
PWR	Power
PX	Prefix
QCWA	Quarter Century Wireless Association (organization for radio amateurs who have been licensed for 25 or more years)
R	Are; received as transmitted (origin of "Roger"), or decimal point (depending on context)
RCVR	Receiver
RFI	Radio-frequency interference
RIG	Radio apparatus
RPT	Repeat or report (depending on context)
RPRT	Report
RST	Signal report format (Readability-Signal Strength-Tone)
RTTY	Radioteletype
RX	Receiver, radio
SAE	Self-addressed envelope
SASE	Self-addressed, stamped envelope
SED	Said
SEZ	Says
SFR	So far (proword)
SIG	Signal or signature
SIGS	Signals
$\overline{\text{SK}}$	Out (proword), end of contact
SK	Silent Key (a deceased radio amateur)
SKED	Schedule
SMS	Short message service
SN	Soon
SNR	Signal-to-noise ratio
SRI	Sorry
SSB	Single sideband

STN	Station
T	Zero (usually an elongated <i>dah</i> )
TEMP	Temperature
TFC	Traffic
TKS	Thanks
TMW	Tomorrow
TNX	Thanks
TT	That
TU	Thank you
TVI	Television interference
TX	Transmit, transmitter
TXT	Text
U	You
UR	Your or You're (depending on context)
URS	Yours
VX	Voice; phone
VY	Very
W	Watts
WA	Word after
WB	Word before
WC	Wilco
WDS	Words
WID	With
WKD	Worked
WKG	Working
WL	Will
WUD	Would
WTC	Whats the craic? (Irish Language: [ <i>Conas atá tú?</i> ])
WX	Weather



XCVR	Transceiver
XMTR	Transmitter
XYL	Wife (ex-YL)
YF	Wife
YL	Young lady (originally an unmarried female operator, now used for any female)
ZX	Zero beat
73	Best regards
77	Long Live CW (Morse Code), wishing you many happy CW contacts
88	Love and kisses
99	Get lost!

## An amateur radio Morse code conversation example

To make Morse code communications faster and more efficient, there are many internationally agreed patterns or conventions of communication which include: extensive use of abbreviations, use of brevity codes such as the RST code, Q code, Z code as well as the use of Morse prosigns. The skills required to have efficient fast conversations with Morse comprise more than simply knowing the Morse code symbols for the alphabet and numerals. Skilled telegraphists must also know many traditional International Morse code communications conventions.

In the following example of a typical casual Morse code conversation between two stations there is extensive use of such: Morse code abbreviations, brevity codes, Morse prosigns and other such conventions.

Aside: Note that in Morse code there is no dot dash sequence defined for the mathematical equal sign and so in fact equal signs are never transmitted by Morse code operators. Usually the word "EQUALS" would be sent in lieu of an actual mathematical equal sign. That said however, in the following example of a casual Morse code conversation between two station operators, the mathematical symbol, the *equal sign* "=", is shown in the following paragraphs in the illustrated Morse data streams. This *equal sign convention* is only used here in this Wikipedia article to represent the actual Morse prosign  $\overline{\text{BT}}$  often verbalized as "dahdididah". This Morse code prosign essentially indicates a *new paragraph* in the text. This use of the mathematical symbol "=" to represent the *new paragraph* Morse prosign  $\overline{\text{BT}}$  is only

ever encountered by operators who may be copying Morse code using certain single or dual line display electronic automatic Morse code readers. Normally when copying Morse code manually by handwriting or typewriting the equal sign "=" representation of the Morse prosign  $\overline{BT}$  shown here is never actually written down by Morse operators who copy manually. Instead of writing or typing an equal sign, or writing some other representation of the prosign  $\overline{BT}$ , a receiving Morse operator who is copying manually merely creates a *new paragraph* in the recorded text upon reception of the prosign. This new paragraph copying convention is illustrated in the following example conversation. When copying mentally instead of manually writing text on paper or to a computer file, the receiving operator copying mentally will merely use the time taken by the  $\overline{BT}$  prosign for either a mental pause, or to jot down for later reference a short word or phrase from the information being sent.

An example casual Morse code (CW) conversation between Station 1 (S1) and Station 2 (S2) is illustrated in the following paragraphs. Here the actual Morse code information stream sent by each station (S1 and S2) is shown in bold face type, and is followed below each bold face transmission by a *translation* of the sent data stream, together with short explanations of the data streams. These translations and explanations are shown in the shaded blocks below each station's indicated transmission data stream.

### **S1 sends Morse data stream: "CQ CQ CQ DE S1 K"**

Calling anyone (CQ CQ CQ) from (DE) S1 Over to anyone (K)

### **S2 sends Morse data stream: "S1 DE S2 $\overline{KN}$ "**

S1 from S2 Over to you (listening for a response only from designated station)

### **S1 sends Morse data stream: "S2 DE S1 = GA DR OM UR RST 5NN HR = QTH TIMBUKTU = OP IS JOHN = HW? S2 DE S1 $\overline{KN}$ "**

S2 from S1 (Note the "=" sign here represents the 'new paragraph' prosign as might be displayed on a single or dual line display automatic Morse code reader. However if copying manually the receiving operator will merely space down to create a new paragraph upon hearing the prosign indicated here by "=".)

Good afternoon dear old man. You are RST 599 here (Note: RST indicates use of the RST code, the Readability, Strength and Tone code, and the N's substitute for numeric 9's RST 599 indicates; signal is very readable (5) and very strong (9), with very good tone (9))

I'm located (QTH) in Timbuktu

The operator's (OP) name is John

How do you copy? (HW?) S2 from S1 Over to you

**S2 sends Morse data stream: "S1 DE S2 = TNX FB RPRT DR OM JOHN UR 559 = QTH HIMALAYA = NM IS YETI S1 DE S2  $\overline{\text{KN}}$ "**

S1 from S2

Thanks for the Fine Business (FB means "fine") report dear old man John. I read you 559 (very readable (5), average strength (5), very good tone (9))

I am in (QTH) the Himalayas

My name (NM) is Yeti S1 from S2 Over to you

**S1 sends Morse data stream: "S2 DE S1 = OK TNX QSO DR YETI = 73 ES HPE CUAGN S2 DE S1  $\overline{\text{KN}}$ "**

S2 from S1

Okay, thanks for this conversation (QSO), dear Yeti

Best regards (73) and (ES) hope (HPE) to see you again (CUAGN) S2 from S1 Over to you

**S2 sends Morse data stream: "S1 DE S2 = R TU CUAGN 73 S1 DE S2  $\overline{\text{SK}}$ "**

S1 from S2

Roger (R means "Roger" or "Received all") Thank you (TU) see you again (CUAGN) Best regards (73) S1 from S2 Signing off

## Informal Language Independent Conversations

Rag chewer is a name applied to amateur radio Morse code operators who engage in informal Morse code conversations (known as chewing the rag) while discussing subjects such as: the weather, their location, signal quality, and their equipment. Meaningful rag chewing between fluent Morse code operators having different native languages is possible because of a common *Lingua Franca* provided by: the prosigns for Morse code, the International Q code, Z code, RST code, the telegraph era Phillips Code and many well known Morse code abbreviations as discussed in this Wikipedia article. Together all of these traditional conventions serve as a somewhat cryptic but commonly understood language (Lingua Franca) within the world-wide community of amateur radio Morse code operators.

These codes and protocols efficiently encode many well known statements and questions from many languages into short simple character groups which may be sent manually very quickly. The international Q code for instance encodes literally hundreds of full normal language sentences and questions in short three character codes each beginning with the character Q. For example, the code word QTH means "My location is". If this code word is followed by a question mark as QTH? it means "What is your location?". Typically very few full words will be spelled out in Morse code conversations. Often vowels are left out to shorten transmissions and turn overs. Other examples, of internationally recognized usages of Morse code abbreviations and well known code numbers, such as those of the Phillips Code from past eras of telegraph technology, are usages such as WX for weather, or the numbers 73 for best regards and 88 for love and kisses.

These techniques are similar to, and often much faster than, texting on modern cellphones. Using this extensive Lingua Franca that is widely understood across many languages and cultures, surprisingly meaningful Morse code conversations can be efficiently conducted with short transmissions independently of native languages, even between operators who cannot actually communicate by voice because of language barriers!

With heavy use of the Q code and Morse Code Abbreviations, surprisingly meaningful conversations can readily occur. Note that in the preceding example conversation very few full English words have been used. In fact, S1 and S2 might not speak the same native language.

Of course, real rag-chewing (lengthy conversations) could not be accomplished by non-native speakers without such a common language.

Contesters often use a very specialized and even shorter format for their contacts. Their purpose is to process as many contacts as possible in a limited time (e.g. 100–150 per hour).

## See also

- 92 Code
- ACP-131
- Brevity code
- Prosigns for Morse code
- Phillips Code

- Q code
- RST code
- Z code

## References

1. Commercial Telegraphic Code Books (<http://dtc.umn.edu/~reedsj/codebooks.html>) James A. (Jim) Reeds Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20081231034800/http://dtc.umn.edu/~reedsj/codebooks.html>) December 31, 2008, at the Wayback Machine.

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