

Q-codes and Prosigns

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What are Q-codes?

- ▶ Short (three letter) codes for particular messages (both questions and answers)
- ▶ Always start with the letter Q
 - ▶ No callsigns will ever start with Q
 - ▶ No country ITU prefixes will ever start with Q
- ▶ Originally created for Morse code use
- ▶ Now often used in voice communications as well
- ▶ Standardized internationally - language independent

What are Q-codes?

- ▶ QAA-QNZ reserved for aeronautical use
- ▶ QOA-QQZ reserved for maritime use
- ▶ QRA-QUZ available for all services
- ▶ Can be used as a question OR as an answer/statement

Adaptations Over Time

- ▶ The Q-code definitions have changed over time
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ QSW originally was used for “Shall I increase my spark gap frequency?”
 - ▶ Now used for “Will you send on this frequency?”

History of the Q-code

- ▶ Originally created around 1909 by the British government
- ▶ Used for communications between ships and in ship to shore communications
- ▶ List of 45 codes were published following the Third International Radiotelegraph Convention in London in 1912
 - ▶ Examples:

Q-code	As a Question	As a Response
QRA	What ship is this?	This is _____.
QRD	Where are you bound for?	I am bound for _____.
QRG	What line do you belong to?	I belong to the _____ line.

Amateur Radio Use

- ▶ Q-codes have been adapted to amateur use
 - ▶ QRA-QUZ codes have been adopted
 - ▶ not all codes make sense in amateur usage, e.g. QSJ - how much will this transmission cost?
- ▶ Originally used in CW, now also frequently used in voice transmissions
- ▶ Often also used outside of radio communications
 - ▶ QST Magazine (QST == General Call to All Stations)
 - ▶ QRZ Web Site (QRZ == Who is calling me?)

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QNA	not applicable	Answer Net Control in pre-arranged order, or only specified station check in
QNF	Is the net Free?	The net is free
QNI	May I join the net?	You may check in ...
QNU	Does the net have traffic for me?	The net has traffic for you; please stand by
QNX	May I be excused from net?	You are excused
QRA	What is the name (or call sign) of your station?	The name (or call sign) of my station is ...
QRG	Will you tell me my exact frequency (or that of ...)?	Your exact frequency (or that of ...) is ... kHz (or MHz).

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QRH	Does my frequency vary?	Your frequency varies.
QRI	How is the tone of my transmission?	The tone of your transmission is (1. Good; 2. Variable; 3. Bad)
QRJ	How many voice contacts do you want to make?	I want to make ... voice contacts.
QRK	What is the readability of my signals (or those of ...)?	The readability of your signals (or those of ...) is ... (1 to 5).
QRL	Are you busy?	I am busy (in contact with ...). Please do not interfere.
QRM	Do you have (human-made) interference?	I have (human-made) interference.
QRN	Are you troubled by (natural) static?	I am troubled by (natural) static.

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QRO	Shall I increase power?	Increase power.
QRP	Shall I decrease power?	Decrease power.
QRQ	Shall I send faster?	Send faster (... wpm).
QRS	Shall I send more slowly?	Send more slowly (... wpm).
QRT	Shall I cease or suspend operation? / shutoff the radio?	I am suspending operation / shutting off the radio.
QRU	Have you anything for me?	I have ... messages for you.
QRV	Are you ready?	I am ready.
QRW	Shall I inform ... that you are calling (him) on ... kHz (or MHz)?	Please inform ... that I am calling (him) on ... kHz (or MHz).
QRX	Shall I standby? / When will you call me again?	Please standby / I will call you again at ... (hours) on ... kHz (or MHz)

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QRZ	Who is calling me?	You are being called by ... on ... kHz (or MHz)
QSA	What is the strength of my signals (or those of ...)?	The strength of your signals (or those of ...) is ... (1 to 5).
QSB	Are my signals fading?	Your signals are fading.
QSD	Is my keying defective?	Your keying is defective.
QSG	Shall I send ... telegrams (messages) at a time?	Send ... telegrams (messages) at a time.
QSH	Stay Happy & Healthy	Stay Happy & Healthy
QSK	Can you hear me between your signals?	I can hear you between my signals.

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QSL	Can you acknowledge receipt?	I will acknowledge receipt.
QSM	Shall I repeat the last telegram (message) which I sent you, or some previous telegram (message)?	Repeat the last telegram (message) which you sent me (or telegram(s) / message(s) numbers(s) ...).
QSN	Did you hear me (or ... (call sign)) on ... kHz (or MHz)?	I did hear you (or ... (call sign)) on ... kHz (or MHz).
QSO	Can you communicate with ... direct or by relay?	I can communicate with ... direct (or by relay through ...).
QSP	Will you relay a message to ... ?	I will relay a message to
QSR	Do you want me to repeat my call?	Please repeat your call; I did not hear you.
QSS	What working frequency will you use?	I will use the working frequency ... kHz (or MHz).

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QST	Should I repeat the prior message to all amateurs I contact?	Here follows a broadcast message to all amateurs.
QSU	Shall I send or reply on this frequency (or on ... kHz (or MHz))?	Send or reply on this frequency (or on ... kHz (or MHz)).
QSW	Will you send on this frequency (or on ... kHz (or MHz))?	I am going to send on this frequency (or on ... kHz (or MHz)).
QSX	Will you listen to ... (call sign(s) on ... kHz (or MHz))?	I am listening to ... (call sign(s) on ... kHz (or MHz))
QSY	Shall I change to transmission on another frequency?	Change to transmission on another frequency (or on ... kHz (or MHz)).
QSZ	Shall I send each word or group more than once?	Send each word or group twice (or ... times).
QTA	Shall I cancel telegram (message) number ... as if it had not been sent?	Cancel telegram (message) number ... as if it had not been sent.

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QTC	How many telegrams (messages) have you to send?	I have ... telegrams (messages) for you (or for ...).
QTH	What is your position in latitude and longitude? (or according to any other indication)	My position is ... latitude ... longitude.
QTR	What is the correct time?	The correct time is ... hours UTC .
QTU	At what times are you operating?	I am operating from ... to ... hours.
QTX	Will you keep your station open for further communication with me until further notice (or until ... hours)?	I will keep my station open for further communication with you until further notice (or until ... hours).
QUA	Have you news of ... (call sign)?	Here is news of ... (call sign).

Q-codes in Amateur Use

Q-code	Question	Answer or Statement
QUC	What is the number (or other indication) of the last message you received from me (or from ... (call sign))?	The number (or other indication) of the last message I received from you (or from ... (call sign)) is ...
QUD	Have you received the urgency signal sent by ... (call sign of mobile station)?	I have received the urgency signal sent by ... (call sign of mobile station) at ... hours.
QUE	Can you speak in ... (language) - with interpreter if necessary - if so, on what frequencies?	I can speak in ... (language) on ... kHz (or MHz).
QUF	Have you received the distress signal sent by ... (call sign of mobile station)?	I have received the distress signal sent by ... (call sign of mobile station) at ... hours.

Responding to Q-codes

- ▶ For codes that merely need to be acknowledged as having been received, it is common to send “R” or “Roger”
- ▶ For codes that need an affirmative response, it is common to send “C”
- ▶ For codes that need a negative response, it is common to send “N”

Informal Usage

- ▶ Often used as part of a phrase when used in voice transmissions
 - ▶ Example: “What’s your QTH?” where in CW you would just send “QTH?”
- ▶ Sometimes “unofficial” Q-codes are used
 - ▶ QLF - are you sending with your left foot? try sending with your left foot.
 - ▶ QNB - how many buttons on your radio? QNB 100/5 - my radio has 100 buttons, and I know how to use 5 of them.
 - ▶ QSY - used to refer to physical move instead of frequency move
e.g. Is N7LCR ever going to QSY to Murray? Or is he going to stay in WVC?

ARRL Nets QN-codes

- ▶ In 1939, ARRL started using special QN codes during nets
- ▶ Conflict with the aeronautical space
- ▶ FCC has signed off on their use on amateur nets
- ▶ Defined in ARRL publication FSD-218
[FSD-218: ARRL QN Signals for CW Net Use](#)

QN-codes

QN-code	Meaning
QNA*	This is a request from the Net Control Station for all respondents to answer in a prearranged sequence, as a congestion avoidance measure.
QNB*	This is a request from the Net Control Station for one station to relay traffic between 2 other stations who cannot read each other.
QNC	An announcement alerting all stations on the Net to standby for an "All Stations" message, that is, a message of interest to all stations on the Net.
QND*	An announcement by the Net Control Station, that the Net is currently operating "Directed", that is, the Net Control Station is controlling all traffic. Often done during times of high Net usage. c.f. QNF.
QNE*	A broadcast announcement to all stations by the Net Control Station, asking all stations on the Net to stop transmitting and stand by.
QNF	An announcement that the net is no longer "Directed," but is now free. c.f. QND.
QNG	A request for a named station to assume the role of Net Control Station.

codes marked with * are for the net control station only

QN-codes

QN-code	Meaning
QNH	A notice to a named station that the frequency that the station is transmitting on is higher than the Net's nominal frequency. c.f. QNL.
QNI	When used by the Net Control Station, this is a request for all stations to announce themselves. When used by a regular Net member, it simply is an announcement that they have joined.
QNJ	When used by itself, this asks the Net if the calling station can be heard. When used in conjunction with a station's call sign, it is asking if the Net can read that particular station.
QNK*	A request from the Net Control Station to send a message from a third party to a specific station.
QNL	A notice to a named station that the frequency that the station is transmitting on is lower than the Net's nominal frequency. c.f. QNH.

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QN-codes

QN-code	Meaning
QNM*	A notice from the Net Control Station to a particular station or stations, informing them that they are causing interference on the Net, and asking them to stop transmitting.
QNN	As a question, asks whom the Net Control Station is. As a declarative, it announces what station is the active Net Control Station.
QNO	An announcement by a particular station that they are signing off from the Net.
QNP	By itself, announces that the sending station was unable to understand the last station. When used with a station's call sign, announces that the sending station was unable to copy that named station.
QNQ*	A complex request from the Net Control Station asking a specific station to change frequency to a specified one, then to wait for a named station on that frequency to finish whatever traffic it is currently engaged in, and then to send that station traffic on behalf of yet a third named station. c.f. QNV.

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QN-codes

QN-code	Meaning
QNR	Requesting that any station please respond to a specific named station and receive traffic from them.
QNS*	As a question, asks for a listing of all stations currently on the net. As a declarative, announces what stations are on the Net, followed by the list thereof.
QNT	Request by a station to leave the net for a specified number of minutes.
QNU*	An announcement by the Net Control Station to a specific station, informing them that there is Net traffic for them, and to stand by to copy it.
QNV*	A complex request from the Net Control Station asking a specific station to make contact on the current frequency with a named station, and upon successful contact, to move to another specified frequency, and then to send that station traffic on behalf of yet a third named station. c.f. QNQ.
QNW	A question from a station inquiring on how to route traffic for a specific named station.

codes marked with * are for the net control station only

QN-codes

QN-code	Meaning
QNX	As a question, a request from a station to leave the net. The Net Control Station will then reply with the same code, informing them that they may leave.
QNY*	A request by the Net Control Station for a station to change to another specified frequency and exchange all pending traffic with another named station.
QNZ	A request from one station to a second, asking that station to "Zero Beat" with the first station: a method of ensuring 2 stations are on the same frequency by transmitting simultaneously and fine-tuning the frequency until no acoustic beat is heard.

codes marked with * are for the net control station only

What about Prosigns?

- ▶ Procedural Signs
- ▶ Used primarily in CW transmissions
- ▶ Indicate special signals/control instructions
- ▶ Similar in use to control-characters in ASCII
- ▶ Not the same as “Brevity Codes” or abbreviations
- ▶ Used for standardization
- ▶ Generally written as a two-letter sequence (typically with an overbar) but transmitted without an inter-letter gap

Prosigns

Prosign	Meaning	Usage
DE	from	precede the sending station
NIL	nothing heard	general response for “nothing,” “none,” or “not available.” also can indicate “I have no messages for you.”
R	roger	the message has been received. does NOT indicate that it will be acted upon or was understood.
K	over	your turn to transmit.
$\overline{\text{AR}}$	out	end of transmission.
CL	closing	station is shutting down.
CQ	CQ	general call to any station
$\overline{\text{AS}}$	wait	I need to pause a few minutes or I am listening to another station (that you can't hear)... please wait.

Prosigns

Prosign	Meaning	Usage
$\overline{\text{VE}}$	verified	message is verified.
?	say again	please repeat your last transmission. can also be used after a Q-code to indicate that the Q-code is to be interpreted as a question.
$\overline{\text{HH}}$	correction	the preceding text was in error... the following text is the corrected text.
C	correct	the answer is “yes.”
N	negative	the answer is “no.”
$\overline{\text{BT}}$	break	start a new section of message.
BK	break in	interrupt a transmission already in progress.
$\overline{\text{KA}}$	attention	message begins, start of work, new message.
WX	weather report	weather report follows

Other Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Usage
73	Best Regards
88	Hugs and Kisses
HIHI	Ha ha, that's funny
OM	Old Man
YL	Young Lady
XYL	Ex-Young Lady (a.k.a. Wife)
DX	Long distance contact/rare station

Q&A

