

AMATEUR (HAM) RADIO FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS (and Answers)

1. How does Ham Radio differ from CB or FRS?
 - a. Diversity of multiple operating bands
 - b. Much higher power allowed - 1,000 watts
 - c. Worldwide range vs. usually less than 10 miles
 - d. AM, FM, CW, SSB, TV, and Digital modes avail.
 - e. Repeaters available
 - f. VOIP available (Voice Over Internet Protocol)
2. What classes of FCC license are available?
 - a. TECHNICIAN – Limited spectrum & low power
 - b. GENERAL - Wide spectrum & full KW power
 - c. EXTRA - Full Amateur Radio spectrum avail.
3. What are the “specialties” in Amateur Radio?
 - a. *Ragchewing* (ordinary conversation)
 - b. *DX* (pursuing contacts with foreign countries)
 - c. *County-Hunting* (contact every U.S. county)
 - d. *Microwave Operating*
 - e. *Contests (Sweepstakes, Field Day, DX, etc)*
 - f. Experimentation and *Home-building Equip’t*
 - g. *Public Service & Emergency Operation*
 - h. *Meteor Scatter, Aurora and Moon Bounce*
- 4.) Why are there over a dozen widely-spaced Ham frequency-bands and how do they differ?

The ionospheric properties of Reflection and Absorption are very frequency-dependent and cause the different bands to perform differently. This provides great diversity to the Ham experience.
5. What is the ARRL?

ARRL stands for American Radio Relay League which has been the leading Ham Radio organization for 100 years. Most Hams are ARRL members and receive the monthly magazine “QST”. The ARRL web site < www.arrl.org/ > is the premier source of information on all facets of Amateur Radio.
- 6.) How do I get a study guide to help me prepare for the FCC exam?
 - a.) The recommended source is on the ARRL web page < www.arrl.org/catalog/lm/ > where you can order two books; “The ARRL Ham Radio License Manual” (\$24.95) and “ARRL’s Tech Q&A” (\$17.95). Or, you can order “The Ham Radio License Course” which includes an Online Course, the Book, and a one- year ARRL membership with 12 monthly QST magazines.
 - b. You can also order the popular Gordon West

Book (\$18.95) and Audio CD Theory Course on the W5YI website: <www.w5yi.org/catalog.php?sort=4>
c.) Borrow books from a friend or SRH member.

- 7.) If I don’t want to do self-study, how do I find a nearby class to help me prepare for the test?
 - a.) On the ARRL Home page click on “Classes” in the upper left corner and follow directions.
 - b.) Check the Gordon West web site for local classes: < www.gordonwestradioschool.com/ > Books can also be ordered at this site.
 - c.) Many cities are offering Ham Radio licensing classes in connection with their “Community Emergency Response Team” or CERT program. Check with City Hall.

- 8.) Are there practice tests available online?

Yes, there are practice tests and a wealth of study materials available on the QRZ web site: < www.qrz.com/ >. Click on “License Study” and “Practice Tests” near the bottom of left-most column on the Home Page. The W5YI book store is also accessible from this home page. Explore this entire site for much useful information.

- 9.) Where can I take the FCC exam?

The FCC delegates the conduct of exams to authorized hams called “Volunteer Examiners”. The VE’s serve at local Ham Clubs and other organizations. Again, the ARRL Home page is where you can locate them. Click on “Exams” on the upper left corner of the Home Page. Sam’s Radio Hams has several VE’s and conducts exams for prospective members.

10. How does Sam’s Radio Hams combine Amateur Radio with RV’ing to enjoy for the past 28 years a thriving Good Sam Club Chapter that currently has 70+ members?

All our members have 2-meter radios and many also have HF radios in their RV’s and cars. These are useful when caravanning or guiding-in members to a campground. At campouts we use 2-meters as an intercom for announcements and conversation between rigs. Also at campouts we sometimes have hidden transmitter hunts, antenna tests, etc. Between campouts we have daily and weekly HF nets to offer tech advice, keep in-touch, exchange ideas and plan future events.