

Morse Code Sound Patterns (Alphabet)

Note: By consensus of many morse instructors in over a century of teaching morse code, it is generally considered counter-productive to learn the morse alphabet visually (i.e., as dashes and dots). What came about, then, to emphasize the need to learn morse aurally (just as it would be used on-the-air), are the word sounds "di" (or "dit", a short staccato sound) and "DAH" (a heavier, longer sound). Even these are approximations, but one needs to start someplace.

Timing: In real practice, using tonal sounds (as one would encounter on-the-air), the "DAH" is ideally three times the duration of the "dit". The spacing between dits and DAHS (within a single character) is equal in duration to a silent "dit". The spacing between characters is equal to the duration of a silent "DAH". And the standard spacing between words is equal to the duration of a silent character "A" (i.e., dit-DAH).

Speed: In words-per-minute (wpm), speed is taken to mean the number of times the word "PARIS", using standard timing as explained above, will exactly fit into one minute. I recommend one have the ability to copy (and send) with 90% accuracy at 10 wpm before attempting to communicate "on-the-air".

Sending: It is a common misconception that if one learns to RECEIVE morse code, sending skills will come automatically. This misconception can lead to a disastrous first experience on-the-air. Sending involves mechanical skills, the timing for which can only be learned by actual practice. The classic choice for practicing sending is a hand key and code practice oscillator. There are other choices available (keyers with dual and single-lever paddles, mechanical "bugs", and keyboards or computers). The choice is yours, but I highly recommend resisting the temptation to use keyboards/PC's, unless you have a physical disability that necessitates it, because you'll be missing out on half of the CW experience.

MORSE CODE PATTERNS

Character	Pattern	Character	Pattern
A	di-DAH	N	DAH-dit
B	DAH-di-di-dit	O	DAH-DAH-DAH
C	DAH-di-DAH-dit	P	di-DAH-DAH-dit
D	DAH-di-dit	Q	DAH-DAH-di-DAH
E	dit	R	di-DAH-dit
F	di-di-DAH-dit	S	di-di-dit
G	DAH-DAH-dit	T	DAH
H	di-di-di-dit	U	di-di-DAH
I	di- dit	V	di-di-di-DAH
J	di-DAH-DAH-DAH	W	di-DAH-DAH
K	DAH-di-DAH	X	DAH-di-di-DAH
L	di-DAH-di-dit	Y	DAH-di-DAH-DAH
M	DAH-DAH	Z	DAH-DAH-di-dit

Number	Pattern	Punctuation	Pattern
1	di-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH	Dash (pause)	DAH-di-di-di-DAH
2	di-di-DAH-DAH-DAH	Period (.)	di-DAH-di-DAH-di-DAH
3	di-di-di-DAH-DAH	Comma (,)	DAH-DAH-di-di-DAH-DAH
4	di-di-di-di-DAH	Question (?)	di-di-DAH-DAH-di-dit
5	di-di-di-di-dit	Slant (/)	DAH-di-di-DAH-dit
6	DAH-di-di-di-dit		
7	DAH-DAH-di-di-dit		
8	DAH-DAH-DAH-di-dit		
9	DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-dit		
0	DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH		

Special	Pattern
Error	di-di-di-di-di-di-di-dit
Error (alternate)	di-dit dit-dit
Break (BK)	DAH-di-di-di-DAH-di-DAH
End-of-Message (AR)	di-DAH-di-DAH-dit
End-of-QSO (SK)	di-di-di-DAH-di-DAH
Please Wait (AS)	di-DAH-di-di-dit
Specific Station Only - Go Ahead -	DAH-di-DAH-DAH-dit