

Amateur Radio Quick-Start

Amateur Radio (ham radio) is a popular hobby and service that brings people, electronics and communication together. People use ham radio to talk across town, around the world, or even into space, all without the Internet or cell phones. It's fun, social, educational, and can be a lifeline during times of need.

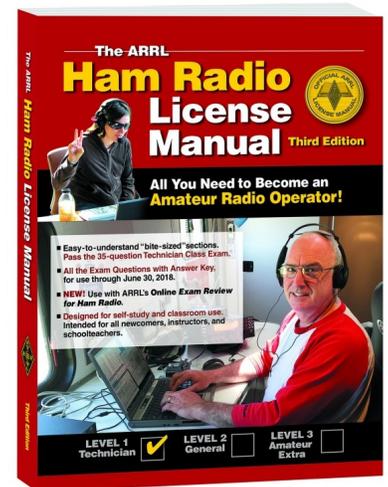
Although Amateur Radio operators get involved for many reasons, they all have in common a basic knowledge of radio technology and operating principles, and pass an examination for the FCC license to operate on radio frequencies known as the "Amateur Bands." These bands are radio frequencies allocated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for use by ham radio operators.



The ARRL is the national association for amateur radio (the "Mother Ship"). Their web site is loaded with information about how to earn your amateur radio license from the FCC, and what you can do with it once you have it:

www.arrl.org/getting-licensed

There are three license levels: Technician, General and Extra. The Technician license is the entry-level license. You need to answer 27 out of 35 multiple-choice questions correctly to pass the test. There are several study guides available. I recommend the ARRL Ham Radio License Manual (3rd edition). It includes a CD with practice exam software. Other guides (including a [free one](#) by KB6NU) can be found by Googling "amateur radio license study guide". Please note: The question pool is updated every four years, so make sure that the guide you are using covers the current pool, i.e. 2014-2018. Free exam study apps can also be found in both the Apple and Android app stores.



HamTestOnline is a very popular and effective way to study online for your license exam. The Technician course costs \$25.

When you think you're ready, license exams are offered by local amateur radio clubs. Check www.arrl.org/exam_sessions for the next exam session in your area.

The Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club is very active. Visit k4co.org to find out more about us. (Also look for our Facebook page under "NKARC".) Come to one of our meetings — we're a friendly, informal group, and we love to have visitors!



A few other useful websites:

Wikipedia has a very good article on ham radio: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_radio

Hams tend to use a lot of jargon. This guide helps sort it all out: www.qrz.com/page/hamspeak.html

Wondering about which radio to buy? eHam contains user reviews of every make and model under the sun: www.eham.net/reviews/

To find out who a particular amateur radio call sign belongs to, visit www.qrz.com. The site also has discussion forums and a buy & sell area.

If you have any questions about amateur radio, feel free to contact Mark Volstad at ai4bj@arrl.net.