



## Level 1 CW Academy Student Handbook

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## **Introduction**

You have applied to participate in CWops' CW Academy Level 1 program. This program is intended for people who do not yet know all Morse Code letters and numbers, or who learned Morse Code in a way that has limited them to under 10 words-per-minute (wpm). For those who will be learning Morse for the first time, our goal is have you learn it the best way and not have to unlearn wrong methods, later. For those who learned Morse in a way that inhibits their speed, you will have an opportunity to learn it the best way and break through those speed barriers. In either case, welcome to CW Academy.

## **The Level 1 Program**

CWops' Level 1 program makes use of online classrooms rather than having applicants go to a physical training room location, or try to learn Morse over the air. The result is you will be participating in a virtual classroom with other applicants from many different locations. In the beginning, the class will stress learning all the Morse characters and numbers using a method that has proven to be very successful. Toward the end of the eight-week sessions, you will have an opportunity to engage in simulated CW QSOs, DXpedition QSOs, and contest QSOs. The idea is to have you become familiar with procedures and protocols so that when you actually get on the air using Morse, you will feel like you are on familiar ground.

## **Different Classes; Different Instructors**

CWops' Level 1 instructors are all accomplished CW operators with experience in ragchew, DX and contest operations. Along with the Morse lessons, they will also convey to you advice based on their individual experiences. Therefore, no two classes will be exactly alike. Some may meet two times per week for about an hour each time; others may meet more than two times per week for a shorter duration. All classes are paced so that you will have the full course completed in the eight-week sessions period.

## **Sessions Schedule**

Level 1 classes begin after Jan 1 and run through January and February; after April 1 and run through April and May; and after September 1 and run through September and October. Ideal class sizes are 6 students and 1 instructor, but classes can be as large as 8 students and 1 instructor.

Enrollment is limited by the number who apply and the number of instructors available to teach. Students who apply before a session begins are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. Where classes become full, we place those who cannot be served in the top of the list for the next session. Space in these classes is at a premium.

### **What You Will Need**

These classes are conducted as virtual training room sessions. Each student is part of a group of students and an instructor able to see and hear each other in their virtual classroom. There is NO charge for participating in CW Academy, however, there may be some costs associated with the equipment you will need.

The minimum essential set up includes:

- A computer (desktop or laptop) with CPU clock rate of 1 GHz or higher
- RAM sufficient to support streaming audio and video
- Wideband Internet access (DSL, cable or 802.11n wireless)
- A webcam (a small inexpensive device that has camera and microphone built in)
- Earphones or headset
- A hand key
- A code-practice oscillator or radio sidetone with speaker output sufficient to be picked up by the webcam microphone
- Downloaded OOVOO program ([www.oovoo.com](http://www.oovoo.com))
- Access to 'Morse translator' (<http://morsecode.scphillips.com/translator.html>) for homework assignments and practice
- Other online tools per your instructor (all freeware).

### **Initial Preparation**

Prior to your first class session, you should download OOVOO, signup at the basic (no cost) level, create your OOVOO ID (e.g. Joe\_K2XX) and check your setup by using the 'help' tab and 'check audio video' tab. This will enable you to test your camera, audio input (speakers), and audio output (microphone). If you have any problems with setup, please contact your instructor via his email address. You will receive the instructor's contact information about a week before the first session

begins. Once you have your instructor's OOVOO ID, use the 'contacts' tab to add the instructor as a friend. This will enable the instructor to 'call' you at the beginning of each session in order to pull the group together into a single online group class.

### **Your Instructor's Commitment**

Please keep in mind that your CW Academy instructor is a volunteer who is giving up his time during the sessions period to instruct you in the learning of Morse, and the procedures and protocols of CW operation on the HF bands. Your instructor is committed to leading all the sessions on schedule, or to in a timely way arrange an alternative session to avoid a scheduling conflict.

### **Your Commitment**

It is very important that you understand that learning Morse is an individual endeavor. No one can put Morse into your head except you! The sessions held each week are only a small part of the process. You must commit to spending 30 minutes per day practicing during the non-session days. The best way to do that is to spend 15 minutes, take a break, and spend another 15 minutes. You will be using Morse Translator or other tools assigned by your instructor to practice the letters, numbers, and words you learn in each session. There is no short-cut around spending that between-class time. If you put in the time, you will learn Morse. If you don't; you won't.

We ask you to email your instructor after he has contacted you and write, in essence, that you will commit to spending 30 minutes per non-session day learning and practicing your Morse assignments. That email will be considered 'your word.' If you do not feel that you can make that commitment, please consider opting out and giving your place to someone who will do so.