

Amateur Radio – Understanding Abbreviations

●The RST Code

RST stands for Readability, Signal Strength and Tone, and is usually transmitted as a group of two or three numbers, e.g. 59 or 599. A 599 report indicates to the receiving station that his signal is perfectly readable, extremely strong and the tone of his signal is a pure note. This last number is only used in the case of morse code and radio teletype transmissions.

●Readability

R1 Unreadable
R2 Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable
R3 Readable with considerable difficulty.
R4 Readable with practically no difficulty
R5 Perfectly readable

●Signal Strength

S1 Faint, signals barely perceptible
S2 Very weak signals
S3 Weak Signals
S4 Fair Signals
S5 Fairly good signals
S6 Good Signals
S7 Moderately strong signals
S8 Strong signals
S9 Extremely strong signals

●Tone

T1 Extremely rough hissing note
T2 Very rough ac note, no trace of musicality
T3 Rough, low pitched ac note, slightly musical
T4 Rather rough ac note, moderately musical
T5 Musically modulated note
T6 Modulated note, slight trace of whistle
T7 Near dc note, smooth ripple
T8 Good dc note, just a trace of ripple
T9 Purest dc note

●The ‘Q’ Code

The listener may at first be confused by some of the ‘jargon’ used in contacts. For example ‘QSY’ and ‘QRZ’ which originated from abbreviations used to simplify morse transmissions. The advantage of using these terms is that they are understood internationally. The following is a list of some of the more common ‘Q’ Codes:

QRA	Address	QRP	Low Power	QRG	Frequency
QRT	Close down	QRI	Bad note	QRX	Stand bye
QRO	High Power	QSB	Fading	QRK	Signal Strength
QSD	Bad sending	QSO	Radio Contact	QRZ	Who’s calling me
QSP	Relay Message	QTH	Location	QSY	Change Frequency
QRM	Interference from other stations	QRN	Interference from atmospherics	QSL	Verification of contact