

About Amateur (“Ham”) Radio Examinations, and a few Study Tips

In a one day class, we use a “ham cram” class approach of reviewing each question and strive to make information out of all the data in the material. Our goal is to help you pass the exam so you can get out there, use your radios and gain experience.

There are three exams (and license grades) in Amateur Radio. The first (entry level) is Technician, and can then go on to increase you on-air privileges by upgrading from Tech to General (and General to Extra Class. Here’s a little info about how the Tech and General exams work:

- Each Technician (and General) Exam has 35 questions taken from a fixed question pool of about 400 possible questions.
- The questions are grouped into Elements and Sub-Elements, and an exam is created by randomly choosing one question from each of the 35 Sub-Elements.
- You must answer 26 of the 35 correctly for a passing score (>71%).
- All questions are multiple-choice (A, B, C, or D).
- The questions on the test must be taken from the official Question Pool that can be found at <http://ncvec.org/>
- The question wording may not be altered in preparing an exam, except for rearranging the answers between A), B), C), and D) presented in the Question Pool.

We strongly recommend that you read through the Question Pool file. This file has each question from the pool with all answers and tells you which is the correct answer. The purpose is to allow you to become familiar with each question and its correct answer.

Caution: Reading this document may cause drowsiness.

In class, we review each question in turn, explaining the topics as they come up. (We also offer “test taking tips” that may help you pass the exam.)

We strongly recommend study in advance. To help you study, you can use one or more of the many excellent resources on the web for drilling the question pool (think flash cards) and for taking practice tests. First study/drill the questions until you have some familiarity with them and then start taking practice tests (to help build your confidence in the testing process). A resource that has a drill mode will allow you to select a Sub-Element of questions and present each one until you answer it correctly (with help along the way). In practice test mode, you’ll be presented with 35 randomly selected questions and scored on your ability to answer them correctly.

Among the resources are hamtestonline.com (which has a nominal fee), aa9pw.com, Ham Academy from <http://www.ah0a.org>, and qrz.com. Each has it’s advantages. As examples: Hamtestonline.com has excellent study materials, and gets high marks from those we know who have used it, and Ham Academy can run entirely in your browser (not online).

Please note: the Question Pool changes every four years.

The Technician pool has just changed – the new pool is effective 01-July-2014.

Make sure the tools and sites you use say that they’re using the “2014-2018 Tech Pool”!

Two more points:

1. Attending a class is not required to take the exam. If your independent study has given you the confidence that you can pass the test, there’s a regular session somewhere in San Diego County every Saturday morning. See the SANDARC website <http://www.sandarc.net/> for details of times, places, and how to sign up for a regular examination session.
2. In class we discuss the questions and strive to make information from all the details. You’re welcome to attend a class even if you’ve already passed the exam and have your callsign. We’ve also had people licensed for years “sit in” to reacquaint themselves with the material.

If you have any questions, contact the instructor and/or the person managing the roster for your class. Good Luck!