

# What is Ham Radio?

■ A man in Dallas receives a data transmission from an orbiting satellite. He forwards the data to a university in Norway, to help the students with a science project.

■ During a Colorado wildfire, communications assistance from volunteer Amateur Radio operators helps save lives and property.



■ A woman in Connecticut uses a pocket-sized handheld radio when she's out of cell phone range to talk to her friends in North Carolina.

*This unique mix of fun, public service, and experimentation is the distinguishing characteristic of Amateur Radio, also called "ham" radio.*



**ARRL** The national association for AMATEUR RADIO®



# FAQs

## Who uses ham radio?

Amateur Radio operators come from all walks of life. They are people of all ages, income levels, and nationalities. They speak to the world in many languages and many ways. But whether they prefer talking into a microphone, interfacing their radios to a tablet and typing messages, or sending Morse code by hand, they all have an interest in what's happening in the world around them, and they use radio to reach out.

## What's the appeal of ham radio?

Some people are attracted by the ability to communicate across the country and around the world without the need for the Internet or a cell phone network. Others enjoy building and experimenting with electronics or interfacing radio transmitters with their computers. Still others enjoy the thrill of trying to make a radio contact with every country in the world. Some of us serve our communities by providing communications during civic events, or emergencies such as tornadoes or floods.

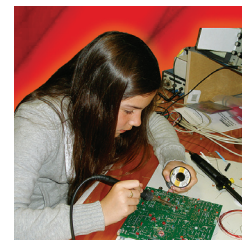
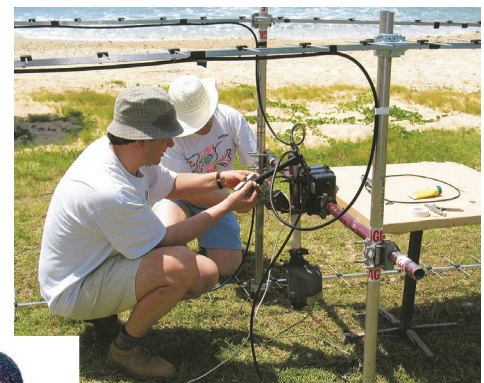
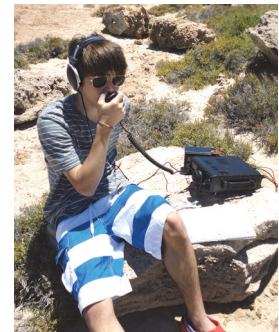
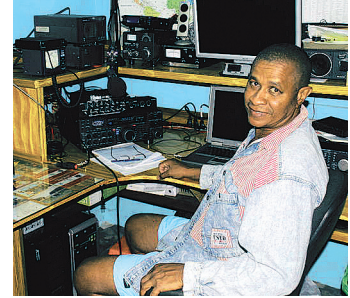
Mostly, we use Amateur Radio to open the door to new worldwide relationships over the airwaves with people we may never meet in person, though we come to call them friends.

## How much does ham radio cost?

Basic study materials to get your entry-level license cost less than \$40. Taking a license class sponsored by a local Amateur Radio club is the best way to go, but there are plenty of online courses and instruction materials, too. Once you have your first license, you may find it best to start with simple equipment and build your station over time. You can find a good handheld radio for under \$100 and start saying hello to the world!

## What is the ARRL?

Founded in 1914, the 165,000-member American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is the national association for Amateur Radio in the United States. Many countries also have their own national associations. ARRL is the primary source of information about what is going on in the ham radio world. We provide books, news, study materials, and support and information for individuals and clubs. ARRL also sponsors on-air operating events, continuing education classes, and many other benefits for our members. Being a member of ARRL is important for Amateur Radio and Amateur Radio operators!



## Amateur Radio is...

- Science
- Service
- Skill

## ...Join us!

For local information, contact:

**Shelby County Amateur Radio Club**

[www.w4shl.com](http://www.w4shl.com)

PO Box 125, Helena, AL 35080

Or visit [www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio](http://www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio)

ARRL ■ 225 Main St. ■ Newington, CT 06111  
860-594-0200 [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)