



GET

ON THE AIR

THE LICW STUDENT START GUIDE

GETTING STARTED IN LICW ACADEMICS

VERSION 1.1



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Ⓢ LICW is committed to ensuring digital accessibility for people with disabilities. We strive to continually improve our curriculum, teaching methods, and training devices to enhance the user experience for all. This document has been optimized for screen readers used by the visually impaired.

LICW hosts a Hams with Disabilities Session with Chris VE3RWJ on the first Monday of the month at 7 PM Eastern in Zoom C. Members with any disability that affects learning or operating CW are encouraged to attend.

Members with hearing impairments may benefit from our revolutionary haptic device. Members may learn more [here](#).

REVISION HIGHLIGHTS:

Version 1.1:

Renamed and updated as The LICW Student Start Guide.



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INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to help new students get started quickly in LICW academics. It is a companion to the LICW Curriculum Guide and focuses only on the essentials needed to begin well.

The goal is simple: understand where to start, what to attend, how to practice, and how to move forward with confidence.

Getting started is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Read your welcome email from Howard, WB2UZE.
2. Accept the invitation to join the LICW [Groups.io](#) mail list - this is where members share announcements, schedules, and support.
3. Watch the [LICW Quick-Start Guide](#) video - a short overview to help you find your way around. The latest Zoom information is available [here](#).

Once you've done these steps, you're ready to attend your first academic class.

LICW ACADEMIC FLOW

LICW academics are organized into three curriculum levels. Each level has a clear purpose, and students should begin at the level that best matches their current skills and comfort.

Level	Typical Entry Point	Main Focus	Where It Leads
Beginners Carousel (BC1–BC3)	Beginner students	Character recognition, sending, early flow, and on-air readiness	First on-air operating and preparation for Intermediate
Intermediate (INT1–INT3)	Students with the full character set knowledge and emerging flow	Flow, recovery, speed, and increasing comfort with real communication	Conversational fluency and Advanced work
Advanced (ADV1– ADV3)	Students comfortable at conversational speeds	Head copy, endurance, relaxed comprehension, and higher-speed operating	Confident operating at higher speeds, including QRQ



WHERE TO START

IF YOU ARE A BEGINNER:

Start with the core beginner classes and practice supports:

- BC1
- BC Sending
- BC Guided Practice / Intermediate Prep
- BC Open Practice

As you progress, move through BC2 and begin BC3, which prepares you for live on-air operating.

IF YOU ALREADY KNOW THE CHARACTERS AND HAVE SOME CW EXPERIENCE:

Choose the Intermediate level that best matches your current comfort and flow:

- INT1 if you are still developing continuity around 12 WPM
- INT2 or INT3 if you already have stronger continuity and are building speed
- Intermediate Sending if you are ready to improve real communication without relying on a script

IF YOU ARE ALREADY COMFORTABLE AT CONVERSATIONAL SPEEDS:

Begin in Advanced at the level that best matches your operating comfort:

- ADV1 if you want to strengthen relaxed copy and conversational skill
- ADV2 or ADV3 if you are building QRQ fluency



NEXT STEPS

1. Attend this Intro class:
 - Mon 7:00 PM ET (2300 UTC): Introduction to LICW Club Resources - Dave VK5PL- Zoom A
2. Watch the [LICW Method Overview](#) video, which explains our teaching methods.
3. Watch the [Human Performance in Morse Code Acquisition](#) video, which explains why no two learners advance at the same pace.
4. A key and oscillator are not required to begin classes, but once you have them, you should attend a Zoom Audio Check session held prior to most BC1 and BC Sending classes.
5. Attend the Foundational classes:
 - Mon 6:00 PM ET (2200 UTC): Sending Prep - Bob WO6W - Zoom A
 - Wed 9:00 PM ET (Thu at 0100 UTC): Building Productive Practice Habits - Ant NU1U - Zoom C
 - Sun 1:00 PM ET (1700 UTC): Sending Fundamentals - Tom WA9CW - Zoom B

WHAT TO ATTEND EACH WEEK

Consistency matters more than intensity. A simple weekly routine works better than occasional bursts of effort.

Level	Recommended Weekly Routine	Add As You Can
BC	1–2 BC classes, 1 BC Sending class, 1–2 Guided Practice / Intermediate Prep sessions	2+ Open Practice sessions, real CW listening, Recorded QSO class
INT	Your primary class level and daily practice	A comfort-zone class, a stretch class, Intermediate Sending, Essential Operating Subjects
ADV	Your primary class level and daily practice	A comfort-zone class, a stretch class, on-air operating, QRQ pathways



HOW TO PRACTICE AT HOME

Productive practice means working toward clear goals. Keep it simple, regular, and sustainable.

- Prioritize flow over perfection
- Include sending as at least 25% of your total practice time
- Use loose focus: stay attentive, but do not try too hard
- Avoid fatigue - two shorter sessions usually work better than one long session
- Progress is not linear - plateaus and temporary regressions are normal

For many students, two 30-minute sessions per day work well. Others do better with several shorter 15-minute sessions spread through the day.

SENDING AND GETTING ON THE AIR

Sending is not separate from receiving. Done correctly, it strengthens rhythm, spacing, timing, and recognition.

- Beginners should attend BC Sending
- Intermediate students should attend Intermediate Sending when ready
- The ultimate goal of the Beginners Carousel is to prepare students to get on the air
- On-air activity is encouraged, but never forced. You may begin operating whenever you feel ready.

Helpful supports for new operators include BC3, LICW QSO Protocol, K1USN SST, Recorded QSO and Adverse Copy, SKCC support, and Code Buddy practice.

A WORD ABOUT BOOTCAMPS

OverLearn Bootcamps are high-intensity, four-week accelerators designed to help students make the transition from one LICW curriculum level to the next. They are not stand-alone classes, and they are not replacements for the core curriculum. Rather, they are immersive “sprints” focused on the



habits, mental mechanics, and flow skills needed to succeed at the next stage of learning.

Bootcamps are offered only at the Intermediate and Advanced levels. Students are encouraged to become familiar with the LICW academic ecosystem - including classes, practice expectations, and the overall learning approach - before enrolling in a Bootcamp.

THE LICW LEARNING MINDSET

You do not need to be perfect. In Morse code, misses are normal. The skill is to recover quickly and keep moving forward.

- Do not fear mistakes; they are part of learning
- Stay in the stream instead of mentally rewinding
- Measure progress by comfort, confidence, and flow, not by perfection
- Ask questions early and participate before you feel fully ready
- Have fun - enjoyment is part of long-term success

A GOOD FIRST WEEK

1. Attend your primary academic class
2. Set up and use the Morse Practice Page
3. Attend the sending class for your level if applicable
4. Join at least one practice session
5. Listen to real CW whenever possible
6. Keep your daily practice short, clear, and consistent

Final Encouragement

Everyone learns CW at a different pace. What matters most is consistency, patience, and staying engaged with the process. Keep going. Stay relaxed. Misses are fine. Prioritize flow over perfection!