American Morse Telegraph Practice

Wilson Frederic, 1901

Selected pages from Telegraphy and How to Learn It.

A landline Morse alphabet and keying exercises teach spacing, rhythm and receiving practice in the historical American code.

Compiled for The Survival University PDF collection

MORSE ALPHABET.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
. —	— . . .	. . .	— . .	.	. — .	— — .

H	I	J	K	L	M
. . . .	. .	— . — .	— . —	— —	— —

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
— .	. .	. . . . .	. . — .	. . .	. . .	—

U	V	W	X	Y	Z
. . —	. . . —	. — —	. — . .	. . . .	. . . .

&
. . . .

NUMERALS.

1	2	3	4	5
. — — .	. . — —	. . . — .	. . . . —	— — —

6	7	8	9	0
. . . . .	— — . .	—	— . . —	— —

PUNCTUATION MARKS.

Period.	Comma.	Colon.
. . — — . .	. — . —	— . — . .
Question mark.	Semi-colon.	Interrogation.
. . — . — .	. . . . .	— . . — .
Paragraph.	Parenthesis.	Dollar mark.
— — — —	. . . . . — .	. . . . — . .
	Exclamation.	
	— — — .	

EXPLANATIONS AND DIRECTIONS.

In the Alphabet, let a dot represent a short but firm closure of the key, and a short stroke of the receiving instrument. Let a dash represent a prolonged closure of the key, and a long stroke of the receiving instrument. Further, let a space represent a pause of rest between two closures of the key.

It will be seen that the dots, dashes and spaces of the Alphabet represent both the movement of the key and of the receiving instrument. Now taking A for example, it is represented as formed of a dot and a dash, which of course, represents a short stroke and a long stroke.

When making two or three dots or dashes in succession, put them compactly together, so that intervals may not be mistaken for spaces.

Go slowly at first. The receiver should copy each letter as it is signaled. The sender

should make good spaces in letters, and long spaces between words. Finally, let there be an unmistakable difference between dots and dashes.

The first step is to memorize the alphabet, so that each character can be called to mind at will; thus, A, dot and dash; B, dash and three dots; C, two dots, space, dot, etc.

The period, comma and interrogation point are the only punctuation marks in frequent use, and the student need not learn the others at first.

A dot (*E*) is made by a single, instantaneous downward stroke of the key. A short dash (*T*) is made by holding the key down as long as it takes to make three dots. A long dash (*L* or cipher) is made by holding down the key as long as is required to make five dots. A cipher is frequently prolonged so as to occupy the time required for seven dots.

The intervals between the dots or dashes in the same letter are called breaks. A

space in letters should occupy the time required for a dot and a break. The space between letters should occupy the time required for two dots and breaks.

The space between words should occupy the time required for three dots and breaks.

In letters that do not contain spaces, the dots and dashes should follow each other as closely as possible.

The beginner should be careful to form and space letters correctly, as this will lead to a perfect style in sending.

POSITION AND MOVEMENT.

Place the first finger on the top of key-button, with the thumb under the edge, and the second finger on the opposite side. Curve the first and second fingers, so as to form the quarter section of a circle. Partly close the third and fourth fingers. Allow the wrist to be perfectly limber. Rest the arm on the table at or near the elbow.

Let the grasp upon the key be firm, but

not rigid. Never allow the fingers or thumb to leave the key, nor the elbow to leave the table. Avoid too much force, or too light touch, and strive for a medium firm closing of the key.

The motion to be imparted is directly up and down, avoiding all side pressure.

The movement is made principally at the



FIG. 14

wrist, although the finger and hand must be perfectly elastic.

The fingers, wrist and arm should move uniformly in the same direction.

The downward movement produces the dots and dashes, and the upward, the breaks and spaces.

Commence the use of the key by making dots in succession at the rate of two every second, and increase the speed five-fold as

skill is acquired. Continue to practice dots until 360 per minute can be made with perfect clearness and regularity.

When dots can be readily made as directed, begin with dashes at the rate of two in every three seconds, and gradually increase until 120 per minute can be made with perfect regularity.

Next, attempt the long dash at the rate of one every two seconds, and increase to sixty per minute.

When perfection is attained, take up the following exercises in order. Remember, that in letters of more than one character, unless spaced, the dots and dashes must follow each other closely.

Repeat each exercise forward and backward, and by selection, until every letter can be made at will correctly:

EXERCISE NO. 1.

Dot Letters.

E	I	S	H	P	6
.	..	...	....	.....	.....

EXERCISE NO. 2.

Dot and Space Letters.

Take pains to make the spaces uniform and in the proper place.

O	C	R	Y	Z	&
. .	. . .	. . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .

EXERCISE NO. 3.

Dash Letters.

Be careful to proportion short and long dashes accurately.

T	L	M	5	0
—	——	——	———	———

EXERCISE NO. 4.

Dots, with Dash, in Succession.

Avoid leaving any space between them.

A	U	V	4
. —	. . —	. . . —	. . . . —

EXERCISE NO. 5.

Dash with Dots, in Succession.

N	D	B	8
— .	— . .	— . . .	— . . . .

EXERCISE NO. 6.

Dots or Dashes in Mixed Combination.

F	G	J	K	Q
·—·	——·	—·—·	—·—	··—·

W	X	1	2	3
·——	·——·	·———·	··——··	···—·

7	9	Period.
——···	———·	··—·—··

EXERCISE NO. 7.

Alphabet and Numerals Mixed.

Drill upon this exercise until perfection is attained, and when possible, use a register to see that the dots are not prolonged, the spaces are uniform, the dashes correct length, the dots and dashes (when not spaced) are close together, and the letters equal distances apart. Do not leave this exercise till completely mastered.

A	N	B	V	C	R
·—	—·	—···	···—	···	·—·

D	U	E	T	F	1
—··	··—	·	—	··—·	·———·

G	W	H	5	I	M
— — .	. — —	. . . .	— — —	. .	— —
J	3	K	9		L
— . — .	. . . — .	— . —	— . . —		— —
Period	O	2	P	4	
. . — — . .	. .	. . — . .	. . . . .	. . . . —	
Q	X	S	6	Y	
. . — .	. — . .	. . .	. . . . .	. . . .	
Z	&	7	8	0	
. . . .	. . . .	— — . .	—	— —	

There are almost as many styles of sending among operators as of penmanship. Cultivate a firm, even, smooth style of sending. The fast writers do not dispatch the most business. Graduate your writing to the capacity of the receiver, and never crowd him.

EXERCISE NO. 8. FRACTIONS :.

Fractions are made by substituting a dot for a hyphen between the figures:

1-2	1-4
. — — . . . . — . .	. — — . . . . . —

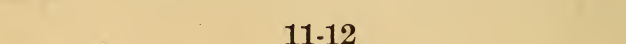
2-3 3-5



7-8 9-10



11-12



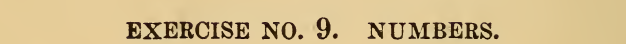
EXERCISE NO. 9. NUMBERS.

In large numbers, a short space is usually made between every three figures:

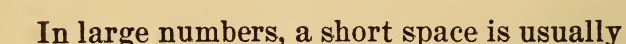
1,000.



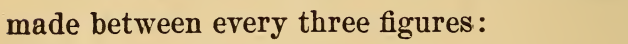
1,500.



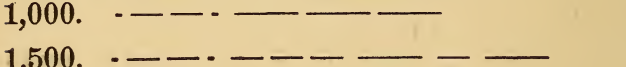
18,907.



21,369.



4,586,329.



EXERCISE NO. 10. UNUSUAL SPACES.

In words largely composed of dots and spaced letters, the spaces should be larger than usual between the letters:

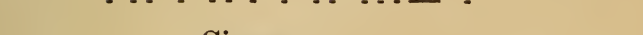
Seen Erie



Receive



Cicero.



EXERCISE NO. 11. WORDS.

After the student can write the words in this exercise satisfactorily, he may arrange series himself for practice:

And Barn.



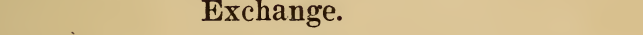
Chair.



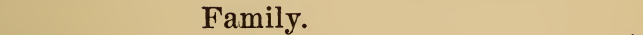
Desire.



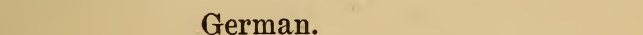
Exchange.



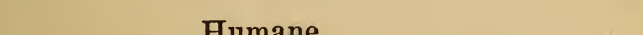
Family.



German.



Humane.



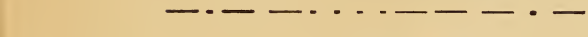
Inmate.



Judgment.



Knowledge.



Limited.



Maintain.



Nominate.



Opinion.



Practice.



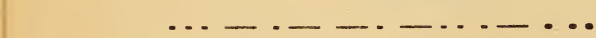
Quotation.



Ramify.



Standard.



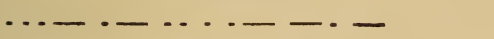
Terminate.



Umbrage.



Vacant.



Warrant.



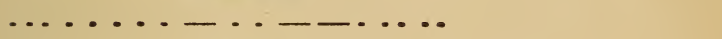
Xenium.



Yorkville.



Zoology.



Chicago.



St. Louis.



EXERCISE NO. 12. SENTENCES.

The student may take such sentences as he chooses, for practice, always being careful to write one correctly before commencing with another.