

# FT8 Notes

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### Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcInFASJUd4>

### Observations

1. Use WSJT-X on OS-X.
2. ALC Debate.
  - a. It is not accurate that if any ALC is present, you cannot make contacts.
  - b. The type of rig you are using may require some ALC to be present.
3. Pre-Amps, NB, and AGC.
  - a. Should be in the off position for FT8.
  - b. For 15 or 10 meter bands, first stage pre-amp can be used for better reception.
4. Notch Filter
  - a. The notch filter can be a handy tool for blocking out 20 db signal from a stronger station.
  - b. Narrow width setting can be the best type of notch filter to use.
5. RF Gain
  - a. Ride the RF gain control allows the best opportunity to decode FT8 signals.
  - b. Often a very low RF gain can successfully decode the FT8 signals.
6. Waterfall
  - a. Don't think the waterfall can indicate another station's signal quality.
  - b. Useful tool to find open spots in the band for transmitting.
7. Getting an Eyeful
  - a. Under the general tab and click the font and decoded text font tabs to adjust the size and quality of the text presented in WSJT-X.
  - b. As eyes begin to fade, it is good to make appropriate font adjustments.
8. Color Palette
  - a. Changing the colors of the decode highlighting can make them more easily read by older eyes.
  - b. Under the color tab of WSJT-X preferences, clicking a highlight brings up choices where changes can be made.
9. Noise Floor
  - a. The station you are trying to contact may have a much higher noise floor than yours.
  - b. The signal to noise reports are relative to the noise floor at the receive location.
10. Split
  - a. Working split really helps.
  - b. Splitting the transmit and receive frequencies helps in bringing in multiple FT8 signals.

11. QSO Strategies

- a. A signal you are trying to work may be having a difficult time decoding your signal due to interference and noise.
- b. There is nothing sacred about sitting on the same frequency in order to complete the QSO.
- c. Changing the frequency may be better for the receiving station at the other end.
- d. A strong signal station may benefit on moving your signal on the frequency of the strong signal station.

12. Study the Propagation

- a. The ionosphere is constantly changing.
- b. Use tools like PSK Reporter to see how propagation is working.
- c. Set to the band of interest and all modes.
- d. WSPRnet is also another good tool for observing the effects of the ionosphere.

13. Digital in Times of Poor Propagation

- a. FT8 and other weak digital modes have been found to be advantageous in times of weak propagation.

14. QRP is Fun

- a. Output is using between 5 to 40 watts into a humble dipole.

15. WSPR

- a. When not using FT8, set your system up for WSPR.
- b. It provides a lot of useful information about your station.