



A controller on the ground radios clearance for the pilot of the A-10 Thunderbolt behind him to attack a chosen target

Radio communication is a vital part of every mission. A delay or miscommunication can be the difference between life and death. As a result, radio operators use code words to avoid errors and express information quickly. For example, the **phonetic alphabet** uses the word "Charlie" to represent the letter "C". This prevents the letter "C" from being misunderstood as a "B" or "D".

Prowords provide quick ways to communicate longer messages. "Roger", "over", "say again" and "wilco" are common prowords that shorten communications. Still, some prowords are intentionally longer. For example, "affirmative" and "negative" are easier to understand through a weak radio connection than "yes" and "no."

Comprehension

1 Read, listen, and match the beginnings (1-3) to the endings (A-C) to complete each sentence.

- 1 ___ The phonetic alphabet A helps express information more quickly.
- 2 ___ Using prowords B is easier to understand on a weak connection.
- 3 ___ A longer proword C prevents letters from being misunderstood.

Vocabulary

COMMON PROWORDS	
PROWORDS	MEANING
Acknowledge	Let me know that you received this message
Affirmative	Yes - Permission granted - You are correct
Negative	No - Permission denied - You are incorrect
Say again	I did not hear that; repeat the message
Over	I have finished this part of the message; I expect a response
Roger	I received and understood your message
Wilco	I will comply with that order
Stand by	Wait for instructions or more information
Go ahead	You may begin your message now

2 Complete the communications with the prowords below.

- say again
- wilco
- roger
- over
- affirmative
- negative

Pilot: Tower, this is HC-15. What heading should we take? (1)

Control Tower: HC-15, take heading zero one seven.

Pilot: (2) tower, I missed that. Did you say heading zero seven?

Tower: (3), HC-15. I say again, heading zero one seven.

Pilot: (4) that, Tower, zero one seven. Are we cleared to land?

Tower: (5) You are cleared for runway one seven. Reduce speed to 300.

Pilot: (6) Reducing speed now.

3 Complete the word or phrase that is similar in meaning to the underlined part.

- 1 Pilots must repeat themselves often when there is a poor link between radios.
c _ _ e _ _ o _
- 2 Use sets of words that represent common messages when speaking on the radio.
_ _ o _ _ r _ s
- 3 "Tango" means "T" in the set of words that represent letters.
_ h _ _ e _ _ c _ _ l _ h _ _ e _
- 4 The transfer of information between airmen is needed to organize takeoffs and landings.
_ a _ _ _ c _ _ u _ _ a _ i _ n

Listening

4 Listen to a radio communication between a pilot and an air traffic controller. Write any prowords you hear.

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5 Listen again and answer the questions.

- 1 Why does the pilot contact the traffic controller?
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- 2 What problem does the controller mention?
.....
- 3 What information has to be repeated?
.....

Speaking

6 Work with a partner. Take turns playing the roles of a pilot and an air traffic controller. Using prowords, guide the pilot to the correct runway for landing.