



# 商务英语函电教程

高等学校商务英语专业系列教材

## BUSINESS ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

主编 张真



武汉理工大学出版社  
WUTP Wuhan University of Technology Press

高等学校商务英语专业系列教材

Business English Correspondence

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主 编 张 真

副主编 黄 嵘 冯 健

武汉理工大学出版社

## 内 容 提 要

为了适应教学,满足教学和学生不同需求,提高教学效果,本着“改革教学须先改革教材”的精神,本书力求摒弃陈旧古板的商业套语和过时的表达方式,使商务函电的写作更适合现代高效、简洁的要求。书中内容以英文为主,以中文为辅,突出重点难点,分若干单元对相关知识点用英文介绍,并提供精练的信函或 E-mail 实例,以中文加以注释,方便学生理解并掌握。在内容安排上,一个单元一个主题,紧扣相关国际贸易实务的知识点。写作指南、范文、注释以及常用语句完美体现现代商务英语函电格式、专业词语、行文方法及文体特点,以期帮助学生融会贯通。课后练习形式多样,旨在巩固训练,拓展词汇与表达,熟练掌握写作技巧,提高商务英语函电写作水平。

本书的读者对象主要为经贸类专业学生和英语专业经贸方向的学生以及从事国际贸易工作的商务工作人员。

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## 前 言

随着世界经济一体化步伐的加快,我国与世界各国的经济贸易往来方兴未艾,具有国际贸易专业知识和良好外语能力的复合型人才为社会所急需,因此,培养拥有国际贸易坚实理论基础和具备国际商务英语运用能力的应用型人才就成为高校教学科研迫在眉睫的任务。

在多年的商务函电双语教学实践中,我们发现教材的选择往往成为教学的极大困扰:对专业知识用纯中文讲解的教材不利于学生提高专业外语水平,而用纯英文教材又给学生全面掌握相关的专业知识增加了难度,尤其是对于缺乏国际贸易基础知识的外语专业学生。为了适应教学,满足教师和学生的不同需求,提高教学效果,本着“改革教学须先改革教材”的精神,本书力求摒弃陈旧古板的商业套语和过时的表达方式,使商务函电的写作更适合现代高效、简洁的要求。书中内容以英文为主,中文为辅,突出重点难点,分若干单元对相关知识点用英文介绍,并提供精练的信函或 E-mail 实例,以中文加以注释,方便学生理解并掌握。

本教材的特点在于突出应用性,贯穿语言交流原则。所编内容按照国际贸易实务操作程序的顺序编排,使学生能在虚拟的环境下得到各个实际工作环节的实践培养。教材贴近实际,力求帮助学生掌握操作技能。在内容安排上,一个单元一个主题,紧扣相关国际贸易实务的知识点。写作指南、范文、注释以及常用语句完美体现现代商务英语函电的格式、专业词汇、行文方法及文体特点,以期帮助学生融会贯通。课后练习形式多样,旨在巩固训练,拓展词汇,熟练掌握写作技巧,提高商务英语函电的写作水平。

本书的读者对象主要为经贸类专业学生、英语专业经贸方向的学生以及从事国际贸易工作的商务工作人员。

本书是集体智慧的结晶,由张真编写大纲并统稿。参加编写的人员有张真(第一、第二、第三、第四、第八单元),黄嵘(第五、第六、第七、第十二、第十三单元),刘玲玉(第九、第十、第十一、第十四、第十五单元),赵应文、冯健(第一至第十五单元练习)。

编写过程中,我们参考了许多中外英语函电优秀教材,在此对有关专家、学者表示深深的谢意。值得一提的是,赵应文教授不辞劳苦,做了很多卓有成效的工作,为本书的编写出版给予了可贵的帮助。本书的出版更是离不开责任编辑的辛勤劳动,在此一并表示衷心的感谢!

由于时间紧迫,加之编者水平有限,书中的错误和不妥之处在所难免,恳请专家、学者及广大读者不吝赐教。

编 者

2008 年 7 月

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## ✧Unit One✧

### Basic Knowledge of Business Letter Writing

### 商务函电写作基础知识

#### *General View*

A good business letter can play an important role in trade, increase friendship and obtain complete understanding between the parties involved. There are many forms being used in communication. It includes letters, telexes, cables and electronic correspondence. But it is clearly seen that the letter is still the main carrier of business communication. So it is of the very importance for us to master the skills of reading and writing a good business letter that presents ideas interestingly and clearly to enable readers to understand with the least possible effort. Generally speaking, English business letters have their own structure and four common styles of format.

## 1. The Structure of Business Letters

### 1) The Basic Parts of Business Letters

#### Letterhead

Letterhead includes the sender's name, postal address, the company's logo, telephone number, telex number, cable address and E-mail address, etc. Letterhead designs vary with business organizations and occupy the top first page. They may be positioned in the center or at the left margin for full block style or flush at the right margin for indented style.

#### Shanghai Huali Imp. & Exp. Co., Ltd.

Room 606 Plaza Building,

Fax: 86-21-64253378

1302 Meilong Road, 200237

Tel: 86-21-64255578

Shanghai, People's Republic of China E-mail: huali188@alibaba.com.cn

In some countries the letterhead contains other details. For example, in the U. K. the director's names of a company is given.



**Director Edmond Halley  
Capital Food Co. , Ltd.  
15 PARKGTE ROAD, LONDON SW12 4NQ. U. K.**

### **Reference**

In business communication, when a firm writes to another, each will give a reference for use in further correspondence about the subject discussed in the letter. The reference may include a file number, departmental code or the initials of the signer followed by that of the typist of the letter. These are marked "Our ref:" and "Your ref:" to avoid confusion:

Your ref: AMD/IP                      Our ref: WRL/QN

They are often placed two lines below the letterhead. If desired, the reference initials can also be placed at the lower left margin two lines below the name of the signer.

### **Dateline**

The dateline consists of the month, day, and year — with the month written in full, not abbreviated or represented by figures. It is usual to show the date in the order of day/month/year (English practice), or month/day/year (American practice). For the day, either cardinal numbers or ordinal numbers can be used. However, there is growing tendency to omit the ordinal suffixes -st, -nd, -rd and -th that follow the day of the month in the date line (e. g. 5 March for the 5<sup>th</sup> March, June 1 or June 1<sup>st</sup>). Never use the short form of the month (e. g. Jan. , Feb. , Oct). Don't write 08 instead of 2008 for the year, or give the date in figures (e. g. 10/12/2008), since it could easily be confusing, because English form follows the order of day, month and year while the U. S practice is to write in the order of month, day and year. Therefore, 10/12/2008 may be taken as either October 12 2008 or December 10 2008. Both of the following styles are acceptable.

28 March 2008

March 28, 2008

### **Inside Name and Address**

The name and address of the receiver are typed at the left-hand margin at least two lines below the date.

Precede the address's name with a courtesy with title (such as Mr. , Ms. or Dr. ). If you do not know whether a person is a man or woman, and you have no way to find out, omit the courtesy title and give the full name.

Do not use both kinds of titles with one name, however, as shown below, the title of a person's position within an organization may be included and typed either on the same line

below the person's name, whichever position results in better balance. If the title appears on the same line, place a comma between the name and the title. For example:

(1) Mr. George Russell, Director  
164 Bay Road, Liquorland Oklahoma City,  
OK 73125  
U. S. A

(2) Mr. Thom Collins  
Assistant Vice President  
The Hercules Engineering Co. , Ltd.  
Brazennose Street,  
Manchester M60 8AS  
England

If the name of a specific person is unavailable, you may address the letter to the department, followed by the name of the company.

Customer Service Department  
Acme Construction Company

In order to avoid ambiguity, when you write letters to other countries, always include the name of the country, even if the city mentioned is the country's capital. See the example below:

Mrs. Ann Meadows  
Warner — Thompkins Company  
210 Tracy Avenue Spokane,  
Washington 99202  
U. S. A

## Salutation

The salutation is the complimentary greeting to the receiver. Place it two lines below the inside address, flush with the left margin. Its form depends on the writer's relationship with the receiver.

The customary formal greeting in a business letter is:

(1) for addressing one person

Dear Sir,

Dear Madam,

(2) for addressing two or more people

Dear Sirs,

Dear Madams,

Gentlemen; (always should be in plural form and never write "Gentleman")

If the receiver is known to the writer personally, a less formal and warmer greeting is

used as follows:

Dear Ms. Katherine Black,

Dear Dr. Harry

The trend is toward "Ms." as the courtesy title for all women regardless of their marital status.

### **Subject Line**

Subject line is actually the general idea of a letter. It is inserted between the salutation and the body of the business letter either at the left-hand margin for fully-blocked letter form or centrally over the body of the letter to call attention to the topic of the letter. Some companies omit the word "Subject". The Latin term in "re" or "Re" is often used in place of Subject. The following forms are commonly used:

(1) Dear Sir or Madam,

Subject: Annual Trade Fair

(2) Dear Sir,

Re: Sales Contract No. 2216 for 200 Metric Tons of Walnuts

(3) Gentlemen:

Sales Confirmation No. TE88

### **Body**

The body is the main part that conveys your message. It expresses the writer's idea, opinion, purpose and wishes. There is no strict rule regarding the content of the letter. It is best, even for a short letter, to divide the body into at least two or three paragraphs, confining each paragraph to one topic. A typical plan for a three-paragraph letter includes:

Paragraph One: Refers to any previous correspondence or introduces the purpose of the letter.

Paragraph Two: Supports the opening and provides what service or information you have to offer.

Paragraph Three: End the body of the letter with the action or idea that you want the reader to consider or with the results you would like to have.

### **Complimentary Close**

The complimentary close is merely a polite way of ending a letter. It appears in the middle of the page or flush with the left margin in fully blocked letters and two lines below the closing sentence. The expression for the complimentary close will match the salutation reflecting the relation-

ship between the sender and the receiver. The most commonly used sets of salutation and complementary close are:

	Formal	Less Formal	Informal
Salutation	Dear Sir (or Madam),	Dear Mr. Smith,	
	Dear Sirs,	Dear Ms. Yen,	Dear Marry,
	Gentlemen	Dear Bob,	Dear Tom,
Complimentary	Yours faithfully,	Yours sincerely,	Sincerely,
	Faithfully yours,	Sincerely yours,	Cordially,
	Truly yours,	Cordially yours,	Best regards,

As the salutation and complimentary close are merely a matter of courtesy and don't mean anything to the message, they can be omitted in the simplified form used nowadays.

The complimentary close, when it is used, must never be separated from the substance of a letter by being carried to a separate sheet. If faulty layout occurs, the letter should be retyped-leaving narrower space to layout the letter within one sheet of paper or rearranging the letter with some portion of the body carried over to the next sheet.

The next page or pages should have the same quality, size and color as the first page to show:

- (1) the number of the sheet ( in the center of the page);
- (2) the name of your correspondence( on the left-hand side);
- (3) the date of the letter( on the right-hand side).

The following styles are often used for continuation sheets:

-2-	
Smart Textiles Trading Co. , Ltd.	June 6, 2008

-2-	
Ms. S. R. Mehta	May 28, 2008

Ms. Grane
Page 2
October 6, 2008

## Signature

The signature is the signing of the message sender's name. Type the name below complimentary close, leaving enough blank lines to sign your name by hand in black or blue ink. Never "sign" with a rubber stamp.

If your letter is on plain paper and you want to emphasize that you are legally representing your company, you may type the company's name in Capital letters below the comple-

mentary close and place the title of the message sender on the same line with or below the typed name.

The following are examples of different ways of signing a business letter:

(1) An official signing for his company:

Yours faithfully,

MAINRICH INTERNATIONAL CO. , LTD.

*Nancy*

Nancy

(2) A partner signing for his firm:

Sincerely yours,

*Dennis Brown*

Dennis Brown

## **2) Additional Parts of Business Letters**

### **Enclosure**

An enclosure notation should be added to the business letter, when such documents as brochures, catalogues, samples, price lists are attached to the letter. The enclosure notation follows two lines after the signature block. Type the word "Enclosure", or its abbreviation written as "Enc." or "Encl." with the number of enclosures. Here typical enclosures might read:

Enclosure 4 samples

Encl. Price List

### **Carbon Copy Notation**

Carbon copy notation is used when copies of the letter are sent to others. Type "CC" or "cc" with the names of the persons who will receive the copies of the letter, usually positioned two lines below the signature block at the left margin. Many companies are now using "PC" (for photocopy). For example:

PC: Margaret Ruth

CC: The Chamber of Commerce for Metal and Minerals.

c. c. Mr. David

### **Postscript**

If the writer wishes to add something he forgets to mention or for emphasis, he may add his postscript two lines below the carbon copy notation, and flush with the left margin. For example,

P. S. The catalogue will be sent to you tomorrow.

The adding of a P. S. should, however, be avoided as far as possible, since it may suggest the writer failed to plan his letter well before he typed it.

The following letter is designed to illustrate the position of each part mentioned above:

## *Specimen Letters*

### *Specimen Letter-1*

**Letterhead**

Inytatex Middle East Ltd.  
P. O. Box 2216  
Jeddah 12641,  
SAUDI ARABIA

**Our ref:** TF001

**Your ref:** FP/t3

**Dateline**

May 20, 2005

**Inside address**      Milan International Trade Corp.  
Via Piccolomini 5  
20151 Milan, Italy

**Salutation**              Dear Sirs,

**Body**

We visited your stand at Milan fair last October. We were interested in your leather boots.

We are wholesalers in Jeddah and we think your articles could find a promising market in our area. We would be very pleased to receive your catalogue and price list.

**Complimentary close**

Yours faithfully,

**Signature**

*John Carter*

John Carter

Purchasing Manager

**Encl. Price List**

**P.S.** The covering samples will be transported to you by airmail today.

## **2. The Formats of a Business Letter**

The format of English business letters usually becomes a part of the image of a company. There are four formats of a business letter in use at present: Indented Style, Full Block Style, Semi-block Style, and Simplified Style. In the four styles, the indented style is the most formal and the simplified style is the least formal.

### **1) Indented Style**

The indented style is a traditional British practice with the letterhead usually in the middle and the dateline on the right-hand side. The complimentary close may be in the center or commence at the center point. The indented style takes 4 or 5 letters in the first line of each paragraph in the body of the business letter. It looks attractive and makes for easy reading, but it is not convenient to type. See Specimen Letter-2.

### ***Specimen Letter-2***

London Trading Co. , Ltd.

Black road, Hammersmith W5 3DT

Tel: 41 23895563 Fax: 41 23895887 E-mail:lc@msn.com

May 15, 2008

Beijing Garments Imp/Exp Corporation  
812 Jianguo Road, Beijing, 100088  
China

Dear Mr. Chen,

Your letter of November 1, 2007 has been received. As we are anxious to finalize this transaction, we have been exerting ourselves to persuade our clients to accept your prices. Eventually, they have decided to accept. We are glad to have been able to conclude the business with you.

Await your sales confirmation.

Yours faithfully,  
Colin Ryan

## 2) Full Block Style

The full block style is an American style, which has now come to much more widely used than before. In the block form, every part of the letter is typed from the left margin. It is convenient to be typed with typewriter but the layout looks somewhat crowded and imbalanced. See Specimen Letter-3.

### *Specimen Letter-3*

21 CENTRURY TRADERS  
77 COOPER ST # 4H  
LONDON 2039, UK

9 October 2007

National Geographic Society  
475Kenwood St  
Duluth, MN55811  
U.S.A

Dear Mrs. Mason,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August, concerning your forthcoming visit to my company. I'll be glad to meet you at the time of your visit. Please confirm your flight number, so that my assistant, Helen, will meet you at the airport.  
I look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,  
Johnson Morgan



### 3) Semi-block Style

Semi-block style is a combination of the indented style and the full block style. It is also called modified block style. In the Semi-block style all the parts start from the left margin, except the date. The complimentary close and signature are positioned from the middle little toward the right. See Specimen Letter-4.

#### ***Specimen Letter-4***

**Capital Electrical Products Co. , Ltd**

**15 Parkgate Road, London SW12 4NQ U. K.**

**Tel: 44-35987048 E-mail: capital@hotmail. com**

25 July 2007

The Commercial Attache  
British Embassy  
Beirut

Dear Sir,

For a number of years we have imported electric shaves from the United States, but now learn that these shaves can be obtained from British manufacturers. We wish to extend our present range of models and should be glad if you could supply us with a list of British manufacturers likely to be able to help us.

If you cannot supply the information from your records, could you please refer our enquiry to the appropriate quarter in London?

Yours faithfully,  
Fred Johns

### 4) Simplified Style

Simplified style is somewhat like full block style. But some parts are omitted, such as salutation and complimentary close. See Specimen Letter-5.