



International  
Economics & Trade



复旦卓越

上海市外贸经济教育高地建设项目

21世纪国际经济与贸易专业教材新系

# 外贸英语函电

(第二版)

■ 葛萍 周维家 主编

復旦大學 出版社



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## 内容提要

《外贸英语函电》（第二版）依据国际贸易通行惯例，就商务书信格式、商务关系的建立、询价与回复、报盘与还盘、促销、订购与确认、包装、运输、付款方式、保险、代理、投诉与处理、电子信函以及贸易形式等14个方面进行商务英语信函应用能力的讲述。修订后的教材体例安排新颖，语言简洁规范，通过大量的技能训练把基础英语技能和外贸英语知识有机地结合起来，使学生具备较强的撰写国际商务英语书信的能力，实用性、针对性更强。

本书适合作为国际经济贸易、国际商务英语等专业的本科、高职高专，以及成人教育的教学用书，也可作为公司、企业在第一线处理商务信息的人士参考使用。

## 总 序

现代经济发展的实践表明,国际贸易是经济增长的强大推动力。第二次世界大战后,国际贸易的迅速发展在全球范围内引起了国际分工体系的革命性变革和福利分配格局的重组,极大地促进了经济增长。中国实行改革开放和加入世界贸易组织,加速了对外开放的步伐,外贸业务增长迅速,对外贸易对经济增长的贡献度不断提高,市场对外贸人才的需求急剧增加。

为了适应国际经济理论的创新与拓展以及外贸业务发展的需要,加快培养出更多掌握经济学理论知识、具有较好的外语基础、熟悉 WTO 的游戏规则、了解国际惯例、熟悉国际市场运作规则、具有浓厚的国际意识、掌握具体操作能力的国际经济与贸易专业应用型人才,必须从国际经济与贸易专业的课程体系、课程内容、教学方法、教材编写等方面进行探索和创新。

“复旦卓越·21 世纪国际经济与贸易专业教材新系”教材编委会精心策划,在总结过去教材建设经验的基础上,结合应用型本科教育的特点,借鉴国内外经验做法,经过反复研究论证和撰写,推出了“复旦卓越·21 世纪国际经济与贸易专业教材新系”。这套系列教材包括《国际结算》、《国际贸易》、《国际外贸实务》、《国际运输与保险》、《WTO 规则与运作》、《外贸英语函电》、《国际商法》、《国际服务贸易》、《报关实务》、《进出口商品检验》、《国际商务谈判》、《国际贸易专业英语》等十几种。

这套系列教材同时作为上海市十大教育高地之一——外贸经济本科教育高地的标志性教材和国际经济与贸易专业人才培养的重要成果,具有“新、特、实、强”等特点。设计思路新颖,强调学以致用,突出“以学生为中心”的思想;力求创新写作体例和研究分析方法;观点内容

着力体现前瞻性、前沿性、动态性,并做到深度和广度适宜。课程体系体现涉外经济类专业特点,采用中文和双语相结合的办法,凸现双语教学特色;注重实践性、实用性、可操作性,便于实践教学。编写教师的阵容强大,起点高,教学经验丰富,研究能力强。

我们希望,通过这套系列教材积极探索出一条国际经济与贸易专业教学改革的新路子,为国际经济与贸易学科在中国的发展做出贡献。由于我们的理论水平和对外贸易实务操作技能有限,这套教材会存在许多不足之处。希望通过这套教材的出版,与国际贸易学界、政界以及从事实务工作的同仁共同研究和探讨,进一步提高教材的编写水平,提高教学和科研质量。

丛书编审委员会

2010年2月

## 第二版说明

《外贸英语函电》是“复旦卓越·21世纪国际经济与贸易专业教材新系”之一,于2007年出版,先后多次印刷,印数近4万册。作者在此特别感谢广大读者给予的信任和支持。

为使本教材更加贴近实际,反映外贸英语实践新的情况和应用需求,适应培养具有从事对外经济贸易时撰写与处理国际商务英语书信能力的高素质应用型人才之需要,我们广泛听取了从事外贸和国际商务实际工作者的建议,广泛汲取了一线教师教学的反馈,在原有版本的基础上进行了适当的修改,使教材的“新、特、实、强”等特点更加突出。

新——本次修订吸收了最新资料,对课文进行了改写,使之更富有时代感。对部分信函范例及例题进行了更新与充实,使之更贴近现实生活。

特——本次修订注重外贸英语信函的业务特色,文字简明,风格自然亲和。本教材采用中文和英语相结合的办法,语言地道,平实易懂,凸显双语教学特色。

实——本次修订保留原有实用框架,充实相关材料,注重实践性、实用性和可操作性,更侧重于语言的运用技巧,以适应当今外贸业务发展的需要。

强——本次修订以强技能、强应用为出发点和归宿点,扩充了信函范例,可借鉴性强;“Related Words and Phrases”、“Reference Expressions”和“Words and Phrases Power Development”部分意在拓展学生视野,通过举一反三,增强学生应用能力。

参加本次修订人员及分工如下:葛萍编写第一单元、第二单元、第三单元、第四单元、第六单元,周维家编写第七单元、第八单元、第九单元、第十四单元,蔡激扬编写第十单元、第十一单元、第十二单元,殷月洪编写第五单元、第十三单元。

编者

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# Unit One

## Layout of Business Letters

We-attitude	You-attitude
We'd like to send our congratulations to you.	Congratulations to you on your success.
We allow you a 2% discount for cash payment.	You earn a 2% discount for cash payment.

Business communication is concerned with the successful exchange of messages that support the goal of buying and selling goods or other services. There are many forms being used in communication. It includes letters, telegrams, telexes, cables and electronic correspondence. But it is clearly seen that the business letter is still the main carrier of business communication. So it is of great importance for students of business communication 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.

A good business letter can play an important role in trade, increase friendship and obtain complete understanding between the parties involved. Business letter writing is one of the necessary business activities. Only when the letter conveys the intended message faultlessly can it be regarded as an effective business letter. So the following essential principles must be paid more attention to if you want to write an appropriate business letter.

### The Basic Principles of Business Letter Writing

Effective business letters should be easy to read and easy to understand. They must be friendly and courteous. We should bear it in mind that business letters play an important role in development of goodwill and friendly trade relationship. Generally speaking, we need to apply some specific writing principles while writing a business letter. They are: consideration, completeness, correctness, concreteness, conciseness, clarity and courtesy.

#### 1. Consideration

Consideration is an important rule of good business writing. The letters you send out must create a good impression. Try to put yourself in his or her place to

give consideration to his or her varied wishes, demand, interest and difficulties. Emphasize the “You” attitude rather than the “I” or “We” attitude. Find the best way to express your better understanding and present the message.

Compare the following pairs of sentences:

You-attitude	We-attitude
Congratulations to you on your success.	We'd like to send our congratulations to you.
You earn a 2% discount for cash payment.	We allow you a 2% discount for cash payment.

## 2. Correctness

Correctness means not only proper expression with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, but also appropriate tone which helps to achieve the purpose. It is likely to convey the real message in a way that will not cause offence even if it is a complaint or an answer to such a letter. Business letters must have factual information, accurate figures and exact terms in particular, for they involve the right, the duties and the interest of both sides, often as the base of all kinds of documents. Therefore, we should neither understate nor overstate, for understatement might lead to less confidence and hold up the trade development while overstatement would throw you in an awkward position.

## 3. Completeness

A business letter is successful and functions well only when it contains all the necessary information. An outline helps to make the letter full and complete. See to it that all the matters are discussed, and all questions are answered. Incompleteness is not only impolite but also leads to the recipient's unfavorable impression towards your firm.

He may give up the deal if other firms can provide him with all the information needed, or if he would not take the trouble to inquire once again.

As you work hard for completeness, keep the following guidelines in mind: Why do you write the letter? What are the facts supporting the reasons? Have you answered the questions asked?

## 4. Concreteness

What the letter covers should be specific, definite rather than vague, abstract and general. Especially for letters calling for a specific reply, such as offer,

inquiring trade terms, etc., concreteness is always stressed. For example, some qualities or features of goods should be shown with exact figures and we should avoid words like short, long or good. Give specific time with date, month, year and even hour, minute, if necessary, but avoid expressions such as *yesterday*, *next month*, and *immediately*.

The following guidelines can help us write concretely: use specific facts and figures; put action in your verbs, prefer active verbs to passive verbs or words in which action is hidden; choose vivid, image-building words; pay attention to word orders, put modifiers in the right place.

### 5. Conciseness

Conciseness is often considered to be the most important writing principle. It can save both the writer's and the recipient's time. Conciseness means the message is expressed with brevity without sacrificing clarity or courtesy. A good business letter should be precise and to the point. To achieve conciseness of your letter-writing, try to keep your sentences short, and avoid wordy languages and redundancy, or repetition, and eliminate excessive details.

Paragraphing carefully can make a business letter clearer, easier to read and more attractive to readers. It is a good rule to confine each paragraph to only one point or topic.

Compare the following sentences:

Concise	Wordy
We will consider the delivery schedule at today's meeting.	We are going to give consideration to the delivery schedule at today's meeting.
They attend the Guangzhou Trade Fair to find a partner.	They attend the Guangzhou Trade Fair for the purpose of finding a business partner.

### 6. Clarity

You must express yourself clearly to make sure that the message conveys exactly what you wish to say and is not liable to misunderstanding. Avoid vague and ambiguous expressions. When you are certain about what you want to say, express it in plain and simple words, present it in well-constructed sentences and paragraphs, and include necessary transitional words or expressions to link them

up. Good, straight-forward and simple English is what is needed for business correspondence.

Compare the following pairs of sentences:

We sent you 4 samples yesterday of the goods which you requested in your letter of May 10 by air.	We sent you yesterday, by air, 4 samples of the goods — which you requested in your letter of May 10.
The goods not only differ in quality, but also in price.	The goods differ not only in quality, but also in price.

## 7. Courtesy

Courtesy plays a considerable role in business letter writing as in all business activities. It is a favorable introduction card, helping to strengthen your business relations and establish new ones. Courtesy means showing tactfully in your letters the honest friendship, thoughtful appreciation, sincere politeness, considerate understanding and heartfelt respect.

Avoid irritating, offensive or belittling statements. Answer letters promptly, for punctuality will please your recipient who hates waiting for days before he obtains a reply to his letter. Sometimes, discrepancy may occur in business but with diplomacy and tact it can be overcome and settled without ill-will arising from either side. Never show your anger in a business letter.

And you must also adopt the right tone. Before you begin to write, think carefully about the way in which you want to influence your customer, and then express yourself accordingly, being persuasive, firm, apologetic and so on.

Compare the following sentences:

We are sorry you have misunderstood us.	We are sorry we didn't make ourselves clear.
Your letter of May 5 regarding the shipment of this batch has been received.	Your letter of May 5 regarding the shipment of this batch has received our careful attention.



## The Structure of Business Letters

### 1. Letterhead

Letterhead designs vary with business organizations and occupy the top of the 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.

Most of the business firms and other organizations use stationery with a printed letterhead, which contains all or some of the following elements: the company's name, address, postcode, telephone number, telex number, fax number, e-mail address, and possibly the name of the chief executive. It may even include some picture or slogan for a symbol of the company. This will be useful not only to the reader in responding to the message but also to the firm in creating a favorable impression.

If the stationery you are using does not have a printed letterhead, type the company's name, address, phone number and e-mail address in the upper right-hand of the page.

### 2. Dateline

All business letters should have the correct date typed under the letterhead. The date records when the letter is written. It may serve as an important reference. For example, if there is a question about an order or shipment, a contract, or a reply to customer complaints, you will have the dated copy of a letter in your files to verify when you wrote the message and what you said. Try to send the letter on or close to the date typed under the letterhead.

The date is usually placed two lines below the last line of the letterhead, at the left margin for full block style or ending with the right margin for indented style. 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 a growing tendency to omit the ordinal suffixes -st, -nd, -rd and -th that follow the day of the month in the date line. For example:

25th March 2005

March 25th, 2005

25 March 2005