



高等院校“十三五”应用型规划教材

国际贸易专业

国际商务函电

(第二版)

主 编 陈 敏 陈淑梅



南京大学出版社



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前言

《国际商务函电》既是国际经济与贸易专业、商务英语专业、电子商务专业的核心必修课,又是一门具有很强实用性、实践性和操作性的课程。本书作为一本专门用途的函电教材,旨在培养国际商务人士的书面沟通和业务运作能力。本书从基础性、实用性、综合性和新颖性的视角出发,呈现国际商务英语与商务知识,力图让读者掌握国际商务流程、熟悉相关术语与表达方法、了解对外贸易的经营策略与谈判技巧。本书既可作为高等院校国际经济与贸易专业、商务英语专业的本专科教材,也可以作为全国外销员经贸英语证书考试和商务英语证书考试的参考书。

根据高校外贸函电课程的课时分配,本书共分 15 单元,教材内容侧重于国际商务业务实例,涵盖了对外商贸的主要环节,既有传统的贸易形式,也有特别的商务类型。在系统介绍商贸函电和便函的文体、结构和原则之后,教材遵循交易流程,首先建立商贸关系,接着进行资信调查、询价与答复、报价与确认,再涉及付款、包装、装运、保险、索赔、代理等各环节,最后以国际投资与对等贸易收尾。每单元涵盖知识简介、函电示例、注释、典型句型及练习五部分。另外,本书后面的附录不但方便教学选用,还为自学提供参考,内容包括常用词汇、贸易术语、缩略语以及进出口单证样本。

本书的主要特色体现在以下几个方面:

(1) 语言的准确性。主编陈淑梅教授是上海外国语学院(现上海外国语大学)英语专业本科毕业,在英国取得硕士学位,近年来多次参加国外访学研究和交流合作,有多篇英文论文在国外 SSCI 期刊及其他期刊发表,且有多年参与外贸事务的实战经历,可以保障教材语言上的严谨与精确。

(2) 内容的时代性。本书结合国际经济与贸易专业全英文教学的契机,通过对外贸企业的实地调研,充分体现国际贸易最新发展态势,尤其是相关法律规范的变迁,并将传统的所谓非典型贸易环节的内容纳入其中;在考虑当今电子商务迅猛发展的前提下,力求实用与可操作。主编取得博士学位之后,一直从事我国

在 WTO 背景下如何规避贸易风险的研究,因此对国际贸易环节相关法律法规的更替非常熟悉,也深知这些方面在外贸函电中的重要性。

(3) 结构的完整性。本书涵盖国际贸易环节的前期准备与后续工作,形成一个完整的国际贸易链,让读者可以掌握贸易前、贸易中、贸易后的所有环节的函电技能。

本书由重庆三峡学院陈敏副教授和东南大学经济管理学院陈淑梅教授主编,沈阳工业大学逢红梅及中南财经政法大学武汉学院卢平、张波参与了编写工作。

愿本书成为有志于从事国际贸易和商务的人士和自学者的良友。

由于编者水平有限,加之时间仓促,错谬之处在所难免,敬请同行批评指正。

编 者

2017 年 3 月

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Unit 1

Lead-in—Business Letters

Introduction

In today's highly developed and toughly competitive society, English is considered the business language in the world; while communication is the lifeline of modern business, which is becoming increasingly frequent and important between individuals and groups. It serves to pass on information, to express ideas or to exchange feelings. In such an age of electronics, people tend to make phone calls for the purpose of communication, instead of writing letters in daily life. The rapid development of telecommunication makes telephone, telex and fax even more popular, and seems to have decreased the importance of letters in paper. However, letters are still retaining their importance in this age of electronic communication and they are still written in an overwhelming number in international business. Business executives are supposed to write so good business letters as to carry business routine efficiently.

1.1 The Principles of Effective Communication—7C's

To compose effective written or oral messages, you must always bear in mind the essential qualities of certain communication principles. These principles provide guidelines for choice of content and presentation style, adapted to the purpose of your message. These principles are not only limited to a sentence level, they are also applicable to all forms of communications, from mere utterances and sentences to complete documents or presentations. To some extent, the principles overlap because they are based on a common concern for the audience, whether that audience consists of listeners or readers.

These principles can be summed up as 7C's, i.e. completeness, concreteness, clearness, conciseness, courtesy, consideration, and correctness.

1.1.1 Completeness

A good business letter should be complete, containing all the information the recipients

need with which can be effectively understood. In order to offer the recipients fully understanding of the information, a good business letter should be complete. A business letter is successful and functions well only when it contains all the necessary information. See to it that all the matters are discussed and all the questions are answered or explained. It is essential to keep following 5W's principles in your mind to ensure your message complete: who, what, where, when, and why. The five-question-method is useful when you make offers or place orders or write letters involving other informative messages.

1.1.2 Concreteness

It means that message should be specific instead of general. Misunderstanding of words may cause problems for both parties (sender and receiver). When you talk to your client, try to use facts and figures instead of generic or irrelevant information. The following guidelines would help you to achieve concreteness.

- 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 close attention to word orders, and put modifiers in right place.

e.g. The Universal Trading Company is one of our big buyers. (poor)

The Universal Trading Company placed over US\$ 2,000,000 worth of business with us each year. (better)

e.g. We have received with thanks your check, the amount has been placed to your credit. (poor)

We have received with thanks your check No. 248 for US\$ 200,000 in payment of our commission, which has been placed to your credit. (better)

1.1.3 Clearness

Make sure that your writing is so clear that it cannot be misunderstood. Firstly, having a concrete idea in your mind of what is your target for only a clean mind can express methodically. What is equally or more important is to get yourself understood, so it has a definite message, with no confusion about what each sentence is trying to communicate. To meet such an end, the writer should follow the following rules:

- Choose plain, simple words, which are short, familiar, conversational, straightforward.
- Build effective sentences and paragraphs. Generally, the average length for sentences should be about 17~20 words. Short paragraphs encourage one to finish reading a letter. Usually a letter paragraph consists of no more than 10 lines.
- Aim at unity, coherence, and emphasis in your expression.

Compare the following examples.

A: We have your remittance of January 30 in the amount of \$ 300, and wish at this time to thank you for it.

B: Thank you for your remittance of January 30 for \$ 300.

Sentence B is clearer and more effective than sentence A.

1.1.4 Conciseness

Express what you said in a short and pithy way.

Conciseness is often considered to be the most important writing principle.

- Omit trite expressions.
- Avoid unnecessary expressions.
- Include only relevant facts with courtesy.
- Organize effectively.

Please compare:

e.g. The senator, who came from New York, gave a speech that was long and tedious. (poor)

The senator from New York gave a long, tedious speech. (better)

e.g. I want to take this opportunity to tell you that we are grateful to you... (poor)

Thank you... (better)

1.1.5 Courtesy

Try to be polite while not humble. Courtesy plays a considerate rule in business letter writing, as in all business activities.

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative.
- Take a personable, friendly, and modest tone.
- Omit expressions that irritate, hurt, or belittle. It is always offensive to show any sign of arrogance or prejudice.

- Be prompt in reply. If your answer is delayed, give strong and understandable reasons.

See how sentences A are blunt and abrupt, while sentences B are courteous and polite.

A: Unfortunately we cannot fill your order because you failed to send your check. (poor)

B: We shall be glad to fulfill your order as soon as we receive your check. (better)

A: Tell us more detailed information on your requirements. (poor)

B: Will/Would you please to tell us more detailed information on your requirements? (better)

A poem composed of commercial jargon:

We beg to advise and wish to state,

That yours has arrived of recent date.

We have it before us, its contents noted;

Herewith enclosed are the prices we quoted.

Attached please find, as per your request,

The data you wanted; and not let us suggest

Your order be sent, and not held unduly,

We beg to remain, yours most truly.

A: We must refuse your offer. (poor)

B: We regret that we are unable to accept your offer./ We are sorry that we are not in a position to accept your offer. (better)

1.1.6 Consideration

Consideration means considering the receiver's interest/intention. It is very important in effective communication while writing a letter, and you should always keep in mind your target group's consideration, which is a very important "C" enjoying great importance among all the 7C's. Three specific ways to indicate consideration:

- Focus on "you" instead of "I" or "We".
- Show the benefit or interest of the receiver.
- Emphasize positive, pleasant facts. Using "you" help you, but overuse leads a negative reaction.

e.g. I am delighted to announce that we will extend to make shopping more. ("we"—attitude)

You will be able to shop in the evening with the extended hours. ("you"—attitude)

e.g. We allow a 5% discount for cash payments. ("we"—attitude)

You earn a 5% discount when you pay cash. ("you"—attitude)

e. g. Your order will be delayed for two weeks. (negative)

Your order will be shipped in two weeks. (positive)

1.1.7 Correctness

Correctness refers much more than that of grammar, punctuation, and spelling of words, which are the basic elements. A letter may be perfect in speaking mechanically, but still it at times does not achieve desired effect. To guarantee correctness of a business letter, one should always bear in mind the following:

- Choose only accurate facts, words, and figures. Be clear about the meanings of all the trade terms and jargon you use.
- Be honest about the things you say. Don't over-say or under-say, be matter-of-fact in attitude.
- Use the correct level of language. Don't over-estimate or underestimate your counterpart in foreign trade activities.
- Observe all the writing mechanics, including the 7C's. Avoid silly spelling errors and grammatical blemishes.

Let us look at the following sentences to see if there are anything improper.

e.g. All offers by fax are open for 5 days.

The above sentence does not clearly explain or account for specific 5 days, and should be changed into:

All offers by fax are open for 5 days inclusive of the date of dispatch.

e.g. We assure you that this error will never occur.

Similarly this sentence can be changed as following:

We will do all we can so that we may not repeat such an error.

1.2 Layout of a Business Letter

A business letter follows a more or less set pattern determined by customs. Choice of layout is a matter of individual taste, but it is better to follow established practice, to which the business world has become accustomed. Usually it includes the physical form of the letter, the arrangement of the parts of letter and the display of the various items of information in the letter.

1.2.1 Structure of a Business Letter

A well-organized business letter usually consists of the seven standard parts and some miscellaneous matters.

1. The Standard Parts of a Business Letter

(1) **Heading or return address**—The letter head is the printed or engraved heading on an organization's sheet of stationery, which may include the following elements:

- Logo or trademark or symbol and/or slogan.
- Full legal name of the organization.
- Full address of the organization or the branch and other necessary data, including telephone number, fax number, and E-mail address.
- Name of director(s) if necessary.
- Starting date of the firm if it needs to be specified, indicating that the firm has a long history.

(2) **Date line**—The date is usually below the heading, more often written as one of the following: 8(th) September/Sept. 2016; September/Sept. 8(th), 2016, but to avoid using figures such as 9/8/2016, as it might be read as September 8, 2016 or August 9, 2016, which will cause unnecessary confusion. Never write “of” in the date (5th of May).

(3) **Inside name and address**—It's usually the same as the outside address on the envelope. If the window envelope is used, there is, of course, no need to write the outside one. The address is arranged like a pyramid, starting from the smallest unit, e.g. the room number, to the largest unit, e.g. the name of the country. If the letter is addressed to an individual, the inside address will include that person's courtesy title—professional title, such as “Dr.” or “Prof.”, or the traditional title, such as “Mr.”, “Mrs.”, “Miss”, and “Ms.”, and the name, which are put on the top line of the address. That person's business or

executive title—such as “CEO”, “General Manager”—is usually placed on the second line of the inside address. If the letter is addressed to a group, the inside address will consist of the full group name and the address. The following are two examples;

Sample Letter

Southeast Travel
Head Office
5th Floor
World Trade Mansion
Nanjing
Tel: 086-025-99668888

5 July 2016

Mr. S. Johnson
Water Close
Sydney

Your ref: 5SJ
Our ref: 0268

Dear Mr. Johnson

Re: Mortgage Account

Thank you for your letter of 1 July, and we learn that you would like details of the building coverage.

We enclose herewith a booklet detailing the premium rates for standard and additional cover.

Please let us know what particular cover(s) you would require so that we can make necessary arrangements accordingly.

Yours sincerely

(Signed...)
M. Smith
Manager of Insurance Section

Example 1—To an individual

Name	Mr. S. Johnson
Organization	Casual Hotel
Road	18 Zhongshan Road
Town/City Postcode	Suzhou, 215000

County/Province	Jiangsu
Country	P. R. China

Example 2—To a group

Group	BCE College
Road	2 Central Avenue
Town/City Postcode	Suzhou, 215000
County/Province	Jiangsu
Country	P. R. China

If you are writing to a company containing one or more personal names, you can put “Messrs.” before the name of the company:

Messrs. David and Young Co. Ltd.

Messrs. Johnson & Sons

If the company does not contain a personal name, “The” is usually written before it:
The South Travel Association

If you are writing to a person who has a particular position, write “The” before the position:
The Manager
The President

(4) **Salutation**—The friendly greeting that is placed just under the inside address. If the letter is addressed to an individual, it usually consists of: Dear + Courtesy Title or Business Title + Surname. If the letter is sent to a group/company, it is customary to use: “Dear Sirs”(BrE), or “Gentlemen”(AmE).

When addressing a group of people, use one of the following salutations:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Dear Sirs or Madams,

Gentlemen;/Dear Sirs,(if all the readers are male)

Ladies;/Dear Madams,(if all the readers are female)

As to the sex question in letter writing, if you unsure to whom you should address a letter, you should use the following salutations: “Dear Sir or Madam”.

(5) **Message/Text**—It’s the most important part of the letter, which directly follows the salutation. The message can be as short as a one-sentence paragraph and as long as several pages with an opening paragraph and a closing paragraph and many other paragraphs in between.

(6) **Complimentary close**—The words that come immediately after the body and directly before the signature to indicate the writer’s regards to the receiver, signaling the conclusion of the letter. The words often used are: truly, sincerely, and faithfully. If you begin your letter with “Dear Sir or Madam,” that is, if you are writing to a stranger then you must end

with “Yours faithfully”. If you are writing to someone whose name you know, or someone has written to you first, you end with “Yours sincerely”. Generally, the typical American forms are: “Best regards”, “Sincerely”; the more typical British forms are: “Best wishes”, “Kind regards”, “Yours Sincerely”, and “Yours faithfully”.

(7) **Signature**—This area may include the following: your signature, your typewritten name, your business title and the name of your branch and/or that of your company. If the person who has dictated the letter is not present to sign it, the typist or someone else will sign it instead. In this case, the usual practice is to write the letters “p.p.” or “per pro”(= on behalf of) before the name of the person signing the letter.

Sample Letter



BE Training & Consulting

2 Viaduct Road, Brighton BN1 4NB, England

TELEPHONE 01225 442128 TELEFAX 01225 442264

E-MAIL 100663@edu.com

36 years of language training for business

1980—2016

Mr. John Smith

5 Daling Road

Nanjing, 210033

P.R. China

18 March 2016

Dear Mr. Smith,

Course Enquiry

Thank you for your enquiry about the course run by BE leading to **National Certificate**.

The enclosed information will give you a clear idea of the course content and approach, the objectives, the dates, and fees for 2016.

If you would like to discuss the course in more detail, please contact one of the course tutors whose names are in the enclosed brochure.

Yours sincerely,
Susan Galtung

Senior Partner

en

SENIOR PARTNERS Paul Hunter, Susan Galtung

TELEPHONE international +44 1225 442128

TELEFAX international +44 1225 442264

2. The Miscellaneous Matters/The Optional Parts of a Business Letter

(1) **Personal or confidential notation**—If the letter is personal or confidential, type Personal or Confidential in all-capital letters or in underscored capital and small letters on the second line below the date, starting at the left margin.

(2) **Attention line**—It is used if you want to bring your letter to the attention to a particular person or a department when you address this letter to an organization. It is usually typed two spaces below the inside address and two spaces above the salutation.

(3) **Subject line**—This line states briefly what this letter is about so that your reader would get the main idea before he reads it in detail and it also facilitates filing.

(4) **Reference line**—Carrying a file, order, or policy number placed one to four lines below the date.

(5) **Executive and secretary/Typist initials**—They usually appear at the left margin on the same line with the last line of the signature areas or one or two lines below that to indicate responsibilities.

(6) **Enclosure(s)**—If you include anything else more than the message in the envelope, you need to specify clearly so that the person who prepares for mailing will not forget, and if more than one item is enclosed, you need to indicate the number as well by writing it after the word enclosures. This would also help the receiver to check for the enclosure(s) when the letter arrives at his end.

(7) **Copy notation**—When you have sent a copy of this letter to a third party and you need the receiver to know it, you will write the name of that third party after the abbreviation “cc” (carbon copy) or “xc” (xerox copy).

(8) **Mailing notation/Notation of delivery**—When the deadline is required for a particular purpose, or where necessary, the mailing means, such as “Registered,” need to be indicated in the letter. It is usually typed in capital letters flush with the left margin about two lines above the inside address.

(9) **Postscript**—To call the receiver’s attention to something important which you have already mentioned in the letter or to add something that is not related to the letter itself. But if you forget something important and relevant to the letter, better insert it in the appropriate place and reprint the letter.

1.2.2 Formats for Letters

There are several acceptable patterns of layout for business letters. The most popular

forms are full and modified block styles, as well as semi-indented style.

1. Full Block Style

Every line in the full-block style begins at the left margin, and the open style of punctuation has been adopted. For example, a complete absence of punctuation marks from the date, the salutation, the complementary close, and from the ends of lines forming the inside name and address, except the full-stops to mark abbreviation.

2. Modified Block Style

In the modified block style, all the parts starts from the left margin, except the date, complimentary close, and signature, which are positioned the same as that in the semi-indented style.

3. Semi-indented Style

At the beginning of each paragraph, we should leave four-letter space blank. There are two lines between every paragraph. The date line is on the top of the right corner, and the signature and the complimentary close is at the bottom of the right corner.

Sample 1—Full block style

Southeast Travel
Head Office
5th Floor, World Trade Mansion
Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, 210033
P. R.China
Tel: 086-025-9966888

Your ref: 5SJ
Our ref: 0268

5 July 2016

Mr. S. Johnson
Water Close
Sydney

Dear Mr. Johnson
Re: Mortgage Account

Thank you for your letter of 1 July and we learn that you would like details of the building coverage.

We enclose herewith a booklet detailing the premium rates for standard and additional cover.

Please let us know what particular cover(s) you would require so that we can make necessary arrangements accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

M. Smith

Manager of Insurance Section

Study the following model letter and answer questions individually or in pairs:

- (1) What are the name, address, and telephone number of the company from which the letter is sent?
- (2) When was the letter written?
- (3) What is the inside address?
- (4) What is the writer's reference number?
- (5) What is the subject of the letter?
- (6) Who wrote the letter?
- (7) What is the position of the writer of the letter?
- (8) What is the purpose of the letter?
- (9) What is the main idea of the letter?
- (10) What is the possible relationship between the writer and the receiver of the letter?

Sample 2—Modified block style

BE Training & Consulting

2 Viaduct Road, Brighton BN1 4NB, England

TELEPHONE 01225 442128

TELEFAX 01225 442264

E-MAIL 100663@edu.com

18 March 2016

Mr. John Smith

5 Daling Road