



“十三五”高等学校专业教材建设工程

# 现代商务英语书信

XIANDAI SHANGWU YINGYU SHUXIN

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副主编 杨飞雪



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· 沈 阳 ·

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## 内容简介

本书按照国际贸易的交易磋商流程, 系统介绍国际商务函电, 包括传真和电子邮件等新媒介手段的写作方法和技巧, 旨在帮助读者提高书面交流沟通能力。具体包括现代商务英语书信的写作基础知识; 询盘、报价、还盘、订货、运输、支付、保险、索赔、代理等书信的写作方法和写作技巧; 合同的拟定原则和方法; 邀请函、感谢信等其他常用商务函电的写作等。此外, 本书还包括相关业务知识简介和阅读、注释、相关单据、常用语句和表达方式、习题参考答案、常用商务术语等, 便于读者自学、查阅和检测。

本书既可以作为高等院校国际经济与贸易、商务英语、电子商务、国际营销等专业的本专科教材, 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以及从事外贸行业工作人员的自学参考资料。

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## PREFACE

### 前 言

“现代商务英语书信”课是经济与贸易、商务英语、电子商务、国际营销等专业学生重要的基础必修课，具有很强的基础性、实用性和综合性。本书顺应不断加强的国际合作与日趋激烈的国际竞争形势的客观需要，按照国际贸易的交易磋商流程，重点讲解外贸函电的基础知识和基础技能，旨在帮助读者在掌握外贸业务知识的前提下，能更好地运用英语技能和现代通信手段，提高英语沟通能力，使其在相关外贸工作岗位上具备较强的适应性和独立工作能力，成为专业知识扎实、业务过硬、英语沟通水平较高的外贸销售人员、谈判人员、管理人员等高素质国际复合型人才。

本书既可以作为高等院校相关专业的本专科教材，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以及从事外贸行业工作人员的自学参考资料。

本书共分为 13 个单元，主要内容包括：国际商务函电——传真和电子邮件等的格式、结构、写作原则、写作方法和技巧；有关外贸实务交易磋商流程的询盘、报价、还盘、订货、运输、支付、保险、索赔、代理等书信的写作方法、写作技巧和样信；具体贸易案例中的往来信函；合同的拟定原则、方法及样本；商务工作中公司间、贸易伙伴间的礼仪性信函等。每章的内容包括相关业务知识介绍、样信、注释、相关单据、补充阅读、常用语句和表达方式、习题七个部分（习题主要包括填空、选择、翻译和写作等内容）。本书附录部分包括习题参考答案、相关商务信函和常用商务术语。

本书的主要特点有：

(1) 顺应时代发展，与时俱进。本书在着重讲解传统商务函电的写作方法和技巧的同时，将新的通讯媒介传真和电子邮件的写作纳入现代商务英语书信的写作范畴，凸显时代特色。

(2) 设计新颖，别具匠心，便于学习。书中内容既包括函电的写作方法和样信，

又包括常用语句和表达方式、注释,还包括相关单据和贸易实务内容的补充阅读,习题答案。每个环节的设计都以学生为中心的教学理念出发,提高学生的自我学习和自我检验的能力。教学目标明确,目的性强。

(3) 注重专业知识的衔接,具有很强的实用性。本书的结构安排大致与贸易实务流程一致,从每章开篇的相应专业知识的简介,到相关单据,再到最后的补充阅读部分,都紧密与专业知识衔接,帮助读者在了解商务信函写作知识的基础上,巩固和复习专业知识,真正做到专业和英语的无缝对接,真正体现培养复合型人才的目标。

(4) 习题内容丰富。本书习题的设计既关注英语本身的拼写和语法以及写作技巧等,又注重英汉对照和互译,有助于提高读者的翻译水平,增强书面沟通能力。

本书第1、2、3、7、8、9、11、12、13章及附录部分由辽宁工业大学王妍编写,第4、5、6、10章初稿由辽宁工业大学王妍和杨飞雪共同编写。全书由王妍负责总体设计及修改整理。

由于编者水平所限,书中不妥之处在所难免,恳请各位读者多提宝贵意见。

编 者

2015年12月

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## CHAPTER 1

# BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF BUSINESS LETTER WRITING

### 1.1 Introduction

With the fast development of international trade, high information technology and economical globalization over the past decades, “modern business letters” are referred not only to traditional postal letters, but also to faxes, e-mails, etc. which have become central to corporate communication media, whereas telegrams(cables) and telexes are seldom used in our modern practice.

Business faxes and emails tend to be less formal than traditional letters, no matter in structure and layout or in language, so do the modern business letters.

Postal letters seem formal, emails informal, faxes somewhere in between. Faxes and emails are more likely selected under time pressure, and faxes are more convenient and flexible than emails, since any sheet of A4 paper can be put through a fax machine and no special hardware or software is required to prepare a document which includes graphs, photographs of diagrams.

We usually make the first contact through more formal postal letters or faxes, whereas emails are used for follow-up contacts. But in some countries, emails have assumed almost all the tasks of business letters and made postal letters secondary, if no irrelevant. While for Chinese practitioners, they take faxes as the prominent medium, and larger Chinese companies still prefer faxes to emails.

Whatever letters refer to, and whatever you choose to convey your message, all important points should be ensured: layout, structural frame, tone, attitude, basic requirements for English writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation), etc. A good business letter can help you create and enhance goodwill towards yourself and your company.

In this chapter, basic layout and structure of a modern business letter, rules for writing and presentation are introduced.

### 1.2 Layout and Structure of a Business Letter

Conventions on the layout of business letters have developed over centuries. Traditionally, a basic distinction has been made between the American block style and British indented style.

The three forms of American block style, full block format and modified block format are featured by all lines in paragraphs being vertically aligned from the left margin, whereas, the semi-block form is featured by the line in paragraphs being indented five or eight spaces. The British indented style has increasingly given way to full block with open punctuation. Very recently, full block with open punctuation style has gained in popularity, and is claimed to be the current international standard for all types of business documents.

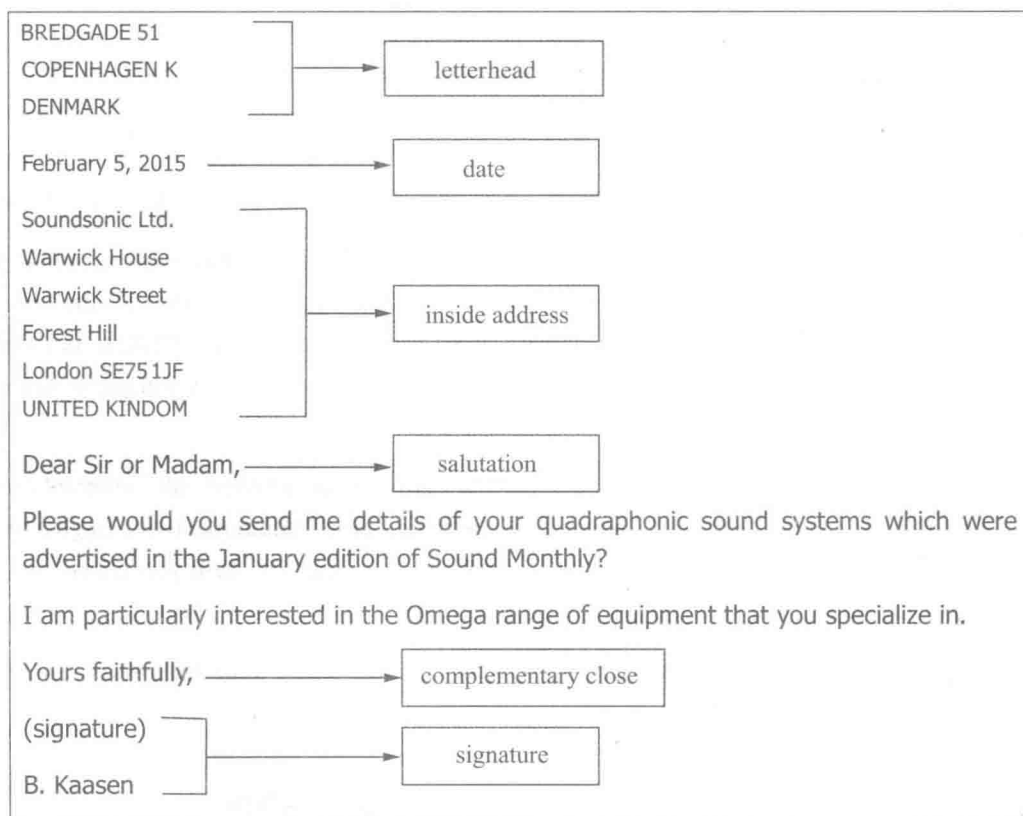
As to the structure of a business letter, seven parts are essential for each letter: the letterhead, the date, the inside address, the salutation, the body of the letter, the complimentary close, and the signature.

While some other parts are optional, you can choose according to your practical need, which include the references, the attention line, the subject line, the enclosure, the carbon copy, the notation, the identification line, and the postscript.

This chapter will show the structure, together with different formats of a letter.

### 1.2.1 Full Block Format

All the lines are vertically aligned from the left margin in full block format.



A standard business letter contains the following seven parts:

## A. Letterhead

The letterhead expresses the personality of a company and often indicates the name & address of the writer's company, telephone number, fax number, email, internet website and the kind of business carried on. Usually it is centered or at the right or left margin of a letter writing paper. Nowadays, more and more business letters have preprinted letterhead stationary which contains the above information.

A printed letterhead of a company gives a great deal of information about it.

### (1) Type of company

The abbreviation Ltd. , after the company's name tells us that the company has limited liability, which means that the individual who own the company, or part of it, i. e. The shareholders, are only reasonable for their holding the capital they have contributed and no more than that if the company goes bankrupt. It is a warning, therefore, to people giving the company credit that in bankruptcy they can only get what the company owns, not the personal possessions of its shareholders. The abbreviation PLC ( public limited company) is now often can be bought by the public, Ltd. continues to be used for private limited companies whose shares are not available. In the USA the term incorporated (Inc. ) is used.

SOUNDSONIC Ltd.

SP Wholesalers PLC

Eartley-Mcson Inc.

The abbreviation &Co. tells you that the company is a partnership between two or more people. If it is a family concern, the word Son, Sons, Bros of very occasionally, Daughter(s) may be added. Partnerships may have limited liability or unlimited liability.

F. Lynch & Co. Ltd.

R. Hughes & Son Ltd.

If neither Ltd. nor &Co. appear after the company's name, then it may be a sole trader, a single person doing business in his own name and on his own account.

If the company is a joint stock company, the names of the directors will appear on the letterhead.

### (2) Board of Directors

The name of the Chairman (or, in the USA, the President), who runs the concern, will be given, as well as the names of the Directors, who decide the overall policy of the firm. The Managing Director (in the USA, Chief Executive), who takes an active role in the day-to-day running of the company, may be mentioned if he is different from the Chairman.

### (3) Address

In addition to the address of the office from which the letter is being sent, the letterhead may also give the address of the head office or registered office if different and the address of any bran-

ches of other offices the company owns.

Telephone and fax numbers and email addresses are also given.

#### **(4) Registered number**

This usually appears in small print, sometimes with the country or city in which the company was registered.

#### **(5) The VAT number**

The VAT number (Value Added Tax) may also be given.

### **B. Date**

The date is generally placed at least two lines below the letterhead to the right for indented style or to the left for the blocked style. The date should be typed in full and not abbreviated (i. e. , November for Nov. ) and the - th, - st, - nd and - rd that follow the day can be omitted (i. e. , 3 May for 3rd May). Please see to it that the year is typed in full (i. e. , 2015 instead of 15). Always spell out the month and include the day, a comma, and the year. The preferred forms of dates are as follows:

e. g. 18 August, 2015      August 18, 2015

And many firms prefer to leave out the abbreviation "th" after the date,

e. g. 18th August 2015 or August 18th, 2015

Whichever you choose, you should be consistent throughout your correspondence.

Avoid giving the dates in figures, since it may easily cause confusion. It is English practice to follow the order of day, month and year while the American practice is to write in the order of month, day and year. So 10/6/2015 could be taken as either June 10, 2015 or October 6, 2015.

### **C. The inside addresses**

The inside address consists of the correspondent's full name and address, which appears exactly the same way as on the envelope. It is typed single-spacing at the left-hand margin about two or four lines after the date.

Generally, the inside name and address in a business letter should include the following:

- (1) the name of the firm or company addressed to
- (2) the number and the name of the building or house
- (3) the number and the name of street
- (4) the name of city, state or county and its postal code
- (5) the name of country

Ordinary courtesy titles used in correspondence are Mr. for a man, Mrs. for a married woman, Miss for an unmarried woman and Ms. for both married and unmarried women. In recent years

it has become customary to use Ms. as the courtesy title for all women and many women, particularly career women, strongly object to being addressed as Mrs. or Miss.

Esq. instead of Mr. is sometimes used for certain classes of persons. Mr. always precedes the name while Esq. always follows the name, separated from it by a comma. e. g.

Mr. George Smith

George Smith, Esq.

Messrs., an abbreviation for the French word Messieurs, which is used only for partnership whose company name includes a personal element.

e. g.

Messrs. S. Laurel and O. Hardy

Messrs. J. Waston & Co.

The addresses can be with commas, each line of the address is followed by a comma (except the last line), or without any commas (i. e. open punctuation) which is now used by most firms.

#### **D. The salutation**

The salutation is the polite greeting with which every letter begins. The customary formal greeting in a business letter is "Dear Sir (Madam)", used to address a man or a woman whose name you don't know; "Dear Sirs (Mesdames)" or "Gentlemen" (used in America), is used to address to a company. If the receiver is known to the writer personally, a warm greeting, "Dear Mr. /Ms. sb." is then preferred.

The salutation should be placed two lines below the inside address or the attention line (if used), and the comma after the salutation is optional (Dear Sirs or Dear Sirs,) but in the USA, "Gentlemen" should be followed by a colon, i. e. "Gentlemen: ".

#### **E. The body of the letter**

This is the most important section of any business letter. It can be indented, or blocked, but whichever style you use, you must be consistent and use that style all through the letter. Make sure that each paragraph is clear and concise. Start a new paragraph for each point you wish to stress and arrange the paragraphs in logical order so that your letter "reads easily" and moves, step by step, toward the aim or purpose you wish to achieve.

The first paragraph of a letter, mainly being a contact one, should usually be short. It may need to:

- (1) indicate the subject and the purpose of the letter;
- (2) acknowledge any previous correspondence;
- (3) establish a satisfactory tone.

The last paragraph should also be relatively short. It may:

- (1) show friendliness and good will;
- (2) leave the reader with a single clear-cut thought or idea;

(3) inspire whatever action or response is desired.

It is typed two lines below the salutation, or below the subject line, if any. In letters of average length, paragraphs are single-spaced and between paragraphs double-spacing is used. Very short messages may be double-spaced.

### F. The complimentary close

The complimentary close, like the salutation, is simply a matter of custom and a polite way of closing a letter. Leave two lines of space after your last body paragraph, then place the close against the left margin (in fully blocked format), on the right or in the centre of the page (in letters which are in forms other than the full block).

The complimentary close should keep in tone with the salutation. The most commonly used sets of salutation and complimentary close are shown below:

Salutation	Close	Comment
Dear Sir(s)	Yours faithfully,	Formal
Gentlemen	Yours truly, / Truly yours,	Formal
Dear Mr. Harris	Yours sincerely, / Sincerely yours,	Less formal

Also notice that the close is always followed by a comma and only the initial letter of first word is capitalized.

### G. The signature

A business letter should be signed by hand and in ink immediately below the complimentary close. The name of the writer is usually typed below the signature and most often includes the writer's title and/or professional designations. The use of a rubber stamp is a form of discourtesy.

It is to some extent a matter of choice whether you sign with your initial(s) (D. Jenkins) or your given name (David Jenkins), and whether you include a courtesy title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) in your signature or not. But if you give neither your given name nor your title, your correspondent will not be able to identify your sex and may give you the wrong title when he/she replies. It is safer, therefore, to sign with your given name, and safest of all to include your title. Including titles in signatures is, in fact, more common among women than among men, partly because many women like to make it clear either that they are married (Mrs) or unmarried (Miss) or that their marital status is not relevant (Ms), and partly because there is still a tendency to believe that important positions in a company can only be held by men. It would do no harm for men to start including their titles in their signatures. It is also possible to include the title in the typewritten signature, usually in brackets, as in these two examples:

Yours faithfully,

(Miss) T. Shurgold

Yours sincerely,  
J. Howatt( Mr)

### 1.2.2 Modified Block Format

The date is placed on the right hand side in the modified block format.

**SOUNDSONIC Ltd.**

Warwick House,warwick Street, Forest Hill,London SE23 1JF

Chairman John Franks O.B.E.      Directors S. B. Allen M.Sc. , N.Ignot, R.Lichens B.A.

Telephone:(01)5663 1861    fax: (01)5663 1160    email: alpha@hml.net.uk

Your ref: 6 May 2015  
Our ref: DS\MR

Date: 11 May, 2015

MS B.Kaasen  
Bredgade 51  
Copenhagen K  
DENMARK

For the attention of Sales Manager

Dear MS Kaasen,

Omega range of equipment

Thank you very much for your enquiry which we received today.

I am enclosing our catalogue and price-list for the equipment you said you were interested in. I would like to draw your attention to pages 31-35 in the catalogue where you will find full details of the Omega range.

We would welcome any further enquiries you have, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

P.p. Soundsonic Ltd

(Signature)

D. Sampson

Sales manager

c. c. Messrs.Poole&Jackson Ltd., Solicitors

Enc.

reference

attention line

subject title

per pro

company position

carbon copy

enclosure

date



Besides the basic parts, optional parts can be included: the references, the attention line, the subject line, the enclosure, the carbon copy notation, per pro, company position and the post-script. It is not necessary to put all the above parts in one letter, and you can choose some according to your actual use.

### A. References

The references number and letters enable the writer or the recipient to link the reply with the previous correspondence. The references may include a file number, department code or the initials of the signer of the letter followed by the typist's initials. They are placed immediately below the letterhead and marked "Your ref:" and "Our ref:" to avoid confusion.

References may either appear in figures, e. g. 661/17 in which case 661 may refer to the chronological number of the letter and 17 to the number of the department, or, in letters, DS/MR, in which case DS stands for Donald Sampson, the writer. and MR for his secretary, Mary Rodgers.

### B. Attention line

The attention line may be used if the writer of a letter addressed to an organization wishes to direct the letter to a particular member or department of the company. Flush with left margin or placed in the centre of the page, the line is generally inserted between the Inside Address and the Salutation, with double spacing above and below it.

"For the attention of" or "attention" or just the abbreviation "Attn." can be used before the recipient's name or position.

International Industries Ltd.  
1 - 5 Greenfield Road  
Liverpool L220 PL  
For the attention of the Production Manager  
Dear Sir,

### C. The subject title

Some firms open their letters with a subject title. This provides a further reference, saves introducing the subject in the first paragraph, immediately draws attention to the topic of the letter, and allows the writer to refer to it throughout the letter. It is not necessary to begin the subject title with Re:

e. g. Re: Application for post of typist.

It is often placed two lines below the salutation and above the body of the letter.

Dear Sirs,  
Contract No. 1328