

高等学校商务英语系列规划教材



实用商务英语 信函写作

PRACTICAL ENGLISH WRITING
FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION

张翠波 主编



清华大学出版社
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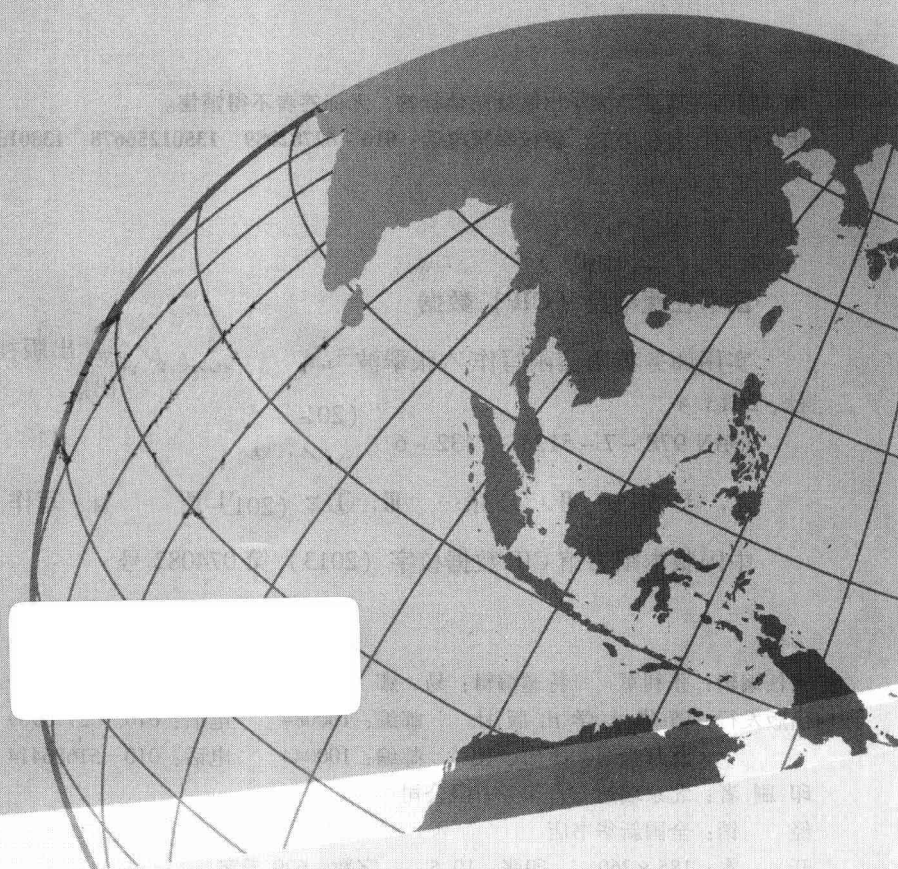
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Practical English Writing for International Business Communication

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· 北 京 ·

内 容 简 介

本书分为三大部分。第一部分为商务英语写作的基础篇,涉及商务英语书信的写作原则、格式及各种商务英语句型;第二部分为商务英语写作的实践篇,以进出口贸易流程为主线,按照外贸业务磋商过程中的各个环节来安排,包括建立业务关系、询盘、报盘与还盘、订货、确认订单、货款支付、保险、包装、装运、投诉索赔、代理合作、电子邮件等;第三部分为综合进出口业务函电磋商模拟篇,分别为出口、进口业务交易磋商各一套,提供仿真的贸易情境,并设有整套的交易磋商任务,供学生从整体上把握进出口业务流程。

本书的特色在于素材实用、编排新颖、布局清晰,其不同于同类书籍之处是将语言技能训练及外贸业务知识融为一体,精炼了多种专用句型,使得本书的内容充实丰富、由浅入深,增强了针对性和实用性。

本书适用于以应用型人才为培养目标的高等院校商务英语、国际贸易、国际商务及文秘英语专业的学生,同时也可供企事业单位的相关工作人员作为参考资料使用。

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

实用商务英语信函写作 / 张翠波主编. — 北京: 北京交通大学出版社; 清华大学出版社, 2013. 4

ISBN 978-7-5121-1432-6

I. ① 实… II. ① 张… III. ① 商务-英语-信函-写作-教材 IV. ① H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2013) 第 074082 号

责任编辑: 张利军 特邀编辑: 易 娜

出版发行: 清华大学出版社 邮编: 100084 电话: 010-62776969

北京交通大学出版社 邮编: 100044 电话: 010-51686414

印刷者: 北京瑞达方舟印务有限公司

经 销: 全国新华书店

开 本: 185 × 260 印张: 19.5 字数: 629 千字

版 次: 2013 年 4 月第 1 版 2013 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5121-1432-6/H · 305

印 数: 1 ~ 3 000 册 定价: 35.00 元

本书如有质量问题, 请向北京交通大学出版社质监组反映。对您的意见和批评, 我们表示欢迎和感谢。

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前言 *Preface*

我国对外开放的深入,加入世界贸易组织,全方位参与国际经济的合作与竞争,标志着中国进一步融入全球经济一体化的大潮。为了适应国家对国际经贸人才日益提高的需求,尽快熟悉国际经济环境,通晓国际商务规范,掌握跨文化商务交际已然成为当务之急。因此,培养既熟练掌握语言技能,具有扎实语言功底和交际能力,又通晓国际经贸知识和规范的学生便成为实现培养全方位、多层次、宽领域、高素质经贸英语复合型人才的最佳选择和有效途径。

当今的国际商务竞争在很大程度上体现在跨文化沟通能力的竞争,而这种竞争又具体表现在思维方式和语言表达方面。因此,外经贸人员增强国际商务沟通能力和英语表达能力显得尤为重要。外经贸英语写作历来是外经贸人员必备的专业技能之一。此门课程已有七十多年的历史,至今仍是商务英语及经贸等有关专业教学及外经贸企业培训的主干课程。

《实用商务英语信函写作》将英美专家提倡的最新沟通理念和沟通方式融入英语语言学习,根据涉外商务和职业场合的需要,系统地阐述了国际商务沟通的通用规则及信函写作方法,使商务信函写作成为更适合当今国际竞争与合作的有效沟通方式。

本书分为三大部分。

第一部分为商务英语写作的基础篇,包括英语书信的写作原则、格式、组成部分及不同情境下所使用的新鲜、生动、实用的表达方式等,并附有大量的相关练习,方便学生更加集中地掌握地道规范的商务英语函电句型。

第二部分为商务英语写作的实践篇,以进出口贸易(主要是货物出口贸易)的各个环节为依据,按照外贸业务磋商过程中各个环节的顺序附有往来函电的大量例文,提供了大量的中英文函电专用语句。本部分所涵盖的主题包括:监理业务关系、询盘、报盘与还盘、订货和订单、确认订单、货款支付、保险、包装、装运、投诉索赔、代理合作、电子邮件等。

第三部分为综合业务函电磋商模拟,设有出口、进口业务交易磋商材料各一套,提供仿真的贸易情境、相关的贸易产品信息及贸易单据,并设计了整套的交易磋商任务,供学生从整体上把握进出口业务流程。

本书的特色在于素材实用、编排新颖、布局清晰,其不同于同类书籍之处是编者在编写过程中深入研究、比较了国内外已出版的商务英语函电教材及教学法专著,将语言技能训练及外贸业务知识融为一体,精炼了多种专用句型,使得本书的内容充实丰富、由浅入深,增强了针对性和实用性,具有较强的时代感。读者通过模仿范例进行大量的实战训练便可获得很好的学习效果。同时,本书第三部分的综合进出口贸易函电磋商及相关贸易单证样本,便于学生将商务沟通与国

际贸易实务知识有机地结合在一起，以便帮助学生加深对国际贸易中交易磋商的整个流程的认识，并能够培养其在商务环境中英语语言的应用能力。

此外，本书中每单元的内容介绍及函电范例均为英文编写，可用于双语教学和全英语教学，以培养学生直接用英语思维的习惯，从而提高在涉外商务环境中运用英语沟通的能力。

本书适用于以应用型人才为培养目标的高等院校商务英语、国际贸易、国际商务及文秘英语专业的学生，同时也可供企事业单位的相关工作人员作为参考资料使用。

本书由北京联合大学商务学院张翠波担任主编，北京石油化工学院樊继英担任副主编。各章节编写的具体分工为：张翠波负责编写 Overview of Business Communication、Module 1~Module 4、Module 11~Module 13、Module 19、Module 20；樊继英负责编写 Module 7~Module 10、Module 14~Module 16；计晗（北京联合大学商务学院）负责编写 Module 5、Module 6、Module 17、Module 18。全书由张翠波统稿、审稿，计晗协助进行校稿工作。

在本书的编写过程中，国际贸易学博士张宇馨副教授给予了大力支持，对教材内容提出了许多有益的建议和补充；张铁顺、马雪莲协助进行电子文档的编辑工作；诸多外贸企业也给予了大力协助，在此一并表示衷心的感谢。

由于时间仓促，加之编者实践经验有限，书中难免有浅薄纰漏之处，敬请专家，同行、企业界人士及广大读者批评、指正，以便今后补充修订。

编 者
2013 年 4 月

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Overview of Business Communication

Effective communication is the lifeblood of every organization and also a key to success in your business career as well as in your personal life. If we could somehow remove communication flows from an organization, we would not have an organization. It is needed for:

- ◆ Exchanging information;
- ◆ Exchanging options;
- ◆ Making plans and proposals;
- ◆ Reaching agreements;
- ◆ Executing decisions;
- ◆ Sending and fulfilling orders;
- ◆ Conducting sales.

When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist. Communication for an organization, therefore, is viewed as vital as blood for life. Moreover, communication to persons outside the company, such as customers, inquirers, suppliers, etc., can have a far-reaching influence on the reputation and ultimate success of the company.

Furthermore, the globalization of business is accelerating as more companies cross national borders in search of new customers, new sources of materials, and new sources of money thanks to technological advances in communication and transportation. Even firms that once thought they were too tiny to expand into a neighboring city have discovered that they can tap the sales potential of overseas markets with the help of fax machines, the Internet, overnight delivery services, and e-mails. This rise of international business has increased international business communication by increasing exports, relaxing trade barriers, and increasing foreign competition in domestic markets.

Overall, business Communication is goal-oriented. The rules, regulations and policies of a company have to be communicated to people within and outside the organization. Business Communication is regulated by certain rules and norms. In early times, business communication was limited to paper-work, telephone calls etc. But now with advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, e-mails, satellite communication to support business communication. Effective business communication helps in building goodwill of an organization.

Business Communication can be of two types.

(1) Oral Communication — An oral communication can be formal or informal. Generally business communication is a formal means of communication, like: meetings, interviews, group discussion, speeches, etc. The chief advantage of oral communication is the opportunity it provides

for immediate feedback. This is the channel to use when you want the audience to ask questions and make comments or when you're trying to reach a group decision. Face-to-face communication is useful when you're presenting controversial information, because you can read the audience's body language and adjust your message accordingly.

(2) Written Communication — Written messages also take many forms. At one end are the scribbled notes people use to jog their own memories; at the other are elaborate, formal letters which are written to outsiders of an organization for a specific business purpose. Regardless of the form, written messages have one big advantage: they let you plan and control the message. A written format is appropriate when the information is complex, when a permanent record is needed for future reference, when the audience is large and geographically dispersed, and when immediate interaction with the audience is either unimportant or undesirable.

A study ever suggests that businesspeople tend to prefer oral communication channels to written ones as it's generally quicker and more convenient to talk to somebody than to write a memo or letter. Nevertheless, they would put important messages in writing although they rely more heavily on oral than on written communication channels for sharing information on a day-to-day basis, which obviously reflects the role of writing in today's business world.

Part I

Fundamentals of Business Letter Writing

Essentials of Business Letters



1.1 What Qualities Are Required to Write Good Business Letters?

Today more and more companies around the world are hopping national borders to conduct business. In this fast-paced global marketplace, companies are finding that good communication skills are essential for meeting customers, making sales, and working more effectively with colleagues in other countries. Regardless of the organization you join, therefore, you are likely to be dealing with people who come from various national, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and you may find yourself trying to bridge differences in both language and culture as you exchange business messages with customers, suppliers, investors, and competitors from other lands.

In addition, the rapid development of telecommunication technology makes telephone, telex and fax increasingly popular, and seems to have decreased the importance of letters. Nevertheless, letters are still retaining their importance in this age of electronic communication and are still written in an overwhelming number in international business as a very large part of the business of the world is conducted by means of correspondence. It is extremely important, as a result, to be able to write good business letters — letters that represent one's self and one's firm to best advantage.

Generally speaking, a business letter is written to get or to convey business information, to make or to accept an offer, to deal with various businesses. Besides, there are letters with no other purpose than to remind the recipient of the sender's existence.

Practical English writing does not call for flowery language because it isn't literary works, but it is required to express your own views accurately in a plain language that is very clear and is readily understood, to catch the readers' attention and persuade the readers to accept what you said. If practical English writing is to achieve its purpose, the writer should have the following abilities.

(1) A good command of standard modern English. Good sentence structure and correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation will lead to a good impression of you and the company you represent on your reader. Moreover, it improves readability and avoid ambiguity, e.g.:

Incorrect Place of Modifiers

Please inform us of the earliest shipment we can have as soon as possible.

Correct Place of Modifiers

Please inform us as soon as possible the earliest shipment we can have.

Poor Rationality in Logic

Being a certified financial analyst, I'm sure you can do the job.

Good Rationality in Logic

Being a certified financial analyst, you can certainly do the job.

As you are a certified financial analyst, I'm sure you can do the job.

(2) A good command of business knowledge. Besides the language requirements, a business letter writer should also learn business practices and special terms. For instance, some words and expressions that look familiar to you may have meanings quite different from what you have learnt in everyday usage. Some examples are shown below.

☆ Trade terms that are widely used in international business, e.g.:

CIF: Cost, Insurance and Freight

DDP: Delivered Duty Paid

Ex-works: Delivery at the Factory

FOB: Free on Board

☆ Other business terms, the incorrect use and misunderstanding of which may cause disputes and losses, e.g.:

Clean Bill of Lading

All Risks

With Particular Average

(3) General knowledge of business letters and writing skills. A good understanding of the basics of how to write business letters, together with some writing skills, may help create a very successful business communicator.



1.2 General Process for Writing Business Letters

(1) Plan your message. Before starting to write, think about who you are writing to and why. What is your objective? What tone should you adopt? What is the correct or appropriate layout for your letter? What channel and medium should you choose?

During the planning phase, you think about the fundamentals of your message: your reason for communicating, your audience, the main idea of your message, and the channel and medium that will best convey your thoughts. The stages of planning include:

Defining your purpose. When planning a business message, think about your purpose. Of course you want to maintain the goodwill of the audience and create a favorable impression for your organization, but you also have a particular goal you want to achieve. That purpose may be

straightforward and obvious (like placing an order), or it may be more difficult to define. When the purpose is unclear, it pays to spend a few minutes thinking about what you hope to accomplish.

Analyzing your audience. Once you are satisfied that you have a legitimate purpose in communicating, take a good look at your intended audience. Who are the members, what are their attitudes, and what do they need to know? What is their probable reaction to your message? What is their relationship to you? The answers to these questions will indicate something about the material you'll cover and the way you'll cover it.

Establishing your main idea. Every business message can be boiled down to one main idea. Regardless of the issue's complexity, one central point sums up everything. This is your theme, your main idea. Everything else in the message either supports this point or demonstrates its implications. The main idea has to strike a response in the intended audience. It has to motivate people to do what you want by linking your purpose with their own.

Selecting the appropriate channel and medium. The communication media available to businesspeople have mushroomed in the past three decades: faxes, e-mail, voice mail, teleconferences — to name a few. Your selection of channel and medium can make the difference between effective and ineffective communication. So when choosing a channel (whether oral, written or electronic) and a medium (whether face-to-face conversation, telephone conversation, e-mail, written letters, etc.), do your best to match your selections to your messages and your intentions.

(2) **Organize your thoughts.** Successful communicators rely on organization to make their messages meaningful. Achieving good organization can be a challenge. Nevertheless, the following four guidelines can help you recognize a well-organized message.

- ◆ Make the subject and purpose clear.
- ◆ Include only information that is related to the subject and purpose.
- ◆ Group the ideas and present them in a logical way.
- ◆ Include all the necessary information.

Each guideline not only helps you communicate clearly and logically but also helps you communicate ethically — by making sure you state all information as truthfully, honestly, and fairly as possible.

(3) **Formulate your message.** When you feel confident that your outline or organization will achieve your purpose with the intended audience, you can begin to write your first draft. As you compose the first draft, don't worry about getting everything perfect. Just put down your ideas as quickly as you can. You'll have time to revise and refine the material later. Composition is easier if you've already figured out what to say and in what order, although you may need to pause now and then to find the right word.

(4) **Revise your message.** Once you've completed the first draft of your message, you need to review and refine your messages before sending them. Read what you've written through quickly to evaluate its overall effectiveness. You're mainly concerned with content, organization and flow. Compare the draft with your original plan. Have you covered all points in the most logical order? Is there a good balance between the general and the specific? Do the most important ideas receive the

most space, and are they placed in the most prominent positions? Have you provided enough support and double-checked the facts? Would the message be more convincing if it were arranged in another sequence? Do you need to add anything else? etc.

Besides, you should also think about what you can eliminate. In business, it's particularly important to weed out unnecessary material.

Overall, the composition process varies with the situation, the communicator, and the organization. Routine messages obviously require less planning and less revision than more complex messages. Moreover, various people approach composition in various ways; some compose quickly and then revise slowly; others revise as they go along. The composition process, therefore, is flexible, not a fixed prescription of sequenced steps.



1.3 Writing Principles

Letter writing does not differ from any other form of creative writing. Good English is one of the important bases of good business letters. What you write should be free from grammatical mistakes, and free from the slightest possibility of being misunderstood. There are certain essential qualities of business letters.

These qualities can be categorized into the following 5 Cs.

1. Clarity (clearness)

International business letters generally have a formal tone and a relatively elaborate style. Usually, a point that is ambiguous will cause trouble to readers. You must have a clear idea of what you want to convey to your intended audience. When you are sure about what to say, say it in plain, simple words. The so-called clearness is to make sure that what you write is so clear that the reader will understand the main points without thinking deeply. Well, to achieve this, as a writer, you should do the following.

(1) Try to choose the concise expressions and try to avoid using the words, and sentences equivocal in meaning, e.g.:

As to the steamer sailing from Shanghai to Los Angeles, we have bimonthly direct services.

The basic meaning of this sentence is “we have direct sailings from Shanghai to Los Angeles”, but the word “*bimonthly*” has two meanings. One is *twice a month* and the other is *once every two months*. You’d better not use the word like bimonthly with double meanings, but use the words that can express your idea clearly as the following:

We have a direct sailing from Shanghai to Los Angeles every two months.

We have two direct sailings every month from Shanghai to Los Angeles.

Cotton and silk blouses made in China enjoy a good market in the European market.

In this sentence, the same word “market” has two meanings, sale and marketplace. In practical English writing, especially in business letters, contracts, etc., the writer should try to avoid repeating the use of the same word such as market which has two different meanings in a sentence. So the above sentence should be rewritten as the following:

Cotton and silk blouses made in China sell best in the European market.

(2) Keep words together that work together. To avoid confusing readers, keep the subject and predicate of a sentence as close together as possible. Otherwise, readers will have to read your sentence twice to figure out who did what, e.g.:

A 10 percent decline in market share, which resulted from quality problems and an aggressive sales campaign by Armitage, the market leader in the Northeast, was the major problem in 2009.

In this sentence, *the market leader* seems to be the major problem, but the fact is not, which is quite confusing to readers, and can be corrected as follows:

The major problem in 2009 was a 10 percent loss of market share, which resulted from both quality problems and an aggressive sales campaign by Armitage, the market leader in the Northeast.

(3) Pay attention to the object of the pronoun and the relations between the relative pronoun and the antecedent.

Whom or what the pronoun refers to and what is the relation between the relative pronoun and the antecedent? These problems must be paid attention to.

Generally speaking, the pronoun and relative pronoun are used to refer to the nearest noun and should be identical in person and number with the noun referred to or modified, e.g.:

They informed Messrs Smith & Brown that they would receive a reply in a few days.

In this sentence, what does the second they refer to, the subject They of the main clause or the Messrs Smith & Brown? This cannot be explained clearly. It will be clear if you change the sentence into the following:

They informed Messrs Smith & Brown that the latter would receive the reply in a few days.

In this sentence, the latter is used to refer to Messrs Smith & Brown, so no misunderstanding

would occur.

Another example:

Our check for \$2,800 was sent to you under our check No. 123 on May 1 which was the price of the article plus transportation charges.

The Chinese for this sentence is “我方已于 5 月 1 日将价值 2 800 美元的 123 号支票寄给贵方, 该款包括货价和运输费。” But apparently, from the structure of the above sentence, it can be decided that the antecedent modified by the attributive clause introduced by which seems to be May 1. As a matter of fact, however, the antecedent should be \$2,800. So the sentence should be rewritten as the following:

We sent you on May 1 our check No. 123 for \$2,800 which was the price of the article plus transportation charges.

(4) Pay attention to the rationality in logic, the variety in sentence structure; the compact in plot and coherence in meanings.

First, you must pay attention to the agreement of the logical subject of the participle and the subject of the sentence, e.g.:

Walking to the office, a red sports car passed her.

The construction implies that the red sports car has the office and the legs to walk there. The modifier is said to be dangling because it has no real connection to the subject of the sentence — in this case, the sports car. This is what the writer is trying to say:

A red sports car passed her while she was walking to the office.

Flipping the clauses produces another correct sentence:

While she was walking to the office, a red sports car passed her.

Dangling modifiers make sentences confusing and sometimes ridiculous (see more examples):

Poor	Improved
<i>Working as fast as possible, the budget was soon ready.</i>	<i>Working as fast as possible, the committee soon had the budget ready.</i>
<i>After a three-week slump, we increased sales.</i>	<i>After a three-week slump, sales increased.</i>

Second, variety in the sentence structure should be paid attention to. To give your writing variety, use the three types of sentences.

Simple structure, which has a single subject and a single predicate, although it may be expanded by nouns and pronouns serving as objects of the action and by modifying phrases. Here is a typical example:

Profits have increased in the past year.

Compound structure, which expresses two or more independent but related thoughts of equal importance, joined by *and*, *but*, or *or*. In effect, a compound sentence is a merger of two or more simple sentences (independent clauses) that deal with the same basic idea. For example:

Wage rates have declined by 5 percent, and employee turnover has been high.

Complex structure, which expresses one main thought (the independent clause) and one or more subordinate thoughts (dependent clauses) related to it, often separated by a comma. The subordinate thought, which comes first in the following sentence, could not stand alone.

Although you may question Gerald's conclusions, you must admit that his research is thorough.

To make your writing as effective as possible, balance all three sentence types. If you use too many simple sentences, you can't properly express the relationship among ideas. If you use too many long, compound sentences, your writing will sound monotonous. On the other hand, an uninterrupted series of complex sentences is hard to follow.

Besides, try not to string together a series of sentences that all start with the same word or words and avoid repeating the same word too often within a given sentence. Another way to save words is to use infinitives in place of some phrases. This technique not only shortens your sentences but make them clearer as well.

Poor	Improved
<i>The employer increased salaries so that she could improve morale.</i>	<i>The employer increased salaries to improve morale.</i>
<i>He went to the library for the purpose of studying.</i>	<i>He went to the library to study.</i>
<i>In order to be a successful writer, you must work hard.</i>	<i>To be a successful writer, you must work hard.</i>

Third, coherence in meaning is worth considering, e.g.:

We wrote a letter. It was addressed to Mr. Henry. He is the sales manager.

The above three simple sentences are not coherent in meaning. Every simple sentence has its own meaning. The readers don't understand what you will tell him at all, i.e., it is difficult for them to tell what is primary from what is secondary and to catch your main idea. The above problem can be solved if you rewrite the sentence like this:

We wrote a letter to Mr. Henry, the sales manager.

(5) Use simple language. It is easy to 'fall into the trap' (make the mistake) of using 'big' or complicated words to make a letter look or feel important. However, these words may not be appropriate and may confuse the reader. In many, though not all, circumstances, simple direct words are best. For example:

Too Complicated	Simple
<i>Endeavour</i>	<i>try</i>
<i>Utilize</i>	<i>use</i>
<i>Terminate</i>	<i>end</i>
<i>Optimum</i>	<i>best</i>
<i>On behalf of</i>	<i>for</i>
<i>In the event that</i>	<i>if</i>
<i>Prior to the start of</i>	<i>before</i>
<i>In view of the fact that</i>	<i>since, because</i>
<i>We are of the opinion</i>	<i>we believe</i>
<i>As a result of</i>	<i>because</i>
<i>At an early date</i>	<i>soon (or a specific date)</i>
<i>At the present time</i>	<i>now</i>

Avoid Unfamiliar Words	Use Familiar Words
<i>circumvent</i>	<i>avoid</i>
<i>consummate</i>	<i>close, bring about</i>
<i>ascertain</i>	<i>find out, learn</i>
<i>increment</i>	<i>growth, increase</i>

(6) Eliminate awkward pointers. To save words, business writers sometimes direct their readers' attention elsewhere with such expressions as the *above-mentioned*, *as mentioned above*, *the aforementioned*, *the former*, *the latter*, *respectively*. These words cause the reader to jump from one point in the message to another, a process that hinders effective communication. A better approach is to be specific in your references, even if you must add a few more words.