

A PRACTICAL COURSE  
OF ENGLISH CONCERNING  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
BOOK I

涉外英语实用教程  
(上册)

陈良旋 编著



河南大学出版社

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Foreign Affairs

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## 前 言

随着改革开放不断深入,我国的涉外工作日益繁忙,对涉外业务人员的需求迅猛增加,对他们的业务素质和工作技能的要求也更高了。

《涉外英语实用教程》系根据国家教委关于适应形势需要调整专业方向的指示精神,根据河南省教委下达的任务,结合我国改革开放形势而编写的讲义。在编写过程中,参考了大量的国内外有关书刊资料。经郑州大学外语系学生和外事文秘方向学生使用,证明切合需要,深受欢迎,现经修改补充,正式出版。

本教程由于涉及面广,内容丰富,为便于教学使用,分为上下两册。上册含写好书信的基本原则;社交书信;外贸书信;电报电传等四部分,另有附录“世界通用电报业务缩略语表”等。下册含秘书必读;即席致辞;外交礼仪;外交公文;其他涉外应用文等五部分,并另附“公共揭示用语”等数种参考资料。

本教程可作高等学校英语专业学生必修课或选修课教材,也可作外事、外贸、旅游及其他行业涉外工作人员进修培训之用。本书也是广大英语爱好者一本实用性强,颇有参考价值的书籍。

由于水平所限,时间仓促,难免有错误或不妥之处,敬请读者批评指正。

编著者  
1992 年夏

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## Part One

### The Basic Rules of Successful Letter Writing

#### I. HOW TO WRITE SUCCESSFUL LETTERS?

##### 1. SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF LETTERS

A wide correspondence with friends can mean pleasure and satisfaction to you. Successful letter writing can help facilitate social activities—often save you much time, trouble and inconvenience. Considered as your personal representative, it goes to the hospital to cheer a sick friend, goes to your hostess to thank her for entertaining you, conveys your best wishes, congratulations, condolences, sympathy, when circumstances make it impossible for you to be there in person. What is more, successful letter writing can also enrich social life of human being. Good letters can bridge any distance, bring friends closer in intimacy and understanding, win affection, inspire love, promote friendship and enrich social relationships.

##### 2. ALWAYS TRY TO VISUALIZE THE PERSON /TO WHOM YOU ARE WRITING

If you think that talking is an expression of thoughts and ideas in spoken words, then, writing is, or should be, those same words on paper. A letter is like a visit on paper. So just write about the very same things you'd talk about if you were together. Always imagine that the person to whom you are writing is now sitting face to face in front of you. It

will help you express yourself in an easier and more natural style. As you know the person's interests, his likes and dislikes, his activities and his hobbies, you can write a most interesting and stimulating letter which he loves to receive.

### 3. JUST WRITE AS YOU SPEAK

As stated above, the letter you write is your personal representative. It is simply part of you, an expression of your personality. Therefore, it is not enough to write letters that are mere patterns of form. They are correct letters, but not good letters because they are colourless in personality. What you write must be letters that are warm and alive with reflections of your own personality. Make your letters sound the way you do. "Be yourself!" So a natural, spontaneous sincerity is the first and most important thing you should strive for in letter writing. Some people say, "Just write as you speak." That is perfectly right and the whole secret.

### 4. USE SIMPLE ENGLISH

The finest English in the world is simple English. It's true especially in producing interesting letters. As is known to all that letters with plain, understandable and familiar words always sound pleasant and conversational. These simple, home-spun words of everyday speech are usually more vivid, lively and expressive than those formal, bookish, high-sounding words. For example:

do	is a better word than	accomplish
write	is a better word than	correspond
often	is a better word than	frequently
find	is a better word than	locate
go	is a better word than	attend

When you can use a single vigorous word, don't use two or more. For example:

please	is better than	will you be good enough to
now	is better than	at the present time
like	is better than	along the lines of
since	is better than	inasmuch as

And try to use :

"I'm"	instead of	"I am"
"you've"	instead of	"you have"
"they're"	instead of	"they are"
"don't"	instead of	"do not"
"haven't"	instead of	"have not"

Of course, writing simply does not mean writing obviously without beauty or style. Your simple words should have meaning, substance and life. They should be colourful and expressive. They should have force and vigor and say something.

## 5. WRITE IN LOGICAL ORDER

Whenever you write a letter, be sure that you present your thoughts or ideas in logical order, and be sure to begin a new paragraph for every new thought or idea.

To make your letter sound conversational, short sentences and short paragraphs are always helpful. They are not only more inviting to eye, but read more easily and deliver your message or idea with greater speed. So, try to avoid long, rambling sentences and long involved paragraphs. Break one long, complicated sentence into two or three short sentences, which will surely bring great force and clarity to your letter. Another way to give your letters sharpness and clarity is to use concrete, specific words whenever possible. For example, instead of saying "He is not at home," you can say "He has gone to Beijing on business." The latter one sounds more sincere and takes more life and vitality as well.

## 6. CONTENT—THINK BEFORE YOU WRITE

In many letters, what you write is very often more than one thing. What you are going to write first and what next must be well-chosen and well-arranged. The advantage in doing so is obvious. But another point which is most easily neglected is what you should write and what you shouldn't.

It must be kept in mind that every letter you write creates either a good or bad impression on the person who receives it. So be as well-groomed in your letters as you are in your dress — as well-mannered as you are in your personal contacts! Don't say anything that sounds impolite, conceited or harmful to the friendship between you and the person who receives the letter. Never spread rumors or repeat unkind gossip.

Letter writing is not, after all, a face-to-face conversation. A careless or thoughtless remark in a letter can not be retracted or explained or made to seem unimportant by the friendliness of a gesture or a smile. It's there in black and white.

So the most important thing is to think before you write! Don't write anything you may later regret. Go over the whole letter again before you mail it. Make sure that you've not said anything that can be misunderstood, that can be construed as curt or unkind, as unfriendly, as ungracious or rude. Make it a practice to write your letters when you are in high spirits, when you feel especially friendly and kindly disposed toward the person to whom you are writing, never to write them in anger, or in a mood of depression or despair. Remember that in letters, as in personal contact, people respond most eagerly to enthusiasm and good cheer.

The most welcome letter — the letter that is received with joy and read with satisfaction — is the letter written from the reader's point of view, with the reader's interests and problems in mind. Don't pour all your worries and trouble into your letters! To be concrete, don't write of ill health, of domestic difficulties, of business reverse, of disagreeable or unpleasant things and of any bad news. The letter everyone loves to re-

ceive is friendly. It's like a smile, a handclasp, a warm and cheery "Hello!"

## 7. MAKE YOUR LETTER ATTRACTIVE

People dress up when they go to make a call, in order to make the best possible impression. And for that very same reason you should "dress up" your letter. The letter you write is your personal representative. Your business letter represents your firm just as the personality of its salesmen and the quality of its goods or services do, so, be sure it represents you or your firm to best advantage. That means a neat, clean letter, a pleasant-looking and prepossessing letter.

**The choice of stationery** Always use the best texture and quality of paper you can afford. And for your formal correspondence—such as invitations, acknowledgements, formal notes of thanks, condolence, and so forth—plain white unruled paper, of standard size and shape ( $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  in. or  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$  in.) is always the best. In English-speaking countries, people do not use ruled stationery for letters. Ruled paper is only for children learning how to write. Try to use stationery that fits the letter.

**Hand-written or typed** Short notes should be hand-written. A hand-written note is more intimate and personal, and somehow, more sincere. Therefore it is best to write short notes, especially notes of thanks, congratulation, sympathy and so forth, by hand. But be sure to write plainly and, of course, good hand-writing seems very important. Don't scribble. Don't scrawl. Don't use very brightly coloured ink. Never write in pencil because it is a rudeness to the person who receives your letter. It's now good form to type practically every kind of letter except formal invitations, acknowledgements and the like, and the above-mentioned short notes. But when you use a typewriter, be sure that it is in good condition and has the appropriate size of type, and that the ribbon is clean so that it does not



smudge or print too faintly. And remember, all typewritten letters must be signed by hand, with pen and ink. A typed signature is discourteous.

**Arrangement and balance** The final appearance of your letter, handwritten or typed, should be of a picture set neatly in a frame. That means it should be well-spaced and well-balanced, with reasonably wide and straight margins.

**Spacing** Spacing depends on the length of the letter. Most long letters are single-spaced, with double spaces between paragraphs. Short letters may be double-spaced, with triple spaces between paragraphs. We Chinese people like to have letters with indented paragraphs. In this case, it is correct to have double spacing between paragraphs. What about the spacing between parts of a letter? In a single-spaced letter, four spaces should be left between the date and the inside address. Two spaces should be left between the inside address and the salutation, between the salutation and the beginning of the body of the letter, between the end of the body of the letter and the complimentary close. Four spaces are usually left between the complimentary close and the typed name of the sender, but this space may be varied according to the size of the handwriting.

**Margins** Whenever you write, don't forget to leave margins. Letters are always bound by margins at the top and bottom, and on both sides. The width of the margin varies with the length of the letter. Long letters have narrow margins, while short ones, wider margins. For a long letter, the margin on the left side should be at least an inch wide and the margin on the right should be approximately the same. For short notes, the margins are proportionately wider—so that the letter looks well-spaced on the page. Top and bottom margins should be about equal in depth. Most letters have engraved or printed headings. When the letter covers a full page, the margin should begin from one to one-and-a-half inches below the base of the letterhead. And when there is no engraved or printed heading, or when the letter runs over to a second page, the top margin should be about one-and-a-half inches. When the letter is shorter, the top margin can