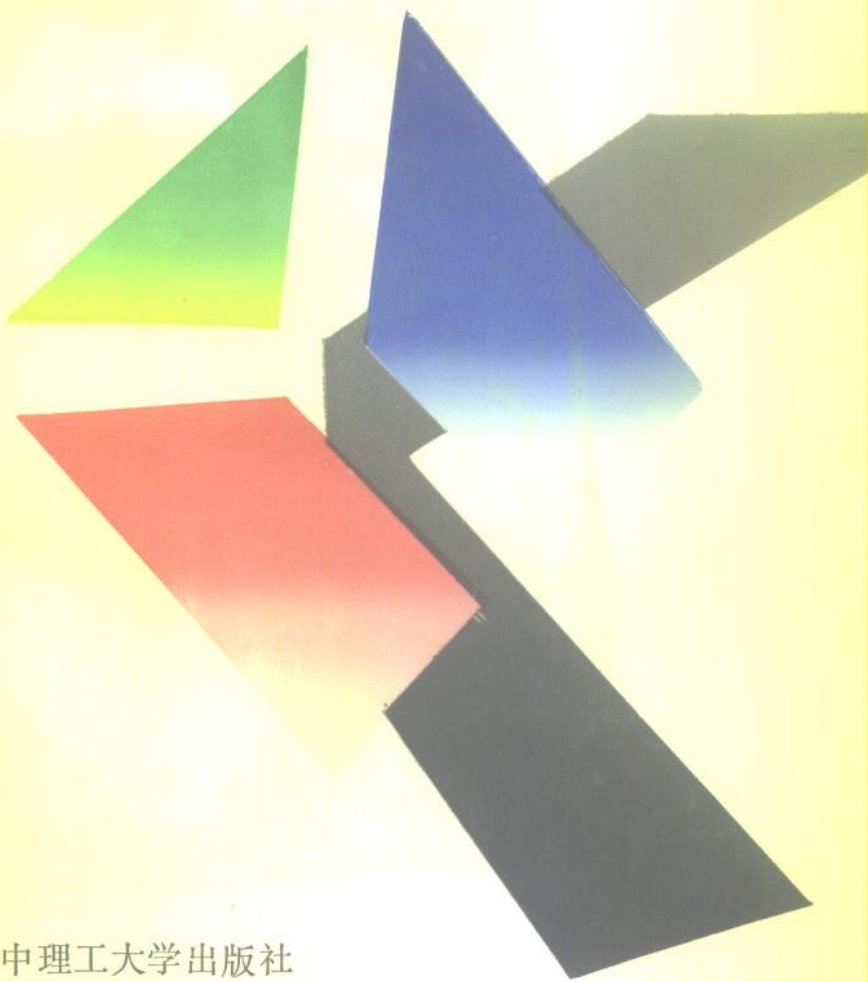


实用外贸英语函电

PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN TRADE COMMUNICATION

廖瑛 主编



华中理工大学出版社

实用外贸英语函电

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Practical

English

for

Foreign

Trade

Communication

实用外贸英语函电

主 编：廖 瑛

副主编：肖曼君

编 委：廖 瑛 肖曼君 何高孟 张军

全 英 周 勤 余顺民 岳志刚

华中理工大学出版社

· 武 汉 ·

(鄂)新登字第 10 号

DV36/02

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

实用外贸英语函电/廖 瑛 主编

武汉:华中理工大学出版社, 1995.8

ISBN 7-5609-1181-1

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Practical English for Foreign Trade Communication

实用外贸英语函电

廖 瑛 主编

责任编辑 杨志锋

华中理工大学出版社出版发行

(武汉武昌路30074)

新华书店经销

华中理工大学出版社沔阳印刷厂印刷

*

开本:850×1168 1/32 印张:9.125 字数:225 000

1995年8月第1版 1995年8月第1次印刷

IBSN 7-5609-1181-1/H·144 印数:1—10 000

定价:7.80元

内 容 提 要

《实用外贸英语函电》一书共分 18 个单元,前 3 个单元分别介绍商业书信的撰写,电报、电传文稿的草拟和破译方法。从第四单元到十八单元,按外贸业务进展的不同环节和内容进行编排,从建立业务关系、询价、报盘、还盘、订货、接受、签约、包装、装运、支付、结算、保险、商检、索赔、代理到几项特殊贸易形式和国际技术经济合作,各单元包括业务介绍、信函及电文示例、常用句型、生词、词语及注释、练习等 5 个部分。

本书融英语语言知识和外贸业务知识为一体,内容新颖,表达流畅,重点突出,实用性强。可作高等学校外贸、外经、国际会计、国际金融、酒店与宾馆管理、国际旅游和企业管理等专业的教材,对从事外经、外贸、外事及合资企业工作的业务人员、翻译人员和公关文秘人员有很强的实用价值。

PREFACE

前 言

《实用外贸英语函电》是由湖南大学国际商学院组织编写，湖南财经学院、湖南商学院、长沙铁道学院、湘潭师范学院和吉首大学等参编的《商务英语系列教程》之一，是国际贸易交往中必不可少的手段和工具。全书共分 18 个单元。前 3 个单元分别介绍商业书信的撰写，电报、电传文稿的草拟和破译方法；第四单元到十八单元，按外贸业务的不同环节和内容进行编排，从建立业务关系、询价、报盘、还盘、订货、接受、签约、包装、装运、支付、结算、保险、商检、索赔、代理到几项特殊贸易形式和经济技术合作。各单元包括 Introduction (概述)、Specimen Letters, Telegrams & Telexes (信函、电报和电传样例)、Sentences Commonly Used (常用句型)、Words, Expressions & Notes (生词、词语和注释) 和 Exercises (练习) 5 个部分。信函、电报、电传样例、常用句型的译文和全书的练习答案均编排在本书的姐妹篇《实用外贸英语函电练习答案及常见错误辨析》一书中，以供读者参考。本书融英语语言知识和外贸业务知识为一体，内容新颖、表达流畅、重点突出、实用性强。可作高等学校外贸专业、外经专业、国际会计专业、国际金融专业、酒店与宾馆管理专业、国际旅游专业、企业管理等专业的教科书。同时，对从事外经、外贸、外事及合资企业工作的业务人员、翻译人员、公关人员 等有较强的实用价值。

本书由湖南大学国际商学院廖瑛主编，湖南财经学院肖曼君

任副主编。参加本书编写的有：廖瑛（第一单元的三分之一，第二单元，第三单元，第四单元，第八单元，第十单元的二分之一，第十六单元的二分之一，第十七单元的二分之一，第十八单元和各单元的电报、电传样例）；肖曼君（第一单元的三分之一，第五单元，第九单元的二分之一，第十一单元，第十二单元，第十三单元，第十四单元，第十五单元和第十七单元的二分之一）；何高大（第四单元的练习，第十六单元的二分之一）；余顺民（第十单元的二分之一）；张越军（第一单元的三分之一和第九单元的二分之一）；全英（第六单元）；周勤（第七单元）；岳福新（第八单元的练习）。

华中理工大学出版社和湖南大学教材科对本书的组编与出版工作给予了大力支持，在此表示衷心地感谢。由于作者水平有限，书中缺点错误在所难免，欢迎同行专家和广大读者不吝赐教，批评指正。

编 者

于湖南大学国际商学院

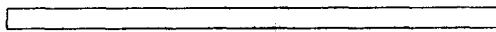
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Business Letter-Writing 商业书信的撰写

1. Introduction(概述)

In today's highly developed and toughly competitive society, communication between individuals and groups is becoming increasingly frequent and important. It serves to pass on information, to express ideas or to exchange feelings.

Generally speaking, the function of a business letter is to get or to convey business information; to make or to accept an offer; to deal with various business.

2. About the Writer(对作者的要求)

If a business letter is to achieve its purpose, the writer should have

- 1) a good command of standard English (精通标准英语);
- 2) knowledge of business theory and practice (通晓贸易理论和实务);
- 3) knowledge of technical terms (通晓术语);
- 4) knowledge of psychology (通晓人的心理);

5) skill in salesmanship (熟练的推销艺术).

3. Some Rules of Good Writing(写好商业书信的几条规则)

For the writer of a business letter, there is no set rule to following in letter-writing. But on the whole, the following rules should be paid attention to:

- 1) studying your reader's interest (研究收信人的兴趣);
- 2) adopting the right tone (使用适当的语气);
- 3) writing naturally and sincerely (诚恳自然地写);
- 4) writing clearly to the point (清楚地写出要点);
- 5) being courteous and considerate (要礼貌和体谅人);
- 6) avoiding wordiness (避免字句累赘);
- 7) avoiding old commercial jargon (避免使用陈腐的商业术语);
- 8) planning your letter and writing effectively (精心安排, 有效表达).

4. Principles of Business Letter-Writing(商业书信的写作原理)

In writing business letters, we should always bear in mind the essential qualities of them, the seven C's: completeness, concreteness, clarity, conciseness, courtesy, consideration and correctness.

(1) Completeness(完整)

A business letter is successful and functions well only when it contains all the necessary information. An outline helps for the letter to be full and complete. See to it that all the matters are

discussed, all the questions are answered. Incompleteness is not only impolite, it also leads to the recipient's unfavorable impression toward 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 inquiring once again.

(2) Concreteness(具体)

Business letters should avoid being too general. In general letters everything seems to be mentioned but actually few are fully expounded. The recipient has vague impression of what you try to achieve, so he is at a loss how to react upon reading your message. Especially for letters calling for specific reply, as offer, inquiring trade terms, etc., concreteness is always stressed. The following guidelines can help us write concretely:

- 1) Use specific facts and figures;
- 2) Put action in your verbs. Prefer active verbs to passive verbs or words in which action is hidden;
- 3) Choose vivid, image-building words;
- 4) Pay close attention to word orders, put modifiers in right place.

However, not on all occasions do the business letters try to be concrete and specific. Sometimes vagueness is preferred. If accurate facts or figures are not available, one has to be general. Sometimes for "strategic" consideration, the writer avoids to be too definite. For example, if you are a greenhand in a line and want to purchase some merchandise, naturally you want to compare the qualities, prices, etc. of the products from different manufacturers. You may open tentative offers to several producers. The offers you deliver are without engagement, they

should not be too concrete, but more flexible.

(3) Clearness (清楚)

To make sure that your letter is so clear that it cannot be misunderstood. You should first have a concrete idea in your mind of what you are going to achieve. Only a clean mind can express clearly. What is equally or more important is to get yourself understood, so it is advisable to write on—not above or below—the level of thereader's understanding. To do these:

1) Choose plain, simple words, words that are short, familiar, conversational, straight-forward;

2) 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;

3) Aim at unity, coherence and emphasis in your expression.

Compare the following examples. Sentence B is clearer and more effective than sentence A:

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.

(4) Conciseness (简洁)

Conciseness is often considered to be the most important writing principle, it enables to save both the writer's and the recipient's time. Conciseness means to express in as few words as possible without sacrificing completeness, concreteness and courtesy. To do so, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- 1) Omit trite expressions;
- 2) Avoid unnecessary;
- 3) Include only relevant facts with courtesy;
- 4) Organize effectively.

Please compare;

- A. (poor) The senator, who comes from New York, gave a speech that was long and tedious.
- B. (better) The senator from New York gave a long, tedious speech.

(5) Courtesy (礼貌)

Courtesy plays a considerate rule in business letter writing, as in all business activities. It is a favorable introduction card, helping to strengthen your present business relations and to establish new ones. Beautiful and courteous words do not necessarily mean courteous attitude. It comes from your genuine sincerity and respect for the others. To show courtesy, one should follow closely the suggestions given:

- 1) Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative;
- 2) Take a personable, friendly and modest tone;
- 3) Omit expressions that irritate, hurt or belittle.

It is always offensive to show any sign of arrogance or prejudice;

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

See how sentence A is blunt and abrupt, while sentence B is courteous and polite:

- A. Unfortunately we cannot fill your order because you failed to send your check.

B. We shall be glad to fill your order as soon as we receive your check.

(6) Consideration (体谅)

A letter functions well if it can deeply impress or influence its recipient. To gain a favorable impression, "You-attitude" is crucial in business letter writing, i. e. to put yourself in the position of the recipient, taking into consideration his demand, hope, interest, etc. Everybody may have his own inconveniences, thoughtful consideration enables you to better understand your recipient, thus your requirement will be more practical and understandable. "You-attitude" can help to avoid awkward situation, and promote cooperation between the trade parties.

"You-attitude" is not so simple as only to use "you" instead of "I" or "we", what works is rather the writer's spiritual attitude. Another thing, remember to emphasize the positive, pleasant facts, stressing what can be done and focusing on ideas that help to form favorable impressions on you. This can be seen clearly from the following examples:

A. (poor) Apparently you misunderstood our order.

Anyway you shipped the wrong thing.

B. (better) Apparently our instructions are not clear, with the result that the wrong article was shipped.

The general principle is courtesy and consideration, besides everything else. But anyhow, "business is business", a writer should be friendly and enthusiastic, but not too humble and flattering; be matter of fact, not exaggerating and lightly promising. Don't behave as if you are deficient in yourself and

your company, which may do harm to your business. The tone of the following example is over-modest as to be humble and flattering:

Please accept our deepest apologies for the thoughtless error we made in your November 14 order when you had sent us your check two weeks earlier.

Our accounting department is extremely embarrassed and sorry, as are all of us here. We need your business, and we hope you will forgive us this time. From now on we are delicate to serving you better, and you can be sure that we will carefully check all records before billing you again in the future.

(7) Correctness (正确)

Business letters must be correct, otherwise they may be misunderstood and run the risk of reaching nowhere or going astray. Business letters often are bases for various commercial documents such as contracts, agreements, so they are concerned with the rights, obligations, etc., of the two sides of a trade, the fact of which calls special attention from writers.

Correctness refers much more than that of grammar, punctuation, and spelling of words, which are the basic elements. A letter may be perfect mechanically speaking, 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:

- 1) Choose only accurate facts, words and figures. Be clear about the meanings of all the trade terms and jargons you use.

- 2) Be honest about the things you say. Don't over-say or under-say, be matter-of-fact in attitude.

3) Use the correct level of language. Don't over-estimate or underestimate your counter-part in foreign trade activities.

4) Observe all the writing mechanics, including the seven C's. Avoid silly spelling errors and grammatical blemishes.

5. The Structure and Layout of a Business Letter (商业书信结构格式)

(1) The Structure of a Business Letter (书信结构)

A business letter consists of the following parts:

1) Letterhead (信头): Letterhead, as the first and most obvious part of a company's business letter, has two functions: to identify where the letter comes from, and to form one's impression of the writer's company. A printed letterhead usually contains the writer's company's name, address, postcode, telephone number and telex number, telegraphic address, etc. In some countries there are regulations about the inclusion of other details. The printed letterhead is usually artistically designed and printed in the center or on the left margin at the top of the page.

①

Weavewell Woolen Co. Ltd.
246 Victoria Street
London E. C. 4, England
Tel. 01-1377-432 Telex: 9876548
cable add: WEAWEWELL, London

②

The Eastern Seaboard Corporation
324 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10017
Tel. 225-2780 Cable add: EASTSEA Telex: 222711

When writing on blank paper, only the address should be at

the right margin.

2) Reference Number(发文编号): The reference number is generally used as a useful indication for filing, so it must be easily seen. It is often placed two lines below the letterhead. In some incoming letters you may find it at the end of the letter on left margin, two lines below the signature.

It may include a file number, departmental code or the initials of the signer of the letter to be followed by the typist's initials in the following fashions:

A. Our ref: 234 GW/gp (in an incoming letter)

B. Your ref: 234 GW/gp

Our ref: 456 JS/lb (in the reply to the incoming letter)

3) Date(日期): Every letter should be dated—never send out a letter without a date. The position of the date below the letterhead (either on the right or on the left) depends on the style you decide to use.

Now there are different ways of writing the date:

August 3, 1994—American form

3rd August, 1994—British form

It is unwise to abbreviate the name of the month nor show the date in figures like 3/8/1994 or 8/3/1994 as this may cause some confusion, this is because the British and the American do not read the day and the month in the same order. If you are giving information, such as shipping or delivery or appointment dates, it is vital that the date should be correct, so it is better to write it out in full.

4) Inside name and address(封内名称和地址): The name and address of the receiver is typed at the left-hand margin at least two lines below the date. It appears exactly the same way