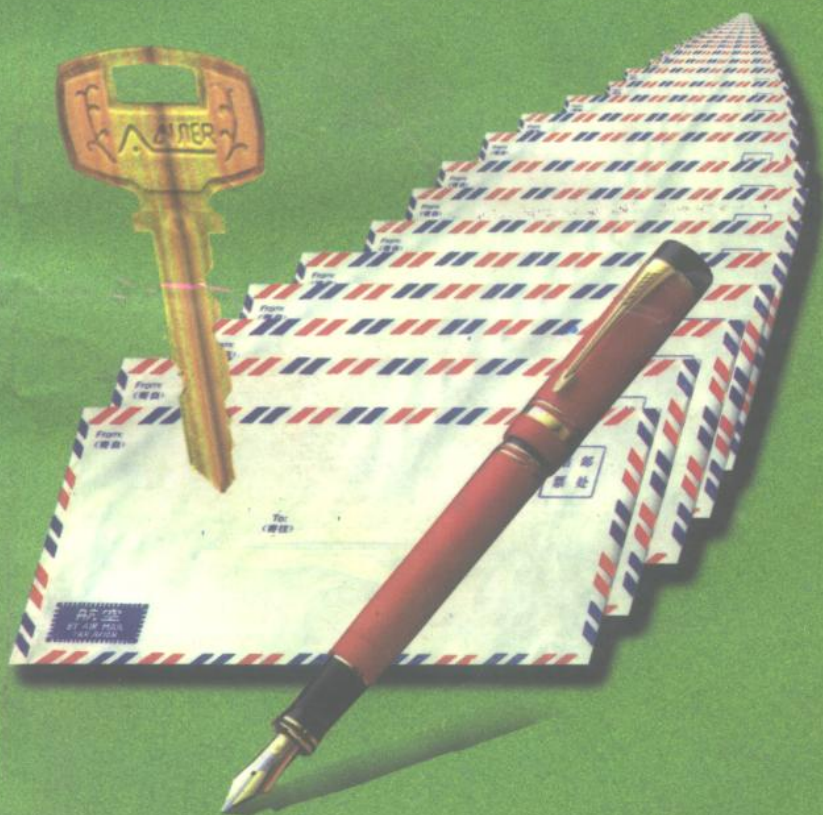


英语书信 写作与应用

汪福祥 编著



旅游教育出版社

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前 言

书信,是人类交际的重要媒介,是人与人之间表达情感、传递信息、沟通思想、密切来往、增进友谊的重要桥梁。在今日的大信息社会,虽然现代化的通讯设备日益更新,但是,电话、电脑、传真和寻呼机之类的设备在很多方面毕竟还不能完全取代书信。无论你是在国内求职还是往国外联系学校,无论你想和身处异地的老朋友叙谈友情还是想与新朋友加深了解,无论你想通知客户某项业务还是想索取一份产品介绍或报价单,你都离不开书信。尤其是在求爱或表达某种隐私性很强的思想情感方面,书信的特殊意义就更不言而喻了。

诚然,书信的重要作用几乎人人晓得,但是,写好一封书信的能力并不为人人所有。有些人连作梦都想联系个国外学校,然而却为写不好申请信而感到苦恼。也有些人,一心想在三资企业谋求个好职业,然却不知怎样写好自我介绍信。还有些人,抱着一颗挚诚的心想与某个异性朋友谈下去,然而,满腹的衷肠不知应该怎样表达给意中人。在这种时候,想写但又写不好书信的人心里的那般心急火燎的劲头就难以描述了。确实,写好书信不是一件容易的事,而用另外一种语言把信写好就更是难上加难了。相信正在申请留学或正在求职的人们都知道这种难处。其实,为写不好书信而着急或正在着急的人不仅仅是申请留学的人,就连在大学教过多年英语的人一轮到用英语写信也不得不大动一番脑筋。

中国人用自己的语言写信本来就不是一件轻松的事,而对于需要用英文把信写好的中国人来说写信到底有多难,相信只有他们自己最清楚。为什么呢?其原因可归为以下三点。

第一,写信表达的是思想、是态度、是情感,传递的是心声。思

想情感是个“只能意会，不能言传”的东西，若想用语言全部表达出来，当然不是件轻松的事。即使能用语言表达，也不得不费一番脑筋。此外，人们写信的主要目的是沟通思想、增进友谊、加深理解。然而，理解不是一件容易的事，不是一件普普通通的事情，要不人们为何要喊“理解万岁”呢？

谈到理解，人们不常有“他不理解我”，“我无法理解她”的感受吗？面对面地交往尚且存在理解问题，而要通过文字沟通人与人之间的理解也就当然更不容易了。轮到用英语写信，让持有另外一种思维的人理解你的思想情感，其难度是可想而知的。

第二，中国人用英语写信，还有个语言障碍问题。很多在大学学过英语的人写篇作文都很发愁，更何况用英语向异国人表达自己的心声或思想感情呢？汉语和英语是两个属于不同体系的语言，其语法、语义、用词、语言结构和表达方式有着千差万别。若把握不好这些存在于两种语言之中的差别，没有一定的语言功底，而想要使自己的思想顺利地被别人接受，让人理解，那当然是不可能的。

第三，文化概念问题。文化概念问题是造成用英语写信难的主要问题。我们中国人有我们自己的生活和思维方式，而外国人也有他们自己独特的生活和思维方式。想想看，要在持有两种不同思维方式的人中间用语言架起一座思想的桥梁谈何容易！

上面谈的是用英语写信的难度。现在再来谈谈这本书的内容编排及编写动机。本人将这本书命名为《英语书信写作与应用》是出于下述几方面考虑的。

其一，在已出版的书信大全或其它与书信有关的出版物中，大多数作者只重视向读者提供较精美的信例，对于兼顾提高写信人的写作技巧和解决需要写信人的当务之急等类的问题缺乏系统的安排和周密的考虑。此外，大多数已出版的书信专著只强调了语言形式，而告诉中国读者如何把握英美等国人们的思维方式及文化概念问题的著作并不多见。因此，本书就力图弥补这方面的缺陷：

不但向读者提供了大量的信例可供参考,而且还向读者提供了写作技巧以及文化方面的知识。

其二,写好书信,决非一日之功,需要长久的学习和不断的实践。然而,对于急需写信但又写不好的人来说,耐心研习写信的知识和技巧实在是“远水解不了近渴”。因此,为了解决广大读者的“近渴”问题,笔者精心收集了大量精美的书信范文,为大家提供了可供“照猫画虎”的“猫”的模样。这样,大家可以根据自己的具体情况和需求到书里去找近似于自己要画的那只“虎”的“猫”。当然我必须指出,这只是为了解决大家的燃眉之急而采取的一种没有办法的办法。真的要写好书信,必须从基础上开始做起。这便是本书将同时介绍写信的要旨和技巧的根本所在。

其三,本书编写的特点是易于查找。比如,当读者需要写感谢信的时候,他只要浏览一下目录便能很快查找到那一章,而且会在短时间内从本书所提供的大量的信例中找到适合己用的信例。在每一章的开始,书中列出了开头语和书信结构示意图,而且还提供了各个信例中值得参考和思考的句子,这一点也是其它已出版的同类书中未有考虑到的。

除上述外,每一章的开头都有一段“导言”,用以提示读者写这类书信时所应注意的方面。这个“导言”就是在告诫读者写这类信时所应注意的文化因素和写作时的注意事项。本人原打算用英语写这些导言,但考虑到读者的阅读习惯,因此才决定用中文写出,这样相信更便于读者对重要信息的理解和把握。上面谈了很多本书的好处,未免有些失谦虚。不过,本人是用英语语言的思维写这些话的,相信会英语的人能够理解这一点。至于书中的不妥或错误,我谨希望读者能给予指正。

编者

1996年元月于北京

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第 一 章

绪 论

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

导 言

写好英语书信的能力决非一日之功：需要严格的专业训练和持之以恒的不断培养。然而，对于生活在跨世纪时代的人来说，眼下急需用英语写信而又不可能再去深造研习的人来说是否有个能解决燃眉之急的捷径呢？常言道：“远水解不了近渴”，是否有个为大家解决那个“近渴”的有效办法呢？我们对此问题的回答是：“有！”本书的目的就是专门为解决大家的燃眉之急并很快解决大家那个“近渴”问题的。

在我们为大家解决那个“近渴”之时，我们深深地意识到，这虽然是个解决问题的方法，但决非是最终办法，也非长久之计。中国有句古语，直译成英语是：“Give me a fish, I'll eat for a day; teach me to fish and I'll eat for a lifetime.”（送我一条鱼，一天不挨饿；教会我钓鱼，一辈子无有饥。）此书编写的出发点就是：“既解决每天的饥饿，也要解决一生不挨饿的长久问题”。在本书中，我们向大家提供的信例主要是为了解决那个“近渴”的问题。但是，我们还将向大家提供有关书信的写作技巧和相关的知识。这样做则是着眼于大家的未来了。

应该承认，中国人想用英语把书信写好决非是件轻而易举的事。这主要是因为，语言是文化的产物，是生活在那个文化中的人们用以思维和表达思想的工具。我们中国人有我们自己的思维方式，而英美人则有他们自己的生活 and 思维方式。一个浸泡在中国文化有着中国人特有的思维方式的人要用别人的语言表达思想当然不是件容易的事。我们用英语写信，可以避免语法错误，但很难避免思想沟通时的表达错误。正是因为考虑到这个问题，我们才决定在本章内加了一条导言和有关注释。此外，诸如用词、标点符号、大小写以及缩略语之类的问题也被考虑其中，主要是解决大家的基

本功的问题。

在本章内,我们详细介绍了写信的要求,书信的作用,参照信例的注意事项以及其它有关信息,旨在向大家提供使用本书的必要知识。这些知识对于想稳步提高自己写信或写作技能的人来说无疑是不可忽视的。

Part 1 How You Can Be Helped To Write Better Personal Letters

Many well-educated people have trouble writing a letter, let alone those who have had little education or have just started doing it. The trouble lies not in their lack of worthwhile ideas, but because they feel they just can't come up with the right words. As for those who use English as a foreign or second language, writing a letter can be troublesome. There are, in fact, more and more Chinese students of English who wish to or who must correspond in English and who, nevertheless, find themselves unable to start their pen straight away, thus, feeling an urgent need for a "short cut" to the writing of better personal letters.

Well, here is a "short cut!" In the chapters that follow, you will be told how to do and what to do; you are provided with a wide variety of sample letters covering circumstances ranging from routine matters of everyday occasion to difficult and sensitive situations, all of which will immediately help initiate your own letters. After you have read this book, you'll never need to worry again or draw a blank when confronted with a pen and paper.

If you've ever been puzzled at the idea of writing a letter to a lover or a friend, if you've ever been troubled by writing an impressive letter to an important person, you'll not worry any more, for I'll show you how to organize and how to start your pen by providing you with sufficient samples which you can tailor to your own needs. If you've ever been intimidated by a letter from a hostile person, you certainly know the feeling caused by such letters. Well, I will show you how to turn the tables and put adversaries on the defensive. By then, your unreasonable neighbours, your unfair colleagues and your unprincipled authorities will soon feel the sting of some of their own medicine!

Well, do you want to write a love letter to the person you are head over heels in love with? Do you want to write a business letter and tell your customer something about your new product? Do you want to write a letter telling your friend that you are in hot water and expect help from him or her? Do you want to congratulate a friend of yours on his or her success or achievements? Do you want to reply to a hostile letter and tell the writer what you think? Or, do you want to write a resume, a short message, a notice, a postcard or anything? Well, whatever your wish, you can find a similar sample letter in this book. On the other hand, if you want to steadily improve your writing skills, you can find necessary information concerning good letter writing. All in all, your urgent need is helped, so is your distant need. With this book, you will

soon find letter writing an easier and more enjoyable activity rather than a headache as you have always felt. So, move on, and you will develop a better liking of letter writing which once bored you stiff.

Part 2 Time-saving Method in Simplifying Your Letter Writing

For any occasion or situation in which a letter is definitely required, I've provided a range of model letters you can use practically to initiate your own letter, changing perhaps just a few words. In many cases, you'll find the samples provided contain the essence of what You want to say. With minor adaptations you'll be able to compose an ideal and appropriate letter tailored to your exact circumstance in a matter of a few minutes. If, say, you want to write a letter of application to a foreign university or a letter of congratulations to a friend, you may refer to the samples categorized by subject. Everything you need is readily available and all are right at your fingertips.

Letter writing, like almost anything else, gets easier with constant practice. If one keeps trying and practising, it will become a pleasure rather than a burden or a chore as many people would think. With more and more practice, you will find that self-expression follows self-confidence. Once you've acquired both, you're on your way to becoming an accomplished wordsmith.

Your letters will become the medium for renewing and nurturing old friendships, and for tactfully handling every

social occasion. They'll open the way to solutions of problems that seemed insurmountable at first. And you will soon experience the heady feeling that comes with the realization of the influence your letter can bring to matters of importance. As for those Chinese students of English who are confident and ambitious enough to make a better living either through going abroad to further their studies or through getting a better and a more ideal job at home, how rewarding it is to be better qualified in letter writing is as clear as everyone can see.

Part 3 Getting Ready For Writing Better Letters

Why should I call "better letters", not "perfect letters"? Generally speaking, "Perfect" is very much of subjective value. It may be "perfect" to one person or in one respect, but not "perfect" to all and in all respects. Besides, a sense of perfection, to some degree, hinders human progress. And, the purpose of this book is to help Chinese students of English improve their writing skills other than provide something for their appreciation, therefore, "better letters" can be a better term than otherwise.

Another reason for the use of "better letters" is due to the fact that readers of this book need to write better letters than the letters they have been doing. As readers move on, they may indeed have such a feeling that the sample letters provided in this book are indeed better in many

ways than their own writings. It is with this justification that I would encourage my readers to prepare for better letter writings.

As indicated in the FOREWORD, the present book aims at providing something for the need-to-write-a-letter-now people to consider and imitate as well as equipping them with all the necessary skills for writing better letters. Therefore, those who do not have time to read the whole book and who just want to find a sample to follow may refer whatever they need, as each model letter stands on its own. When a specific occasion calls for a particular type of letter, turn to the pages covering that situation. Read the sample, modify it, and finish your own product. But if they are not compelled to write a letter now and do have some spare time, they may read the rest of the book, which, I bet, will do good to improving their letter writing skills.

Part 4 What Does A Letter Do?

If you say "Money can talk", then, I would say a letter can do much more; in many cases, a letter can talk better and do better things which money cannot possibly accomplish. What follows are some of the things a letter can do. Make a study of it and you may then have a stronger desire for writing more and better letters.

A Letter, though small with one or two pages, can actu-

ally do great many things, it can hold a hand, warm a heart, lend an ear, pat a back, light up a face, tickle a funnybone, dry an eye, woo a sweetheart, toast a bride, shout a bravo, blow a kiss, quench a wishful thinking, stop an evil desire, abate a hot anger, dismiss a fantasy, clear up a mist, mend a quarrel, drive away a worry, let up a stress, establish a new tie, start a new relation, cheer up a dull soul, motivate a worn out body, and above all, bring a change for the better. In doing business, a letter can bring better luck, better chances and a more prospective future.

Part 5 Why Do We Need to Write Letters?

When we are having amost all the necessary communication facilities such as telephone, computer, etc. , why should we still bother to write letters?

Read the following dialogue between a teacher and a student and you may then have a better idea of why.

Student: There's one point I keep wondering: why should we bother to write a letter when we can just pick up the phone and call?

Teacher: Well, that's an interesting question. But you won't contradict me if I say both phone calls and letters are means of communications, but nevertheless, they have different impact on the recipient.

Student: Can you explain the difference through some examples, please?

Teacher: Yes. Let's assume that you have quarrelled with your girlfriend and she seems quite hurt. And we assume that you really love her and do not want to lose her love. In a case like this, do you really think you can ease her anger and mend the quarrel just by picking up the phone and say: "Hay, I was very sorry to have quarrelled with you?" I guess not. But, after the quarrel, you sit down and write a letter telling her how stupid you were in the matter and add a few other remarks showing your apology, you will create a different feeling in her.

Student: I agree to a case like this. But why should letters create a different impact?

Teacher: The point is: when you pick up the phone and call, it shows your casual attitude with which you've come to regard a call — it's easier and quicker. But a letter involves more time and thought, and when a person receives your letter, he or she will certainly subconsciously add all that to the content of your letter. In many cases, friends will be touched to know that you were thoughtful enough to take the time to write. They think your doing it is to respect them in some way.

Student: I now see the point.