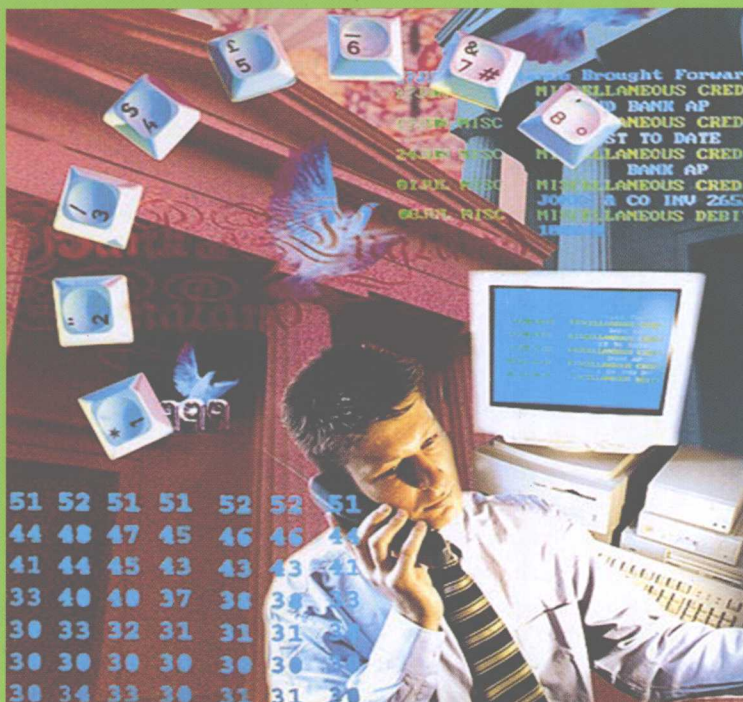


实用商务英语系列教材

# 外贸英语单证与函电

*Foreign Trade English: Business Letters and Documents*

总主编 刘超先



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## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

外贸英语单证与函电/刘超先总主编. —上海:复旦大学出版社,2008.12  
ISBN 978-7-309-06334-9  
(实用商务英语系列教材)

I. 外… II. 刘… III. ①对外贸易-英语-原始凭证-写作  
②对外贸易-英语-电报信函-写作 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2008)第162010号

## 外贸英语单证与函电

刘超先 总主编

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出版发行 复旦大学出版社 上海市国权路579号 邮编200433  
86-21-65642857(门市零售)  
86-21-65100562(团体订购) 86-21-65109143(外埠邮购)  
fupnet@fudanpress.com <http://www.fudanpress.com>

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责任编辑 庄彩云  
出品人 贺圣遂

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印 刷 上海肖华印务有限公司  
开 本 787×960 1/16  
印 张 17.75  
字 数 309千  
版 次 2008年12月第一版第一次印刷  
印 数 1—5 100

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书 号 ISBN 978-7-309-06334-9/H·1255  
定 价 29.00元

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# 总 序

改革开放日趋深入,社会对外经贸人才的需求持续增长,我国商务英语专业(方向)的招生规模逐年扩大,该专业(方向)本专科生教育的改革、学科建设及教材的出版循序渐进,教学质量逐步提高。并且,教育部于2007年9月成立了“2007—2011年教育部高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会”,对商务英语人才的培养提出了更高的标准,同时也为学科建设和教材编写提出了新的要求。中国加入世界贸易组织几年来,社会需要大量既懂英语,又思维严谨、知识面广博、综合能力强,尤其能熟练运用外经贸知识的高素质的专门人才。新的中学课程标准的颁布使中学生英语水平逐年提升,商务英语专业(方向)本专科生入学时的基础和综合素质也相应提高。此外,非英语专业大学公共英语教育迅猛发展,这些学生英语能力的提高,也为商务英语专业(方向)学生的培养提出了严峻的挑战和更新更高的要求。这就规定了21世纪的商务英语教学既是英语专业培训,又是英语专业教育,既以普通英语为主体,又以特殊用途英语为支撑,必须全面培养高素质的复合型人才。商务英语教材的编写和出版,毋庸置疑要顺应这种潮流。

复旦大学出版社正是顺应这种潮流,为商务英语人才的培养做了一件好事。在充分调研的基础上,复旦大学出版社抓住机遇,邀请了全国10多所财经类院校和综合性大学的外语院系的30多位商务英语教育专家,在湖南长沙召开了“高等院校商务英语专业本专科生系列教材编写委员会会议”。与会代表们一致认同了编写面向本世纪商务英语系列教材的必要性、可行性和紧迫性,并对编写思想、教材构建、编写程序等提出了建议和要求。而后,复旦大学出版社又多次组织专家、学者召开了会议,拟订编写大纲、确定教材类别、选定教材项目、讨论审核样稿。经过一年多的努力,终于迎来了第一批书稿。

商务英语系列教材共分13部书,内含经贸知识与语言技能、语言与文化、人文科学与经济学等3大模块。可以说几乎涵盖了当前我国高校商务英语专业(方向)所开设的主干课程。编写内容遵循深入浅出的原则,反映行业和学科领域的最新实践及研究成果;编写体例采用国家最新有关标准,力求科学、严谨,满足各门课程的具体要求;编写理念为帮助学生打下扎实的语言基本功,着力培养学生分析问题、解决问题的能力,提高学生的人文、科学素养,培养学生健康向上的人生观,使学生真正成为我国本世纪所需要的商务英语专门人才。

高等院校商务英语专业本专科生系列教材编写委员会由商务英语教育界的知名人士和一线教师组成,其中多数是在该领域颇有建树的专家,不少是各高等院校商务

英语专业教学的行家里手。教材作者均由编写委员会的专家们在仔细审阅校稿后遴选商定,总体上代表了我国当前商务英语教育的发展方向和水平。

该套教材的编写理念新颖、特色明显、体系宏大,经过实践和进一步完善必将列入商务英语专业(方向)重点教材规划项目。我们相信,复旦大学出版社该套教材的编写和出版,不仅会满足本世纪商务英语人才的培养需要,其独创性、前瞻性、先进性及其敢为人先的做法,也将为商务英语乃至其他学科教材的编写树立新的理念,开辟新的思路,拓展新的视野。

刘 岗  
2008 年春于岳麓山

## 前 言

随着我国经济建设的蓬勃发展,对外开放的进一步扩大,各高等院校为了适应形势需要,纷纷开设若干门实用性较强的课程,商务外贸英语单证与函电就是当中最普遍的一门。针对传统教育落后于具体实践的现象,根据外贸行业对行业人才的实际需要,在吸取现行多种同类教材优点的基础上,我们根据学习者特点及其业务实际,编写了《外贸英语单证与函电》。本书旨在增进学习者对外贸函电的格式、国际贸易的常规、国际贸易实务写作及相关内容的深入了解,培养学习者阅读、理解和写作符合国际商务规范的外贸函电的能力,进一步提高学习者在商务背景下英语语言的实际运用能力。

本书共分14个单元。其中第1~3单元系统地介绍了商务英语信函、电报、电传、传真及电子邮件写作的基本知识;第4~14单元则遵循外贸常规流程,依次介绍了建立业务关系、询盘、报盘、还盘和反还盘、订单、合同、装运、支付方式、保险、索赔、代理等内容。每个单元都含有专题介绍、样函、实用语句和练习等。

本书的特色是:每个单元的专题介绍都能针对国际贸易业务各个环节进行详细具体、深入浅出的讲解,绝不流于表面,力求让学习者真正了解国际贸易的常规流程和业务知识;专题介绍还包括对各类信函写作步骤进行的归纳总结,为学习者提供实践写作的各类提纲。本书的样函均源于编者长期的教学实践和研究成果,选自真实的国内外贸易公司的业务往来信函、原版的英语商务书籍及有影响的企业网站,并且根据情况进行了修改和调整,极具代表性和实用性;每例样函都附有详细完整的注释及编者针对样函内容提出的问题,对一些最新出现的业务术语也作了解释。在实用语句部分,本书提炼了函电中出现频率较高的表达方式,并且进行了分类,以方便学习者选择使用。附录部分选用了商业发票、订单、合同、信用证、保险单等各种单据实例供学习者学习和实践,有助于强化学习者对单证与函电的相关性认识,突出实用性、可操作性、高度仿真性。练习部分设计新颖、独特、合理,通过大量与实践联系紧密的写作练习,帮助学习者掌握函电写作方法、写作技巧及制作与审核相关单据的要求,提高其外贸业务写作能力。

本书可供高等院校商务英语专业、外贸专业、国际经济与贸易专业及其他相关专业师生使用,也可供社会读者参考。

由于编者水平有限,书中疏漏之处在所难免,希望专家、学者、同仁与读者不吝赐教。

编 者  
2008年2月

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# UNIT 1

## ***Basic Knowledge of Business Letter***

### **Learning Target**

To have a general idea of the definition, functions and significance of the business letter;

To grasp what a business letter consists of in structure;

To learn the styles of the business letter;

To master the layout of envelope for the business letter;

To comprehend the writing principles of the business letter.

### **学习目标**

了解商务书信的定义、功能和重要性；

掌握商务书信的结构；

学习商务书信的格式；

掌握商务书信信封的版式；

理解商务书信写作的原则。

## **I. Definition and Functions of Business Letter**



As a kind of goal-oriented writing, business letter can be defined as the letter used to support the goal of buying and selling goods or services. As one of the most popular means of communication in business activities, business letter plays an irreplaceable role in the fulfillment of business transactions.

Basically speaking, a business letter has the following two main functions:

On one hand, a business letter possesses the information function, which is an effective way to convey large amount of information in order to complete the routine business operations. The business letter is a kind of commercial dialogue in the written form through the mail or other telecommunication methods. After a telephone conversation or face-to-face talk, business executives

often still have to send the business letters to confirm the result of it. The business letters, as the outcome of ripe deliberation<sup>1</sup>, can reduce maximally<sup>2</sup> the oversights<sup>3</sup> or misunderstandings in the telephone or face-to-face talk.

On the other hand, a business letter is of the interpersonal function. A well-written business letter, which shows sincerity, consideration and goodwill to the business partner, builds and enhances the harmonious<sup>4</sup> business relations; thus facilitates<sup>5</sup> the business communication. However, a poorly-written business letter may impress the business partner as insincere<sup>6</sup>, arrogant<sup>7</sup> and lacking in respect. It does harm to the rapport<sup>8</sup> and at last damages the business relations.

Besides, as the written material, the business letter is a part of a company's permanent record. When some questions occurring<sup>9</sup> in the transaction must be checked, you can refer to the copy of the letter for verification<sup>10</sup>. When business disputes happen between the two sides, the business letter is also an important evidence in the law, which is fully recognized by the courts.

In fact, every letter fulfills several functions. As a result, business letters deserve considerable concern and attention.

## II. Significance of Business Letter



The rapid development of modern economy and technology has brought us into an age of globalization in which the contacts between individuals and companies are becoming increasingly frequent and easy. Although the modern communications such as telephone, telegram, telex, fax and E-mail are used widely now, the letter is still one of the most important communication methods. Today, letters are seldom sent out in the post offices as in the past, whereas people send them by fax or through E-mail on Internet in order to save time.

The world needs more and more communication, and the business field is not an exception. On the stage of "Global Village", more and more enterprises and companies expand their activities across the borders and engage in international trade. The business letter is one of the main media involved in the international economic activities. It is the principal means used by a business firm to keep in touch with its customers. It is said approximately<sup>11</sup> that ninety

percent of all business is transacted by the business letter, from which its importance can be recognized clearly.

In international business activities, in order to save time and expenses, people in the past used the telegram and the telex massively<sup>12</sup> and adopted the abbreviation widely; thus neglected the formal business letter writing to a certain extent. But along with the modern technology development, in international trade more and more people are using the facsimile and the E-mail to transmit the formal business letter. The form of transmission may vary<sup>13</sup>, but its essence<sup>14</sup> remains. Therefore, the business letter writing, which has aroused the business executives' attention again, gets its rebirth<sup>15</sup> and extends its realm<sup>16</sup> of transmission. In a word, the business letter is extremely useful and helpful in the business world.

English is the main tool used in the international commercial activities. Most business letters and oral transactions are carried out in the language of English. With China's entry into WTO and the development of foreign trade, there is an urgent need for the Chinese business executives to improve their capabilities to write good business English letters so as to carry out international business routine efficiently.

### III. Structure of Business Letter



Generally speaking, a business letter consists of standard parts and optional parts.

#### 1. Standard Parts

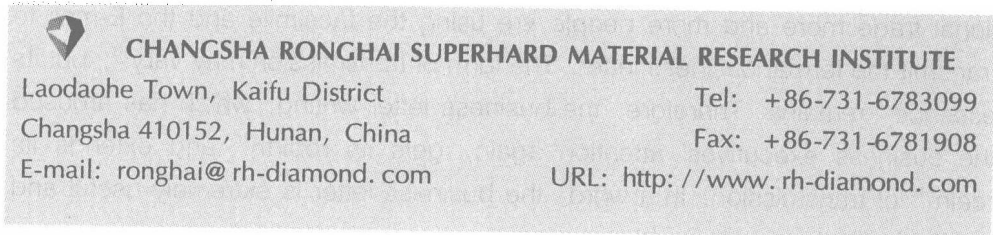
A typical business letter usually has seven standard parts, from the top to the bottom: letterhead<sup>17</sup>, date line<sup>18</sup>, inside name and address<sup>19</sup>, salutation<sup>20</sup>, body of the letter<sup>21</sup>, complimentary close<sup>22</sup>, and signature<sup>23</sup>.

##### (1) Letterhead

Letterhead, which is also called as stationery<sup>24</sup> or return address, is the heading at the top of a letter. It includes the necessary information such as name and address, postcode, telephone number, fax number, telex number, cable address, E-mail address, website address; and logo<sup>25</sup> of the sender's

company.

Usually letterhead is printed in the up-center or at the top left margin of a letter writing paper. It identifies where the letter comes from and provides the receiver with the first impression of the sender's company. Since every company wants to leave a favorable impression, it usually invites professionals to design the letterhead. For example:



When a letter runs more than one page long, instead of the letterhead, the second page heading is necessary for quick identification<sup>26</sup>, including the page number, the name of the receiver, and the date of the letter. The following examples are the most common.

Example 1

Mrs. Sarah D. Regan 2 May 12, 2007

Example 2

Mrs. Sarah D. Regan, May 12, 2007, Page 2

If the name of the receiver is long, we can write the second page heading as the following example:

Guangdong Peace Glass Import and Export Corporation  
Page 2  
June 11, 2007

## (2) Date Line

The date line is a very important part of every business letter, and it must never be omitted. When some transactions need checking, it will be convenient for the sender and the receiver to find the relevant letters with dates. And sometimes it is the key to settling the disputes in the transaction.

The date is placed two to four lines below the letterhead, either on the right or on the left, depending on the style of the letter.

There are different ways of writing the date. The following two are recom-

mended in the business letter.

*15 August (,) 2007* — British form

*August 15, 2007* — American form

Remember that the ordinal<sup>27</sup> suffixes<sup>28</sup> for dates such as “st”, “nd”, “rd”, and “th” can be omitted. For example, write September 1 for September 1st; the months and years should always be written in full and not abbreviated, for example, do not write Oct. for October, or 07 / '07 instead of 2007.

Avoid writing figures for the dates, for example, 9/10/2007, since it could easily be confusing. According to the British English form which follows the order of day, month and year, such a figure could be taken as 9 October 2007, while the U. S. practice is to read it in the order of month, day and year, so the figure could also be taken as September 10, 2007.

### **(3) Inside Name and Address**

The inside name and address is the receiver’s name and address, which is put in the left margin about two or four-line spaces below the date line. Although it appears exactly the same way as that on the envelope, the inside name and address can not be left out, because the envelope is often thrown away, but the letter, which is kept on file, must indicate for whom the message was intended. Besides, just because the information of inside name and address on the letter and the envelope should be the same, it may avoid the mistakes of putting the letter in a wrong envelope.

When the receiver is a company, the inside name and address should include the company’s name and address, which follows the order of street address, city, state/province, postcode and country. For example:

*The Magellan Group, Inc.*

*20301 Bond Road*

*Poulsbo, WA 98370*

*USA*

When the receiver is an individual in a company, the inside name and address should include the person’s name, title and full address. The ordinary courtesy title such as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. is used to address one person. After the receiver’s name, his or her official position should follow, if there is any. For example:

*Ms. Tanya Cavner*

*General Manager*

*New World Quartz Company*  
*278 Main Avenue*  
*Norwalk, CT 06853*  
*USA*

#### **(4) Salutation**

Salutation is the conventional greeting to the receiver. It is usually written two to four lines below the inside name and address or the attention line. Different salutations are used according to the relationship between the writer and the receiver, as well as the formality level of the letter.

If the writer doesn't know the name of the receiver, the traditional formal salutation in a business letter such as "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam" is used for addressing him or her, and "Dear Sirs", "Dear Mesdames", or "Gentlemen" for addressing two or more people. Remember "Dear Sir(s)" or "Dear Madam (Mesdames)" is usually followed by a comma which is the practice of Britain, and American practice is to use a colon for "Gentlemen". "Dear Sir or Madam" and "Ladies and Gentlemen" can also be used, when the letter is addressed to a company.

If the writer knows the receiver's name and sex, a warmer greeting "Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Miss / Ms. + receiver's surname" is then preferred. Mr. for a man, while Mrs., Miss and Ms. for a woman. When unsure about the female addressee's preference or the marriage status, you are safe to use Ms. If you don't know the person's sex, you can use the form "Dear + receiver's full name". However, "Dear + receiver's *FIRST* name" may be used in friendly personal letters, rather than in the business letters.

#### **(5) Body of the Letter**

Body of the letter, as the main part of the letter, is positioned two lines below the salutation, or below the subject line, if there is one.

The body of the letter should be paragraphed<sup>29</sup> correctly, confining each paragraph to one topic. The paragraphs may be classified into an opening paragraph, middle paragraphs and a concluding paragraph. In the opening paragraph, if it is the first letter to the receiver, a straightforward<sup>30</sup> sentence should be used to immediately indicate what the letter is about; if there has been previous correspondence<sup>31</sup>, the reply letter should refer to it in the opening paragraph. The writer's idea, opinion and purpose are expressed in the middle paragraphs, so they should be carefully planned. The writer may con-

clude and reinstate<sup>32</sup> the key points, or express his plans, suggestions, hopes and expectations in the concluding paragraph. Lines within a paragraph should be single-spaced, with double-space between paragraphs.

### (6) Complimentary Close

Complimentary close, like salutation, is merely a matter of courtesy<sup>33</sup> and a polite way of ending a letter. Its first word is capitalized, followed by a comma, and placed two lines below the body of the letter. It should be in keeping up with the salutation. The following are the most commonly used sets of salutations and complimentary closes:

*Dear Sir(s), / Dear Madam, / Dear Mesdames,*

*Yours faithfully, / Faithfully yours,*

— commonly used in Britain

*Gentlemen: / Dear Sir(s), / Dear Madam, / Dear Mesdames,*

*Yours truly, / Truly yours,*

— commonly used in America and Canada

*Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Miss / Ms. + receiver's surname,*

*Yours sincerely, / Sincerely yours,*

— used if the writer knows the receiver's name

*Dear + receiver's first name,*

*Sincerely, / Cordially*

— only used in informal letters

### (7) Signature

Every business letter must be signed. The signature means that the signer agrees to be responsible for the contents of the letter, which has a legal implication<sup>34</sup>. Unsigned letters have no legal authority<sup>35</sup>.

The complete signature includes the signer's handwritten signature, type-written signature and job title or position. It is common for the signer to write his or her own name below the complimentary close, by hand and in ink. Since the handwritten signature is illegible<sup>36</sup>, the name of signer is usually typed below the signature, followed by his job title or position. Never sign a letter with a rubber stamp. For example:

*Yours faithfully,*



*John Smith* — handwritten signature  
*John Smith* — typewritten signature  
*Personnel Director*

If the signer is a female, she can add her favorite courtesy title such as “Miss”, “Mrs. ”, or “Ms. ” before the type-written signature, in order that the receiver should choose an appropriate title as the salutation.

## 2. Optional Parts

The optional parts can be added or reduced according to the concrete situation.

### (1) Reference Number

The reference number<sup>37</sup> is used to indicate the file number of the writer's or the receiver's letter. If there is a reference number in the letter, when mentioned, the writer or the receiver will understand immediately which letter is referred to. And the reference number can link the letter with the previous correspondence so that the letter can be settled in due time. It is usually positioned two lines below the letterhead.

If the sender uses a reference number in the previous letter, the writer should quote<sup>38</sup> this number after the notation<sup>39</sup> “Your ref: ” in the reply letter. If the writer's letter has a file number to refer to, it is written after “Our ref: ”. Different companies have different forms and requirements to use the reference number. For example:

*Your ref: XT/ 0901*

*Our ref: 0425/ FXY*

### (2) Attention Line

When the letter is addressed to a company, if the writer wants the letter attended by or directed to a specific person or department, the attention line<sup>40</sup> is added to ensure the letter can reach the right person or department on time. This will speed up the sorting process within a company. It generally follows the inside address. Its abbreviation is “Attn.” Here are some examples for writing the attention line:

*Attention: Marketing Department*

*Attn: Mr. James Lane*

*ATTENTION: PURCHASE MANAGER*

### (3) Subject Line

Subject line<sup>41</sup> is actually the topic of a letter, which can help the receiver