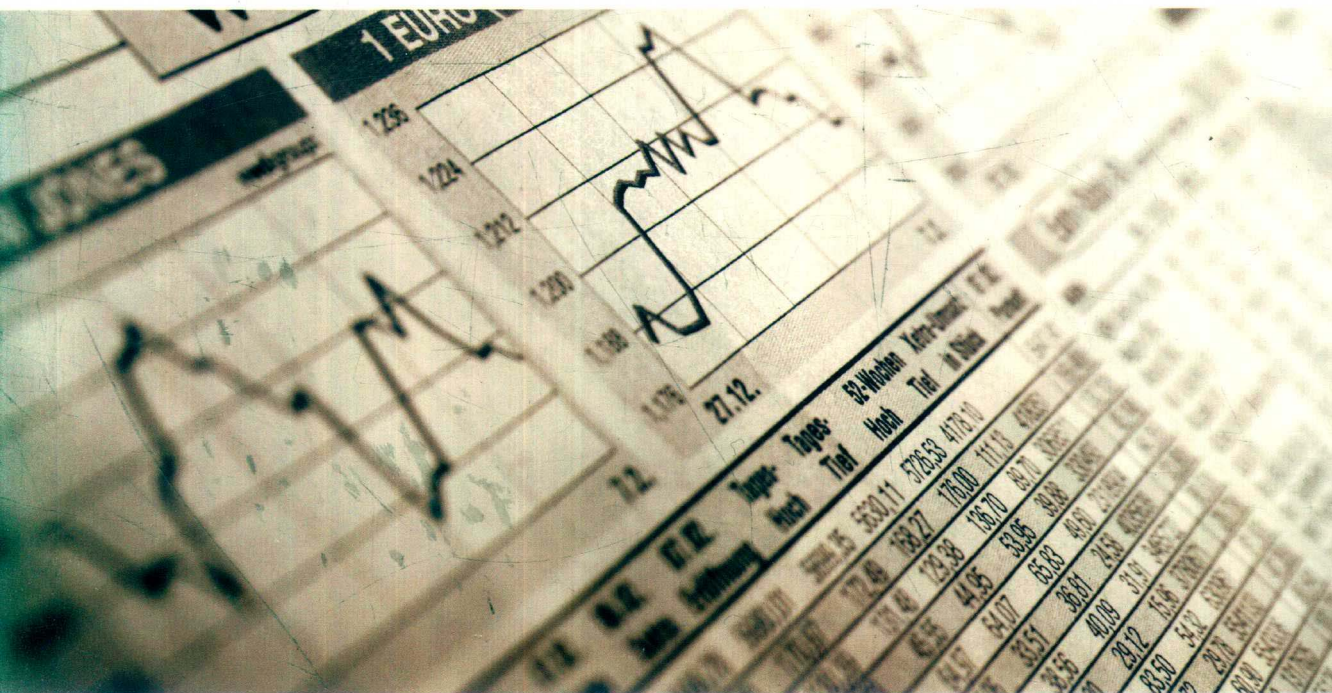


A Guide to Business English
Correspondence and Documents

外贸英语 函电与单证

姚克勤 杨红燕 主编

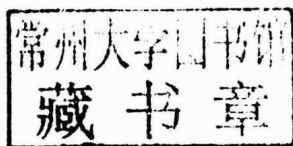


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前 言

“外贸英语函电与单证”是商务英语专业和国际商务专业的主干课程之一,其目的不仅在于培养学生的英语函电写作能力和单证制作能力,还特别强调培养学生解决实际业务问题的能力。本书充分考虑了国际贸易人才培养的要求与目标,力图处理好培养语言运用能力和提高外贸业务处理能力的关系,强调函电写作、单证制作的基本技能训练与外贸英语实际运用能力并重。

本书共六章,内容涉及外贸的各个业务流程。每章设置了词汇笔记、常用句、信函模板、常用表格范本等栏目,对于重点内容还设有练习题并提供参考答案。本书的主要特点体现在以下几方面:

(1)本书突破传统的“外贸函电”和“外贸单证”教材的编写体系,遵循“能力提高为主、实用为度”的原则,以国际贸易出口业务为主线,按照业务流程将外贸函电写作与单证制作融为一体,为学生构建出口业务的模拟操作平台。

(2)本书的内容体现了我国进出口业务近年来的新变化,在编写过程中,对山东、浙江、广东、陕西的多家外贸企业和进出口检验检疫、货运代理、海关等部门进行了不同形式的调研,获取了大量的业务函电和最新单证,使教材内容能够体现实际工作的要求。

(3)本书对外贸业务各环节函电的写作技巧和基本单证的制作方法进行了详细的介绍,参考同行的教材对不同类型函电的结构和典型句型进行了提炼和总结,参照有关教材和不同部门的有关文件提供了各种单证的制作方法,以便学生更好地使用和掌握。

(4)本书用英文编写,在语言上参考国外教材和专业网站的表述,在术语上借鉴、选择最新官方文件和教材的译语,力求语言表达地道、术语译语准确,帮助学生在提升业务能力的同时,有效提高语言实际运用能力。

本书由姚克勤、杨红燕任主编。具体编写分工如下:杨红燕编写第一、二、四章,李雅玲编写第三章,姚克勤编写第五章,冯正斌编写第六章。

本书适用于高等院校商务英语专业和经贸方向的学生使用,也适合从事国际贸易的人士参考使用。

在编写过程中,参考了大量的教材和网络资料,从事外贸工作的朋友和已毕业的学生也提供了大量外贸业务往来的函电资料和宝贵的修改意见,在此谨表谢意。同时向所参阅的国内外书籍和网络资料的作者致以诚挚的谢意。

限于水平,书中不足之处在所难免,敬请读者、同行和专家不吝赐教。

编 者

2018年3月

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Chapter 1 Business Correspondence: An Overview

This chapter will show you :

- ◇ what a business letter is;
- ◇ the principles applied to business letter writing;
- ◇ the standard parts and optional parts in business letters;
- ◇ the four widely accepted formats for business letters;
- ◇ how to address envelopes.

1.1 What is Business Correspondence

Business correspondence is one of the main communication means used by companies to keep in touch with their customers in international trade practice. Generally speaking, business correspondence can be defined as the correspondence used in business transaction, i.e., letters fulfilling the goal of buying and selling goods or services. Briefly speaking, business correspondence refers to the letters between the exporters and importers with the purpose of concluding and implementing business transactions.

Business correspondence takes such forms as letter, e-mail, fax, telegram and telex. Although email has become increasingly popular in recent years, letter writing is still one of the most widely used means of communication. Especially in the corporate world, a business letter is sometimes useful because it produces a permanent written record, and may be taken more seriously by the recipient than other forms of communication.

Business correspondence writing has its own characteristics in nature. On the one hand, the organization patterns vary in different communicative contexts. Because of different communicative purposes, differences exist in information and wills conveyed in letters, and the way and the order also differ in organizing these specific messages. For example, writers tend to be direct in writing good news letters, while they are found to be more indirect in writing bad news letters. On the other hand, as an independent and special genre in business English, business correspondence shows its own features in language. First of all, special importance should be attached to precision, accuracy and concreteness in business letter writing in order to avoid unexpected loss resulting from inappropriate expressions. Secondly, although some formulaic expressions can be acquired conveniently from such sources as text

books and letters in practice, flexibility and variety, which can help writers achieve the ultimate goal of convincing the recipient into willingly taking action and leaving him a favorable impression, can never be ignored. Moreover, euphemistic and positive expressions can make negative messages acceptable without causing offence.

Notes

序号	词汇	词性	释意
1	means	<i>n.</i>	手段,方法
2	conclude	<i>vt.</i>	达成(协议)
3	implement	<i>vt.</i>	实施,执行
4	permanent	<i>adj.</i>	永久的
5	recipient	<i>n.</i>	接收者,收件人
6	genre	<i>n.</i>	体裁,语类
7	precision	<i>n.</i>	精确(性),准确(性)
8	accuracy	<i>n.</i>	准确性,准确无误
9	concreteness	<i>n.</i>	具体,具体性;确实
10	inappropriate	<i>adj.</i>	不适当的,不恰当的
11	flexibility	<i>n.</i>	灵活性
12	variety	<i>n.</i>	多样化
13	ultimate	<i>adj.</i>	最终的,根本的
14	euphemistic	<i>adj.</i>	委婉的,婉言的
15	offence	<i>n.</i>	得罪,冒犯
16	business correspondence		商务信函,商务函电
17	in the corporate world		在企业界,在公司里
18	written record		书面记录,文字记录
19	in nature		本质上,事实上
20	communicative contexts		交际语境
21	formulaic expressions		程式化表达,程式语表达

1.2 Classification of Business Letters

In the process of international trade practice, business correspondence includes letters from one company to another, or between such organizations and their customers, clients and other external parties. In the process of a transaction, letters of different functions are

involved in every step. Specifically speaking, there are letters for establishing business relations, letters of enquiry, quotation, negotiation, order, confirming order, payment, shipment and insurance, and claim, etc.

By the nature of the information conveyed, business correspondence can be classified into three types: good news letters, bad news letters and persuasive letters. Good news letters provide the recipient with the required information, or respond to the recipient's requests in a favorable way, for example, sending shipping advice, catalogue or price list, or making an offer, and etc. Bad news letters convey negative information against the recipient's wish, usually refusals of the recipient's request, for example, refusal of a counter-offer or a repeat order. In persuasive letters, the writer makes every effort to persuade the recipient into taking favorable action, for example, making a counter-offer, urging the establishment of L/C, lodging a claim, and etc.

Notes

序号	词汇	词性	释意
1	client	<i>n.</i>	客户, 顾客, 委托人
2	enquiry	<i>n.</i>	询盘, 询价
3	quotation	<i>n.</i>	报价单, 报价
4	negotiation	<i>n.</i>	谈判, 协商
5	order	<i>n.</i>	订单, 所订的货
6	claim	<i>n.</i>	索赔
7	convey	<i>vt.</i>	表达, 传递, 传达
8	persuasive	<i>adj.</i>	劝导性的, 劝说的
9	counter-offer	<i>n.</i>	还盘, 还价
10	shipping advice		装运通知
11	repeat order		续订单

1.3 Principles of Writing Business Letters

A well-written business letter can surely promote the trade as well as bilateral friendship, so certain principles should be followed in writing business letters. As business correspondence fall into English for special purposes (ESP), certain unique principles should be followed in its writing. The "7 Cs" are the most widely accepted principles in writing business letters.

1.3.1 Completeness

A business letter should include all the necessary information. Upon finishing a letter, it is essential to check it from the following aspects:

- ↓ Why do you write the letter;
- ↓ What are the details that support your request;
- ↓ Whether you have answered all the questions as required;
- ↓ What do you want the recipient to do.

For example, when you are writing a letter to accept an offer, you'd better make clear all the terms and conditions and the types of the offer because this kind of letter is equal to a contract. Once the letter is sent, it shall be binding on both parties. Possibly, unnecessary disputes may arise from incompleteness.

1.3.2 Concreteness

Messages in business letters should be conveyed in a specific, definite and vivid way. Especially when you want the recipient to give a definite reply, or when you reply to the recipient's request or problems, or when you make an offer or a promise, you have to avoid being vague, general and abstract.

Detailed facts, precise figures, specific time can help you write concretely and vividly.

Compare

a. We have drawn on you as usual under your L/C. (general)

We have drawn on you our sight draft No. 389 for the invoice value, \$20,000.00, under your L/C No. 126 of Bank of China, Shanghai Branch. (concrete)

b. For a large order, we will grant a considerable discount. (general)

For an order of more than 2000 sets, we will grant a 3% discount. (concrete)

c. The L/C has been issued. (general)

L/C No. OTNG0895678 for the amount of £20,000.00 has been issued in your favor through Bank of Communication. (concrete)

Of course, you have to be general because concrete information is not available. However, on some occasions, you have to strategically use vague expressions to protect yourself, to save the recipient's face or to persuade him so as to create a better communicative effect.

1.3.3 Clarity

You must try to express yourself clearly to enable the recipient to grasp the idea conveyed in your letter. To achieve clarity, you should keep the purpose of the letter in mind and use appropriate words in correct sentence, clearly state your point near the beginning to allow the reader to immediately grasp the purpose of your letter, and to focus on one point

for each paragraph.

Compare

a. We have sent you the samples requested in your letter of May 25 by air. (ambiguous)

We have sent you, by air, the samples requested in your letter of May 25. (clear)

b. As to the steamers sailing from Hong Kong to San Francisco, we have bimonthly direct sailing. (ambiguous)

As to the steamers sailing from Hong Kong to San Francisco, we have direct sailing every two months. (clear)

1.3.4 Conciseness

A concise business letter should be brief and to the point without losing completeness, clarity or courtesy. If you want to be an effective writer, you have to eliminate nonsense words and phrases, repetition and redundancies.

Compare

a. It is possible, of course, that the damage occurred because of faulty packing. An even great possibility is that the shipper was careless in storing the merchandise for safe shipment. On any event, we will do everything possible to ship a replacement this week. (redundant)

It is possible, of course, that the damage resulted from faulty packing. More likely, however, the carton was not stored improperly by the shipper. In any event, we'll send a replacement this week. (concise)

b. In compliance with your request, we will send you the sample next week. (redundant)

We will send you the sample as requested next week. (concise)

However, take care that your letters do not turn out as an endless series of short, choppy sentences. You'd better also keep in mind that "concise" does not have to mean "blunt"—you still need to think about your tone to whom you are writing.

1.3.5 Courtesy

Courtesy is not mere politeness. The courteous writer should be sincere and tactful, thoughtful and appreciative. You should never write a letter filled with blame, accusation, suspicion or exaggeration. The following rules are widely applied to achieve the purpose of courtesy.

- ↓ Use "you attitude" appropriately;
- ↓ Use passive voice appropriately;
- ↓ Use subjunctive mood appropriately;
- ↓ Use expressions of request instead of command. For example, please, will you..., would you..., etc.;
- ↓ Express negative ideas mildly by using such expressions as we are afraid that..., we

would say..., we may(might) say, we(would) think, it seems(would seem) to us, we(would) suggest, as you are (may be) aware, etc.

Compare:

- a. You should be pleased to receive our catalogue under separate cover. (offensive)

You are authorized to draw at 90 days on the bank in Beijing for the amount of your invoice after shipment is effected. (acceptable)

- b. You make a careless mistake during the course of shipment. (offensive)

A careless mistake was made during the course of shipment. (acceptable)

- c. I think you'd better accept this offer. (offensive)

I think it advisable that you should accept this offer. (acceptable)

- d. You must send us the sample upon receiving the letter. (offensive)

Will you send us the sample upon receiving the letter. (acceptable)

- e. We cannot deliver the goods all at once. (offensive)

I'm afraid we cannot deliver the goods all at once. (acceptable)

Of course, it is unnecessary to humble yourself abjectly in order to be courteous. In developing friendly relationship and business relations, you should neither be haughty nor humble.

1.3.6 Consideration

The general principle of being considerate is to do onto others as you would have them do onto you. You should:

↓ keep the recipient's requests, needs as well as feelings in mind;

↓ focus on the positive rather than the negative approach;

↓ organize your letters appropriately when presenting different types of messages (good-news, bad-news or persuasive).

Compare:

- a. We are shipping your order of September 24 this afternoon. (too general to satisfy the recipient)

2,000 sets of air conditioners you ordered will be shipped this afternoon and should reach you by September 29. (specific enough to satisfy the recipient)

- b. Your order will be delayed for two weeks. (negative)

Your order will be shipped in two weeks. (positive)

1.3.7 Correctness

A business letter must be grammatically correct, provide factual information and accurate figures. You can not overstate or understate anything. Special attention should be paid to names of goods, specifications, figures, trade terms, etc.

Notes

序号	词汇	词性	释意
1	bilateral	<i>adj.</i>	双边的, 双方的
2	completeness	<i>n.</i>	完整, 完整性
3	essential	<i>adj.</i>	极其重要的; 必不可少的
4	binding	<i>adj.</i>	有约束力的
5	dispute	<i>n.</i>	争端, 纠纷
6	incompleteness	<i>n.</i>	不完全, 不完整
7	definite	<i>adj.</i>	清楚的, 明确的
8	abstract	<i>adj.</i>	抽象的
9	strategically	<i>adv.</i>	策略地
10	clarity	<i>n.</i>	清楚, 明晰
11	conciseness	<i>n.</i>	简明, 简洁
12	courtesy	<i>n.</i>	礼貌
13	eliminate	<i>vt.</i>	消除, 排除
14	redundancy	<i>n.</i>	冗余
15	endless	<i>adj.</i>	连续的
16	blunt	<i>adj.</i>	不客气的, 直言不讳的, 耿直的
17	courteous	<i>adj.</i>	有礼貌的; 谦恭的
18	tactful	<i>adj.</i>	机智的, 有分寸的
19	appreciative	<i>adj.</i>	感激的
20	accusation	<i>n.</i>	谴责, 指责
21	suspicion	<i>n.</i>	怀疑, 猜疑
22	exaggeration	<i>n.</i>	夸张, 夸大之词
23	humble	<i>vt.</i> / <i>adj.</i>	使谦恭, 低声下气; 谦虚的, 谦卑的
24	abjectly	<i>adv.</i>	不自爱地, 卑躬屈膝地
25	haughty	<i>adj.</i>	傲慢的, 目中无人的
26	consideration	<i>n.</i>	体贴
27	factual	<i>adj.</i>	事实的, 真实的
28	overstate	<i>vt.</i>	夸张, 夸大的叙述
29	understate	<i>vt.</i>	轻描淡写地叙述; 淡化

续 表

序号	词汇	释意
30	to the point	中肯,扼要;切题
31	English for special purposes (ESP)	专门用途英语,特殊用途英语
32	arise from	由……引起,起因于
33	choppy sentences	不连贯的短句
34	you attitude	对方为重,收信人态度
35	subjunctive mood	虚拟语气
36	to do onto others as you would have them do onto you	己所不欲,勿施于人

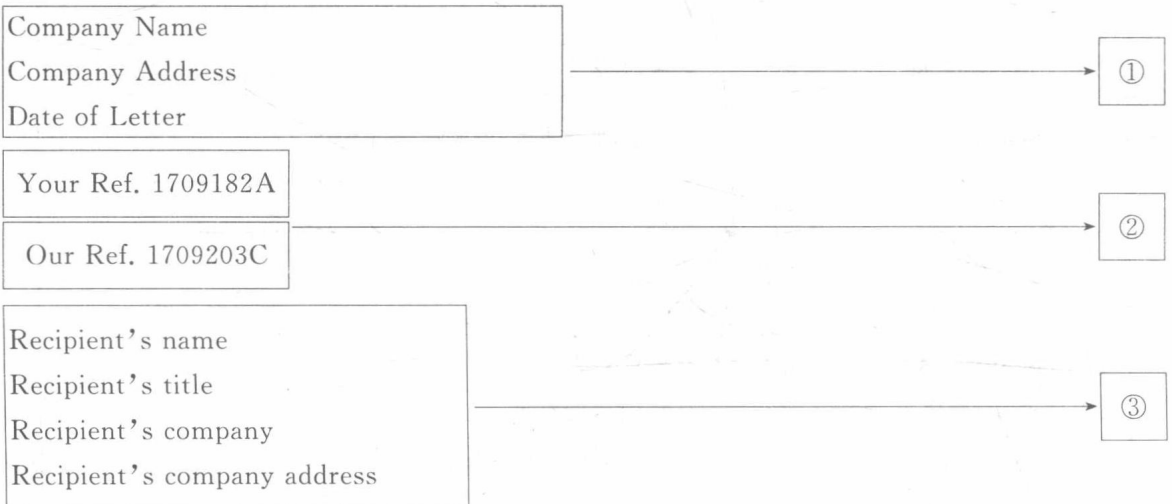
1.4 Structure of Business Letters

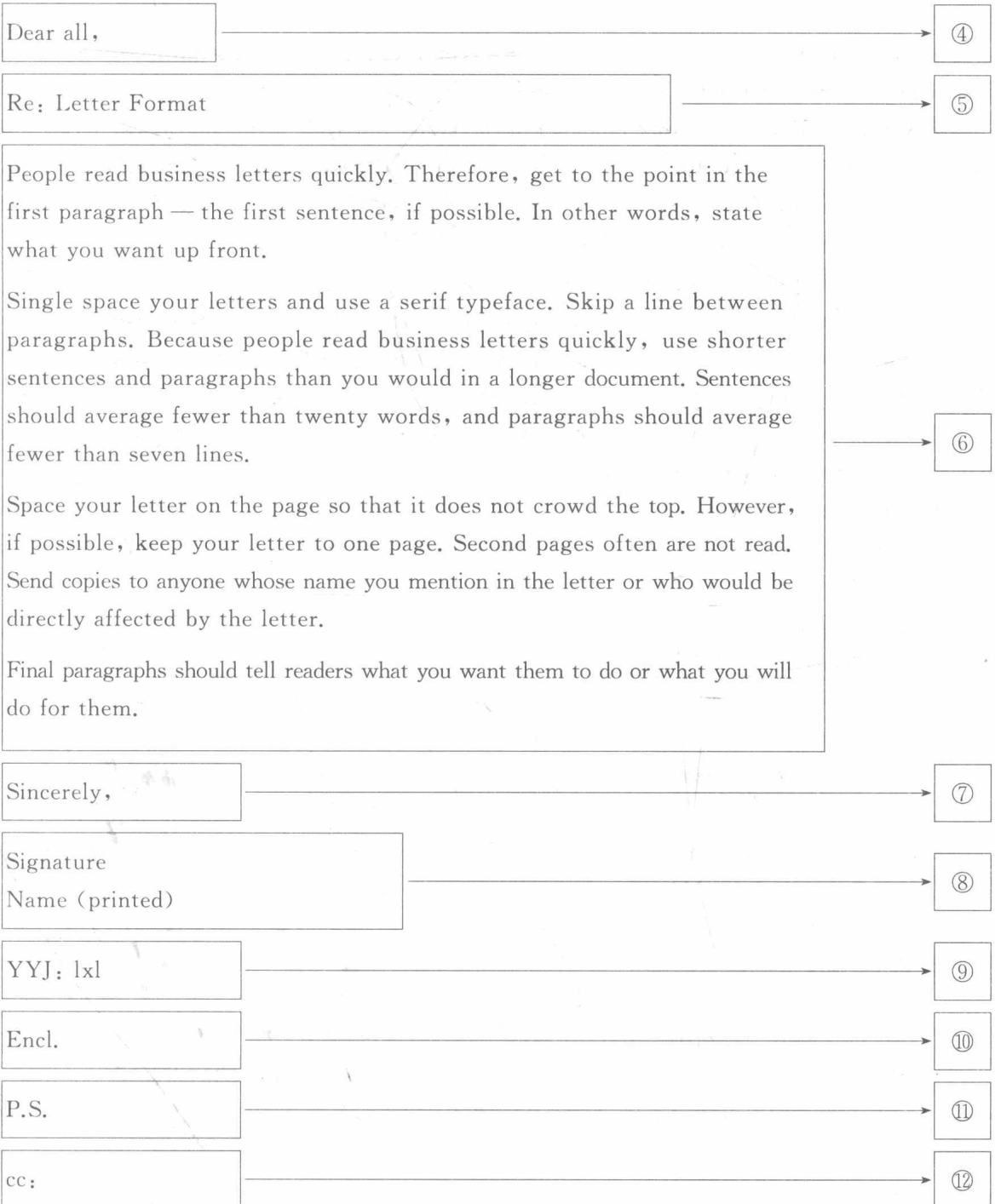
A business letter consists of standard parts and optional parts (see Tab. 1 - 1).

Tab. 1 - 1 Components of Business Letters

Standard Parts	Optional Parts
Letterhead	Reference Number
Inside Name and Address	The Subject Line
The Salutation	The Reference Notation
The Body of the Letter	Enclosure
The Complimentary Close	Carbon Copy
The Signature	Postscript

A formal business letter must contain all six standard parts. As for the optional parts, the writer can include the necessary ones depending on specific cases.





1.4.1 Letterhead

Letterhead usually consists of the writer's essential particulars and the date of the letter. The writer's essential particulars usually include the name of the company, the full address of the company, postcode, email address, website, telephone number and fax

number. The printed letterhead is usually artistically designed and printed on the top centre or on the top left of the page.

In the printed letterhead, you can simply type the date in the date line available. Date line is generally two lines below the letterhead.

Basically, a letter can either be dated in the American style or in the British style. The American style is the month, the day, the year in sequence, while the British style is the day, the month, the year in sequence.

October 16, 2016 — American style

16th October, 2016 — British style

The months and the years are normally not contracted and it is unwise to date a letter in figures like 10/8/2016 as it can be regarded as October 8, 2016 (American style) and 10th August, 2016 (British style).

In either of the style, no punctuation is used between the month and the date, while a comma must be used before the year.

If you have to write on blank papers, only the address should be typed on the top right of the page (just above the dateline) in block form (sample a and b) or indented form (sample c and d).

a. 201 Main Street

Yoxall, DE138 NJ, England

Oct. 16, 2016

b. P. O. Box 3181

Vancouver 6, Canada

Dec. 16, 2016

c. 1470 St. Louis Street,

Los Angeles, CA90015, U.S.A.

July 22, 2016

d. P. O. Box 20402

Xi'an, China.

Feb. 22, 2016

In the blocked form (sample a and b), no punctuation mark is used between the lines, while in the indented form (sample c and d), a full stop is used at the end of the last line and a comma is used in each of the remaining lines. However, some writers do not use any punctuation marks.

Generally, it is unnecessary to use any punctuation mark between house number and street address, while a comma must be used between state/province and country. The figures and/or letters (DE138 NJ; Vancouver 6; CA90015) are the postcode of the city.

P. O. Box is the abbreviation of Post Office Box.

1.4.2 Reference Number

Reference number is the coded number created by the writer that may comprise a file number, department code, the initials of the writer, etc. The use of reference number can help the writer arrange and keep the files. The writer's reference number is marked as "Our Ref." and the recipient's as "Your Ref." respectively in order to avoid confusion. If the writer uses a reference number in his letter, the recipient should mention it in the form of "Your Ref." in his reply. It is often placed two lines below the letter head.

- a. Our Ref. DYPXA2016 - 01
- b. Your Ref. CQNP160806

Sometimes, the reference number is mentioned at the beginning of the letter or in the subject line.

- a. We acknowledge receipt of your letter, reference XR00912, dated 3rd November, 2000.
- b. Re: Your ref. XR00912

1.4.3 Inside Name and Address

The inside address is placed two lines below the date line at the left margin. It generally consists of some or all parts of the following: the name of the recipient, the department and the company, and the address of the company. For letters sending to an American company, the state and its postcode have to be made clear.

- a. M & C Partners
66 Hammersmith Street
Hammersmith, London, W6P 7HA
United Kingdom
- b. Messrs James & Picasso
2520 Kenridge Road
Caldwell, ID 83607
USA
- c. China National Medical Equipment and Supplies Import & Export Corporation
5/F, Building B, Chengming Plaza,
No.2 South Xizhimen Avenue, Xicheng Dist,
Beijing, People's Republic of China
- d. Mr. A. David
c/o Original Manufacturing & Trading Co.
24704 State Road
Lutz, Florida 33559
U.S.A.

In example b, "Messrs" is the plural form of Mr., which is used only when the firm is named after one or more persons. In example d, c/o (care of) indicates that the letter should