

ENGLISH FOR SECRETARIAL COMMUNICATION

涉外英文函电

翁慰宝 编著

Jonathan D.Fazzone 审阅

同济大学出版社



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前 言

《涉外英文函电》原称之为《涉外文秘英文函电》，是涉外文秘专业和经济管理各专业的
主干课程教材。本教材在涉外文秘专业曾经多次使用。为满足广大涉外人员的需求，现在
内容上作了大幅度的增加，涉及到各类英文函电，使其成为涉外人员的案头必备书。现以
《涉外英文函电》出版，以满足广大读者需求。

本书主要侧重讲解商务公司各种类型来往函电的撰写，其中包括一般交往函电、商务函
电、秘书函电、金融函电，等等，内容丰富，包涵面广。本书不但教读者如何写函电，而且还汇
集了近百例样函供读者学习参考。每章均有生词解释和疑难表达方式的注释，以方便读者
学习。为了使那些国际商务知识甚少的读者能够顺利地阅读本书，在每章之后还辟有“拓宽
国际商务知识”一栏，最后还辟有“写作练习”以供读者自己动手练习写作函电。本书最后的
附录部分提供了各种类型的信函标准格式和文本格式，这些资料绝大多数为 90 年代国外正
流行使用的格式和文本，供读者参考和使用。

本书可作为涉外文秘专业和经济管理各专业学生的主干课程教材，也可作为各种
类似的培训班、强化班的教科书。对于那些现已在各种商务公司从事秘书、外销和经营管理的
从业人员来说，本书也是一本不可多得的业务参考书。

本书在编写的过程中使用了以下两本书的部分材料：

1. Modern English Business Letters

Published by Longman Group Ltd.

2. English for International Business Communication

Published by Shanghai Science and Technology Literature Press

在此表示衷心感谢。

本书曾经多位外国语言专家审核，其中 Mr. Jonathan D. Fazzone 从头到尾作了全面审
阅，并提出宝贵意见，在此表示感谢。

由于编者水平有限，书中如有错误或不妥之处在所难免，恳望广大读者予以批评指正。

编者

1999 年 5 月 20 日

CHAPTER 1

Format of A Secretarial Letter

文秘信函的格式

Although formality in secretarial letter-writing has rapidly given way to a less conventional and more friendly style, the layout, or mechanical structure of a letter, still follows a more or less set pattern determined by custom and not resulting from any deliberate plan. Choice of layout is a matter of individual taste, but it is better to follow established practice, to which the business world has become accustomed. A good plan to make correct practice habitual is to adopt one form of layout and stick to it.

A secretarial letter which is similar to a business letter consists of seven principle parts: (1). the letter-head, (2). the date, (3). the inside name and address, (4). the salutation, (5). the message (or the body of the letter), (6). the complimentary close and (7). the writer's signature and official position.

1.1 Format 格式

(1) The Letter-Head 信头

The letter-head expresses a firm's personality. It helps to form one's impression of the writer's firm. The heading must give all necessary information: the name and address of the firm, the telephone numbers, the telegraphic addresses, the telegraphic code used by the firm, the telex numbers, fax numbers, etc. If the firm's name does not indicate the type of business it is engaged in this is usually printed under the firm's name, though not always.

The use of commas and full stops in printed letter-heads has disappeared almost entirely, except perhaps after abbreviations like "Co." and "Ltd." The same thing is happening with type written addresses and dates, etc., although this is not acknowledged by many writers all over the world. That is to say, closed punctuation can also be used if preferred.

On the left-hand side of the paper in Britain the names of the directors are printed, while American firms do not have to print the names of directors on their letter-paper, although they sometimes print the names of the President, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

In most British letter-heads, always there is a *limited company*. The indication of this is the word "Limited" under (or beside) the name of the firm. As the name of this company does not say what its line of business is, this is stated under the firm's name. The Limited Liability Company, or Joint Stock Company, is the most usual type of firm in Britain, whereas in America the name "Incorporated"

is used instead of "Limited". In order to let you understand the British and American styles of the letter-heads well, some samples are given as follows:

Sample 1

**THE JOHN BROWN MANUFACTURING
COMPANY INCORPORATED**
789 Madison Avenue
NEW YORK, N. Y.

May 10, 19...

H. Brown & W. Pink, Ltd.,
18 Hill Street,
London, W. 1,
England.

Your Order No. 9375
Our Ref. RN-543

Gentlemen:

Receipt is acknowledged of your order numbered as above, which is accepted subject to the general conditions stated in our offer of April 29.

This order is appreciated and we will give careful attention to your instructions.

Meantime we are

Very truly yours
THE JOHN BROWN MANUFACTURING CO. INC.
(Signature)
Vice President

OG/JM

Sample 2

Telegrams:

Foreign—BRONK, LONDON
Inland—BRONK, PICCY, LONDON
Code—Bentleys

Telephone:

REG 1324 (2 lines)

**H. BROWH & W. PINK
LIMITED**

DIRECTORS:

H. BROWN

W. PINK

Home & Overseas Merchants

18 HILL ST.

LONDON, W. 1

WP/GD

23rd February 19..

Oliver Green and Co. Ltd.,

99 Bridge Street,

SYDNEY, N. S. W.

AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sirs,

We have your letter of 15th February and thank you for your enquiry for *Grinding Kit AB/20*.

Unfortunately the delivery date you asked for is rather short and we hope you can extend this, say by two weeks.

Your early reply on the matter will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

H. BROWN and W. PINK, LIMITED

W. Pink

Director.

(2) The Date 日期

The date is normally typed in a month-day-year sequence. The month should be spelled out in full; avoid abbreviations or numbers only. The date, then, should be expressed as "March 24, 1994"; not "Mar. 24, 1994" or "3/24/94". A comma separates the day from the year.

Some businesses are, however, adopting a date system that has long been followed in military correspondence. This is the day-month-year sequence. No punctuation is used in this sequence: "24 March 1994" is the accepted use of the day-month-year date. This sequence saves one keystroke. It is a system that is widely used in Europe, and so it is suitable to use in international correspondence.

In modern society, most government agencies and businesses have adopted the year-month-day sequence for their internal use, because computers sort by numeric order with all numbers expressed in two digits. In this sequence, "24 March 1994" is rendered "940324". Thus, any date prior to 24 March 1994 would be a lesser than 940324; and any date after would be a larger number. So far, most uses of the year-month-day sequence are limited to highly specialized forms and reports, and do not as yet affect general business correspondence.

The date line is the first line in the letter. It is placed two or three lines below the letterhead and flush right or left, as you like.

(3) The Inside Name and Address 信内人名、公司名称和地址

The inside name and address usually, consists of the name of the person to whom the letter is sent, often with a social title and his company title, the name of the firm, and the mailing address of the firm. You may—or may not—use a social title in the address block. Once it was required; now it is optional. A social title is “Mr.” (Mister), “Mrs.” (Mistress), “Ms.” (Miss or Mistress), “Miss”, “Dr.” (Doctor), “The Hon.” (Honour) or “The Rev.” (Reverend). Since there are several keystrokes involved, and there is always the chance of choosing the wrong social title, many business letter writers just use the person's name in the address.

If you have regular business correspondence with people in a church environment, spend some time to learn the correct social titles. The best way to be sure you have the right official title and social title is to call the person's secretary and ask how the person is to be addressed. The same is true of university positions. It is best to follow the lead on the person's letterhead or to call the person's secretary to ensure that you use the correct titles. If you write regularly to military personnel, follow the patterns for that military service. The Navy abbreviates “Captain” as “CAPT”; the Army as “Capt.” Each service has its own correspondence style, expressed in readily available official correspondence manuals. Get a copy from each of the services and use the titles in the fashion used by the service involved.

Two groups of professional people normally do not use a social title before their name in formal business address. A lawyer often uses “Esq.” after the full name: John J. James, Esq. (In some sections of the country, a lawyer may use the form “Atty. J. James”; in that case, “Esq.” is not used. In the United States the social title “Esq.” is most often a term of mutual respect given by lawyers to each other, and sometimes by non-lawyers when writing to lawyers. Women lawyers are never “Esq.”; the term is reserved for males only. In Great Britain and the Commonwealth, “Esq.” is sometimes used in correspondence when you want to show respect to a man (not a lawyer) but you do not know a specific honorific to use. It is a way of being extremely courteous to someone in an important position. A medical doctor uses “M.D.” after the full name: Mary P. Person, M.D. “Mr.” or “Mrs.” or “Dr.” is not used in these formal addresses to either lawyers or medical doctors. Note that there is no space between the letters in “M.D.”. The social title “Dr.” and the formal recognition of medical qualification “M.D.” is used whether the person is a man or a woman.

Use of the company or business title is optional. It is courteous and it can often be helpful later in identifying the position of the person to whom the letter was sent. If you are writing to someone you do not know personally, use of the title is not only safe, it also ensures that the person realizes you are writing to the office represented by the title. This can be especially important when writing to the president of a company with a proposal or a complaint. In such a case, you are addressing a position in the company more than an individual.

The business title usually follows the person's surname. A comma is used and the title is capitalized. Parts of the title are spelled out in full. If the title is too long to fit readily on the same line as the name, the title is placed on the line just below the name:

Mr. John P. Rogers, President
Mary Lou Endicott, Assistant Marketing Director
Philip H. Conwell, M.D., Director of Aural Services
The Rt. Rev. Max Drummond, Bishop of Nelson
Maj. Gen. Roscoe X. Kelley, U.S.M.C.
Director of Logistics Services

Company name. Either the full name of the company or its official abbreviation may be used, for instance, "International Business Machine Corporation" or "IBM Corporation." It is always safe to follow the pattern in the company's own letterhead.

Parts of a company may be abbreviated, such as "Inc.," "Co.," and "Corp." Usually, "Incorporated" is abbreviated to "Inc.," "Company" to "Co.," and "Corporation" to "Corp."

Street/Box Number. The street address should include the number, street name, quadrant (if any), and street title. If the quadrant is used, it is increasingly used without periods. The street title is normally spelled out in full, although "Boulevard" is often abbreviated to "Blvd.". Thus:

15307 Sunrise Highway, SW
1508 K Street, NE

If a post office box is used, the United States Postal Service prefers that you use "Post Office Box" or "POB" instead of just "Box". This is to differentiate their box from a company's internal sorting box. Post Service instruction points out that if you use both the street address and a POB address, the one on the line just above the city name is the one that will be used. Thus, If you address the envelope:

ABC Company
123 Third Avenue
POB 456
Anywhere, MN 77777

The envelope will be delivered to the post office box, not the Third Avenue address. Reverse the two lines:

ABC Company
POB 456
123 Third Avenue
Anywhere, MN 77777

and the envelope would then be delivered to the street address.

City, State, ZIP. Use the Postal Service abbreviation for the state.

These abbreviations are two-letter, no-punctuation abbreviations.

“NY” is much simpler to type than is “N. Y.” “MA” is much simpler than “Mass.”

Use the ZIP Code. The Postal Service sells an annual ZIP code listing, the National Five Digit ZIP Code, and Post Office Directory, which gives all the ZIP Codes in the United States and its possessions. This book includes the street and house/business numbers for all communities that have more than one ZIP Code for the community.

Increasingly, businesses are using the “ZIP + 4” extended code. The final four numbers in this code identify the actual carrier route and delivery sequence, in addition to the standard ZIP Code’s identification of the postal region and specific post office. Use of this code gives the business preferential postal rates for its bulk First-Class mailings, such as monthly billings. ZIP + 4 will be used more and more, so include it in your address line for those companies that adopt its use.

In order to avoid ambiguity, when you write letters to other countries, always include the name of the country, even if the city mentioned is the country’s capital. Here is an example:

The Vice President
The Eagle Press Inc.,
24 South Bank
Birmingham
Alabama
U.S.A

(4) The Salutation 称呼

The salutation is the line in which you directly address the person to whom you are writing. Normally, “Dear” is the first word; this is followed by the person’s name.

First Name. We prefer using the first (given) name only with people we know or have done business with over a period of time. Nonetheless, we are increasingly getting business mail from complete strangers who address us as “Dear Betty” or “Dear Warner”, just as we often have a young voice on the telephone. Once the other person uses your first name, feel free to use his first name in return. Not to do so is to remain in a subordinate role unnecessarily, or to suggest a level of distance in your relationship that may be offensive and may mar your business dealings. “First naming” in business correspondence is a matter of delicate etiquette; advancing to a first-name basis marks a step into new business relationships.

Social or professional title. Use a social or professional title if you do not use the first name. Even though you addressed the letter to “John J. James.”, you would now say “Dear Mr. James.” This would also apply if you addressed the letter to “John J. James, Esq.” or to “The Rev. John J. James.” “John J. James, H.D.” becomes “Dear Dr. James.” Even though “The Rev. John J. James” becomes “dear Mr. James.” “The Rt. Rev. John J. James” becomes “Dear Bishop James” or

“Dear Judge James” or “Dear Alderman James,” depending on the position or role that is the reason for the honorific.

“Mr.,” “Mrs.,” or “Dr.” is never spelled out when used with a person’s surname. Titles of position are sometimes abbreviated when used with a person’s surname but are more courteous when spelled out. “Dear Professor James” is better than “Dear Prof. James”; “Dear Senator James” is better than “Dear Sen. James”; “Dear Admiral James” is better than “Dear Adm. James”; and so on.

The salutation in a business letter is normally followed by a colon. “Dear Mr. James:” is the standard form. “Dear Sir” is proper. “Dear ABC Company” is satisfactory, though impersonal. But “Dear Friends” or “Dear Colleagues” seems out of place.

(5) The Body 正文

The body of the letter contains your message. You need to tell your reader what you want him to know or do. And you need to introduce the letter by reference to whatever has gone on before or to what is the cause for the letter’s being written. You need to give any background or special data that will enable your reader to take the right action or to understand more fully what you want him to know. And you need to close with a final summary or an indication of your willingness to help your reader at the next step. If you know your reader well, you may wish to close with a more personal note, thus assuring the reader that you continue to have a friendly interest in him as well as business interest.

In a sense, you should tell your reader what you are going to say, then say it, and then tell him what you have said. Another way of putting it: You prepare the reader for your message; you deliver it; and then you suggest the next step, now that the message has been delivered.

The first paragraph in the body of the letter should contain enough of the background for the reader to call the subject matter to mind or to direct him to the right files if he needs the previous correspondence before him. The two sample first paragraphs that follow illustrate this:

This is further to our telephone conversations of July 17, in which we discussed the quality control procedures needed in manufacturing the new Mark 2 Clamps. You said you wanted the results of our quality control tests of the past six months.

Thank you for your letter of August 12, in which you indicate that you have not yet received your order of windscreens, and in which you stress your urgent need to stock these windscreens at the beginning of the summer season.

These two sample first paragraphs tell the reader what the subject matter is for the rest of the letter that follows. And they refer the reader to any previous contact—whether orders, letters, telephone calls, meetings or personal conversations. This enables him to place the letter in its right setting. The paragraph also summarizes for the reader what you understand to be the crux of the matter to be considered. It shows him you really do understand what his concern is, or it may alert him to the fact that you have not really understand his primary concern. If he sees that you have missed his main point, he now

knows that he has to restate it to you in a way that will make it clear.

The main purpose of the opening paragraph is to set the stage for the main part of the discussion. It introduces the “characters”—the items to be discussed—and notes their circumstances at the present time. This paragraph ensures that both you and your reader are viewing the same matter from essentially the same perspective.

Sometimes there is no past relationship. Your opening paragraph then must serve both as an introduction and as a foreword to the body of your letter:

This is to invite your consideration of a new service we at ABC Company have tailored for “white table cloth” restaurants like yours. This service is a computer-assisted record-keeping system that gives you complete control of your bar and food inventory with no added time or cost to you.

Don James at the Tutti Frutti Restaurant suggested that I write you about our computer-assisted record-keeping system for “white table cloth” restaurants. We’ve given Don better control of his bar and food inventory at no additional time or cost to him. And he thought you would be interested in hearing how we can do the same for you.

The first sample above is a “cold” opener; you have no previous contact with the reader, nor do you know of any intermediary. It is less likely to get the careful reading that the second sample will probably enjoy. Here the opening paragraph immediately calls on the good will of a mutual acquaintance, even though the reader himself does not personally know you. In this sample his response to your letter will be partly based on what he thinks of Don James.

The key in wording a cold opener is to appeal to the reader’s interests and experience. He does not really want to learn about you and your company. He wants to run his own company or department better, and so will have an interest in yours only as you can convince him that you can help him accomplish his paragraphs more effectively.

Most cold opener letters are sales letters of some kind. You want to sell your services or products to another company or to individual consumers. And yet you do not want your letter to sound just like a direct mail sales pitch, since you are going to the trouble of writing a personal, thoughtful letter. Your first problem is to get the reader beyond the first paragraph into the rest of the letter. To do this, you must appeal to some interest he has that will be served by what you have to offer. The other kinds of cold openers are an announcement or a threat. The announcement is usually a pleasure:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to membership in the XYZ Society.

Sometimes the announcement is less of a pleasure:

We regret to inform you that your 1988 xxx automobile is subject to recall for the installation of a

new breaking system.

The threat usually relates to credit and collections or to legal action. The formulas most often used in these kinds of letters are considered in detail later in the book. The key to wording these letters is straightforward impersonality. You personally are not threatening the reader; rather you are the voice of the system, bringing the system's pressures to bear on the situation—which you know you both want to work out to everyone's satisfaction.

The body of the letter should be single-spaced, with a line space between paragraphs. Paragraphs are normally not indented. If you use a numbered list, you should separate the entire list from the rest of the body by a line space above and below the list. The list can be "hang indented", that is, the second and following lines (turnovers) of each numbered entry are indented to hang under the opening letter that follows the number:

1. This is a numbered list. Note that the second and following lines of each numbered entry are indented to hang under the first letter that follows the number.
2. This system of hang indents applies to each of the numbered entries in the list. This hang indent format makes reading a numbered list easy.

Do not needlessly repeat yourself. All of us sometimes have a tendency to say the same thing over in other words, Just to make sure that the person gets our message. In conversation, we do this when we sense the need for it through watching the reaction of the person to our words. Business letters, however, should make a point clearly and only once. When you've come to the end, end.

The content of the closing paragraph depends in part on how well you know your correspondent. If you know him well, and see him regularly in the course of business, you may wish to end the letter with a personal reference. This letter is not a social note, so this personal reference will not be as personal as a hand-written letter sent to the person's home would be. If your letter lacks a personal note, your correspondent might feel slighted to be treated impersonally and formally. If your letter has this personal note, your correspondent will probably be flattered that you are treating him as a personal friend as well as a business colleague.

Interestingly, the better you know each other and the more you have to deal with each other face to face, the less this personal note need appear. This is because there are many regular opportunities to affirm the continuance of your friendship. This permits your correspondence to focus only on the business matters. And personal references should not be so personal that others might be surprised to see them there. Your secretary and filing personnel will see them—as will your correspondent's. These references will also be read by any who receive photocopies of the letter. They will be read by your correspondent's successor when he reads the file to bring himself up to date. Since the letter is "pub-

lic"—between companies—keep in mind that any personal references must be general and innocuous.

(6) **The Complimentary Closing** 结尾用语

The last section of the letter is the complimentary closing. Many business letter writers like to add a transition phrase, so that the letter does not jump immediately from the body to the end. These phrases are usually partial sentences, such as:

With all best wishes,
With every good wish,
With continued regards,

Sometimes, if the writer is a bit more formal in his manner—and it is clearly a matter of personal style—the phrase “I am” can be added:

With all kind regards, I am
With best wishes, I am
With every good wish, I am
With continued regards, I am

This transition phrase is followed by the complimentary closing itself:

With all kind regards,
Sincerely,

With every good wish, I am
Sincerely Yours,

Complimentary closings include such standard phrases as:

Sincerely,
Sincerely yours,
Yours sincerely,
Very sincerely yours,
Truly yours,
Yours truly,
Respectfully,
Very respectfully,

The military and the church have elaborate protocols regarding the appropriate complimentary

closing when writing up to a superior or down to subordinate. “Sincerely” alone is always in good taste in business letters, and avoids any suggestion of talking up or down. “Sincerely yours” or “Yours sincerely” are slightly more formal—again a matter of personal taste. “Yours sincerely” is slightly more British. However, most business letter readers would be indifferent to any possible nuances of feeling between “Sincerely,” “Sincerely yours,” or “Yours sincerely”. These readers are far more interested in what you have to say in the body of your letter than in how you close the letter.

(7) The Signature and Title 签名和头衔

The signature and title lines follow the complimentary closing. Enough room should be left for your signature so that the signature does not look cramped. In fact, it should be surrounded by enough white space to have the appearance of being framed. It is the one place in the letter where your personal mark is made—and indeed, little can be more personal than your signature. So give yourself room to enjoy signing the letter. If the letter needs a second page for just the transition phrase and the complimentary closing, followed by your signature and title, go to the second page for these. Do not break the transition-phrase-closing-signature sequence between two pages.

Your full “official” name should be typed. This is courtesy, since many signatures are hard to decipher. As you sign only the original copy, a typed name identifies the originator of the letter to all those who receive copies, as well as your file copy. The official name is that form of your name that you have chosen to use in business.

Even though your official name is typed on the letter. You may choose to sign only your first name or a nickname you use with that reader. If you normally sign only your first name to this particular reader, and then you slip up when signing a stack of letters by signing your official name, your reader may wonder why you have become so formal so suddenly. It is worth taking the few extra seconds to determine how each individual letter should be signed. If the letter you sign improperly is word processed, it is worth having a new copy run out to avoid offending your reader.

Your title is normally typed in the line following your typed name:

Jonathan R. Preston 3
National Marketing Manager

This enables the reader—and everyone who receives copies—to know the “position” that is writing the letter, as well as the name of the person who holds that position. The only time it is not appropriate for you to type your title is when that title is included in the printed letterhead. If your name, as well as your letter, is printed on the letterhead, there is no need even to type your name under your signature.

1.2 Miscellaneous Matters 其它事项

(1) Subject Line 标题行

Occasionally, you may wish to highlight the subject matter of your letter by writing a subject line. The subject itself is often preceded by "Re:" or "Subj.:" in order to make it clear that you are writing about that particular subject. It is not necessary to type the subject line in capital letters or to underline it. The fact that you have placed it at the head of your letter gives it adequate emphasis. Usually, the subject line is a line space below the date and a line space above the salutation:

March 24, 1994

Re: Overdue Tables for your Article

Dear Mr. James:

We are now preparing the final copy for the 1994 Annual Review of Artificial Intelligence, and we find that you have not yet provided us with the tables you have indicated to be used in your article. Could you please get these tables to us before Friday, April 15?

Besides the above, the subject line can also be typed two line-spacings below the salutation, underlined, and centred over the body of the letter. In the front of the line with "Re:", "Subj:" or nothing, all of them are correct:

Dear Sirs:

Printed Cotton Piece Goods

Dear Sirs:

Re: P. V. C. Wire

(2) **Typist's Initials** 打字员姓名缩写

It is standard business practice to type both the dictator's and the typist's initials. Often the initials of the dictators or originator are in capitals; the typist's initials are lower case:

JRP:dlm

JRP/dlm

dlm

In the United States, the reference initials are usually beside the signature on the left-hand side, or in the bottom left-hand corner of the letter, but as for the British letters, the reference initials are on the same line as the date, but on the left side and the initials are all capitalized: WP/GD. Please refer to sample 1, and sample 2.

(3) Enclosures 随函附件

A line after the typist's initials (if they are used) notes that there are enclosures. Ideally, these enclosures should be listed by name. When the letter is given to you to sign, the enclosures should be part of the package, so you can see if everything you want sent is actually there.

If the enclosures are listed by name, the covering letter serves as a record of what was sent:

Enclosures: (1) Agreement for signature
(2) 1996 Catalog and Price List

(4) Copies 复印件

When copies are sent to people, their names should be listed on the letter so everyone who receives a copy of the letter knows who else has also received a copy. The safest manner for listing names is in straight alphabetical order by surname. Usually the official name is used:

Michael Konrad
Alicial Montare
Peter D. Schaeffer

Some firms use only the list name, together with the appropriate social title:

Mr. Konrad
Miss Montara
Dr. Schaeffer

(5) Indented Letter Style and Block Letter Style (打印格式)混合式与平头式

Indented Letter Style 混合式

The inside name and address is typed in block form, but the paragraphs forming the body of the letter are all indented six spaces. Some typists prefer a deeper indentation and may use as many as ten spaces, though six are sufficient to show the Separation of paragraphs clearly.

Block Letter Style 平头式

It is now being increasingly adopted in Britain and is popular in the United States. Its main feature is that all typing lines, including those for the date, the inside name and address, the salutation, the subject heading and complimentary close, begin at the left hand margin.