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国际商务英语系列

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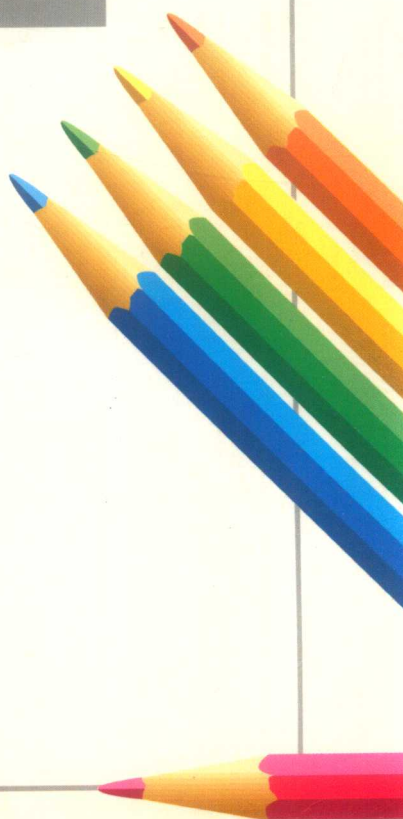
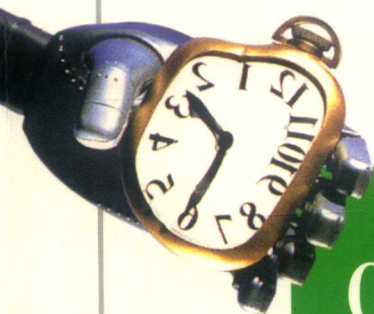
(修订本)

NEW

UP-TO-DATE  
CORRESPONDENCE  
FOR  
IMPORT & EXPORT  
新编进出口英语函电

王兴孙 等 编著

上海交通大学出版社



国际商务英语系列

# 新编进出口英语函电

(修订本)

王兴孙 张春鋈

编著

邬孝煜 周林根 倪咏梅

上海交通大学出版社

## 内容提要

进出口英语函电历来是国际经济与贸易专业教学及行业培训的主干课程。本书是依据国际贸易通行惯例,按照询购、报价、订购、保险、包装、运输、付款等进出口贸易的环节程序,选用近年来英语国家最新资料而编写的。全书体例安排新颖,语言简洁规范,体现了现代商务英语的习惯表达方式与最新的电子传送手段。本书最鲜明的特点是针对中国学生在学习中可能遇到的问题,突出规范的、循序渐进的语言应用能力训练。尤其是每个单元的练习部分,在题型设计、训练内容等方面,都不但紧密结合单元教学内容,而且有的放矢地针对国内学生常见错误。因此,与国内已出版的同类教材相比较,本书有与众不同的独特之处。

本书可作为大专院校国际经济与贸易等涉外商务专业教学以及外经贸行业培训的教材,也可供具有相当英语水平的国际商务从业人员自学或参考。

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# 序 言

随着我国改革开放和社会主义市场经济体制的建设,商务英语越来越受到人们的重视。

商务英语(Business English 或 English for Business)是专门用途英语(English for Specific Purposes 或 English for Special Purposes,简称 ESP)的一种。国外有的学者认为,专门用途英语是与某种特定专业、科目或目的相关联的英语。它有两个明显特点:一是有明确的特殊目的,应用于特定的职业领域;二是有特殊的内容,即专门化的内容。从这个意义上说,商务英语也就是对已在从事或将要从事商务行业的专业人才所教授或应用的专门用途英语。

国内专家学者中有人不同意商务英语或专门用途英语的提法,他们认为英语就是英语,没有商务英语、科技英语之分。对此,不妨可以姑存一说。但是,在英语国家确有商务英语、科技英语以及专门用途英语之说。商务英语成为一门学科,起始于60年代后期,至今有20多年历史。包括英语国家在内的西方国家商学院或大学商科专业普遍开设商务英语课程(在英国,仅教授商务英语的语言学校就有100多所)。有关商务英语的教材、辞书、研究论著、考试项目更是层出不穷。因此,商务英语实际上已发展成为一个独特的领域。

当然,商务英语绝对不是作为一种独立的语言而存在的,它是英语语言属下的一个专门用途学科。不论商务英语如何发展,它都不会、也不应该违背英语语言的基本规律。实际上,对学生而言,他们基础英语的根底如何,对学好商务英语起着决定性的作用。“根深才能叶茂”,没有英语语法、词法、句型等扎实的根基,商务英语的“枝叶”就不可能“茂盛”。因此,商务英语教学应始终坚持以英语语言训练为基本宗旨。但是,商务英语又毕竟有其自身的特点,它绝不是贸易、金融、法律等诸多方面专门词汇的堆砌,而自有其许多独特的语言现象(包括词汇、用语、语言结构等),独特的文体风格,等等。可以说,英语基础好,为商务英语的学习创造了最为重要的条件;但这并不等于说英语基础好的人就自然掌握了商务英语。我们在实践中经常可以看到,有些人虽有较高的英语水平,但由于没有受商务英语的培训,在涉外商务交往中仍然“词不达意”,难以与外方沟通,业务技巧也不能施展,真好比“隔行如隔山”。此外,既称商务英语,它又与所涉及的相关商务专业知识密切相关。很难想象一个根本不懂国际金融知识的人会很好地掌握金融英语,也很难想象一个没有任何国际经济法知识的人会自如地运用法律英语。商务专业

同样,为了贯彻这一宗旨,本书的编写还尽量着眼于中国学生在学习过程中可能遇到的问题,有的放矢地加强语言训练。尤其是 Communication Laboratory 项目,在题型设计、训练内容等方面,都不但结合每个单元的教学内容,而且特别针对国内学生常犯错误,是编者着力编写的一个部分。

由于电子技术日新月异的发展,进出口贸易函电传送的手段也越来越先进,从最早的信函,到电报、电传,到传真以及当今的电子邮件等等,而且这种发展变化还将不断继续下去。但是,正如英语国家一位学者所说,信函将依旧是商务信息交换的主要载体(the main carrier of business communication)。因此,编者认为应加强培养英语信函的撰写能力,并力求作出一些新的尝试,以期为我国外经贸教学与人才培养作出自己微薄的贡献。但由于编写时间匆促及条件限制,本书尚存不尽人意之处或疏漏差错,为此,编者恳请有关专家、学者、企业界人士及广大读者不吝赐教指正。

参加本书编写的有王兴孙、张春铤、邬孝煜、周林根、倪咏梅,由王兴孙任主编。

在本书编写过程中,曾得到上海外国语大学薛蕃康教授、上海对外贸易学院叶兴国教授以及其他教师的指教和帮助,数位学生也做了辅助工作,在此一并致谢。

上海对外贸易学院进出口英语函电课程为上海市教育委员会重点建设课程,本书为该课程教材,在编写过程中得到上海市教育委员会及上海对外贸易学院的资助,也在此致以谢意。

本书为由王兴孙、叶兴国主编的《国际商务英语系列》教材之一。该系列至今已出版了四本,今后还将陆续编辑出版。上海交通大学出版社的编辑对本系列的出版一直十分关心,编者也谨致衷心的感谢。

编者

1998年9月

# 前 言

进出口英语函电是我国商务英语教学开设最早的一门课程,已有约 40 年的历史,至今仍是国际经济与贸易等有关专业教学及外经贸企业培训的主干课程。随着国际贸易实践及英语语言的发展,进出口英语函电课程的教材需要不断更新。我们编写这本《新编进出口英语函电》(Up-to-date Correspondence for Import & Export)的目的也就在此,希望能满足当今高校及外经贸企业界教学、培训的需要。

在编写过程中,编者深入研究、比较了国内外已出版的进出口英语函电教材及教学法专著,广泛收集、分析了国内学生(包括外经贸企业界从业人员)在函电中的常犯错误,并在此基础上确定了本书编写的宗旨、体例、大纲和内容。

本书依据进出口贸易(主要是货物出口贸易)的环节程序,共分 12 个单元(Unit)。除第 1 单元及第 12 单元外,第 2 至第 11 单元每个单元包括以下九个项目:

1. Into the Unit(单元入门)
2. Specimen Letters(信函范例)
3. Comprehension Help(答疑解难)
4. Bonus Glossary(术语扩展)
5. Word Power Development(词语应用)
6. Sentence Menu(句型菜单)
7. Writing Tutorial(写作要义)
8. Communication Laboratory(语言训练)
9. Tips for You(名言警句)

由于进出口英语函电是一门应用性、实践性很强的英语语言课程,因此我们把本书编写宗旨确定为加强学生英语语言应用能力的训练,使学生能掌握规范的、符合现代英语习惯的表达方式,并能准确地应用到进出口贸易的各个环节。

为了贯彻这一宗旨,本书 Specimen Letters 项目所选用的来往信函基本上都选自近年来英语国家的有关资料,以保证语言的规范、纯正,并在文体、用语方面体现当代商务英语的特点。在编写 Bonus Glossary, Word Power Development 及 Sentence Menu 等项目时也刻意达到上述要求,一以贯之地帮助学生提高现代商务英语的应用能力。

知识对商务英语的渗透性,也决定了商务英语是需要经过专门学习或训练才能掌握的。

商务英语发展到今天,已是一个相当大的概念。仅以我国为例,商务英语在我国最早出现的只是一门外贸英语函电课程。这门课对培养和培训我国的外贸人才起到了重要作用。学生毕业后认为这门课是到工作岗位后最有“实用价值”的课程之一,用人单位也往往把毕业生的外贸英语函电水平作为录用的重要标准。因此,它已成为我国高等学校国际贸易或其他相关专业开设的必修课。但是当今国际贸易已有相当大的发展,一门外贸英语函电已远远不能满足实际工作需要,它实际上只是涉及国际货物贸易的一门英语课程。根据关贸总协定(GATT)乌拉圭回合最后文件,仅就国际贸易而言,就包含了货物贸易、服务贸易和技术贸易三个方面。何况,国际商务涉及的学科要多得多,包括国际贸易、国际金融、国际经济法、国际企业管理、涉外会计等多个领域。商务英语是一个涉及上述各领域的专门用途英语体系。

近几年来,我国高等学校以及企业界对商务英语的教学与研究越来越关注。北京、上海等地高校先后召开了有关的研讨会,就是很好的探索。在我国深化改革,扩大开放,社会主义市场经济体制逐步建立的今天,我们需要大批合格的国际商务人才,对他们商务英语水平的要求也日益提高。在这种情况下,我们要更加重视并加强对商务英语的教学和研究。上海对外贸易学院为此专门组织编写了这套国际商务英语系列教材,希望以此作为一种探索,进一步提高教学和科研水平,同时也希望与国内外的同行切磋交流,取长补短,共同提高。

衷心期待国内外同行及读者的批评帮助。

王兴孙

于上海对外贸易学院

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## UNIT ONE

# PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT OF BUSINESS LETTERS

A very large part of the business of the world is conducted by means of correspondence. Therefore it is extremely important to be able to write good business letters—letters that represent one's self and one's firm to best advantage.

### I. PRESENTATION

Here are the essential qualities that go to make up an attractive, well-groomed business letter:

#### 1. GOOD QUALITY STATIONERY

It is advisable to use the best quality of paper you can for business correspondence. Single sheets of plain white bond paper are the best, unruled, with the letterhead printed or engraved in black, grey or blue. The size most generally used is approximately 21×30 cm, the size of A4 duplicating paper.

Envelopes should match the letter sheet in quality and weight; and any printing or engraving that appears on the envelope should conform with that on the letterhead. Standard size envelopes are approximately 22×11 cm.

#### 2. NEAT TYPING

Whether you type the letters yourself or have them typed for you, be sure they are faultlessly neat and clean—without smudges, finger marks or erasures—otherwise they will not represent you to best advantage. Never be guilty of sending out over your signature a letter that is soiled, creased, or torn, or that is in any way marred or unsightly.

Besides, make sure the ribbon on your typewriter or printer is fresh so that the recipient can get a sharp copy of your letter. Avoid worn typewriter ribbons, as they produce an uneven effect that is certainly not appealing to the eye. And always keep the type of your machines shining bright and clean; for blurred type is not only difficult to read, but is very likely to smudge and spoil the appearance of your letter.

#### 3. EVEN SPACING

Whether long or short, your business letter should present an even, well-balanced appearance—neither crowded at the top of the page nor sitting lopsidedly on one side of it. Try to estimate the

length of your letter and visualize its position on the page before you begin to type it. Then plan your margins accordingly, so that they provide an even frame for your letter. This seems easier on a word-processor, for you may first draft your message, then polish it, and adjust the whole layout before finally having it printed out.

Bear in mind that wide margins make your letter more readable and inviting; so if your letter is a very long one, plan on using two sheets instead of crowding it all on one. But don't use an additional sheet for only one or two concluding lines of a letter; in that case it's better to try and get it all on the preceding page.

Most business letters are single-spaced, with double spaces between the paragraphs. However, very short letters look better when they are double-spaced, with either double or triple spaces between the paragraphs.

The paragraphs may be indented or not, as preferred. But if they are indented, they should all line up exactly the same distance from the margin. Don't start one paragraph one centimeter from the margin, another two or more from the margin—as that gives your letter a careless and untidy appearance.

#### **4. SHORT PARAGRAPHS**

Business letters should look easy to read and inviting to the eye. As long wordy blocks of type are anything but inviting, make an effort to keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Use a new paragraph for each new thought or idea, and express that thought as simply and briefly as you can.

#### **5. CORRECT GRAMMAR, SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION**

No letter should ever be permitted to go out with a misspelled word, a typographical error, or an incorrectly or poorly constructed sentence. This may seem comparatively unimportant to you at the moment, if you happen to be more concerned with the tone and spirit of your letter and what you want it to accomplish for you. But make no mistakes about it! Poor grammar, misspelled words, lack of punctuation or the improper use of it, prejudice the reader against you and help to destroy the effectiveness of your letter. It pays to check each letter carefully before it goes out and correct any errors that may cost you the confidence and respect of your correspondent.

The proper use of punctuation is especially important, for it helps to clarify and emphasize your thoughts, and makes your letter easier and more pleasant to read.

## **II. THE PRINCIPAL PARTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER**

Every well-constructed business letter is made up of the seven parts detailed as follows:

### **1. THE LETTERHEAD**

which is the name and address of the firm that writes the letter

### **2. THE DATE LINE**

which is the date on which the letter is written or signed

### 3. THE INSIDE ADDRESS

which is the name and address of the person to whom the letter is written

### 4. THE SALUTATION

which is the complimentary greeting

### 5. THE BODY OF THE LETTER

which is the subject matter or message

### 6. THE CLOSE

which is the complimentary conclusion or "good-by"

### 7. THE SIGNATURE

which may include the official capacity in which the letter is written

## 1. THE LETTERHEAD

This part expresses the personality of a company and is generally printed on the company's stationery. The letterhead may contain some or all of the following parts:

### 1) The Full Name of The Company

From the name of a firm, you may learn what type of company it is.

### 2) Logo

This is usually an eye-catching emblem or trademark of a company.

### 3) Addresses

In addition to the address of the office from which the letter is being sent, the letterhead may also give the address of the head office or registered office if different and the address of any branches or other offices the company owns. Telephone, fax and telex numbers, e-mail address, or occasionally a cable address is also given.

### 4) Names of Chief Executives

### 5) Icon of Products

This is usually a miniature of the products the company manufactures or sells, such as an automobile, a computer or a motorcycle. A glance at the icon will tell you what line of business the firm is in.

### 6) Type of Business

Some companies have such wording as *Importer & Exporter*, *Distributor*, or *Building Contractor*, printed on the letterhead so that you may learn what type of business the company is. Sometimes, you may get to know what line a company specializes in from the names of commodities, products or services printed at the bottom of the company's stationery.

### 7) Registered Number

This usually appears in small print, sometimes with the country or city in which the company was registered.

### 8) References

References are quoted to indicate what the letter refers to (Your Ref.) and the correspondence to refer to when replying (Our Ref.).

## 9) Date

On some companies' stationery, the word DATE is printed almost at the foot of the letterhead to provide a natural space for the date line.

## 2. THE DATE LINE

If no space is provided for DATE on the letterhead, the date line is generally typed two or three lines below the letterhead. The date line may start from the left margin, or be centered, or appear on the right-hand side, with the last figure serving as a guide for the right-hand margin. It is advisable for you to follow your house style.

The date should be typed in one line and generally the week days do not appear. It is preferably typed in the order of D/M/Y: day, month, and year, because nowadays most computer-processed forms bear a Date Box in such an order; but, in practice, quite a few people write the date in the M/D/Y order.

The DAY may be expressed either in cardinal numbers, e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 ... or in ordinals, e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th ... If you use ordinals, pay special attention to the numerals containing the units 1, 2 and 3, because when dating a letter, beginners are apt to write 1th, 2th, 3th, 21th, 22th, 23th, and 31th, or 11st, 12nd and 13rd. To avoid making such mistakes, use cardinals.

The names of months are preferably spelled out in full. Avoid using numerals, because confusion may arise as whether 12/11 is *November 12* or *December 11*. However, since the D/M/Y order is widely used on word-processors, and, since most Europeans write the date in a highly abbreviated form —1.7.97—, if you prefer to write the month in numerals, it is advisable always to (1) adopt the D/M/Y order, and (2) express the day, month, and year with two digits. For example, 01/07/97. Besides, as we have only twelve months in a year, if the day is 13 or larger, the month can be assuredly expressed in numeral. For example, 13/01 or 01/13 is doubtlessly *January 13*.

In case the date line is typed in the M/D/Y order, then after the day (especially when it is in cardinals) you should use a comma to separate the numerals respectively expressing the day and year, e.g. *January 1, 2000*.

## 3. THE INSIDE ADDRESS

The inside address should be the same as the name and address on the envelope. As a secretary or a typist in a business company will perhaps type dozens of letters and address an identical number of envelopes each day, the inside address helps her or him to make sure that the letter sheet is put in the right envelope. By and by, this part has become an indispensable component of a business letter.

The inside address should be in line with the left-hand margin; and although it may be either in indented or block form, the latter is preferred. The amount of space between the date and the inside address depends on the length of the letter. In a letter of average length two lines is suggested.

The inside address of a business letter to be sent abroad may have some or all of the following components:

**1) Full Name of the Recipient (if it is known)**

If you know the full name of the person you are writing to, you write this on the first line of the address. Here full name means either the person's first given name and surname, or the initial(s) of the person's first name (and middle name) and fully spelt last name, preceded by a courtesy title, e.g. *Mr. John Smith* or *Mr. J.M Smith*, not *Mr. Smith*.

Courtesy titles used in addresses are *Mr.* for a man; *Mrs.* (followed by the husband's surname) for a married woman; *Miss* for an unmarried woman; and *Ms* for both married and unmarried women, but in that case the married woman generally uses her maiden name instead of her husband's family name, e.g. *Mrs. Maggie Seaver* vs. *Ms. Maggie Malone*. *Messrs.*, an abbreviation for the French word *Messieurs*, is used occasionally for two or more men (*Messrs.S. Laurel and O. Hardy*) but more commonly forms part of the name of a firm (*Messrs.Holmes & Waston & Co.*). For two or more women, *Mmes.*, a shortened form for the French word *Mesdames*, can be used. Some special titles like *Doctor (Dr.)*, *Professor (Prof.)*, *Sir* (which means that the man is a Knight) are occasionally used before the full name of certain business people.

**2) Business Title of the Recipient (if it is known or you wish it to appear there)**

Business title may be typed after the recipient's name on the same line, or on a separate line below the name, especially when you find that the total length of the recipient's courtesy, full name and business title appear too long on a single line.

Or, suppose you are writing to a person who holds a certain business position in the company but whose name is unknown to you, in that case business title will appear on the first line in the inside address.

**3) Name of the Company Addressed To**

Name of the company should usually be typed out in full, but, if it is too long, some of the words may be abbreviated, e.g. *China International Trust and Investment Corporation*, shortened as: *China Int'l Trust & Investment Corp.* Initials are generally not used in the inside address, e. g. *CITIC*, which stands for the above company.

**4) Name of House/Building**

Name of the house or building, e.g. *Shanghai Center* or *Sun Plaza*, where the company addressed to is located may be included in the inside address. If you find there are more than five or six lines in this part while the number of the house or building will be typed before the street name on the line below, just omit the house name.

**5) Number of Building, Name of Street, and, Suite Number (if any)**

Number of building generally precedes the name of street, avenue, road, etc., while, if the company is housed in a suite, the suite number then follows the street name, e.g. *1234 St. Richard Avenue, #2105*.

**6) Name of Town or City and Postal Code**

The name of large towns or cities in most countries needn't be followed by the name of a county, state or province unless the firm addressed to is situated in a smaller town. In Britain there are two *Richmonds*, one in Surrey and the other in Yorkshire, while in the United States, several cities and towns are named *Washington*. Therefore, the postcode or zip code, if available, should also be included.

#### 7) Name of Country

For international correspondence, the name of the country is an indispensable component on both the envelope and the letter paper. Without it, many letters cannot be delivered properly, and some may be sent to a wrong country. For example, there are two cities called *Tripoli*, one in Libya and the other in Lebanon.

All in all, no matter whether you are writing a reply or an initial letter, copy the name and address as they appear in the incoming letter or the source you have secured.

Be correct in spelling and typing. Mind that *Iceland* is only one letter different from *Ireland*.

Don't alter the spelling of the name of your correspondent simply because you conjecture that it is wrong. Americans' surnames vary greatly. The spelling of ethnic family names is not of *English*. And even the spelling of some typical English names appears rather bizarre. Both *Byrd* and *Smyth* are surnames as *Bird* and *Smith* are. Don't arbitrarily replace the *Y* by *I*.

#### 4. THE SALUTATION

If neither the Attention Line nor the Subject Line is used, the Salutation generally should be placed against the left-hand margin with at least two lines under the Inside Address and two lines above the Body of the Letter.

The usual salutation in British business letters addressed to a company rather than to an individual within the company is *Dear Sirs*, while the most common one in the U.S. is *Gentlemen*. Nowadays, people have begun to use *Dear Sirs or Mmes* or *Ladies/Gentlemen* to avoid being charged with sexual discrimination, especially when addressing to companies in the countries where women's social status is universally acknowledged.

*Dear Sir* is used to address a man whose name you do not know, while *Dear Madam* to a woman, whether single or married, whose name you do not know. *Dear Sir or Madam* can be used to address a person of whom you know neither the name nor the sex.

When you do know the name of the person you are writing to, the salutation takes the form of *Dear* followed by a courtesy title and the person's surname. Initials or first names are not generally used in salutations: *Dear Mr. Johnson*, not *Dear Mr. R. Johnson* or *Dear Mr. Richard Johnson*.

Some Americans prefer to be called by their first or given name. When you and your correspondent have become friendly to each other through business dealings, and when he or she addresses you by your first name, e. g. *Dear Weiming* or *Dear Yun*, or *Dear Jack* or *Dear Mary*, in case you happen to have an English name, you may also use his or her first name as the salutation.

Some special titles may also be used as the salutation. They are preceded by *Dear* and followed by the surname only, e.g. *Dear Dr. Watson*, or *Dear Prof. Young*.

We Chinese tend to address people by their official or business title, if any, e.g. 王总, 张经理, 周厂长. Please note that in English not all official or business titles can be followed by a surname. We can have *Chairman Mao*, *Premier Zhou*, *President Nixon*, etc., for example, but such titles as *minister*, *manager*, or *director* cannot precede a surname to make a salutation.

In all the salutations mentioned above, except *Gentlemen* or *Ladies/Gentlemen*, the word *Dear* should always precede the title and the surname. It is used here only for the sake of courtesy, without any other suggestion. A salutation without this word, e.g. *Mr. Young*, or *Helen*, would

sound abrupt and impolite. Therefore, when you write to a person of the opposite sex, feel free and be sure to use the word in the salutation. However, if the salutation is to be translated into Chinese, 亲爱的 can simply be omitted. On the other hand, in the case of *Dear Sir*, if the adjective is omitted, you seem to have reduced yourself to something like a humble servant by addressing your correspondent as 老爷 or 爵爷.

The British tend to end a salutation with a comma while Americans with a colon. In modern business letters, no punctuation marks are used in the salutation.

## 5. THE BODY OF THE LETTER

This is the most important section of any business letter. It is typed two lines below the salutation, or below the subject line, if any.

In letters of average length, paragraphs are single-spaced and between paragraphs double spacing is used. The first line of each paragraph starts at the left-hand margin (or is indented as some people prefer).

Bear in mind the business letters are often read under pressure, when people are busy and dozens of other interests compete for their attention. So streamline your letters to make them more effective. Keep them brief and fast-moving, with short sentences and short paragraphs. Start a new paragraph for each point you wish to stress, but you should not fall into the habit of beginning a new paragraph with every sentence. Arrange the paragraphs in logical order so that your letter "reads easily" and moves, step by step, toward the aim or purpose you wish to achieve.

The first paragraph of a letter, being mainly a contact paragraph, should usually be short—often consisting of a single sentence. It may need to:

- (1) indicate the subject and purpose of the letter,
- (2) acknowledge any previous correspondence, and
- (3) establish a satisfactory tone.

The closing paragraph should also be relatively short. It may:

- (1) show friendliness and good will,
- (2) leave the reader with a single clear-cut thought or idea, and
- (3) inspire whatever action or response is desired.

Try to confine each letter to one subject, but sometimes you will find it necessary to write a letter to deal with several things. Use a heading at the beginning of each paragraph to show what subject this paragraph is dealing with. Type the paragraph heading in block letters or italic or bold fonts for emphasis. Leave several spaces and then write your sentences.

## 6. THE CLOSE

Like the salutation, the complimentary close is simply a matter of custom or a polite way of closing a letter. Two lines below the final line of the body of the letter, the close is placed against the left hand margin (in fully blocked letters), on the right or in the centre of the page (in letters which are in forms other than the full block), according to your firm's or your own preference.

The expression used for the complimentary close must match the salutation, as shown below:

<i>Dear Sirs</i>	<i>Yours faithfully \ Faithfully yours</i>
<i>Dear Sirs or Mmes</i>	
<i>Gentlemen</i>	<i>Yours very truly \ Very truly yours</i>
<i>Ladies/Gentlemen</i>	
<i>Dear Sir</i>	<i>Yours faithfully \ Faithfully yours</i>
<i>Dear Sir or Madam</i>	
<i>Dear Mr Seaver</i>	<i>Yours faithfully \ Yours sincerely \</i>
<i>Dear Mrs Seaver</i>	<i>Best wishes \ Kind regards, etc. (U.K.)</i>
<i>Dear Ms Malone</i>	<i>Sincerely \ Very truly yours \</i>
<i>Dear Miss Malone</i>	<i>Best regards, etc. (U.S.)</i>

Note: 1. *truthfully* is never used in a complimentary close.

2. Only the initial letter of a whole expression in the close is capitalized.

## 7. THE SIGNATURE

In the signature area you can include the name of your company, your signature, your typed name, and your business title, which is sometimes followed by the name of the department you represent. The signature area in business letters is normally in a block form with the first letters of all the typed lines within it aligned. The whole block is generally placed two lines immediately below the complimentary close. Its position can be against the left-hand margin, in the center or on the right of the page, depending on where the complimentary close is placed.

Since the name of your company is already included in the letterhead, you can sometimes omit it in the signature. So, below the complimentary close, leave enough space, say, three or four line spacings, for you or the person who writes or dictates the letter to sign.

Every business letter should be signed by hand, in ink. A typed signature alone is no good form; the use of a rubber stamp is anything but effective; and a signature in pencil or crayon is a rudeness to the person who receives the letter.

It is to some extent a matter of choice whether one signs with one's initial(s) *G. F. Smith* or one's given name *George F. Smith*. The signature, however, should not vary from one letter to another. *George F. Smith* should remain *George F. Smith* in all his business correspondence. He should not sometimes become *G. Smith*, and sometimes *G. Ford Smith*.

To sign with one's given name, e.g. *Davis Jenkins* or *Dianna Jenkins*, is preferable because the writer's sex is so identifiable that his or her correspondent is able to give him or her the right title when replying.

Under the handwritten signature, the signer's name should be repeated by typing. The typed name prevents the possibility of mistake or confusion, however illegible the written signature may be.



Now it has become somewhat a practice to have one's title bracketed before or after his or her typed name, e.g. (*Ms*) *D. McCarthy* or *H. E. Morgan (Ms)*. Including titles in signatures is, in fact, more common among women than among men, partly because many women like to make it clear either that they are married (*Mrs*) or unmarried (*Miss*) or that their marital status is not relevant (*Ms*), and partly because there is still a tendency to believe that important positions in a company can be held only by men.

Many a man who signs with initial(s) or whose first name can also be used by ladies, e.g. *Carol* or *Lee*, will also include his title *Mr* in his signature.

Including titles in signatures seems an advisable practice for us Chinese because our given names mean little to non-Chinese speakers. With the titles provided in the first outgoing letters, our overseas correspondents are able to address us correctly in their incoming letters.

Another problem for us Chinese to take note of is how to sign or type our names in the first letters sent abroad so that our foreign correspondents will not mistake our surnames. The best solution to this problem is to have the whole surname typed in capitals, e.g. *GAO Yuanhua*. Most overseas Chinese tend to put their initials before their surnames as westerners do, but when they spell out their full names, more often than not, their surnames precede their Chinese "first names", e.g. *S. C. Leung* or *Leung Suet Chan*.

The business title may follow the typed name on the same line or be placed on the line under. The latter position is preferred especially when both or either of the name and the business title is long.

If the signer represents only a certain department of the company, the department name should be typed in the signature. In this case, the business title should be placed on a separate line below the typed name and be followed by the department name typed on the line under. For example:

Frederick B. Prentice  
Assistant Manager  
Overseas Sales Department

### III. THE OPTIONAL PARTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER

#### 1. ATTENTION LINE

This line may be used if you wish to address the letter to a particular member or department of the company, but you perhaps only know the surname of the member and thus cannot write the name in the Inside Address (which needs a complete name), or you expect your letter to be promptly attended to by any other member of the company who takes care of the business of the addressee in case the latter is absent from the office.

Flush with left hand margin or placed in the center of the page, the Attention Line is generally inserted between the Inside Address and the Salutation, with double spacing above and below it. The line may begin with the word *Attention*, or the simplified form *Attn*, punctuated with a colon, or with the expression *For the attention of*, and followed by the addressee's name and business title if available. This part is generally underlined, and may be capitalized as preferred.