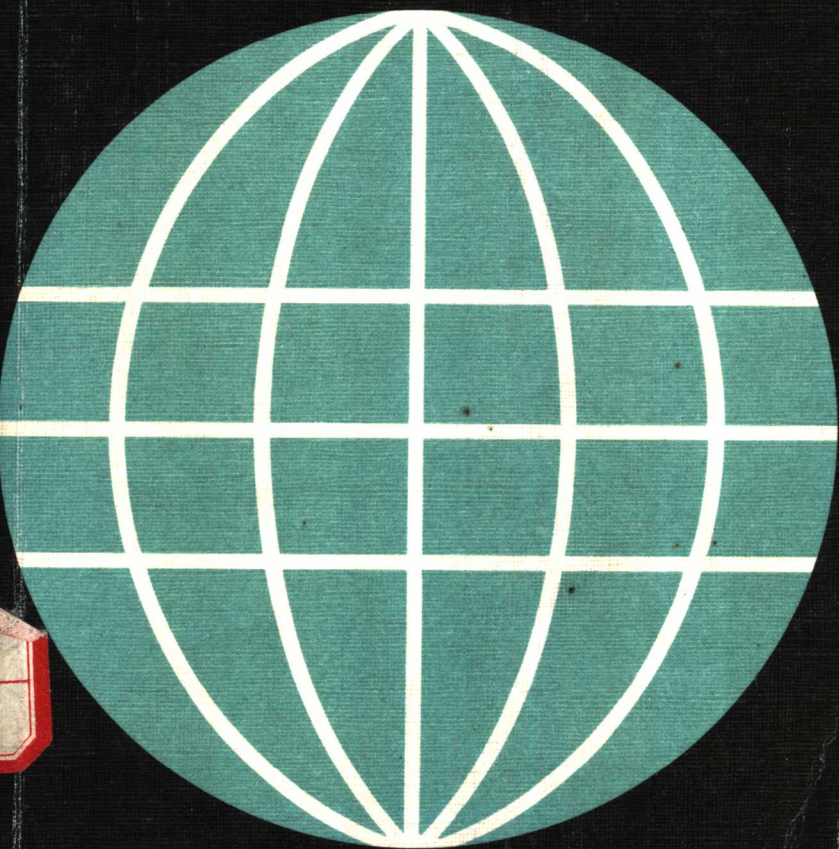


A COMMERCIAL COURSE FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS VOLUME 1

C. E. ECKERSLEY/W. KAUFMANN



ESSENTIAL ENGLISH SERIES

A COMMERCIAL COURSE

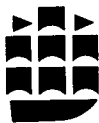
For Foreign Students

Volume One

by C. E. ECKERSLEY

and W. KAUFMANN

Illustrated with photographs and diagrams



LONGMAN

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Preface

There have been many books aiming at teaching commercial practice, and still more striving to teach English to foreign students, but the present volume is, perhaps, unique in attempting to combine these aims, in trying, while giving an outline of English business organisation, to enlarge the student's general vocabulary, to exercise him in grammatical constructions and to increase his power of expressing himself in English with ease and clearness.

This book, the first of two volumes, covers the essential features of modern English business. It glances briefly at England's position in the world of trade, at her industries and powers of production. Then, in more detail, it surveys the various functions of commerce, the work of the wholesaler and the retailer, the forms and the control of business organisation from the sole trader to the limited liability company. It discusses the work of the various departments of a business concern, examines methods of payment, traces the course and gives the documents of a home and of an export transaction.

Particular emphasis has been given to commercial correspondence, which is of such overriding importance to the foreign student. In one of the longest chapters the general rules for writing a good business letter are explained and the main parts which it should contain are analysed. A special section contains numerous examples of the various categories of business letters, e.g. offers and orders, complaints and apologies etc. To make these letters more real and interesting they are so arranged as to form in themselves complete transactions from the initial enquiry to the final payment.

Throughout, an attempt has been made to smooth away the particular difficulties of the *foreign* student and to enlighten him on those matters where the commercial procedure of his country differs from that in England.

Each section of the book is followed by copious exercises based on the subject matter of that section. Of these exercises the ones marked *A* are designed to increase the student's knowledge of English; those marked *B* to consolidate the work that he has done, by causing him to review what he has just read, to think about the issues involved and to arrange and express his thoughts in good, plain English.

The vocabulary of this book has been very carefully controlled but not stringently limited. Its basis is the vocabulary of the four

books of *Essential English* plus about 500 new words; but every one of these words is defined within the *Essential English* vocabulary in the Glossary on pages 304 to 323.

So that this volume shall reflect as far as possible the conditions of business life of the country as it really is, we have included a judicious selection of the documents used in English commercial practice. But though our main aim has been to make the book useful, practical and accurate, we have tried, too, to make it (what commercial courses so rarely are) readable also. For that reason we hope that the occasionally lighter touch by which some of the information is conveyed may be forgiven by the perhaps unduly serious-minded student.

In Volume II we have dealt at greater length with the work of the City and the Banks, the Capital Market and the Stock Exchange, with Foreign Exchanges and Foreign Trade, with Markets and Marketing, Organisations in Commerce and Industry, with Nationalisation and Monopolies and other economic subjects, and finally with some International Problems, including the European Economic Community.

C. E. E.

W. K.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Coming to England

LETTER NO. 1

Juan in Montevideo writes to Uncle Carlos in London

Montevideo,
Uruguay.
24th January, 19—.

Dear Uncle Carlos,

As you have been in England now for several years, I am writing to you for some guidance and advice. I have been advised to go to England to study commercial life and business methods there before I begin a business career at home. Father, as you know, when he was alive, always had a great admiration for England both as a nation and as a centre of world industry, commerce and finance and was very anxious that I should have a thorough knowledge of the language and the country. Well, I have a fairly good knowledge of the language. I have worked through *Essential English* Books I-IV and have done some additional reading, but I don't know anything about the more specialised vocabulary of business or the office routine there. I'm sure I couldn't write a proper business letter, and the City page of the English newspaper that I read, with its talk about Debentures, Joint Stock Companies, dividends, discount, F.O.B., and so on, is a complete mystery to me.

I want to come to England but I really don't know the first thing about how one sets to work to come. I feel terribly ignorant and should be very grateful if you could find time to write to me fully about it all. You have done all these things yourself and so you know exactly what my difficulties will be and, being on the spot yourself, you can, I know, give me far

more reliable first-hand knowledge of what is necessary than anyone here. I know I am asking a lot and taking up far too much of your valuable time, but knowing you to be one of the best-natured fellows in the world, I am risking it.

Kindest regards from us all here,

Yours sincerely,

Juan

LETTER NO. 2

From Uncle Carlos in London to Juan in Montevideo

Whitehall Mansions,
Kensington,
London, W. 8.
10th February, 19—.

My dear Juan,

I was very pleased to receive your letter and even more pleased to know that you were thinking about coming to England. I am sure it is of the utmost importance to you to do so. For the business career that you are to follow it is absolutely essential that you should have a really good knowledge of world trade, of export business and of international commerce and finance. And where could you get a better knowledge of it than in the heart of that world, England? For, believe me, England is still the heart of it.

Nor do I think that her influence is decreasing. England exports more than £4,200 m.¹ worth of goods a year and her influence extends with those exports, for with the machinery and so on that she sends abroad her engineers and technicians go to the four corners of the earth. They are followed by her commercial agents, managers of works, scientists to develop the raw materials, administrators, civil servants, business men, seamen—all making England and her manufactures, her speech, her manners, her customs known in every part of the world. In recent years this influence has spread even more rapidly. The world is shrinking constantly. Fast liners, the

¹ £4,200 m. is the abbreviation for £4,200,000,000.

steam engine, the motor car and the aeroplane have brought the nations almost on to each other's doorsteps. So it is more important than ever that we should know these neighbours intimately, should know their customs and usages, their laws and their language. If for no other reason, you ought to come to England to perfect your knowledge of English, the language of administration and trade, of culture and entertainment for more than 300,000,000 people and an acquired language to probably as many millions more. Students in Europe and other parts of the world are realising more and more the enormous value that a knowledge of the English language and English life and customs will be to them, and you will meet these students here in the schools and universities, in the factories and the technical colleges, in the banks and the commercial houses, eagerly trying to get the knowledge that they want.

So, come here as soon as you can manage it—and stay here as long as you can afford it.

Your affectionate
Uncle Carlos

EXERCISES A

I WORD STUDY. Use each of the following words:

Guidance, career, specialised, routine (use also *route* [ru:t]¹ and *rout*² [raut]), mystery, ignorant (use also *to ignore*³), grateful, reliable, advice (compare with *advise*), decrease (the opposite is *increase*), technician (use also *technical* (adjective), *technics*, *technique*), agent, administrator (use also *administration* (noun), *administer* (verb)), civil (two meanings. Use also *civilian*, *civil war*, *civilisation*. What work does a *civil engineer* do?), shrink (what are *unshrinkable woollen goods*?), doorstep, neighbours (use also *neighbourhood*), intimate, perfect (adjective. How is this word pronounced if used as a verb?), acquire (use also *require*, *inquire* (written also *enquire*)).

¹ For guidance on phonetics see pages 304–5.

² *rout* can be either a verb or noun. As a noun it means the disorderly flight of an army.

³ Note that the meaning of 'to ignore' is *not* 'to be ignorant of' but 'to take no notice of'.

II *Fill in the missing parts of speech where a space is left: the words are taken from page 1 to page 3.*

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
—	ϕ	anxious	—
mystery	—	—	—
—	—	extensive	—
—	—	reliable	—
commerce	ϕ	—	—
—	admire	—	—
influence	—	—	—
—	ϕ	important	—
—	—	—	completely
finance	—	—	—
science	ϕ	—	—
—	—	perfect	—
—	impress	—	—

ϕ This mark means that there is no commonly used corresponding part of speech to go here.

III What are the usual beginnings (the greeting) and endings (the complimentary close) for (a) a friendly letter, and (b) a business letter?

EXERCISES B

I *Answer the following questions:*

- 1 Why do/don't you want to go to England?
- 2 What are the main shipping lines from your country to England?
- 3 What route would you take from your country to England? Mention any ports that you might call at on the way.
- 4 What are the main ports on (a) the East, (b) the South, (c) the West coast of Great Britain?
- 5 What is the difference between (a) England, (b) Great Britain, (c) the British Isles?
- 6 How do Britain's exports increase her influence?
- 7 What are the main exports and imports of your country?

II Write a letter telling an English student why he ought to visit your country.

LETTER NO. 3

From Uncle Carlos to Juan

London,
15th March, 19—.

My dear Juan,

Let me give you first of all a little advice about what to do before you leave home. Study something of the trade of your own country with England; what raw materials, if any, you supply her with; what you export to England and what you import from her. Note what English goods there is a demand for in your country; those are the goods that your buyers will want to obtain. Make yourself quite familiar with the import restrictions, if any, on these goods. It won't be much good for you to advise the buying of some particular commodity if you find that there is a 30 per cent import duty on it that you hadn't reckoned on. I came across an instance of this only last week. Pedro B——, who has just been made a buyer in his father's firm, went to Leeds to buy cloth. He saw a high-grade worsted with a stripe in silk running through it. It was a very attractive pattern so he bought six pieces of it in three colours. It was only when they arrived at the port that he discovered that the duty on it was the equivalent of 9s. 6d. a yard more because of that little stripe of silk, which could easily have been replaced by artificial silk. Study, too, the particular aptitude of your countrymen and how far they might be able to adopt the ideas that you pick up in your travels and how far articles might be profitably manufactured at home. I am thinking now particularly of the case of Pierre Lebrun of Geneva. He was very much impressed by the excellence of the 'Jewel' baby typewriter that you will see everywhere here. It is small and delicate but beautifully made. Pierre felt sure that was exactly the sort of thing that Swiss workmen with their long tradition of skill in watchmaking and other delicate, precise machinery could do excellently. So he got into touch with the makers of the 'Jewel' and after some

negotiation with them, he bought the Swiss manufacturing rights. I don't need to tell you of the success that the 'Bijou' typewriter—the Swiss counterpart of the 'Jewel'—has had; it certainly made Pierre Lebrun's fortune. A similar bit of foresight might make yours!

If you are coming to England for a short time only, find out all particulars of the seasons for buying and selling of the commodity that you are interested in. A man I know, who is interested in the woollen trade, decided to come to England last July for a three weeks' visit. It was a sad blow to him when he arrived in London to find that if he wanted to see the full range of textiles in Golden Square,¹ he could only do so in May and November.

There are many other things that I want to tell you but they can wait for the next letter—but just a word of homely advice before I finish. Don't forget your 'woollies'. England in June can be the loveliest country on earth, but March or November can be terrible. Above all, especially as you will probably pay a visit to Manchester, don't forget your mackintosh and umbrella!

All the best,
Your affectionate
Uncle Carlos

LETTER NO. 4

From Uncle Carlos to Juan

London,
15th May, 19—.

Dear Juan,

In a few more days now you will be leaving Montevideo, so I'm just sending you a few final reminders. Have you made a point of getting as many 'contacts' as possible with people in England? Unfortunately I shan't be here to welcome you when you arrive; I am going to Egypt for my firm within a week or so, but I am leaving here for you some letters of recommendation to good friends of mine in England. Pay them a visit as soon as you can. You can probably get other letters of intro-

¹ An important centre of the cloth trade in London.

duction to people here. There are numerous channels open to you for this; your father had a number of personal friends here; there are the agents of English firms in Montevideo, many of them knew your father and would, I am sure, be quite pleased to give you a letter to their principals here. If everything else fails there is always a recommendation from your father's banker to the English agent of the bank.

Are all your papers in order? Have you a valid passport covering the time of your stay in England? Do you need to get, in addition, a visa? With some countries there are mutual agreements about the entry of their nationals and no visas are necessary, with other countries a visa is essential. If you need one, apply at once to the British Consul giving the reasons for your journey and the intended duration of your stay. Have you arranged about a Letter of Credit¹ on an English bank? If all that is done I suppose you will be ready now to book your passage. The route that I took was from Montevideo to London; that is 6,240 miles, and it took us just about three weeks.²

A last word of warning: be absolutely truthful with the Customs officials and Immigration Officers in the English port. They are very polite and courteous but they are very efficient. I could tell you of the gentleman who had the idea of smuggling in drugs in the hollow frame of his bicycle, or of old Dietz who told the Immigration Officer that he had come to England to attend the fur sales here, and then, without saying anything about it, tried to set up in business. They are both sadder and wiser men now!

Bon voyage and happy landings,

Yours sincerely,

Uncle Carlos

¹ A Letter of Credit (L/C) is an arrangement between a bank in one country and a branch or agency in another by which a customer of the bank can draw money from the foreign branch up to a certain amount and for a certain time. (For other uses of L/C see p. 271.)

² There are numerous crossings from N. Europe to England, the usual ones are Calais to Dover and London (103 miles); Ostend—Dover and London (143½ miles); Boulogne—Folkestone and London (100 miles); Dieppe—Newhaven and London (132 miles); Flushing—Queenborough and London (164½ miles); Hook of Holland—Harwich and London (171 miles).

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Whitehall Mansions, W. 8.
15th May, 19—.

R. A. Sampson, Esq.,
Argo Export Company,
250, Billiter Street, E.C. 4.

Dear Sir,

The bearer of this letter is my nephew, Juan Alvarez, who is spending some time in England in order to study the industrial life and commercial practice of this country before returning to Montevideo and entering his father's firm.

If you can do anything while he is in England to make his stay useful and pleasurable, I shall be deeply grateful.

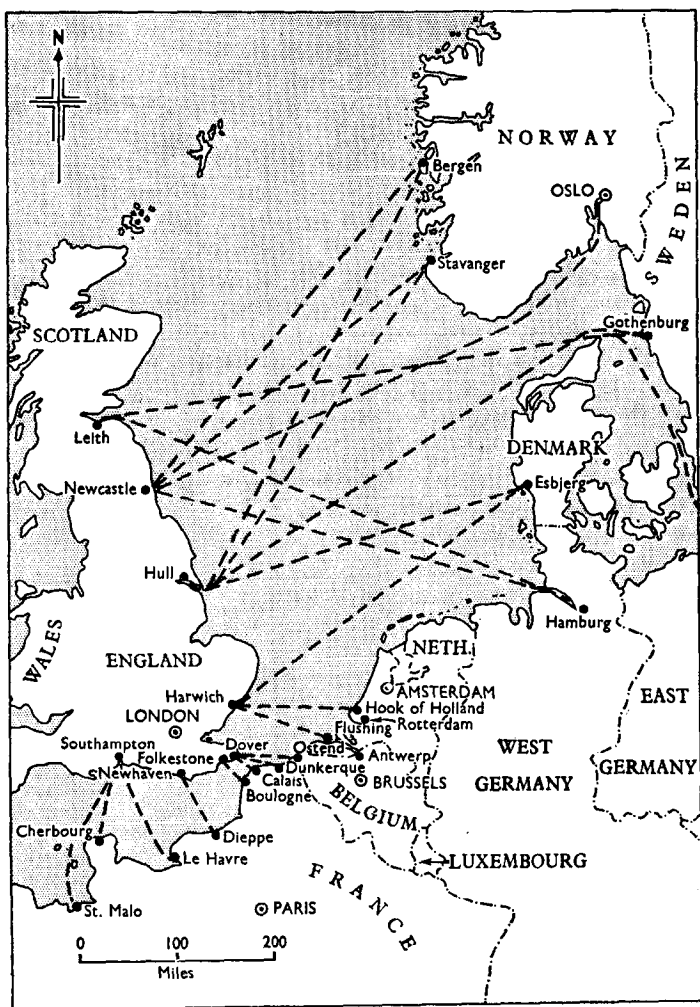
I remain,

Yours very truly,
Carlos Alvarez

EXERCISES A

I WORD STUDY. Use each of the following in sentences:

Restriction, commodity, attract (use also *subtract*, *abstract*, *extract*, *contract* (two meanings)), pattern, artificial, aptitude, adopt (how does this differ from *adapt*?), delicate, tradition, precise (what is the noun from *precise*?), negotiation, foresight (use also *foretell*, a *fore-runner*, *foresee*, *forefathers*. Explain 'Forewarned is forearmed'), typewriter (what is the difference between a *typewriter* and a *typist*?), season (what are the four seasons?), textile, affectionate, reminder (compare *remainder*), firm (two meanings), recommendation, principal (compare with *principle*), fail (what is the opposite?), valid (the opposite is *invalid* [in'vælid]. When *invalid* is pronounced ['invæli:d] it has another meaning), mutual, duration (note also and use *during*, *durable*, *endure*, *endurance*), numerous (use also *numberless*, *innumerable*), immigration (use also the opposite, *emigration*), courteous (use also *courtesy*), efficient, smuggle, drug (noun and verb).



Routes from the Continent to Britain