

高等学校商务英语系列教材

# 实用进出口英语函电

主编 邹建华 江 峰

主审 余富斌



电子工业出版社

Publishing House of Electronics Industry  
<http://www.phei.com.cn>

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北京 · BEIJING

## 内 容 简 介

作为《高等学校商务英语系列教材》之一,本书从商务英语信函的格式入手,以进出口业务实际操作程序为步骤,把学习如何书写商务英语信函内容与实际进出口业务中进出口双方当事人建立业务关系、深入了解进出口合同条款内容、磋商合同条款、履行合同过程,甚至解决合同纠纷等紧密地联系在一起。同时,为了更利于读者将业务知识的学习与英语函电的学习结合起来,本书还将同一笔交易中进出口双方当事人相互往来的多封英文信函编入一处。

本书适合高等学校商务英语专业及经贸专业的学生使用,尤其适合高职高专院校商务英语及相关专业的学生使用,还可作为外经贸从业人员的参考用书。

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### 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

实用进出口英语函电/邹建华,江峰主编. —北京:电子工业出版社,2005.2

(高等学校商务英语系列教材)

ISBN 7-121-00771-1

I.实... II.①邹...②江... III.进出口贸易—英语—电报信函—写作—高等学校—教材IV.H315

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2004)第142008号

责任编辑:王 平

排版制作:华信卓越公司制作部

印 刷:北京东光印刷厂

出版发行:电子工业出版社

北京市海淀区万寿路173信箱 邮编:100036

经 销:各地新华书店

开 本:787×1092 1/16

印张:18

字数:531千字

印 次:2005年6月第2次印刷

定 价:25.00元

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# **Chapter 1**

## **How to Write a Business Letter in English**





## I Essentials of Business Letter Writing

There are certain essential qualities of business letter, which can be summed as in the three C's, i.e. (1) Clearness (2) Conciseness (3) Courtesy.

**Clearness.** The writer must try to express himself clearly, so that the reader will understand. To achieve this, he should keep in mind the purpose of his letter and use appropriate words in correct sentence structures to convey his meaning. He should also avoid ambiguous sentences.

**Compare:**

*The L/C must reach us for arranging shipment not later than 8 Oct.*

*The L/C must reach us not later than 8 Oct for arranging shipment.*

**Conciseness.** Conciseness means saying things in the fewest possible words. A concise business letter should say things briefly but completely without losing clarity or courtesy. To achieve conciseness, one should try to avoid wordiness or redundancy.

**Compare:**

a. Shorten wordy expressions

*We have begun to export our machines to countries abroad.*

*We have begun to export our machines.*

b. Use words to replace phrases or clauses

*We require furniture which is of the new type.*

*We require new-type furniture.*

**Courtesy.** Courtesy is not mere politeness. It should hardly be necessary to stress the importance of courtesy in your correspondence. One of the most important things is promptness. Punctuality will please your customer who dislikes waiting for days before he gets a reply to his letter. It's nearly always wrong to doubt a statement made in good faith by the other side and even worse to contradict it. In letters we should always keep in mind the person we are writing to, see things from his point of view, visualize him in his surroundings, see his problems and difficulties and express our ideas in terms of his experience.

**Compare:**

*You made a very careless mistake.*

*A very careless mistake was made.*

## II Structure and Layout of Business Letter

The business letter consists of seven principle parts:

Part 1. Head

Part 2. Date

Part 3. Name and address

Part 4. Salutation

Part 5. Body of the letter

Part 6. Complimentary close

Part 7. Signature

You can use the following optional parts if you need:

Part 8. Attention line

Part 9. Subject line

Part 10. Enclosure notation

Part 11. Carbon copy

## **1 The Head**

The head expresses a firm's personality and is generally printed on the firm's stationery. It helps to form one's impression of the writer's firm. Styles vary considerably, but they all give similar information and besides the name and address of the firm may include telephone numbers, fax numbers and E-mail address, even web address.

## **2 The Date**

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 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.

Regarding the date line, you should pay attention to the following points:

- a. YEAR should be typed in full, never abbreviated. For example, 03 can't be replaced for 2003.
- b. MONTH are preferably spelled out in figure, so as to avoid confusing. For example, 12/11 is November 12 or December 11?
- c. DAY may be expressed either in cardinal number, e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4... or in ordinals, e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th.... If using ordinals, you should pay attention to the numbers containing the units 1, 2 and 3, because when dating a letter, beginners are apt to write 1th (1st), 2th (2nd), 3th (3rd), 21th (21st), 22th (22nd) and 23th (23rd) and 31th (31st), or 11st (11th), 12nd (12th) and 13rd (13th).

To avoid making such mistakes, use cardinals.

## **3 The Name and Address**

The preferred position for the correspondent's name and address is the upper left-hand side of the sheet, three or more line-spacing below the line of the date, depending on the length of the letter.

Mr., Mrs., Miss., Ms., and Messrs. are the ordinary courtesy titles used for addressing correspondents.

## **4 The Salutation**

The salutation is the greeting with which every letter begins. It always appears on a line by itself,

three line-spacing below the inside address.

The customary greeting in a business letter is Dear sirs or Dear sir followed by a comma. But the Americans usually use Gentlemen with a colon instead of Dear sirs. Note that you can't use sirs alone and Gentlemen can't be used in the singular, nowadays, people have begun to use Dear Sirs or Mmes or Ladies / Gentlemen to avoid being charged with sexual discrimination.

## 5 The Body of the Letter

This is the most important section of any business letter. It is typed two lines below the salutation.

Since the main purpose of the letter is to convey a message, the letter should be written in language that is easily understood. It is advisable to keep the above-mentioned "three C's" in mind.

## 6 The Complimentary Close

The complimentary close, like the salutation, is simply a matter of custom and 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, on the right or in the center of the page, according to your firm's or your own preference.

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

Salutation	Close
Dear Sirs	Yours faithfully
Gentlemen	Sincerely yours

## 7 The Signature

The signature is the signed name or mark of the person writing the letter or that of the firm he represents. It is generally placed two lines immediately below the complimentary close.

Every business letter should be signed by hand, in ink, and a signature in pencil or crayon is a rudeness to the person who receives the letter. Under the handwritten signature, the signer's name should be repeated by typing.

## 8 The Attention Line

This phrase "For the attention of" or simply "Attention" is used where the writer of a letter addressed to an organization wishes to direct it to a particular member. It is typed two line-spacing above the salutation, underlined, and centered or on the left over the salutation.

e.g. For the attention of Mr. Smith  
or: Attention: Mr. Smith

## 9 The Subject Line

The subject line gives a brief indication of the content of the letter. It is placed two lines below the salutation and above the body of the letter. The line may begin with or without the subject, be typed, underlined, in block letters, as preferred.

## 10 The Enclosure Notation

When there is something enclosed with the letter, please type the word Enclosure or an abbreviation of it (Encl.) at the bottom, left-hand, two or three lines below the signature line.

Nowadays many business letters are sent by fax, attached to the fax message usually some documents are sent. In this case, the word Attachment should be used to replace Enclosure.

## 11 The Copy Notation

When you want your correspondent to know that a copy of a letter is to be sent to a third party, it is usual to indicate this by typing cc or CC followed by two spaces and the name of the recipient of the copy. The usual position is at the foot of the letter, two lines below the signature or immediately below the enclosure notation.

e.g.	CC	Mr. William Carter, Vice-President Ms. Fan Zhonghui, Treasurer
------	----	---

According to some Americans, cc stands for carbon copy which is now almost replaced by the photocopy in the business world, so they substitute the brand name Xerox for cc. However, most business people still use cc because they believe it is the short form of copies circulated (to).

Although formality in business letter-writing is rapidly giving way to a less conventional and more friendly style, the layout or mechanical structure of a letter as it is called 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 to stick to it.

Specimen Letter

**THE EASTERN SEABOARD CORPORATION**

350 Park Avenue, New York, 10017, USA  
Telephone No. 225-2788 Telex Call No. 225-2780  
Fax No. RCA543 E-mail: ESCo.@CA.com

April 20, 2004

Kanto Mercantile Corporation  
2-1 Nihonbashi  
Tokyo 301  
Japan

Attn: Mr. Smith

Gentlemen:

Bicycles

Enclosed is a new price-list of U.S. Products, Inc. indicating a full range of their products.

We can quote on all of these items. If you are interested in receiving CIF quotations on any of these items, please let us know and we shall be glad to send them to you.

We await good news from you.

Sincerely yours,

*James Parrington*

Vice President

Encl. Price-list

CC Mr. William

## III The Envelope

The three important requirements of envelope addressing are accuracy, clearness, and good appearance, in that order. The paper used for the envelope should match exactly the paper used for the letter.

When writing a letter, we must bear in mind that every letter that leaves the office is a representative of the firm in which we are working and as a messenger of goodwill. Its style and appearance must be in keeping with this function. It must have a quiet dignity and personality.

Business stationery ordinarily has the return address printed in the upper left corner of the envelope. Name and address of the receivers should be typed about half way down the envelope, leaving enough space for the postmark or stamps. Post notations such as "Registered", "Confidential" should be placed in the bottom left-hand corner.

The following are some suggestions about addressing an envelope:

- a. Type the name and address of the receiver in the lower part of the envelope, beginning at least 1.5 inch from the top so as to leave ample space for stamps and postmark;
- b. Type your correspondent's name exactly as he uses it himself, and be sure to spell it correctly;
- c. Use your correspondent's full address;
- d. Use double line-spacing, unless the address consists of more than four lines;
- e. Type words such as Street, Road, Avenue in full.

## Specimen Envelope

China National Chemicals Imp. & Exp. Co.  
925 Jianguo Road,  
Beijing, China

Stamp

Messrs. Smith & Co.

215 Des Voeux Road  
HONGKONG



## Exercises

### 1 Plan the layout according to the following particulars

- 1) Sender's name: H.G. Wilkinson Company, Limited
- 2) Sender's address: 245 Lombart Street Lagos, Nigeria
- 3) Sender's cable address: WILKINSON
- 4) Sender's telephone No.: 3305421

- 5) Date: March 23, 2004
- 6) Receiver's name: The China National Light Industrial Products Import & Export Corporation
- 7) Receiver's address: 128 Huchiu Road, Shanghai, China
- 8) Salutation used: Dear Sirs
- 9) For the attention of: Mr. Johnson
- 10) Subject matter: Electric Fan
- 11) The message:

We are interested in tweed lengths suitable for skirt making and would like to have details of your prices and terms.

It would be helpful if you could supply samples.

- 12) Complimentary close used: Yours faithfully

- 13) Signature: your name

## 2 Address an envelope for the above letter



# **Chapter 2**

## **How to Establish Business Relations**





The establishment of business relations is one of the important undertaking in the field of foreign trade. It is fairly true to say "No customer, no business".

A newly established firm or an old one that wishes to enlarge its business scope and turnover could establish business relations through some of the following channels:

- a. Banks;
- b. Chambers of Commerce in foreign countries;
- c. Chinese Commercial Counselor's Office in foreign countries;
- d. Business Houses of the same trade;
- e. Advertisements;
- f. Introduction of his connections;
- g. Exhibition and fairs at home and abroad.

Having obtained the desired names and addresses of the firms from any of the above sources, he may start sending letters to the parties concerned. Generally speaking, this type of letter can include the following:

- a. The source of the information, i.e., tell the addressee how his name is known;
- b. The intention;
- c. Self-introduction including your business scope, branches and some other information;
- d. Express expectation.

To firms engaged in foreign trade, business connections are valuable. Therefore, traders must not only do everything possible to consolidate their established relations but also develop and revitalize their trade by searching for new connections from time to time.