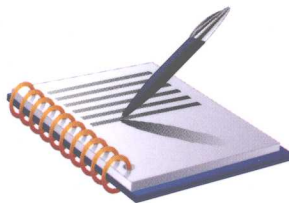


◆ 中国国际贸易学会推荐教材

◆ 全国应用型本科国际经济与贸易专业系列主干教材

商务应用文 英语写作教程



PRACTICAL

BUSINESS WRITING

IN ENGLISH

主 编 李慎忠

副主编 林铭杰 代欣 高月媚 李运雷



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主 编	李慎忠	
副主编	林铭杰	代 欣
	高月媚	李运雷
编 者	王 莉	赵东旭
	蔡秀梅	丁 蕾
	马国华	孙丽萍
	金红梅	蔺玉石
	吴丽丽	

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主 编 李慎忠

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举报电话: (010) 64242964

前 言

改革开放 30 多年来,特别是在加入世界贸易组织以后,我国对外经济贸易以前所未有的速度和规模迅猛发展。在全球经济一体化大潮的冲击下,我国的工商企业纷纷走出国门,积极参与国际竞争和跨国经营,大大增强了我国产品在国际市场的竞争力。而外商开办的独资企业和中外合资企业,也宛如雨后春笋,在我国广袤的土地上破土而出,茁壮成长。

在我国经济全面深入对外开放,新的发展机遇比比皆是的大好局面下,许多行业急需大批实用型、复合型、外向型的涉外专门人才。他们不仅要有热爱祖国、报效人民的崇高思想,而且要有渊博的专业知识,扎实的英语功底和良好的专业英语运用能力。本书的编辑出版,正是为我国培养出更多更好这样的人才,尽一点微薄的力量。

本书所涵盖的内容,是商务应用文英语写作中最常见、最常用的部分,其中包括商务信函、商务摘要、公司备忘录、电传、传真、电子邮件、公司会议日程、会议记录、商务报告书、商务提案书、公司内部通信、公司网络写作、国际商务合同和协议书、工作申请函、个人简历、求职面试、商务广告、出国访问、社会交往以及其他一些商务应用文的写作文体。

我们编写本书的目的,主要是为国际经济、国际贸易、国际工商管理、国际市场营销等非英语专业和应用英语专业国际经贸方向的大学本科生开设的商务应用文英语写作课程,提供一本较为理想的教材。

众所周知,商务应用文英语写作课程(亦称商务英语写作)是上述各专业大学本科学生的必修课。它的开设目的,是为了培养和提高学生商务应用文的英语写作能力和专业英语的运用能力。这正是实用型、复合型、外向型外经贸专门人才所必须具备的基本能力。

本书也适合民办本科院校和独立学院相同专业的学生,用作同类课程的教材。对于我国外经贸企业、外商独资和中外合资企业,以及其他一些涉外机构的广大白领阶层来说,本教材也是一本值得推荐的好参考书。

本书具有以下特点:

1. 为营造良好的英语教学氛围和学习气氛,本书用英语编写。但考虑到读者多为商科类专业、应用英语专业和民办本科以及独立学院学生的具体情况,教材中尽量使用常见、常用词汇,少使用生僻、难读、难懂的词汇。在教材的词汇部分,对一些较难掌握的单词和短语,除用英语做出说明外,还用汉语解释,并用英语举例说明用法。为了便于查阅,词汇部分按其首字母在英语字母表中的顺序排列。

2. 本书共13个单元,每一个单元由引言、写作文体的结构、写作方法和技巧、实例、词汇以及练习共6个部分构成。在每个单元的编写过程中,编者重视写作方法、写作技巧和篇章结构的叙述,同时重视提供足够的实例,尽量做到理论与实践密切结合。通过对实例的阅读和学习,学生将获得更多的商务应用文英语写作知识、专业知识和英语语言知识。

3. 本书练习部分内容丰富,方式较为多样,可供学生课堂讨论、思考和课后习作之用。为便于教学,通过练习加深学生对所学知识的理解和提高运用能力,本教材的练习参考答案放在教学光盘中,供教师和学生参考。

4. 由于涉及的内容不同,各章节的篇幅很难做到完全相同。各章节举例较为丰富,教师在授课过程中,可视具体情况,对要讲授的实例进行适当的选择。

5. 在本书编写过程中,编者参阅了国内外大量最新相关文献资料,尽量使教材内容更加贴近现代商务实际,更具时代气息。书中不少实例,直接改编自外国公司的业务档案。

6. 本书编者具有在我国高等院校从事本课程教学的丰富经验,又有在我国进出口企业、中外合资企业和外国跨国公司长期的工作实践经验。因此,本书英语语言简明、流畅,商务气息浓厚。

本书由吉林华侨外国语学院国际经济贸易学院李慎忠教授任主编;吉林华侨外国语学院应用英语学院林铭杰教授、吉林华侨外国语学院国际经济贸易学院讲师代欣、吉林农业大学发展学院讲师高月媚、中国人民大学研究生李运雷为副主编。本书编写人员有:吉林华侨外国语学院国际经济贸易学院王莉、蔡秀梅和马国华老师;吉林华侨外国语学院国际工商管理学院赵东旭和丁蕾老师;长春大学光华学院孙丽萍副教授和蔺玉石老师;长春大学旅游学院金红梅老师和长春理工大学光电信息学院吴丽丽老师。蔡秀梅和赵东旭

老师对本书“练习”的参考答案进行了整理和修改。

在本书即将出版之际，我们对吉林华桥外国语学院国际经济贸易学院知名教授、院长谭立本先生对本书编写工作给予的全力支持和帮助表示由衷的感谢。对本书参考文献的著作者们致以最诚挚的谢意。

由于编者水平有限，不当之处在所难免，恳请读者批评指正。

编 者

2009年6月

于长春市

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Unit One

Business Letter Writing

I Introduction

As one of the most important means of communication, business letters in English are much used in business world. With rapid development of telecommunication, nowadays letters can be sent by fax or email, and therefore, they can reach their “destinations” within a few seconds, which greatly facilitates timely exchange of views, opinions, and information between and among writers and readers. Although some letters are still transmitted by surface post, they can reach their recipients who reside in most parts of the world within a couple of days if the senders use the Express Mail Service (EMS).

Business letters are written for many reasons. Besides conveying information, they also send a message about the writer and the company or organization the writer works with through the content and presentation. A good business letter can help the writer project a good image of the company, while a poorly written letter leaves a bad impression of both the writer and the company on the reader. Therefore, business letter writing is a key element for a company's success.

Business letters can be classified as routine, good news, bad news and persuasive. Letters requesting for information about a product or service are routine; letters for placing orders, accepting a claim for refund or a request for credit are good news; letters refusing a claim for refund, declining an invitation or order are bad news; sales letters, proposal letters, and collection letters are persuasive.

Business letters have a basic three-paragraph structure: opening, body, and close. This structure remains the same regardless of the type of the letter. The body of a letter may be developed into more than one paragraph, depending upon matters to be dealt with and specific situations.

The organization of the content of a letter varies. It may be direct, where the main idea is presented in the opening paragraph of the letter, the details supporting

the main point follow. This approach is used for letters transmitting good or neutral information. However, it may be indirect, where the opening is neutral and positive and the main idea follows in the body of the letter. The indirect approach is generally used for letters providing bad news or attempting to persuade the reader to accept or refuse a plan or course of action.

The tone of a business letter is also important. It is the impression the reader forms from the choice of words made by the writer. Depending on how much the writer knows about the reader and the subject of the letter, business writers try hard to use a less formal or informal tone so as to create goodwill in the letter and make the letter sound personal. The formal tone is normally adopted when writing to persons senior in status to the writer, or writing about very important or serious matters and subjects.

Business letter writing does not differ from any other form of creative writing, good English is the essential requirement for good business letters. What you write should be free from any mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage and format, and exclude the least possibility of being misunderstood. When you write a business letter, it is of vital significance that you have to follow the standard components, conventions, and principles of business writing, and at the same time, put yourself in a business situation.

In addition to the above, business letters should be well designed, typed neatly and clearly on quality, pure white or off-white paper, look attractive, and delivered timely in standard envelopes.

II Principles of Business English Writing

The principles of business English writing can be summed up in the following 8 C's.

1. Clearness

Clearness (clarity) means when you write something, you have to write it clearly. Unlike school writing, the purpose of business writing is to exchange information and points of view between writers and readers, hence, correct understanding is the key factor to be put into consideration.

To achieve clearness, you should use plain English, simple and informal words, short expressions, being easily understood sentences and short paragraphs; do not use out-of-date English, long, formal, and vague words or expressions, incomprehensible sentences, and long paragraphs. Please see the following examples:

Words:	<u>Don't Use</u>	<u>Use</u>
	substantial	big
	approximately	about
	utilize	use
	conflagration	fire
	peruse	read
	ameliorate	improve

Phrases:	<u>Don't Use</u>	<u>Use</u>
	for the purpose of	for
	in the event that	if
	basic and fundamental	basic
	in compliance with your request	at your request or as requested

Sentences:	<u>Don't Write</u>	<u>Write</u>
	In the event that you speak to Mr. Smith in regard to production, ask him to give consideration to the delivery schedule.	If you speak to Mr. Smith, ask him to consider the delivery schedule.
	If you need any further information, please feel free to call us.	If you need any further information, please call us.
	We need machines which are of new models.	We need new model machines.

Paragraphs:

Short paragraphs are more easily understood than long ones.

Where possible, try to use short paragraphs. Keeping your paragraphs within 4 to 6 lines is a good rule to follow.

In addition, clearness also means when writing something, do it without causing any confusion in meaning; otherwise, the reader will have to ask for clarification or explanation, for example:

Don't Write: Please quote us your price for the following goods.

Write: Please quote us your CIF London price for the following goods.

Don't Write: This offer is subject to your reply before May 20.

Write: This offer is subject to your reply reaching us on or before May 20, Beijing time.

To highlight the key points of a message and help readers better understand the meaning of a message, visual elements are often used in business writing. Visuals refer to numbers, symbols, bullet points, boldface, italics, capitalization, charts, tables, bars, pie charts, etc. Please see the following example:

Dear Sirs,

We particularly want to know the following specifications of the activated carbon you offered us:

- Total surface area
- Apparent density
- Particle density
- Mesh size
- Abrasive number
- Butane activity

If your products can meet our requirements and your price is competitive, we will place regular orders with you.

You can see that the writer used bullet points in the above letter to show clearly and highlight the detailed specifications of the product.

2. Consideration

Consideration (thoughtfulness) means whenever you write something to your readers, you have to put yourself in their position. You should fully consider your readers' needs, benefits, and their problems, focus on what you can do for them and how to help solve their problems, and express appreciation for your readers.

To achieve consideration, you should take *you-attitude*, also called *you viewpoint* in your writing, rather than *I, we, my, or our*, for instance:

You-attitude:

Enclosed please find your credit card with which you can purchase whatever you need at your favorable prices.

We-attitude:

We send you the credit card with this letter and hope it can provide you with more convenience in your purchase

You-attitude:

Please mail or fax the sales receipt to us so that you can receive your refund promptly.

We-attitude:

We must have your receipt with the merchandise before we can deal with your refund.

You-attitude does not mean that you repeatedly use *you* or *your* in your message, but put the interests of your reader at the center. By so doing, you are able to achieve the purpose of your writing more easily.

Another thing which needs to be mentioned here is that sometimes you have to make complaints or claims against your customers in your correspondence. When such occasions arise, you should be considerate towards your customers and tactful in writing such messages. Please imagine the possible reactions from the readers after they have read the sentences under "Tactful" and "Blunt".

Tactful

I am returning the shipment we ordered on March 15. Unfortunately, it arrived too late for us to be able to use it.

Blunt

I just received the shipment we ordered three months ago. I am sending it back—we can not use it now. Thanks a lot!

We would appreciate your reply to our claim within one week.

We must have your answer to our claim within one week.

We are highly appreciative of your prompt response to our request for amendment to the credit.

We have to receive your amendment to the credit by this Friday; otherwise, we will have to revoke the contract.

3. Correctness

Correctness means when you compose a business message, you should:

- 1) Provide correct figures, valid reasons and reliable findings.

Incorrect figures, unreliable information, false reports, and ungrounded arguments can do nothing but mislead your readers and thus, damage the benefits and image of your own.

- 2) Use correct formality level of language (formal, less formal, and informal) and appropriate tone.

Although most business writing tends to be informal, do not forget that the formality level of language used in your writing largely depends on the content of the message, the relationship between you and your reader as well as the official position you hold in the company. Hence, to choose a proper language level and a right tone is still of vital importance in business writing.

- 3) Use right approaches.

As mentioned in the introduction of this unit, there are two approaches commonly used in business writing: direct and indirect. When you use the direct approach, you begin your writing with the most important point, then present the necessary explanations, cover the less important point (s), and end the message with a specially tailored closing. This approach is employed in writing good-news and neutral messages. With regard to the indirect approach, it is used in writing bad-news messages. In order to reduce the

negative effect of the bad news on the reader, you have to start your writing with a buffer, which refers to a piece of good-news or a neutral message, used to put your reader in an agreeable or open frame of mind, so as to make him/her ready to accept the bad news that follows. For example, when you reject a person's application for a position in your company, do not write in the following way:

Your application for the position of sales representative has been rejected. We have found someone more qualified than you.

You should write like this:

We thank you for your time and effort in applying for the position of sales representative in our company.

Because we need some one who can assume the duties here immediately, we have selected an applicant with several years of experience.

Your academic record is excellent, and I encourage you to apply for another position with us in the future.

4) Use correct grammar, spelling, usage, and punctuation marks.

It goes without saying that any message you compose on behalf of your company must exclude any mistakes in grammar, spelling, usage and punctuation; otherwise, not only can they cause your reader's confusion in understanding, but also leave bad impressions on your customers, as a result, the image of your company is damaged.

5) Use no biased language.

Biased language refers to words and expressions that offend because they make inappropriate assumptions, or stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, physical or mental disability, age, or sexual orientation.

The easiest way to avoid bias is simply not to mention differences among people unless the differences are relevant to the discussion in your writing. To avoid sexism in your writing, treat men and women equally and use nonsexist occupational descriptions in your writing, for instance, use "businessperson, chairperson, supervisor, and police officer" to replace