

ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

# 高级 商务英语 教程

原著 Duncan Macintosh  
译注 杨 丽  
审校 侯亚峰

广东经济出版社

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## 译注者的话

改革开放近二十年来，中国的市场经济体制不断完善，国家的综合国力日益增强。据总部设在瑞士洛桑的国际管理发展与评估协会预测，到本世纪末，中国的综合国力在世界上的排名将跃入前十名，国际竞争力也将有较大的增长。这种走势同我国的对外开放程度（指对外贸易额在GNP中的比重）渐趋佳境有密切关系。而国际经济活动的发展与扩张必然伴随频繁的经贸洽谈活动，产生了各类投诉、催账和销售等内容的函电来往，以及诸多报告、总结、会议记要和公开演讲等文秘工作。这些统称为国际商务交往。在这种世界范围的交往中，英语是普遍使用和接受的语言，因而便有国际商务英语一说。众所周知，一个外向型企业的员工对商务英语的熟练程度，直接关系到该企业的竞争力。

D·马金多斯先生的《高级商务英语教程》正是普及和提高商务英语的卓有成效的努力。D·马金多斯是香港大学专业进修学院外事系的资深教师，专门从事商务函电的教学。本书的写作目的是为各种环境下的国际商务函件的写作提供一些具体原则，并利用语言注解和语言训练强化读者的语言驾驭能力，为不大熟悉国际商务活动的读者提供丰富的背景知识和专业术语。《高级商务英语教程》初版于1975年，后经多次更新，迄今共修订5次，重印20次。可以说，它在促进国际经济活动，特别是香港对外经济活动和香港经济地位的提高方面做出了一定的贡献。

为了把这部优秀的教材介绍给内地的广大读者，广东经济出版社引进了版权，同时约请我们翻译了原书“Notes on Content”和“Language Notes”这两部份注释，并进行适当的讲解。所据版本为原版书第6版第20次重印本。本版更新了旧版中一些老式提法，着眼于90年代和下一世纪，选材实用，立意明确，具有较强的可读性和实践性。国内目前虽有种类繁多的商务英语读物，但本书无论是作者的经历、写作环境，或是内容的安排、语言的训练方式和运用等方面，都具有明显的优势。一句话，这是一本一位母语为英语的学者，以亚洲人的经济活动为依托，以亚洲人为教育对象，积数十年教学经验而写就且不断更新的适合中国人学习的商务英语教程，相信它对于国内从事国际化经营的实体及国际商务专业的学生具有较强的指导作用。

译注者

1997. 7. 31

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译注者的话

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# Business Correspondence: Basic Principles

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## THE LETTERS WE WRITE

When anyone needs to write a business letter he should always remember the importance of 'The Three C's: *Clarity, Courtesy and Conciseness*'. He should also remember any letter is written for the recipient. Unlike other means of communication, the reaction to a letter is known only when the reply is received. In conversation one can normally see the kind of impression one is making on the other person and therefore make the necessary corrections to get on better with him. This is not so, however, with a letter, and if a bad impression is made, one learns about it only from the reply, by which time it is probably too late. It is therefore necessary to put oneself in the position of the person who receives the letter, to consider his possible attitude and to show his views and requirements are being taken into consideration.

### The Aim of a Letter

Any letter should attract the reader's attention from the very beginning, and so the subject matter should be introduced without delay. His interest is often encouraged if the subject of the letter is stated at the beginning in a subject heading, e.g.

Dear Sirs,

Your Order CX68472 of 3rd June, 1994

Such a heading serves to show the reader from the outset what the letter is about, so he can give it appropriate priority. On some occasions, however, this 'headline' approach may appear a little too abrupt. The writer should therefore decide for himself whether the subject of the letter is something he wishes to announce from the beginning or whether it needs to be introduced rather more delicately. This is often the case with bad news or something needing tact to explain. As a general rule, anything that is of obvious and straight forward importance merits the 'headline' approach, but if the subject is more complex, it should be treated rather more gently.

### The Language of a Letter

Since a letter should always be written for the reader, the language used should be something he can easily understand. If, therefore, the writer knows he is writing to someone in a country where English is seldom spoken, he should write his letter in much simpler English than he would if he were writing to a native speaker of English.

He should also remember that long sentences and paragraphs are often off-putting to many readers, even if they have a good command of English, and so try to ensure



his letter appears attractive and easy to read and understand. Of course, with very detailed and complex letters, it will sometimes be impossible, but whenever it can reasonably be done, a letter should be so designed that the paragraphs are reasonably short and the sentences easy enough for a busy executive to understand without having to spend too much time on them.

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## CORRESPONDENCE: CONVENTIONS AND FORMAT

Business letters have developed over a number of years and there have been many changes in the various techniques used. Today the emphasis is on freshness, informality and friendliness in approach. Certain conventions remain, however, and these should be followed if the letter is not to seem very amateurish. The types of letter can best be classified as follows:

1. from a private person to a firm or organisation;
2. from a firm or organisation to a private person;
3. from a firm or organisation to another firm or organisation.

Once the conventions for the first two types are known, the third, which occurs repeatedly in later chapters, is fairly easy to follow.

### Private Person to a Firm or Organisation

**73 Lotus Heights  
87 Floral View Road  
Sunningdale  
Tel : 698458**

7th November 1994

Kingsley Blighton & Company  
458 High Street  
Sunningdale.

Dear Sirs,

'Wearwell' Children's Clothes

Thank you for your letter of 1st November in which you explained...

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully,

*M. Brown*

M. Brown (Mrs)

## 注释

- 1. The Sender's address(发信人地址):** 该信属平头式(open style), 地址无标点符号, 时下最为流行。当然, 也可以在地址最后一行的末尾加上句号, 其他各行行尾加逗号。但是, 在街道的门牌号码后面绝对不能加上逗号。例如: 87 Floral View Road就不能写成 87, Floral View Road。
- 2. The date(发信日期):** 上文信函中日期的写法最为常见。其中 7th November 1994可换为 7 November 1994, 也可在月份后面加一逗号。美国人习惯将月份写在日期前面。例如: November 7 1994以及 November 7, 1994。缩写形式如 7th Nov.或 7/11/94一般不用在商业信函中。
- 3. The inside address(信内地址):** 在信纸上再一次写上收函人地址的唯一目的是为了将信函备份、复印并保留。旧时将以个人名字命名的公司称做“Messrs 某某公司”的用法已不再流行。在公司商号不含有其成员姓名情况下, 如 The Shatin Trading Company, 也忌使用这种用法。当这类公司为有限责任公司时千万不可使用 Messrs, 而应使用缩词 Plc或 Ltd, 例如 Smith, Watson & Company Plc(Ltd)。虽然如此, Messrs仍然可以在信函中用作 Mr的复数形式以表示两个或两个以上的人, 例如: Messrs Black and Brown do not wish to join us in this project.
- 4. Dear Sirs(亲爱的先生们):** 当发信人将信函发给一家公司时, 他可以用 Dear Sirs这种称呼法, 如果是发给一家公司的某个人, 则可用 Dear Sir。如果知其姓名, 可称做 Dear Mr…。如果发信人特别指出信函是发给公司的某个具体经办人(公司主要负责人除外), 则可在信内地址下面写上 For the attention of…或 attention:…, 然后才开始写 Dear Sirs。发信人也可直接写上收信人的具体姓名, 如:

Miss Eliza Doolittle  
Kingsley Blighton & Company

- 5. Yours faithfully(您忠实的):** 当信函以 Dear Sirs或 Dear Sir开头时, 这种表达方式是合适的。但是, 当信函以 Dear Mr…或收信人姓名开头时, 恰当的客套结语应为 Yours sincerely。其变体 Sincerely yours, Sincerely以及 Yours ever, Yours truly, Yours very truly的诚恳与正式的程度逐渐减弱, 而其中后两者则应尽量避免使用。
- 6. Mrs(太太):** 如果发信人是女性, 则最好在自己的姓名之后加注 Mrs或 Miss。这是为了让对方在复函时能正确地称呼她。如果对方不知发信人的婚姻状况, 则会在复函中用 Ms…来称呼。如果无法从其姓名中判别其性别, 则可以这样开始: Dear后面直接写上其姓名的全称。例如: Dear T. G. Oba.

## Kingsley Blighton & Company

458 High Street Sunningdale  
Tel.: 44 567 5684  
Fax: 44 567 5984  
Cables: Kingcome Sunningdale

Our Ref.: CM/876/pw

13th November, 1994.

Timothy Williams, Esq.,  
48, Arrowsmith Road,  
Illingworth.

Dear Mr Williams,

### Your Order of 1st November, 1994

Thank you very much for your order mentioned above which we have now received...

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
for Kingsley Blighton & Company

*C Meadow*  
C. Meadow

CM/to

## 注释

- 1.Punctuation(标点符号):** 这封信函的格式与上封信所依照的平头式不同。请注意其日期和信内地址的标点、主题行(subject heading)的居中、每一段落的左缩格及右下方签名的位置等。这种格式虽可接受,但不如平头无标点符号格式流行。
- 2.Esq(先生):** Esq是Esquire的缩写。这种用法有些古老。但是,当发信人意欲对收信人表示尊敬时,可以如此使用。需注意的是这只限于对英国人使用,且不能与Mr一起使用。
- 3.With best wishes(祝您万事如意):** 在签字栏之前,人们日益使用一种亲切敬语以表示对其通信人的友好,最简单的方式是上封平头式信函中使用过的With all good wishes,而With best wishes显得更加亲切。其他敬语如Regards, Best regards, Kind regards等可用于熟人之间。有时,敬语结尾显得相当商业化,如We/I now look forward to hearing from you;

We assure you of our best attention at all times. 当然，还有许多其他变体，但其最终目的都是为了建立或保持良好关系。

**4. The signature block**(签字栏): 当发信人的官职不足以代表其公司签署信件时，他可在其负责人已打印好的名字前代签，并应加以注明，例如：

Yours faithfully,

*J. Smith*

for John Jones  
General Manager

公司的高级负责人历来应对其下属以他的名义进行的商务活动负责。在政府部门，公务员常常代替有关部门的负责人签名，例如：

Yours faithfully,

*C.T. Wong*

C.T. Wong  
For Financial Secretary

另外，主管如果在口授信函内容后有事需要离开而等不及在打印好的信上签字，可由秘书代签，其格式如下：

Dictated by Mr Thomas Jones and signed in his absence by

*Annie Wong*

Annie Wong  
Secretary

**5. CM/to:**这是起草此信函的C. Meadows和打印人姓名的首字母。

## CORRESPONDENCE: THE GENERAL PATTERN

Some firms have an accepted house-style which makes their most routine letters look as if they have come from the same family. Where such rules apply, they should be obeyed, regardless of any possible clash with the suggestions made in this chapter. Some firms also impose minimum standards of consistency by the use of *form letters* which are stereotypes that can be used to meet any situation and be copied by the inexperienced. They may be necessary where routine letters and postcards have to be sent out by junior members of staff, but they are the main cause for conservatism in a firm's correspondence, perpetuate what are often outmoded expressions and may produce lifeless and unnatural letters that seldom fit the circumstances they are being used for. The best letter is one that is fresh in style and written for the particular occasion in question.

### The Opening Paragraph

This should be as brief and to the point as possible. When the letter is in reply to another, the writer should start off by acknowledging that letter, e.g. *Thank you for your letter*, mention any relevant reference number, *of...*, and then go on to quote the date of the letter received. Alternatively, he might say *Thank you for your letter of* (the date in question) *in which you say...* and mention the subject of the letter received.

As indicated above, letters should always open with an acknowledgement of one received and the writer should therefore say *Thank you...* The earlier custom of acknowledging a letter with *With reference to...* or *I/We refer to...*, e.g. *With reference to* or *I/We refer to your letter of 3rd November*, should be avoided, for such expressions are cold and impersonal, and also outmoded today. When, however, a letter written is a follow-up to an earlier letter from the same writer or company, there is no acknowledgement for anything received, and so such expressions as *With reference to* or *I/We refer to* are justified. A follow-up letter can also be usefully introduced with the expression *Further to my/our letter of...*, but it is important to remember that sentences beginning with clauses introduced by *With reference to*, *I/We refer to* or *Further to* should always continue so that a grammatical sentence is completed, e.g.

With reference to	) our letter of 2nd June, I wish to point out it is
I/We refer to	) important to remember what our competitors may
Further to	) do.

It will thus be seen the opening clause merely introduces the main message of the sentence, in this case *I wish to point out it is important to remember what our competitors may do.*

### The Body of the Letter

The writer of any letter should fully recognise the purpose of his letter, for then he can organise his material appropriately. The body of the letter may therefore

consist of a number of paragraphs, each dealing with different aspects of the subject, and in logical sequence. If the subject matter is very complex and the letter therefore fairly long, it may be necessary to number the paragraphs so they can be easily referred to later on. It is not usual to number the opening paragraph of a letter, for it is clearly Number 1, but the first paragraph of the body would normally be the second paragraph and so numbered 2 and the succeeding ones 3, 4, 5 and so on.

As each individual paragraph should be devoted to a particular aspect of the subject, it is useful to introduce them with such phrases as *With reference to...*, or *With regard to...*, e.g. *With reference/regard to the price of imported goods, ...* Sometimes the longer phrase *As far as...* (the item considered) *...is/are concerned,...* is used, e.g. *As far as the price of imported goods is concerned, ...*

### Closing the Letter

The subject of the letter will have been discussed in the various paragraphs in the body of the letter, so now the close to the letter often begins with a brief paragraph summing up what has been said previously and sometimes coming to particular conclusions and/or suggesting appropriate action. This will normally be followed by a brief paragraph containing a single closing courtesy sentence. As has been mentioned previously, this may be no more than *With all good wishes/With best wishes*, but can be more businesslike, e.g. *If you require any further details, we will be pleased to send them to you.* This closing sentence should be a complete sentence and not, as was sometimes the case in the past, a mere participial phrase such as *Trusting this will meet with your wishes,*. If the writer wishes to say something like this, he should make a complete sentence of it, i.e. *We trust this will meet with your wishes.*

### How Letters are signed

All organisations send out vast quantities of correspondence each year, and so this varies very considerably in importance and type. The least important letters are signed just with the printed name of the organisation in question, sometimes with the initials of the clerk responsible. More important ones are signed by executives with authority to sign, but not to act on their own responsibility. Such people, like Mr Meadow in the letter already considered, sign *for* the organisation in question and its name is incorporated into the signature block. More senior executives, like departmental managers and above, who can write on their own responsibility, sign with their position indicated thus

Yours faithfully,



Thomas Smith  
Sales Manager

The name of the company is sometimes also incorporated into the signature block as well as the position of the signatory holds, but this is not really necessary, for

the company name has normally been stated clearly enough in the letterhead. The signature block would therefore look like this.

Yours faithfully,  
Smith, McGregor & Sons Ltd,



Thomas Smith  
Sales Manager

Now there is no *for Smith, McGregor & Sons Ltd*, as there would have been if Thomas Smith had been more junior, but if he was writing specifically on behalf of Smith, McGregor and what he had to say in that letter had nothing whatsoever to do with him as an individual, he might sign *per pro*, sometimes abbreviated as *p.p.*, meaning *for and on behalf of*, Smith McGregor, thus

Yours faithfully,  
per pro Smith, McGregor & Sons Ltd,



Thomas Smith  
Sales Manager

## General

Business letters are normally written in

1. the first person singular, e.g.

*I am sure we will be able to supply you with goods that will sell very well in your country;*

2. the first person plural, e.g.

*We thank you for your interest in our products and assure you we will always supply goods of superlative quality;*

3. the impersonal passive, e.g.

*You will be informed accordingly when your application has been processed.*

The first person singular should be used only by senior people in the firm who can report on their actions or express their opinions which are at the same time those of the firm as a whole. A junior would do better to associate himself with the firm by using the plural form. Both of these styles have a certain personal element, which is their main advantage, but would not be appropriate if the writer was very junior, if the nature of the letter was very impersonal or the writer did not want to appear particularly friendly. In these circumstances the third style, the impersonal passive, should be used. This should be avoided as often as possible, but this does not mean it would never be used. It invariably appears very much less personal and therefore less friendly than either of the other two styles, and so it is important the writer who uses it should realise this and consequently use it very cautiously.

The first person singular and the first person plural may be used in conjunction in a letter. This varying from one style to the other emphasises the value of the first person singular, for it makes it clear that here is a personal opinion the writer has given some thought to. It is also possible to use the first person plural in conjunction with the impersonal passive if the writer wishes to play down the personal element in his letter.

Letters written in the first person singular are normally signed by the writer with his position in the firm indicated. Those written in the first person plural are signed *for* the firm with just the name of the writer indicated. Such people are often obliged to refer to themselves as *the undersigned*.

When a person uses the first person singular and signs with his position indicated, it is usual when writing in reply to address the letter specifically to him, e.g.

Mr James Smith  
General Manager

or just to the position he holds, e.g. *The General Manager*. When he has written in the first person plural and has signed *for* the company, it is usual to address a letter in reply to the company and, if the letter is intended for a particular person, to indicate this by adding after the inside address, and sometimes after the address on the envelope as well, *For the attention of* that person.

---

## CORRESPONDENCE: LANGUAGE

In undertaking any kind of correspondence, there are two main principles to consider: the unity and coherence of what one is writing and the general effectiveness of the language used.

### Unity and Coherence

Unity in writing should be seen at three levels: in individual sentences, in paragraphs and in the message as a whole.

A. Sentences should be unified in that they contain one main idea only.

Modifying or subsidiary ideas may be added by using the conjunctions *and*, *but* or *for*.

*You have done very well this year and I hope you will do even better next year.*

The main idea is *You have done very well this year* and the subsidiary, *I hope you will do even better next year*. There are two ideas in the sentence, joined together by *and*, and there is unity between them.

Note, however, there is no unity in a sentence like *We are sure you will agree our products are better than our competitors' and we will allow you a good discount on large orders*, for the second idea, *we will allow you a good discount on large orders*, is totally different from the first, *we are sure you will agree our products are better than our competitors'*, and so cannot be considered a subsidiary to it.



*She has made a good start in this company, but there is still a lot she has to learn.*

Here, the modifying idea or subsidiary, *there is still a lot she has to learn*, is attached to the main one, *she has made a good start in this company*, by the conjunction *but*, which shows a degree of contrast between the two ideas, but they are still related to each other.

*We must be careful how we deal with them, for they do not have a good reputation.*

Now the subsidiary idea, *they do not have a good reputation*, is attached to the main one, *we must be careful how we deal with them*, by the conjunction *for*, and is the reason for it. It could just as well have been introduced by *as* or *since*.

Subsidiary or modifying ideas are often contained in relative clauses,

*His friends, who had often disagreed with him in the past, now gave him their full support.*

The main idea is *his friends now gave him their full support* and the subsidiary, *who had often disagreed with him in the past*, is clearly related to it.

A sentence may contain up to three ideas, a main one and two subsidiaries, e.g.

*The new regulations will come into force on 1st June and, although Management may consider requests for concessions in particular circumstances, they will normally be strictly followed.*

The main idea is *the new regulations will come into force on 1st June* and the principal subsidiary is added with an *and*, *they will normally be strictly followed*, but a third idea is admitted in the clause of concession introduced by *although*, *Management may consider requests for concessions in particular circumstances*. It is most unlikely for a sentence to contain as many as four ideas, for then the overall meaning is likely to be confused.

- B.** Unity within a paragraph can be achieved when all the sentences within it are closely related to a central idea. This should be indicated at the beginning of the paragraph in question by such *linguistic signals* as *with regard to*, *with reference to* or *as far as... is concerned*, e.g.

*With regard to/With reference to the machine tools we have ordered, we must stipulate they should be delivered by 1st January, 1994.*

All other sentences in this particular paragraph would also be about the indicated central idea, i.e. *the machine tools we have ordered*.

*As far as your brother is concerned, I would like to say we will do all we can to help him on his travels.*

All the other sentences in this particular paragraph should also be about the central idea, in this case, *your brother*.

- C.** It is not enough for a paragraph to consist of a number of grammatically correct, but isolated sentences on a particular subject, but they should be clearly