



商务英语系列教程  
BUSINESS ENGLISH SERIES



# 商务英语写作

*BUSINESS ENGLISH WRITINGS*

主编 / 熊银 陈咏

商务英语系列教程

# 商务英语写作

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## 前 言

《商务英语写作》以介绍商务交往中常见的应用文体写作为主要内容，通过对各种应用文的结构、布局以及写作原则、规范要求等方面的说明，辅以经过仔细分析的实例和具有真实情景意义的练习，导入中西方文化背景知识，学习者在掌握有关的商务文体写作方法的同时，获得商务交往的一次“实习”过程，从而达到有效地进行商务交往的目的。

教材内容新颖、实用、趣味性强；语言浅显易懂，示例详实；在编写过程中，以学习者为中心，组织编排练习，由易到难，形式多样，学习者能够做到边学边练，真正体现了“学一点，练一点，用一点”。除文字教材外，还配备了CAI课件，并附有练习和练习答案，一体化设计，便于学习者自主学习和个性化学习。

本书共分12个单元，每单元后都附有练习，既可以用作高等院校的教材，也可以成为广大对外商务工作者的实用手册。由熊锬和陈咏主编，负责拟订写作大纲、编写体例、统稿和CAI课件的设计及稿本撰写工作，郭红霞、陈成涛、鲍艺蕾和梁悦瑶担任副主编。具体分工如下：郭红霞：第5、6、9单元；陈成涛：第2、12单元；鲍艺蕾：第7、8单元；梁悦瑶：第4、10、11单元；陈咏：第3单元；熊锬：第1单元。

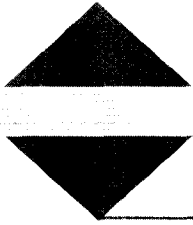
在编写过程中，我们参考了国内外多种专著、书刊以及网上资料，并吸取了其中诸多有益的东西，在此恕不一一说明，谨对其作者致以衷心的感谢。本书能够付梓出版，得到深圳广播电视大学曾仲培校长、邓孟忠副书记、温仲端副校长和广州广播电视

大学周健中校长、杨作新教授、林镜华副校长、李文斐副教授的支持和鼓励，以及其他同仁的热心帮助，在此一并致谢。

由于时间仓促，编者水平有限，各种疏漏在所难免。欢迎同行和广大读者不吝赐教，使之日臻完善。

**编 者**

2003年6月



# Contents

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<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	(1)
<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Daily Affairs Letters</b> .....	(25)
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Business Letters</b> .....	(37)
<b>Unit 4</b>	<b>Notices</b> .....	(84)
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>Invitations and Replies</b> .....	(91)
<b>Unit 6</b>	<b>Memos</b> .....	(101)
<b>Unit 7</b>	<b>Telecommunications</b> .....	(110)
<b>Unit 8</b>	<b>Questionnaires</b> .....	(124)
<b>Unit 9</b>	<b>Leaflets and Advertisements</b> .....	(133)
<b>Unit 10</b>	<b>Business Reports</b> .....	(138)
<b>Unit 11</b>	<b>Meeting Documents</b> .....	(146)
<b>Unit 12</b>	<b>Job Application Letter and Résumé</b> .....	(152)
	<b>Key to Exercises</b> .....	(162)
	<b>References</b> .....	(191)





## Unit 1

# Introduction

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Communication (交流) is everywhere, whether orally (口头地) or literally (书面地). Effective communication is thought to keep things running smoothly and successfully. Commercial correspondence (商业函件) is a vital factor in making the world of business run smoothly and efficiently. This correspondence may take many forms. The business letter is the most common form. Business letters communication is one of the most important aspects of a business organization. It includes downwards (下发), upwards (上报), and horizontal flows (同级交流) — your bosses, colleagues, and working staff under you, or your clients outside companies. And the ability to write effectively in English for business correspondence is a crucial skill for business people around the world. Written communication has the advantage of keeping records and references. It includes such different types of communication as interoffice memorandums (备忘录), reports (报告), telegrams (电报), cables, résumés (个人简历), and printed forms that are used for particular purposes.

The modern world of computers and electronic communications has made a striking difference in the use of business letters, of which many are sent from computer to computer, then to printer and recipient (接收者), instead of being mailed to the recipient. Even though the transmission (传递) of business letters is changing, the essential function remains the same.

From the above, the importance of business communication is clear. No modern business could exist for long without letters and other forms of written communication. For business organizations letters are sent out or received from other organizations: customers, dealers (商人), manufacturers (制造商), suppliers, wholesalers (批发商), purchasers, bureaus (办事处) and so on. Letters are reflections of a company's image. If the letter is clear and concise, the

firm seems well-organized and competent; if the letter is attractive and neat, the company seems efficient and accurate; if the letter is courteous and friendly, the company seems concerned and helpful. On the other hand, if the letter is unattractive and sloppy (草率的), the company seems careless and negligent; if the letter is curt (语言生硬的), the company appears abrupt; if the letter is hackneyed (言辞陈腐的) and dull, the company seems backward and stodgy; if the letter is discourteous or tactless, the company appears dominated (专横的).

Therefore a good knowledge of written communication is crucial for the people involved in business.

## 1.1 Some Important Factors Relating with Business Letter Writing

There are several important factors to be taken into account in the writing process of a business letter:

### ● Relationships

Relationships, whether good or not, between the two sides of business may produce an certain impact upon the effectiveness of a business letter. A good relation will increase the probability of successful communication while the discordant (不和的) relation will make the correspondence fail to be effective.

### ● Language

Effectiveness of written communication depends on the choice of words to a great extent for the variety of word meanings in contexts (上下文). Many factors, like background knowledge, experience, etc., are involved in choosing appropriate terms.

### ● Emotion

The emotional aspect of business communication is also vital to the successful establishment of a good relation. Any anger, insecurity, complaint, fear, etc. will probably cause the business to fail. A better solution is to wait for a calm mind state.

### ● Resources

Resources refer to the staff and the equipment accessible to both sides, i.e. computer network, fax machine, telex machine, etc.

### ● Confidentiality (机密), Safety and Security

For sending confidential information, a suitable way should be decided upon, like a memo enclosed in an envelope, registered (挂号) or recorded delivery, or a courier (信使) service.

### ● Cost

Typing and handwriting messages cause different costs. Registered or recorded delivery, or a courier service, or express (特快) service are different in expenses. Just choose the suitable and efficient and economical way. However, a higher cost most probably is suitable for urgency. That will depend.

### ● Recipient

Take into account the importance of the receiver, then decide whether the written communication is formal or informal accordingly, e.g. e-mail, memo, letter, or notice.

### ● Effect

What is the desired result of your communication will give you the impetus (促进) to choose a suitable way of expressing yourself, e-mail for quickness and eagerness, registered service for security, etc.

### ● Appropriateness of Time

Choose the right hour of the day when sending telex or e-mail or fax, esp. when a businessman deals with overseas commercial affairs.

When you write a business letter, just use one side of a sheet of paper. Never use the other side for the second page. Formal correspondence is usually typed. If a handwritten one is unavoidable, do it neatly and legibly (清楚地). Remember that your letter is the image (形象) of your company. It is wise to give your recipient the important first impression of your organization. That will contribute a lot to the profits for your business.

Check all the facts to be transmitted before you put them under your pen, and proofread (校对) the read copy of the letter to polish it and make it accurate, of course with no errors in it. The seemingly beforehand work really saves you time and energy, and keep the client (receiver) happy in contact with you.

Now that the important factors are considered above, there are of course certain correspondent (对应的) styles (文体, 格式) and principles (准则) for effective written communication. Developing an effective business letter writing style is not so easy, especially for non-native speakers in international trade.

However, there are some principles for a good business letter brief, friendly, tactful, courteous and clear. Accordingly, some outlines for guidelines (指导) are advised: systematic layout (格式), appropriately organized information, suitable tone and style, logically knitted ideas, correct spelling and grammar.

## 1.2 Basic Principles for Business Written Communication

Even though the correct use of the mechanics (手法, 技巧) and forms of business letters are important in writing a business letter, in reality, every time when we begin with a new letter, we should pay more attention to the correct use of words and sentences. The words and sentences we are to select should convey our correct idea and obtain the expected response from the reader.

In business letter writings, HOW and WHAT are frequently used to introduce a subject. HOW controls the feeling content of the message, while the WHAT controls the subject content. To achieve both the HOW and WHAT, we should have a better understanding of the basic principles for effective communications. They include:

Clarity (清楚易懂) vs. Confusion

Courtesy (礼貌, 客气) vs. Discourtesy

Conversational Tone vs. Business Jargon (术语, 行话)

Positive Language vs. Negative Language

You-Attitude vs. I/We-Attitude

Direct Organization vs. Indirect Organization

### ● Clarity vs. Confusion

It is almost too self-evident to state that a business letter does not fulfill its function if the recipient does not understand the message. However, the obvious can be overlooked and too easily under the pressure of a tight schedule or by ignoring its importance. Clarity, the transfer of a writer's thoughts to a reader without misunderstanding, is the most important factor in written communication. A message of confusion is worse than no message at all.

Only when the writer is absolutely certain that the message, especially the subject content of the message, is clear to the intended receiver, should he begin to analyze the

reader's probable reaction to the message and adjust the feeling content accordingly. Therefore, clarity is the writer's first responsibility in communication.

Using right words will be the most essential thing to obtain clarity. Let us compare the following.

**Complicated**

interrogate

subsequent to

with regard to

institute

be kind enough

under date of

**Simple**

ask

after

about

start

please

on

[ *Be sure to choose short , simple words rather than long , complicated words .* ]

**General**

soon

a large volume

contact you

our time

somebody

your port

**Specific**

May 15

an order up to US \$ 567,800

call/write/fax/visit you

Beijing time

Mr. Brown

Liverpool

[ *Be sure to use specific words rather than general ones , always give exact facts , figures , details , explanations , and examples .* ]

Sending the right information by using correct sentences is also very important in letter writing. Let us compare the following:

**Vague (含糊其辞的):** Please send me your catalogs on tools.

[ *A large company may have several catalogs concerning different kinds of tools and is not likely to send all of them .* ]

**Clear:** Please send me your catalogs on hand tools. I am especially interested in hand tools to be used in gem cutting.

[ *This specific request will be answered quickly .* ]

**Wordy (冗长的):** It is encouraging and inspiring to note that sales which are reported right now have increased this month.

[ *The sentence is too wordy and ambiguous .* ]

**Concise:** Sales have increased this month; the figures are encouraging.

[ *This revised sentence is shorter and clearer .* ]

**Implicit (不明确的):** The items you ordered will be arriving soon.

[ *This message will leave something implied and indefinite.* ]

**Explicit:** You will receive your order # 309 for POWER-35 electronic flash attachment in about 15 days. We shipped them by air freight (空运) this morning.

[ *Using specific and concrete words will help construct a definite and straight-forward message.* ]

### ● **Courtesy vs. Discourtesy**

A courteous message takes its reader's feelings and points of view into consideration. A courteous message, like a courteous person, is polite, considerate, and empathic (有同感的). Courtesy is extended primarily through the feeling content of your message, though the subject content may well be influenced by your consideration for your reader. The basic assumption (假设) of a courteous message is that writer and reader are both reasonable people with good intentions who can solve problems without resorting to (求助于) any form of psychological or physical force. Courtesy depends on the writer's understanding of the reader's viewpoint and the assumption that the writer and the reader can cooperate on an equal basis.

**Be polite:** Whenever ask your reader to do something for you, don't forget to say "Please", "Thank you", "I would appreciate it", "It would be kind of you", "I would like to"...

**Be equal to each other:** Any letter you write should demonstrate your feeling that the reader is doing business with you because he or she has chosen the right person he or she trusts. Any word or sentence that interferes the one-to-one relationship of equals is usually detrimental (不利的) to the success of a message. Compare the following messages:

Poor — *This letter is to inform you of an important change in our policy concerning insurance.*

Good — *Since you are our regular customer, we are writing to let you know about our important policy change in insurance.*

**Avoid mistrust (怀疑):** Never use language that implies mistrust.

When you have a reason to doubt your reader, give your reason explicitly.

When you are unsure of something, ask a question. Compare the following:

Poor — *We have received your letter in which you claimed that ten tea sets*

were damaged in shipment.

Good — *We have noticed in your letter that a damage to ten tea sets in shipment was found.*

**Avoid indignation (愤慨):** Always remember not to accuse your reader of a deliberate shortcoming or to show resentment at having to write or explain a situation. Sometimes a seemingly harmless statement may imply that the reader resents having to do something. Compare the following:

Poor — *Your letter has been referred to this office for a reply.*

Good — *We are pleased to receive your letter and are now writing to you that...*

Poor — *You obviously made a mistake by sending me the wrong goods.*

Good — *Thank you for your prompt delivery. However, the goods that reached us were not the ones we ordered.*

**Avoid paternalism (家长式作风):** No one likes being ordered and lectured. Sometimes an improper statement may place your reader in an inferior position, may upset the meaning of your praise, or may interfere your reader in the choice of an alternative course of action. Compare the following:

Poor — *We are pleased to grant you permission.*

Good — *We are pleased to offer you a favor by doing...*

Poor — *What you manufacture is the most suitable one to our requirement.*

Good — *We find both the prices and quality of your products satisfactory.*

### ● Conversational Tone vs. Business Jargon

The purpose of writing is communication. What we write should very much resemble the way in which we would wish to talk to our reader. Although written communication conveys more complex information than oral one, the best writing sounds comfortable and natural to the ear.

In order to achieve a better understanding, conversational tone is used rather than business jargon.

Be sure to use short and simple words which convey ideas more efficiently:

**Use these**

improve

aware

read

pay

**Rather than these**

ameliorate

cognizant

peruse

remunerate

send it back	return same to this office
try	endeavor
we, the company	the subject company
finally	in the final analysis
then	in that time frame
receive	in receipt of
this month	instant

**Be sure to use direct and meaningful sentences in messages:** Our writing style should be natural, conversational, and unpretentious (不装模作样的). Sometimes some people prefer to use expressions that can not be easily and quickly defined because they want to show how knowledgeable and businesslike they are. Compare the following:

Useless jargon: *Expensewise and schedulewise, what you offered is unacceptable.*

Revised: *In terms of expense and scheduling, what you offered is unacceptable.*

Pretentious: *Unless both of our two sides interface synchronously within the given parameters, the project will be rendered inoperative.*

Revised: *Unless we coordinate our efforts, we will fail to operate the project.*

Too literary: *I regret very much having to ask, but if you could please do us the inestimable honor of speaking at the meeting, we would be forever in your debt.*

Revised: *It would be a great honor if you could speak at the meeting.*

All readers appreciate a message which has a warm, breathing and friendly tone. As the face-to-face conversation, written messages should be used as a means of establishing a human relationship.

### ● **Positive Language vs. Negative Language**

Our messages will be more successful when we show confidence in our readers, our messages, and ourselves. Positive expressions are more easily understood than negative ones. And an optimistic message usually has more to do with the encouragement to the reader. Words, sentences, and expressions we use to show our confidence are frequently called positive language.

**Make the negative positive:** It would serve the function of effective communication if sometimes we turn negative messages into positive ones.



Compare the following:

Negative — *We hope you won't be dissatisfied with the new range of our electric products.* [disappointed]

Positive — *We are sure you will be satisfied with the new range of our electric products.* [confident]

Negative — *Please do not be late in submitting your application for the letter of credit.* [indirect and wordy]

Positive — *Please submit your application for the letter of credit promptly.* [direct and concise]

Negative — *We can not comply with Part II of your request even though the other three parts are workable for our shipping schedule.* [negative and decisive]

Positive — *We agree completely with Part I, III, and IV of your request. Since our delivery schedule is already established for the next fiscal year, implementation of Part I will begin next January.* [cooperative and clear]

**Emphasize the positive:** Readers respond more favorably to positives than to negatives. When we give suggestions or make our requirements, ~~try to~~ emphasize benefits rather than flaws.

Negative — *Because the size of your order is ~~disappointing~~, our profitability is low and a larger one may be needed.* [critical and disappointed]

Positive — *A large size of your order will help ~~reduce the cost~~ of production.* [encouraging]

Negative — “Complaints Department” [Evoke an unfavorable mental reaction of customers]

Positive — “Customer Service” or “Customer Service Department” [Make the customer anticipate a pleasant experience]

Negative — *To avoid errors and mistakes in shipping, complete the order form as directed.* [The customer may see the order delayed or lost and anticipate being billed for merchandise never received — it would be safer to tear up the order form and do business elsewhere]

Positive — *Please complete the order form as requested for accurate and prompt shipment of merchandise.* [This language is likely to stimulate a favorable reaction and a positive picture to the customer]

**Use correct negatives:** Some negative expressions, of course, are perfectly