

# 国际航运业务英语与函电

English for International Shipping Business  
and Correspondence

范苗福 编著

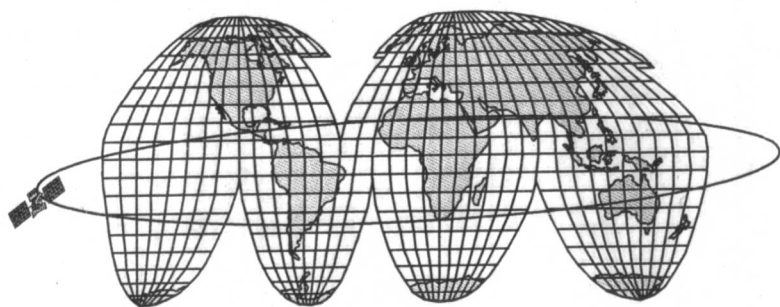


大连海事大学出版社

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# 前 言

随着改革开放的深化,我国的航运事业得到飞速发展,因此迫切需要培养一大批通晓英语、熟悉国际航运业务的专业人材。为了适应新形势下我国高等航运院校教学和航运界从业人员提高专业英语水平的需要,编者根据多年专业英语教学实践和社会实践,广泛地收集了国际航运业务方面的函电资料,曾编著出版了《国际航运业务英语函电》一书。

五年来,该书一直作为上海海运学院国际航运专业、法学(海商法)专业、英语专业、外贸与运输专业等大学本科生必修课专业英语教材,同时也是国内一些航运公司驻外工作人员培训班使用的主要教材之一。该书的特点是注重英语应用文语言的规范性和结合航运业务的实用性。因此在教学上和自学参考方面颇具效果,深受航运界从业人员的欢迎。

为了使该书更能适应当前国际航运业新形势的需要,在大连海事大学出版社的支持下,编者对原书进行修订和增补,以《国际航运业务英语与函电》名义出版。新编本保留了原书的特色,增补了新的内容。编者以国际海运法规和惯例以及我国《海商法》为基础,按各类业务内容的需要,在每课函电实例前增写了正文,介绍有关的专业知识,旨在帮助读者了解、学习和掌握航运业务英语,提高实际操作技能。

另外在本书第二部分“电信”中,专门增补了“传真与电子邮件”内容,以帮助读者掌握现代通信手段,适应新形势下工作的需要。

在本书编写过程中,得到上海海运学院管理学院王根兴院长热情指导和帮助,谨此致谢。

由于编者水平有限,不足之处在所难免,敬请读者和同行专家不吝指正。

编 者

1999年12月



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# Part One LETTERS



## Lesson One

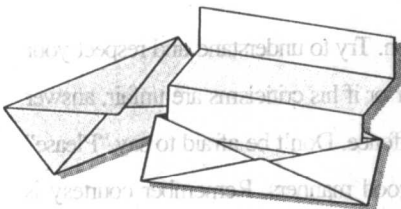
# ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

Letter-writing is an essential part of business activities. In spite of the great advances made in the field of telecommunication, the letter remains one of the most effective ways in business communication. A business letter is often evidence of an arrangement or a contract, and must therefore be written with care; even the shortest and most usual of letters may have this importance.

Business letters have two purposes: to inform, and to organize. The way to get the right amount of information in your letter, and to get it in the right order is, by planning your letter in advance. Everything

to be put down in writing must be carefully considered and well organized. You have to be clear, and by means of your letter you have to make things happen. In the first instance the letter has to be functional. In the second instance—since you are stuck with having to write the letter anyway—what you have to do, you should do well. Let every letter be at least readable, and

then see if you can add some extra quality. The need for thought in writing is clear when you realize that in speaking—either face-to-face or by telephone—the reaction to the spoken word can be seen or heard



immediately, but reaction to a letter is not known until the answer is received.

When you have written a letter, read it through carefully; see that you have put in everything you intended, and have expressed it well; read it again, trying to put yourself in the place of the recipient to find out what impression your letter will make.

A question frequently asked is "How long should a good letter be?" The answer is: "As long as is necessary to say what has to be said", and this will depend on the subject of the letter. The right length includes the right amount of information.

Because the aim of the letter is to secure the interest of the reader and his cooperation, it is important to try to adopt the right "tone" in your writing. Generally speaking, you should aim for a neutral tone, avoiding old-fashioned or pompous style of language on the one hand and informal or colloquial language on the other hand. What is required of a business letter is that it must be clear, fluent and to the point. The wording must carry the reader along smoothly; jerky, overshoot or disjointed sentences spoil the impression.

A good vocabulary is necessary, both in your own and foreign languages; repetition should be avoided as much as possible, except where the exact meaning does not allow any change of word.

The general principle for the effective business letter-writing can be summed up in the "Three C's". In other words, letters should be: Clear, Concise and Courteous.

**Clearness** Make sure that the message conveys exactly what you want to say and is not liable to misunderstanding. The clearness of meaning is closely linked with the correct use of words, grammatical sentences and the style of writing. Make all the necessary points clear, full, and in a logical sequence. Good, straightforward, simple English is always preferable in business letter writing. A well-expressed letter makes a far more positive impression on the reader than does an awkwardly phrased, jargon-filled letter.

**Conciseness** Be brief as far as possible. Your recipient, like you, leads a busy work life and has little time to pore over long, complex letters. He prefers his information in condensed, concise, concentrated form—in a format as easy to read as possible. Therefore, make it easier for your recipient by keeping your message to one page if at all possible. Cut off all unnecessary words, out-of-the-way remarks, and irrelevant details, etc. Avoid using stale and roundabout phrases that add nothing to the sense of what you write. Organize each paragraph so well that your concept is readily understood. Make your desired action clear. And do all this with a few well-chosen words.

**Courtesy** Be patient and courteous, whatever the provocation. Try to understand and respect your correspondent's point of view. If he sends you a rude or sharp letter or if his criticisms are unfair, answer him with restraint and say what you feel tactfully without giving offence. Don't be afraid to say "Please" and "Thank You", they are not a sign of weakness, they show good manners. Remember courtesy is always necessary. This does not mean that a letter may not be sharp and severe—there is frequent necessity for such letters—but the sharpness and severity must be tempered by courtesy.



Courtesy consists, not only in using polite phrases, but also in showing consideration for your correspondent. In case you have to say no, say it nicely. It is the skill that enables us to turn down unreasonable or impossible requests without killing the hope of future business. Besides, deal promptly with all letters needing a reply. This will give your correspondents an impression of efficiency and help to build good will.

**The “YOU” Attitude** Another principle is the “YOU” attitude, namely “Put yourself in the shoes of the recipient”. Practically, every business letter aims at *persuading* the recipient to do something, or to agree with the writer. To achieve this, when writing a letter you should constantly ask yourself, “What are his needs, his wishes, his interests, his problems, and how can I meet them?”, trying to see things from his standpoint. One of the surest ways is to show him that what you propose is to *his* advantage. Besides, you may emphasize the positive and pleasant facts, and focus on ideas your recipient can view favourably. It is the sort of attitude that helps to create good will and increase business.

Last but not least, special attention should also be paid to the correct use of punctuation and capitalization in writing in order to make your meaning clear.

## New Words and Expressions

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| functional(a.)有功能的; 起作用        | having a special activity or purpose of a person or thing |
| recipient (n.)收信人; 收件人         | person who receives sth                                   |
| be stuck with 被困住; 摆脱不开        | unable to go or do anything further                       |
| in the first instance...首先; 第一 | firstly   |
| in the second instance...其次    | secondly  |
| secure (v.)获得                  | succeed in getting sth                                    |
| jerky (a.)拗口的; 不流畅             | not smooth  |
| disjointed(a.)不连贯; 没条理的        | not connected; incoherent                                 |
| jargon (n.)怪僻难懂的语言             | language difficult to understand                          |
| pore over (v.)仔细研读             | study it with close attention                             |
| format (n.)格式; 版式              | the size, shape, and general makeup (as of sth printed)   |
| concise (a.)简洁; 简明             | brief and clear   |
| condense (v.)缩短(文章); 浓缩        | put into fewer words                                      |
| stale (a.)不新鲜的; 陈腐的            | no longer fresh, uninteresting                            |
| courteous (a.)有礼貌的             | having or showing good manners                            |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| courtesy (n.) 礼貌             | courteous                               |
| provocation (n.) 挑衅; 激怒      | the act of making a person angry        |
| severity (n.) 严厉; 剧烈         | quality of being severe, stern          |
| temper (v.) 使软化; 缓和          | soften or modify                        |
| last but not least 最后但并非不重要的 | importantly, although coming at the end |

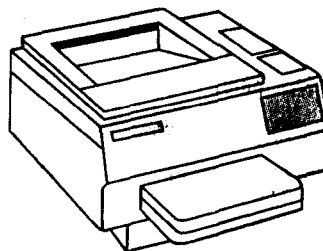
## Exercises

### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the two purposes of business letters?
2. How long should a good letter be?
3. What are the three C's and the "YOU" attitude?

### II. Rewrite the following sentences on the basis of general principles of business letter-writing:

1. We beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of \_\_\_\_, 20...
2. We request the favour of a reply at your earliest convenience.
3. Please favour us with an early expression of your views.
4. We express our regret for being unable to deliver to you the bill of lading and shipping documents with promptness.
5. Every consideration will be given to your request.
6. Your letters of the 30th ultimo (last month) and 4th instant (this month) have come to hand.
7. It is with much regret that we have no other alternative but to decline your request.
8. Please be assured that there will be no further delay in remitting you \$ 5 000 as compensation as per Article 6 of the contract.



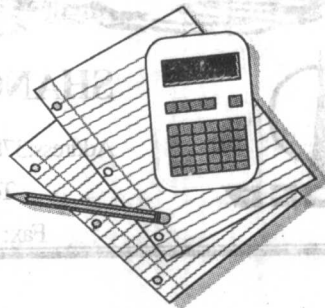
## Lesson Two

# THE MAIN PARTS AND LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

## The Main Parts of a Business Letter

A business letter in English generally consists of eight main parts:

1. Heading (Letterhead)
2. Date
3. Inside Name and Address
4. Salutation
5. Subject Line (Caption)
6. Body of the Letter
7. Complimentary Close
8. Signature



The following are some explanatory notes given item by item for guidance in letter writing.

### 1. Heading (Letterhead)

The heading or letterhead is printed at the top of the paper. It gives the name and address of the company which the writer represents. Sometimes, the name and the nature of the company are printed at the top centre of the page, while the address, telephone number, telegraphic (cable) address, telex number and fax number are arranged a few spaces under or on both sides below according to individual taste.

Examples of a heading are given below.



## CHINA OCEAN SHIPPING AGENCY SHANGHAI BRANCH

13 Zhongshan Road (E1)      Tel: (021) 3290088  
Shanghai                      Telex: 33052 PENAV CN  
Post Code 200002)          Fax: (021) 3291519  
China                          Cable: PENAVICO SHANGHAI

Date \_\_\_\_\_

File \_\_\_\_\_



## HONG KONG MING WAH SHIPPING CO, LTD

Address: 152-155, 4/F, China Merchants Bldg.,

Connaught Road, C, Hong Kong.

Telex: 60597 MINSF HX Fax: 5-410494

Telephone: 5440177 Cable: MINGWASHIP



## SHANGHAI OCEAN SHIPPING CO

Address: 378 Dong Daming Road, Shanghai, P.C.: 200080, China

Tel: 5416620      Telex: 33057 COSCO CN

Fax: 5458984      Cable: COSCO SHANGHAI

M. V. "HUA XING"

Port: Yokohama

Japan



## Mediterranean Shipping Company (Hong Kong) Ltd Central & Northern China Management Office Shanghai

25/F, Shanghai Bund International Tower

108 Daming Road Shanghai, P.C.: 200080, China

Tel: +86-21-6393 6393 Fax: +86-21-6393 5262

E-mail: [mscsha@sha.msccn.com](mailto:mscsha@sha.msccn.com)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

File \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Date

The date on which the letter was written is placed towards the upper right corner and below your heading. Type the date all in one line. Do not use figures or abbreviations for the month but spell it out in full. The use of figure can be misleading because the usage differs in the U.S.A. and England. (For example, in the U.S.A., 5.8.1992 means May 8, 1992, while in England it would be understood as August 5, 1992). And it would be advisable to avoid the use of ordinal numbers (e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.). However, any of the following forms is correct:

- (1) 16 February, 1992
- (2) February 16th, 1992
- (3) 16th February, 1992
- (4) February 16, 1992

The first form in a day-month-year sequence is widely used in Europe, and so it is suitable to use in international correspondence. The fourth form in a month-day-year sequence is preferred in the U.S.A.

## 3. Inside Name and Address

This comprises name and address of a person and/or the firm to whom the letter is written and appears at the left margin a few spaces below the Heading. It is always safe to follow the pattern in the firm's own letterhead. The Inside Name and Address can not be omitted as the letter will be filed later for the completeness of the documents, though it is exactly the same as what appears on the envelope. This part usually consists of four to five lines:

Line 1—the name of a person or company

Line 2—the number of house or building and name of street

Line 3—the name of city, the state(county) and its post-code (or ZIP Code).

Line 4—the name of the country

The examples are as follows:

**A**  
W. K. WEBSTER & CO.  
6 Lloyd's Avenue  
London EC3N 3AX  
United Kingdom

**B**  
Mr. Thomas R Witter, Manager  
Providence Insurance Company Inc.  
892 Market Street  
Chicago, IL 60601  
U. S. A..

The courtesy titles used in correspondence are Mr. (or Esq.), Mrs., Miss, or Ms., Messrs. (plural of Mr.) and Mmes. (plural of Madam). But there are certain rules of using titles. For addressing a single person, Mr. (with or without a full stop) is the usual courtesy title for a man. Esq. (abbreviation for Esquire)

is generally used instead of Mr. in England. But it is considered a somewhat archaic term and seldom used now. If used, it can only be placed after the name, separated from it by a comma, e.g. George Jackson, Esq. In the United States "Esq." is not generally used except after the names of distinguished attorneys. Besides, it is wrong to use both Mr. and Esq. We must not, for example, write Mr. G Jackson, Esq. Mrs. (with or without a full stop; no unabbreviated form) is used for a married woman and Miss for an unmarried woman. Ms. (with or without a full stop; no unabbreviated form) is used for both married and unmarried women. Many women now prefer to be addressed by this title, and it is a useful form of address when you are not sure whether the woman you are writing to is married or not.

However, when your correspondent holds a special title, such as Doctor, President, Professor or Captain (or Master of a ship), he is addressed by his title and Mr. or Esq. must not be used, e.g. Dr. J Brown, Pres. W Johnson, Prof. L Carter and Capt. J Smith of M. V. PIONEER. Messrs. (abbreviated from the French Messieurs) is a plural form of Mr., and is used only when the firm is named after a person or more persons, such as "Messrs. Smith & Jones", "Messrs. Lambert Bros. & CO.", "Messrs. L Wilma & Sons" or "J. D. Simpson & Co.". But the title "Messrs." should not be used when the name of a firm begins with "The", e.g.:

The Henderson Forwarding Agency

The Wilkins Insurance Co. Ltd.

Note that some use "Company (CO.) Ltd." in their firm names, others prefer "Corporation Inc. (Incorporated)" though the nature of the firms is of no difference. Be sure to write a company's name exactly as it appears on that company's letterhead.

#### 4. Salutation

The salutation is the line in which you directly address the person to whom you are writing. It is typed at the left margin, two line spaces below the Inside Name and Address. Remember that it must agree with the address. When a company (or a partnership) is addressed, the salutation is "Dear Sirs" or "Gentlemen". But the Americans usually use "Gentlemen" instead of "Dear Sirs". When an individual is addressed, the salutation includes the family name of the man, as "Dear Mr. Brown" or "Dear Sir" if you do not know his name, but it is wrong to open a letter with "Dear Mr. John" or "Dear Mr. John Smith".

Note that "Gentlemen" is always followed by a colon in American letters, while "Dear Sirs" is followed by a comma. Note further that you cannot use "Sirs" alone and that "Gentlemen" cannot be used in the singular. Besides, it is more customary to use the greeting "Dear Madam" in business letters when a lady is addressed.

#### 5. Subject Line (Caption)

The purpose of the subject line is to indicate at a glance the general content or purpose of the letter. Generally it is preceded by "Re:" or "Subj." and placed between the salutation and the first paragraph of the letter. The use of capitals or underline for the subject matter is optional. For example:

A Re: M. V. "Pioneer"—2 000 cases of Glassware

B Subj: Charter Party No.13245

C Claim on Contaminated Sugar

Ex M. V. "Athens" Arrived Shanghai 16.9.1990

The subject line or caption can be dispensed with if the letter is short.

## 6. Body of the Letter

This is the message of the letter itself. Since the main purpose of the letter is to convey a message, you should try to achieve the "Three C's" qualities mentioned in Lesson One. The body of the letter usually consists of at least three paragraphs, depending on the character of the letter, and it begins two line spaces below the salutation. Two line spaces separate the paragraphs of the body of the letter.

The opening phrase of the first paragraph is usually rather formal and will depend very much on the subject about which you are writing. If it is continuing correspondence that has previously taken place, it will generally begin by thanking the correspondent for his previous letter and helping him to recall the letter to which this is a reply.

The second paragraph gives information and states the facts.

The last or closing paragraph should be a call to action of some kind. This may indicate what you expect from the recipient of the letter or express your good wishes. Remember to use a short opening paragraph and a short closing paragraph whenever possible.

## 7. Complimentary Close

The complimentary close is the courteous ending of the letter. Just as the salutation is the courteous greeting, this is the courteous "good-bye". The way you close a letter depends on what salutation you use in the opening. The following examples illustrate how the close is used in modern business letters.

### Salutation

Dear Sirs/Sir/Madam

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Smith

Gentlemen

### Close

—Yours faithfully

—Yours sincerely

—Sincerely/Truly yours

A general rule for closing a letter is: if you know the name of your correspondent you end "sincerely"; if you do not know the name you end "faithfully". The close of "Yours faithfully" is a formal practice in British English, but in American English "Sincerely yours/Truly yours" is most commonly used. The

Complimentary Close starts from the left (Blocked Style) or the middle of the line (Semi-blocked Style). It is a matter of your preference.

Avoid closing with old-fashioned phrases such as "We remain, yours faithfully", "Respectfully yours" etc.

## 8. Signature

First, type the company's name in capitals immediately below the complimentary close, exactly as it is printed on the letterhead. Below the company's name is your handwritten signature. Note that it should always be written by hand and in ink to indicate that the letter is authentic or genuine. Then type your name under the signature because many signatures are very difficult to read. The title of the writer may also be given under your name, if so desired. The following are examples of the way in which business letters are signed.

### A

Yours faithfully,  
SCOTT & GRANT CO. LTD.  
Signature (hand-written)  
V. R. Scott (typewritten)  
Vice General Manager

### B

Yours faithfully,  
Signature (hand-written)  
R. Hopkins (typewritten)  
Master, M. V. "Green Meadow"

When a writer is entitled to sign the name on behalf of his company, he may use "for" or "per pro" before the company's name. e. g.:

### A

For China Ocean Shipping Co.  
(Signed name)  
Fang Min (Typed name)  
Manager of Shipping Dept.

### B

per pro. Peter Hill & Co.  
(Signed name)  
H. Green (Typed name)  
Personnel Manager

## Miscellaneous Matters

### A. References

Each letter going in or out of business firm is usually coded with a reference for filing or classification. The references often appear at the left margin in line with the date. They can also be placed at the upper right corner above or under the date, e. g.

Our Ref: 94 NH/D4  
Your Ref: ALW / PS

Date \_\_\_\_\_



or:

Your Ref: 180/MB

Our Ref: SA/9216

17 May 19\_\_\_\_\_

**B Attention Line**

When the letter is addressed direct to a particular person of a firm, you may type "For the attention of (name or title)" at the left margin, which is below the Inside Name and Address and above the Salutation.

**C Identification Initials**

The identification initials are made up of the initials of the writer and the typist, which indicate their own responsibilities. They are placed two line spaces below the signature against the left margin. Often the initials of the writer are in capitals; the typist' initials are in small letters. The two sets are separated by a colon or a stroke, e.g. JB/ms or JB: ms

**D Enclosures**

If there are enclosures to be sent with the letter, type the word "Enclosure" or its abbreviation "Enc." at the left margin below the initials. If there are more than one enclosure, they may be listed or numbered for easy checking, e.g.

Enc.

- Invoice No. 807613 of 4/6/90 (1 copy)
- Sales Contract dated 12/4/90 (1 copy)
- B/L No. 387 (3 copies)

**E Carbon Copy**

In case a copy (copies) of the letter is (are) to be sent to a party (parties) concerned, this should be noted at the lower left corner below the Initials and/or Enclosures, thus:

C.c.

- Penavico, Shanghai
- Shanghai Harbour Administration

The following form is given as a standard layout of a business letter for your guidance:

**LETTERHEAD (信 头)**

Ref. No. (引证号码)

Date: (日期)

Inside Name and Address (收信人名称和封内地址)

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.....  
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