

# 科技英语写作

俞天民

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高等教育出版社

本书内容包括用英语写信或写文章时应注意的一些事项,以及写法与范例,每章后附有练习题。本书可作为高等院校理工科学生的英语写作课教材,对科技人员及外事工作者也有参考价值。

## 科技英语写作

俞天民

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高等教育出版社出版

新华书店北京发行所发行

河北省香河县印刷厂印装

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开本 850×1168 1/32 印张 8.875 字数 210,000

1983年7月第1版 1983年12月第1次印刷

印数 00,001—46,000

书号 9010·0165 定价 1.05 元

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# 书 信

## 1 在书信内容方面应注意的事项

### 1.1 要讲究文明礼貌

在书信中使用有礼貌的、亲切的、能造成友好气氛的语言，可以赢得对方对你或你所在单位的好感；而这种好感是一种很宝贵的无形财富。

写信时要言简意赅，但这不等于说可以不讲究方式方法，生硬冷淡。下面这封信的缺点就在于过于直截了当，缺乏必要的礼貌。

With reference to your application of 1 September, I am to inform you that you cannot be granted the leave applied for.

如果在信中能够说明这次请假不便批准的理由，并进一步提出具体建议，让对方在今后什么时候再次提出申请（如果有一定把握到时候可以批准的话），则较为妥当。

企事业单位登报征聘职工时，应招人数一般都大大超过空缺额，对那些落选者发出的通知信如果写成下面的样子，就显得生硬失礼：

With reference to your application of 14 May for the post of Assistant Manager in our Sales Department, you are hereby informed that we are not able to offer this position to you.

而同一封信如果用下面的写法就比较得体了：

Thank you very much for your application of 14 May for the post of an Assistant Manager in our Sales Department.

We are sorry that at present we are not able to offer you this position. But we have noted your qualifications and experience and put your application on our files. Should an opportunity arise in future, we shall be pleased to consider you again.

We appreciate the interest you have shown in our organization.

下面列出的是一些常用的有礼貌的言辞:

*Thank you very much for your letter of ...*

*We are glad to note that you are now in a position to pay our bill.*

*We appreciate your writing to us so promptly.*

*We regret to inform you that we cannot meet your order immediately.*

*We are sorry that you did not receive the books in time.*

*You will be pleased to know that we have dispatched the books you ordered in your letter of 28 October.*

下面列举的是应避免使用的一些不够礼貌的言辞:

You state ...

You are wrong in saying ...

We find it difficult to believe that ...

Your claim that ...

We must firmly state ...

Your complaint that ...

We cannot accede to your request that ...

We are forced to refuse ...

We demand ...

## 1.2 要从对方的角度看问题

仅仅多多使用 you 这个代名词并不等于就是从对方的角度看问题了。应当设身处地地从对方的心情、利益和需要出发来考虑如何写一封信才行。下面是宣布解放黑奴的美国第十六届总统 Abraham Lincoln 写给他素不相识的 Mrs. Bixby 的著名的信；这是一封从对方的角度看问题的信的典范：

Dear Madam:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln

在这里我们可以再举一个例子来说明这一问题。工厂一般是不愿意接受用户直接从他们那里购买商品的。在写拒绝信时，可以

直截了当地予以拒绝,并提出理由,说明这样做会给工厂造成很大麻烦,得不偿失等等(实际上也的确是如此)。但是他们也可以用另外一种方法来写这封信,建议用户从零售商店购买所需的这种商品(还可以列出一些离他住处较近的零售商店的名字),因为这样他不但能够买到还可以亲自挑选出最能使他称心满意的商品。这个工厂所以能够想出这种两全其美的办法是因为他们认真地考虑了对方的利益。

### 1.3 要采取积极的态度

1. I was surprised to discover in your letter of June 26 your claim that we have made an excessive charge for investigating your lighting needs.
2. I have received your letter of June 26 concerning my charge for investigating your lighting needs.
3. I have been glad to do as you requested in your letter of June 26 to look into the question of whether I have made the correct charge for investigating your lighting needs.

上面这三句话讲的是同一件事,但所采取的态度不同。第一句话给人的印象是写信人很不冷静;虽然对方提出的要求是毫无道理的,但是使用以牙还牙以眼还眼的方式对于弄清事实解决问题并无补益。第二句话是就事论事;再加上后来说明为什么不能同意对方提出的意见,给人以冷冰冰的感觉。一般认真负责的单位,对于对方提出的意见是持积极态度的;认为这是一种督促自己发现问题改进工作的有效途径之一。用第三句话作为信的开头,再进一步心平气和地说明这笔帐是怎样算出来的,就能够使对方心悦诚服。

又如:

We regret to say that unfortunately we cannot comply



with your request until ...

We shall be glad to comply with your request as soon as ...

前一句话以消极态度对待问题,听起来象是拒绝,因为它强调的是“不能马上从命”;而后一句话是以积极的态度对待问题,听起来象是接受,因为它强调的是“最终是能够解决的”。

又如:

My experience is limited, consisting of nine months' assistant to ...

My qualifications have been increased by nine months' experience as assistant to ...

二者说的是一回事,但前者是消极的,给人的印象是“九个月的经验是微不足道的”;而后者是积极的,给人的印象是“经过九个月的锻炼要比以前懂得多得多了”。

又如:

I hope that our decision will not impair the pleasant relationship that has always existed between our companies.

I believe that the reasons I have given to explain our decision show it to be appropriate, and I shall look forward to a continuance of our pleasant relationship.

从第一句话可以看出写信人的态度是消极的,认为这一决定会损害两公司之间的关系;而第二句话的态度是积极的,写信人希望两公司的友好关系还会继续下去。

下面这封信缺乏热情:

In reply to your letter of 4 August, we are sending herewith a copy of our catalogue. We shall be able to supply immediately the make you wish to buy. We are waiting for your order.

但如果把这封信改写成为下面的样子,则态度更为积极,成交的可能性就更大一些。

Thank you for your letter of 4 August. We are sending a copy of our catalogue. On page 5 you will find the make you are interested in. You are most welcome to visit us any time during working hours (10 a.m. to 7 p.m.) on week days and we shall be pleased to demonstrate its working without any obligation on your part to buy it. Its size, performance and price have made it very popular. We do hope that you too will love to have it.

#### 1.4 要言简意赅

应尽量用最少的字来表达最多的内容。要考虑到对方没有时间也没有耐心去看废话很多的冗长的信。古希腊哲学家和科学家亚里士多德曾经说过,要想把一篇文章写好,最重要的一条原则是:象聪明人那样思考,象普通人那样讲话。十九世纪英国大诗人阿诺德说:“Have something to say and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style.”他们讲的都是一个意思,就是要言简意赅。

对比下面同一内容的一封信的两种不同写法就不难看出遵循言简意赅这一原则写出的信的优越之处。

1. We are in receipt of your esteemed favor of 14th instant and in reply beg to advise you that we have written to our head office in Beijing. On hearing from them we shall be in a position to communicate to you our exact and considered decision.
2. Thank you for your letter of 14 September. We have written to our Head Office in Beijing and shall let you know our decision on hearing from them.

下面左栏中是一些常见的冗笔；右栏给的是经过修改后的更简练的说法：

<i>acknowledge receipt of</i>	We — your check	We have received your check
<i>advise</i>	We regret to — you that the book is out of stock	We must tell you that the book is out of stock. Unfortunately, the book is out of stock. We are sorry to say that the book is out of stock.
<i>affix (one's) signature to</i>	Please — the enclosed documents	Please sign these documents. Please sign the enclosed documents.
<i>as per</i>	— your request — our telephone conversation — our agreement	as you requested according to your request as a follow-up to our telephone conversation in accordance with our telephone conversation as we agreed in accordance with our agreement according to our agreement
<i>assuring you that</i>	— your cooperation will be appreciated, I remain	I will appreciate your cooperation.
<i>at all times</i>	We shall be glad to meet you at all times.	We'll always be glad to meet you.

*at an early date*

*attached*

*hereto/*

*herewith*

*at this*

*writing*

*at your earliest*

*convenience*

*beg*

We — to acknowledge

We — to advise

We — to state

*brought to*

*our notice*

*deem*

We — advisable that  
you

*despite the fact*

*that*

*due to the fact*

*that*

immediately

by (date)

when convenient

Attached is/are

We are attaching

We have attached

You'll see attached

now

at present

as soon as you can

soon

by (date)

within (number of days)

We acknowledge

We have received

Thank you for

We are pleased to tell you

We can say that

We can tell you that

We note

We notice

We see

We think you ought to

We think it advisable that  
you

although

though

because (of)

since

<i>duly</i>	Your order has been — forwarded.	Your order has been for- warded We have forwarded your order
<i>enclosed here- with enclosed please find</i>		We enclose We are enclosing We have enclosed Enclosed is/are
<i>esteemed</i>	We welcome your — favour of	Thank you for your June 9 letter
<i>favour</i>	your — of April 14	your April 14 letter
<i>hoping for the favour</i>	— of a reply, I re- main	I look forward to hearing from you. We look forward to your reply. May I hear from you soon?
<i>in the amount of</i>	are sending you a check — \$50.95	are sending you a check for \$50.95
<i>in the event that</i>	— you cannot meet with me next week, we shall	if you cannot meet with me next week, we shall
<i>in view of the fact that</i>	— he is now president of he was term- inated — he had been negligent	since he is now president of he was terminated because of negligence
<i>oblige</i>	Please reply to this letter and —.	Please reply to this letter immediately.

<i>of the opinion that</i>	Ne—that	We think (believe) that Our opinion is that Our position is that
<i>pending receipt of</i>	We are holding your order — your check.	We'll ship your order as soon as we receive your check.
<i>pursuant to</i>	— our telephone con- versation of June 1, let me say that	Following up our June 1 telephone conversation, I can say that In accordance with ... According to ... Following up (As a follow- up to) ...
<i>return mail</i>	Please send us your check by —	promptly (immediately; at once) by (explicit date) Won't you mail us your check immediately? Please send us your check at once. We'd like to have your check by (date).
<i>said</i>	a discussion of — matters	a discussion of these mat- ters
<i>same</i>	we have your check and we thank you for —. Your July 2 order has been receiv- ed and same has been shipped.	Thank you for your check which arrived yester- day. Your July 2 order has been received and shipped.

<i>separate cover</i>	We are mailing you our 1976 Annual Report under —.	We're sending you separately our 1976 Annual Report.
<i>take the liberty</i>	We are taking the liberty of sending you free samples of	We are sending you free samples of
<i>thanking you in advance</i>	— for your help, I am	Your help (assistance) will be appreciated. I'll appreciate your help. Any help you may give me will be greatly appreciated. I'll appreciate any help you may give. If you can help me, I'll appreciate it. I'll be grateful for your help. Won't you help me?
<i>therefor/therein, thereon</i>	The order is enclosed herewith with payment therefor. The safe is in a secure area with the blueprints kept therein. Enclosed please find Forms, X, Y, and Z; please affix your signature	We're enclosing a check with our order. The blueprints are kept in the safe which is located in a secure area. Please sign Forms X, Y, and Z which we have enclosed.

thereon.

*this is to thank  
you*

Thank you

*trusting you will* — inform me of your  
decision soon, I  
am

I hope that you'll give me  
your decision soon.

Will you please give me  
your decision soon?

Won't you give me your de-  
cision soon?

*up to the present  
writing* — we do not seem to  
have received

We have not yet received  
As of now we have not re-  
ceived

We still have not received  
We haven't received

### 1.5 要条理清楚、计划周到

书信要条理清楚。如果内容比较复杂，有必要根据逻辑顺序先写出一个提纲，以便把信写得条理清楚、层次分明(关于提纲的写法和材料的安排，请参阅后面的有关章节)。这里我们特别谈一谈如何计划信的开头和结尾。

信的开头都很短，一般不超过两句话。内容可包括：说明为什么写信，提到以前的有关信件，向对方表达良好的祝愿。

下面举个例子说明：

We have received your letter of June 15. In this letter you say that you would like to have me make reservations for you for July 17, 18, and 19.

这样一个开头不如下面的好：

Thank you for letting me know, in your letter of June 15, about your need of reservations for July 17, 18, and 19.



这样，在一句话里，将三个重要内容都包括进去了（重复所定房间的日期是为了避免发生差错）。

另外有一点需要注意的是，如果你写信的目的主要是为了给对方提出的某一要求以肯定性的答复，那么，这一内容应尽早——甚至可以在信的第一句中——出现。这样做的好处在于对方知道他的要求得到满足后，对于你要讲的其他别的对他不那么有利的事情会持谅解的态度（如：也许你还要告诉他以后如果有类似的情况，还需要再重新申请）。如果不注意这一点，先告诉对方为什么在一般情况下这种要求是得不到满足的，那么，即使后来再对他说他这一次请求批准了，也会使对方从一开始就持对立的态度，或是心不在焉地看过前面所说的，急于找到具体的答复是什么，而对于你提出的正当理由反倒忽视了。同时，把具体的答复放在后边，给人留下的印象是你很勉强地同意了，这样就不必要地影响了对方对你和你所代表的单位的看法。因此，遇到这种情况，最好是马上把你的肯定的答复告诉对方，再进一步解释为什么这种作法不能成为惯例；并要在信的最后再一次肯定他的要求已得到满足这一事实。

相反，如果你的答复是否定的答复的话，那么，最好不要匆匆忙忙地告诉他这件事情只好作罢了；而应当先讲清楚拒绝的理由，使他看到这个决定是合情合理的，拒绝是逻辑的必然。这样作法会使对方感到他的请求是被认真对待了的，使他心悦诚服。

当然不是每一封信都涉及对一具体问题的肯定或否定的答复，但上述原则几乎在任何情况下都适用。如果你写的内容会使对方高兴，应当马上让他知道这一使他高兴的具体内容；如果你要告诉他的内容有好有坏，先告诉他好的，把坏的留到后面再说。

书信的结尾如何写，取决于是否要求对方采取什么行动。如果不是，最后可用很短的一段（可以是一句话）再次表示良好的祝愿。如：