

外贸英语函电

全国外贸中等专业学校教材编写组编

对外经济贸易出版社

WAIMAOYINGYUHANDIAN

全国外贸中等专业学校教材

外 贸 英 语 函 电

(修 订 本)

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全国外贸中等专业学校 编
教 材 编 写 组

Jm16-1/18

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对外贸易教育出版社出版

北京关西庄厂印刷

对外贸易教育出版社发行

开本787×1092 1/16·印张 17.625·字数440千字

1986年9月第二版·1986年9月第二次印刷

印数15,001—25,000册·定价2.90元

统一书号: 9321·14

修 订 说 明

本书自1982年对外贸易出版社出版发行以来，经全国外易学校试用，内容基本上符合要求。随着我国对外经贸事业的发展，有必要进行修改补充。

对外经贸部于1985年9月在天津召开教材修订会议，决定由天津、山东、江苏、广州外贸学校承担教材修订任务，并明确这次修订，不是推倒重来，而是在原书基础上去粗取精，剔旧增新，改进提高，重新编排，目的在于使题材更为新颖、内容更为充实、注释更为详细、练习更为实用，以期更好地适应当前外贸中专教育改革的需要。

修订工作是在经贸部人事教育局的领导下进行的。参加修订的有（以姓氏笔划为序）：吴明忠、张书勤、芮增霖、秦南及酆汉臣。由王联祖主编，蒋恩倚、齐毅主持集体讨论和审编定稿工作。

在修订工作中，张继祖、沈学海、齐眉生等同志参加了部分工作，付出了艰辛的劳动。

本书属于全国外贸中专统编教材，但也可供外贸工作者自学使用。

由于修订工作是在不脱产情况下进行的，加上修订人员的水平所限，书中的错误和缺点在所难免。希望广大教师和读者给予批评指正，以便再次修订时改进。

全国外贸中等专业学校教材编写组

1986年4月

PREFACE

With the rapid development of China's trade and other economic activities with foreign countries in recent years, business correspondence has undergone significant changes in form and style. Now effectiveness instead of economy receives primary concern. Telex becomes so popular that it is being widely used. Simplified and straightforward messages are much preferred to those stereotyped ones. Many new modes of trade and practice have emerged in the meantime. To cope with all such changed conditions, we find it necessary to have our first edition of "Foreign Trade Correspondence" revised.

The material in this edition goes beyond the confines of trade itself and includes also some of the economic activities currently in practice. Its chief aim is to help the students learn how to write good business letters, cables, and telexes by using up-to-date expressions in the simplest possible language. The use of business jargons is always controversial. We do not think it wise to rule out all jargons especially those commonly established ones. Although we have endeavoured to do away with stock phrases and stale jargons, there are still quite a few purposely retained in the text of incoming letters just for recognition sake.

Professional knowledge and basic conception of foreign trade is a prerequisite and therefore the backbone of a good business letter. Besides, the writer has always to remind himself of our foreign trade policy and those universally accepted rules and practices. In presenting an idea, especially in case of a dispute, one should bear in mind the national interest and proceed with good reasons and proper restraint. Care should be particularly taken to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding. As a general guidance, there are seven C's to be observed, clearness, conciseness, correctness, completeness, concreteness, courtesy and consideration.

This text book consists of 14 chapters or 75 lessons in two volumes. Book I covers Chapters 1 to 8 (Lessons 1 to 45) and Book II comprises

• I •

Chapters 9 to 14 (Lessons 46 to 75) . In the beginning of each chapter, there is a brief introduction to the respective business link. Each lesson contains one or two specimen letters to demonstrate the related business link under assumed situation. Notes and supplementary examples are provided. Exercises are given either for class/home assignment or for the purpose of self-study. A key to such exercises is only available to teachers.

It must be stressed, however, that many specimen messages presented in this edition could only serve as a guide to reasonably good business writing but should never be taken as models to copy. Two chapters devoted to some new modes of trade and economic activities have been added so as to enable the students to keep pace with the recent development.

This textbook is designed for foreign trade students and workers who have already had a vocabulary of around three thousand words and attained an intermediate level of proficiency in English and foreign trade.

This new edition is compiled under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, without whose guidance and supervision, the publication of this book would be hardly possible.

We are fully aware that mistakes would be inevitable owing to our own shortcomings in language and professional knowledge. Criticisms and comments are therefore heartily welcome.

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THE LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

Displaying the Letter

Although formality in business letter-writing is rapidly giving way to a less conventional and more friendly style, the layout still follows a more or less set pattern determined by custom. It is safe to follow established practice so as to avoid confusion and waste of time for both sender and receiver.

Good form in letter-writing, like good form in any other activity, comes from making correct practice habitual. It is a good plan to adopt one form of layout and to stick to it.

Basically, two main patterns of layout are in current use—the conventional indented style (*vide* p2) and the modern blocked style (*vide* p3). Following traditional British practice the indented style takes in the first line of each paragraph in the body of the letter, five spaces for pica type and six for elite type, though deeper indentations than these are sometimes preferred. Consistency in use is, however, the important point.

The practice of displaying business letters in the blocked style is now quite common. Its outstanding feature is the commencement of all typing lines, including those for the date, inside name and address, salutation, subject heading and complimentary close, at the left-hand margin. The loss of clarity occasioned by the absence of indentations may be made good by increasing the number of separating line-spacings between paragraphs from two to three, as shown on page 3.

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Your ref.

Our ref. GBD/FM Date: 4th April, 1986

R. Jameson, Esq., B. Com., A.C.A.
25 Silverthorn Gardens
BATH, Somerset
BA2 9AN

Dear Mr. Jameson,

A few days ago I wrote to Mr. R. Faulkner, a well-known chartered accountant in the city, inviting him to read a manuscript of Accounts for Beginners and advise us on its suitability for publication. He has replied that he cannot help us because of pressure of work, but he has very kindly suggested that you might be able to do so.

The manuscript is the work of Mr. F. Baron, a commercial teacher in one of the London technical colleges. We are attracted by it, and think it would make a book likely to appeal to the more progressive teacher of Accounts, as it presents a quite new approach to the teaching of the subject.

We should be very glad if you could read the manuscript and send us a report on it. We would of course pay an appropriate fee, the amount of which we could perhaps discuss when you have seen the manuscript.

We look forward to hearing that you can undertake the work for us.

Yours sincerely,
for MACDONALD & EVANS (Publications) LTD
G. B. Davis
Managing Director

CONVENTIONAL LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

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Your ref.

Our ref. RBN/FM

10 January 1986

Mr R W Jackson CBE MA
108 Kingsway
ROCHDALE Lincs
OL 16 4UX

Dear Mr Jackson

Revision of Catalogue

We are preparing a revised edition of our Professional and Business Studies Catalogue. I enclose a copy of the current issue and should be glad if you would check to ensure that all your books are included and that the Appendix correctly summarizes their syllabus coverage.

It would be most helpful, too, if you would check the classification symbols indicating the class of reader each of your books is designed to serve. Classification has proved to be of great help not only to lectures and students in selecting books, but also to booksellers themselves.

I look forward to receiving from you details of any necessary alterations for the reprint as soon as you can let me have them, if possible, please not later than the end of this month.

Yours sincerely
for MACDONALD & EVANS (Publications) LTD
Roy B North
Director
Encl

BLOCKED FORM OF LAYOUT

(In this example, modern or 'open' punctuation is used, but if conventional or 'closed' punctuation is preferred, it could be used too.)

Placement of the date on the left-hand side of the paper may cause inconvenience when particular letters are required from the files. Because of this, some firms using the blocked style of layout prefer a date position on the right. An example of modified blocked style is shown on page 5.

Single line-spacing gives a letter an appearance of compactness and is usual for both long and short letters, though double linespacing is preferred by some for very short letters.

Whether the indented style or the blocked style is used is determined by personal taste or by a firm's preferred style, but whichever style is used the ordinary business letter consists of seven parts,

- (1) the letter-head
- (2) the reference and date
- (3) the inside name and address
- (4) the salutation
- (5) the message, or the body of the letter
- (6) the complimentary close
- (7) the writer's signature and designation

A common fault is to type the letter too high on the paper. It should be neither too high nor too low, but nicely placed to preserve an appearance of balance and dignity, even if your letter might contain some more parts such as:

- (8) the attention line
- (9) the subject line
- (10) the reference notation
- (11) the enclosure
- (12) the carbon copy notation
- (13) the postscript

However faultless a business letter may be in matter, style and tone, it will not only create a bad impression but also weaken its effect if it is not attractively displayed.

The following letter is designed to illustrate the position of each part mentioned above.

- (1) CHINA NATIONAL CHEMICALS
IMP. & EXP. CORPORATION
Xijiao, Beijing, China

Cable Add: "SINOCHEMAO" BEIJING
Telex: 22243 CHEMI CN BEIJING

- (2) 3rd May, 1986

- (3) Messrs. J. Brown & Co.,
143 Eastcheap,
London, E.C.3.

- (8) Attention, Import Dept.

- (4) Dear Sirs,

- (9) PHARMACEUTICALS

- (5) We thank you for your letter of the 21st April.

In compliance with your request, we are sending you herewith a copy of our latest price list for your reference.

All prices are understood to be CIF European main ports, subject to our final cable confirmation. Payment is to be made by irrevocable Letter of Credit available by draft at sight.

As there is a heavy demand for our products, we would suggest that you advise us by cable in case of interest.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

- (6) Yours faithfully,
China National Chemicals
Imp. & Exp. Corporation

- (7)
Manager

(10) NQ/sc

(11) Encl.

(12) cc our Branch Offices

(13) P. S. Your letter of the 22nd April has just come to hand. As requested, we will airmail you two packets of sample tomorrow.

1. The Letter-Head (信头)

Letter-heads include the essential particulars about the writer—his name and postal address, his telephone number, his telegraphic and telex addresses, and, if any, the telegraphic codes used. Good quality paper and a neat, well-balanced letter-head combine to enhance the prestige of the firm that uses them.

2. The Reference and Date (案号和日期)

Most letter-heads provide for reference letters and numbers. When one firm writes to another each will give a reference, and these are marked 'Our ref;' and 'Your ref;' to avoid confusion. Sometimes a rectangle or other space is provided for them in the printed heading. Quite commonly, and especially in small offices, the reference consists of no more than the initials of the person dictating the letter followed by those of the typist:

Our ref; LGB/ww

Your ref; JDM/jc

Such kind of reference may be placed two spaces below the typed signature against the left margin, i.e. the position indicated by 'the reference notation'.

The date should be typed three or four line-spacings below the letter-head and, in the indented form of layout, so placed to the right that the last figure serves as a guide for line-endings in the body of the letter, though other placements are now accepted. It should always be typed in full and never abbreviated. Never give the date in figures (e.g. 10/2/19..); it could easily be confusing.

Whether commas or full stops are used in dates is accepted as a matter of taste, but the inclusion of a comma after the month with no full stop after the year is now customary, e.g.

24th March, 1986 (British style)
March 24, 1986 (American style)

3. The Inside Name and Address (封内名称及地址)

The preferred position for the correspondent's name and address is the upper left-hand side of the sheet, three or more line-spacings below the line of the date, depending on the length of the letter.

Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., and Messrs. are the ordinary courtesy titles used for addressing correspondents.

Messrs. (abbreviation of Messieurs) is used only for partnerships whose firm's name includes a personal element, as in Messrs. Macdonald & Evans. It is not used, when there is no personal element in the name, as Utility Furniture Co., or when the name already carries a courtesy title, as Sir William Dobson & Sons, or when the word 'The' forms part of the name, as The Grayson Electrical Co. Of course, it is not used with limited companies and other corporate bodies, which should always be addressed through an official.

It is the usual practice to type the inside name and address in blocked paragraph form in alignment with the left-hand margin of the letter. This helps to give the letter a tidy appearance.

4. The Salutation (称呼)

The salutation is the complimentary greeting with which the writer opens his letter. The particular form used depends upon the writer's relationship with his correspondent. To some extent it settles the form of the complimentary close; the two must always be in keeping.

For ordinary business purposes Dear Sir (or Dear Madam for both single and married women) is used for addressing one person, and Dear Sirs or Gentlemen (or Mesdames) for addressing two or more, as where a letter is addressed to a firm.

Whatever its form, the salutation always appears on a line by itself, conventionally three line-spacings below the inside name and address, and followed by a comma for Dear Sirs and a colon for Gentlemen.

5. The Body of the Letter (信文)

When writing, pay attention to the following:

- (a) Write simply, clearly, courteously, grammatically, and to the point.
- (b) Paragraph correctly, confining each paragraph to one topic.

(c) See that your typing is accurate and the display artistic. Aim at an attractive and pleasing appearance for your letters. Margins especially are important, since they serve to "frame" your letter.

For very short letters you may adopt double line-spacing except for your correspondents' name and address for which single line-spacing should always be used.

If there has been previous correspondence the place to refer to it is in the opening paragraph. The paragraphs that follow will contain further details, and the closing paragraph a statement of your intentions, hopes or expectations concerning the next step.

6. The Complimentary Close (结尾敬语)

The complimentary close is merely a polite way of ending a letter. Just as the use of Dear Sir, etc., is purely conventional, so is the use of Yours faithfully, Yours truly, and similar expressions. Used in this way the terms are meaningless; nevertheless, convention imposes these fashions on us, and for the time being we must accept them, always bearing in mind that the expressions used must be appropriate to the occasion, and that salutation and closure must be in keeping. 'Yours faithfully' is the standard closure for business letters. Like all other complimentary terms, it must be typed in full. The first word should be capitalized and a comma usually placed at the end.

'Yours truly' is also being used in business, particularly in the United States. Inverted forms like Faithfully or Truly yours (for business letters) and Sincerely or Cordially yours (for personal letters, the latter being common in the United States) are considered somewhat forced and artificial by some writers.

To use 'Yours', etc. as closure is in bad taste.

A list of the most commonly used salutations arranged with their appropriate closures is given below:

Salutation	Suitable closure	Remarks
Dear Sir(s), Dear Madam, Mesdames,	Yours faithfully,	Standard closure for business letters, particularly in the U.K.
Dear Sir(s), Dear Madam, Mesdames,	Yours truly,	Commonly used closure in the United States.