

外贸英语函电

English For
International Trade Communication

主编 王虹 耿伟

ENGLISH FOR
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE
COMMUNICATION



清华大学出版社

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北京

内 容 简 介

本教材主要涉及国际贸易各个环节书面沟通的写作规范,还有经贸合同的写作技巧、其他主题的书信范例和求职信及简历的写作指导。本教材以样信解析为主线,连接国际贸易的背景知识,商务英语词汇的特殊用法及相关的英语语法知识。同时也可以更好地完善财经专业学生的知识结构,开阔视野,提高学生从事宏观经济工作的综合素质。

本书适合国际经济与贸易专业的学生学习使用,也可以作为国际贸易业务人员的参考用书。

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前 言

《外贸英语函电》是国际经济与贸易专业及商务英语专业的核心业务课程之一，是一门将英语与国际贸易业务环节相结合的课程。本书介绍国际贸易实务中各种英文业务函件及电子邮件的写作格式和表达方法，以及对外贸易各环节的具体做法，旨在提高学生英语水平的同时，使其熟练掌握国际贸易实务中常用的基本术语及表达技巧，培养和强化其外贸业务能力，为国家培养从事国际贸易工作的高水平应用型人才。

本书主要特点是：①以对外经贸商务活动的成交过程为主线；②信函范例精选国际贸易活动的最新材料和实例；③突出基本词汇、句型和格式，学会撰写规范的国际贸易函电；④练习形式多样化，有针对性，力求做到学以致用；⑤每章安排有背景介绍、写作模块等内容，体现了对外贸易发展的实际情况，便于课堂教学和自学。

本书共 17 章。第 1 章系统介绍了英文商务信函写作的基本知识。第 2~16 章则遵循外贸常规流程，依次介绍业务关系建立、资信调查、询盘和发盘、还盘和接受、订单及其履行、支付方式、信用证、包装、装运、保险、索赔和理赔、贸易方式、业务合同订立等内容。第 17 章简要介绍了其他常用商务信函的写作技巧。书后附有参考文献和单元练习的参考答案。另外，我们为选择本书作教材的教师提供电子课件。

本书由王虹和耿伟担任主编并负责统稿。具体编写分工为：第 1、2、3 章由孙晓娟、耿伟共同编写。第 4、5、6 章由徐晓旭编写。第 7、8 章由樊友丹编写。第 9、10、11 章由王虹、刁显强共同编写。第 12、13 章由张辉编写。第 14、15 章由段莹莹编写。第 16、17 章由王欣编写。

由于编写时间和水平有限，书中不妥之处在所难免，敬请同仁和广大读者不吝赐教，批评指正。

编 者

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Chapter One Business Letters (商务信函)

1.1 Introduction

Business letter is the most frequently used form of communication. It is very important in the business world. Business executives are supposed to write good business letters as to carry out business routine efficiently. If a businessman is unable to write an effective business letter, it is very difficult to represent himself positively, which may cause some problems in doing business.

All business letters have two main functions. One is to ask for and give a reply to an enquiry, offer, order or complaint. The other one is to keep a record of all the important facts for ready reference. An effective business letter will say what the writer wants it to say clearly and simply. It should be precise, straightforward, relevant and action-centered. It should also be written in a friendly, formal style using plain language. Thus, in order to communicate effectively, you should ensure that the letters portray you as approachable, caring, effective and professional. In addition, you should be very familiar with the established layout and practice of business letters. There are three styles of business communication: the full blocked style, the indented style and the semi-blocked style. The fully-blocked style with open punctuation is the most popular method of display for business letters, because it is considered to be businesslike, simple and professional.

The business letter can tell readers a lot about the writer and the writer's company. A business letter that is neat, easy to read, and present a professional image will leave a good impression on the reader. Such a letter helps the writer as much as the reader, and will probably mean an earlier reply. In today's global market place, the reader's first impression often comes from the appearance of the documents and the quality of the paper. So you should pay more attention to the paper quality, the paper color, the paper size and margins. Firstly, never use paper that is too flimsy. Secondly, white is the standard color for business purposes, although light colors such as gray and ivory are sometimes used. Thirdly, the size of papers varies slightly from country to country. In the United States, the standard paper size for business documents is 8.5 by 11 inches. The last but not least, the document is to be centered in the page, leaving at least one-inch margins all around. We can use word-processing software to achieve the balance by defining the format.

This chapter is intended to develop skills in writing good business letters. It contains guidelines on developing personal writing style, using appropriate tone and composing effective communications in modern business language.

1.2 Writing Guide

1.2.1 The Essentials of Business Letter Writing

Since the main purpose of business correspondence is to convey a message, the letter should be written in language that is easily understood. The writer must make sure that it should be free from grammatical blemishes, and also free from the slightest possibility of being misunderstood. There are certain essential qualities of business letters, which can be summed up in the following 7 “Cs” principles.

1. Clarity

You must try to express yourself clearly, so that the reader will understand. To achieve this, you should keep in mind the purpose of the letter and use appropriate words in correct sentence structures to convey your meaning. We should also avoid ambiguous sentences. Otherwise, the business letter will cause trouble to both sides. All in all, good, straightforward and simple language are what are needed for business letters.

2. Conciseness

Conciseness means saying things in the fewest possible words. The elimination of wordy business jargon can help to make a letter clearer and at the same time more concise. If conciseness conflicts with courtesy, then make a little sacrifice of conciseness. Generally speaking, to achieve conciseness, one should try to avoid wordiness or redundancy.

3. Courtesy

Courtesy is not mere politeness. It should hardly be necessary to stress the importance of courtesy in your letters. One of the most important things is promptness. Punctuality will please your customer who dislikes waiting for days before he gets a reply to his letter. Differences are bound to occur in business, but with diplomacy and tact they can be overcome and settled without offence on either side. Remember that it's nearly always wrong to doubt a statement made in good faith by the other side and even worse to contradict it. In letters we should

always keep in mind the person we are writing to, see things from his point of view, visualize him in his surroundings, see his problems and difficulties and express our ideas in terms of his experience.

4. Consideration

Consideration emphasizes You-attitude rather than We-attitude. When writing a letter, keep the reader's request, needs, desires, as well as his feelings in mind. Plan the best way to present the message for the reader to receive.

5. Correctness

Correctness here refers to appropriate and grammatically correct language, factual information and accurate reliable figures, as well as the right forms and conventions. All facts should be checked and double checked. Special attention should also be paid to names of goods, specification, quantity, figures, units, etc.

6. Concreteness

To make the message specific, definite and vivid is the key point of concreteness. The writer must ensure that the letter contains all the information the recipient needs to act upon. Put yourself in reader's place. It is necessary to check the message carefully before it is sent out.

7. Completeness

Like any other letter, a good business letter should be complete, providing all the information and data necessary for a specific issue. If any necessary piece of information is lacking, the reader will have to ask for clarification, which means that you will have to write another letter. It will not only waste time, energy and money, but also damage the image of your company.

1.2.2 The Structure of Business Letters

Business letter has its special formats. In the formal business letters, we usually use 12 factors. They are letterhead, reference, date, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject line, body, complimentary close, signature, IEC block, postscript. Among them, the return address, date, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close and signature belong to the standard factors and must be contained in the formal business letters. Whether to use other

factors depends on the specific situation. The approximate locations of these factors in a business letter are as follows:

	Letterhead
Reference number	
Date	
Inside address	

Attention line	
Salutation	
Subject line	
Body	

Complimentary close
Signature
IEC block
Postscript

While the horizontal placement of letter parts may vary, the vertical order of these parts is standard. The followings are the most common components and formats.

1. The Basic Components of Business Letters

(1) Letterhead For letters to outsiders, many companies use letterhead stationery which is professionally printed at the top of the page, though some are printed at the bottom or even at the upper-left corner of the page. The letterhead indicates the name, address, telephone, fax number and E-mail address of the company sending the letter. It helps the recipient identify the company from which the sender comes just at a glance. If letterhead stationery is not available, you can type the heading, which includes a return address, and leaves about a two-inch top margin.

(2) Date Writing date in English goes in two styles: one is American style, and the other is British style. The standard order of typing the date in the U.S. is month, day, year. For example: September 12, 2008. While in Britain, the standard order is day, month, year. For example: 12 September, 2008. The day can be written or typed in either cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) or in ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.). The month and the year had better not be written in their abbreviation forms, otherwise, it may easily cause confusion. For example, 12/09/2007 in the U.S. would mean December 9, 2007, while in Britain it means 12 September, 2007. There is no rule for the date placement. If you use letterhead stationery, place the date