

领先商务英语专业系列教材

# BUSINESS

■ 总主编 仲伟合 王立非

# Leader Correspondence

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# 商务英语

# 函 电

■ 主编 芮燕萍



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# 总序

“十二五”期间，我国对外开放和经济国际化的步伐将不断加快，迫切需要培养大批精通跨国投资、跨国贸易且具备较强外语能力的复合型国际商务人才。截至2011年，教育部已批准32所高校开办商务英语本科专业，全国700多所院校开设了商务英语方向课程。

《领先商务英语》系列教材的设计理念和定位是：培养具有扎实的英语基本功、宽阔的国际视野、专门的国际商务知识与技能，掌握经济学、管理学和法学等相关学科的基本知识和理论，具备较强的跨文化交际能力与较高的人文素养，能在国际环境中熟练使用英语从事商务、经贸、管理、金融等工作的复合应用型商务英语专业人才。

本教材突出商务英语的特色和优势，包含语言技能、商务知识、跨文化交际能力和人文素养四个模块，体系完整，内容全面，设计新颖，特色鲜明。注重贯彻以内容为依托的教学理念，注重语言技能、跨文化能力和国际商务知识三者的平衡，以形式新颖和丰富多样的教学任务激发学生的学习兴趣 and 积极性，培养学生的自主学习能力和实践能力和创新能力。本套教材具有以下4个特点：

## 1) 合理兼顾语言、商务、文化三者的关系

本教材选材新颖，反映当今社会经济发展的新知识和新动态。选材兼顾语言、商务和文化三者的合理比例和衔接。不同阶段有所侧重，从侧重语言与文化逐步过渡到侧重商务与文化。

## 2) 突出跨文化商务交际能力的培养

本教材突出商务英语应用性和实践性强的特点，在打好扎实的语言基本功的同时，强调跨文化商务交际能力的培养，培养国际化思维，提高在多元文化和复杂国际商务关系的环境中用英语沟通、跨文化思维、跨文化适应和跨文化沟通的能力。

## 3) 强调国际商务知识与技能的应用

本教材突出商务英语特色和国际商务知识与技能的运用，逐步培养学生的学科思维 and 创新能力，使其掌握就业所需的社交知识、商务办公礼仪等普通商务知识和经济学、管理学、国际商法、国际贸易、国际金融等商务专业知识以及谈判、演讲、写作等商务技能。

## 4) 采用立体化教材设计手段

本教材突出可教性原则，在保留传统教学方法的优势的同时，整合现代信息技术与教材设计，搭建立体化商务英语学习平台，将多种类、多模态的商务英语学习资源进行网络化和数字化集成，培养学生在网络环境下的自主学习能力。

本套系列教材配有学生用书、教师用书、多媒体教学材料等立体化教学资源，适合商务英语专业的本科生、高职高专商务英语和经贸方向的学生以及涉外财经方向的本科生使用。



本教材编者均为全国主要商务英语专业院校的教学科研专家或中青年骨干教师，不仅具有丰富的商务英语教学和商务实践经验，而且都主持或参与过多项商务英语教材编写项目，从而保证了本套教材的编写质量。我们衷心地希望本套教材能够很好地满足各类高校商务英语教学和课程建设的需要。

编者  
2011年7月



# 前言

世界经济一体化、全球化已成为当今世界经济发展的主流。我国加入WTO以来,国际交流与合作渗透到社会生活的诸多领域。作为国际贸易的一种专业语言,商务英语函电(以下简称函电)是从事对外经济贸易与合作的重要工具。掌握函电的基本知识,熟练运用其各种写作策略,是国际贸易从业人员的必备素质。

本书根据国际贸易的主要流程,结合流程中的典型案例,系统地编写内容情景和业务环节。部分语言材料是在当前国际贸易往来函电的基础上,经过适当的补充和必要的加工编写而成。本书注重介绍国际贸易术语和函电的语言形式及各类体裁,体现了函电的语言特点和写作策略。编排上力求做到相互连接、循序渐进、简明易懂。书中涉及的国际贸易业务知识内容新、信息量大,并体现了良好的完整性和系统性。各个章节都提供了实例中重点和难点的注解和例句,精心编写了习题并附有参考答案;增加了简历、备忘录、邀请函、感谢信等内容,方便了教学和相当水平的学习者自学需要。

全书用英文编写。在编写过程中,突出了实用性。但使用者的需求千差万别,因此希望使用者结合自身实际情况,对教材内容有所侧重,有所取舍。同时,随着世界形势和现代信息技术的发展,商务活动形式和国际贸易内容也在不断地发展更新,也需要使用者密切关注国际贸易的最新发展动态,及时补充已有的知识体系。

本书由中北大学芮燕萍教授担任主编,白瑞、赵晓霞、李瑞萍、郭丽君、朱向梅等参与编写,全书由芮燕萍教授负责审定和统稿。本书的出版得到了高等教育出版社的大力支持,特别是策划编辑张维华和责任编辑吴爽做了大量辛勤的工作,许多外贸公司也给予了积极协助,提供了大量素材,在此一并表示衷心的感谢!

由于本书编写人员水平有限,书中难免存在缺点和不足之处,恳请使用本书的广大读者不吝指正,并提出具体的意见和建议,以便我们今后修订、提高和完善。

芮燕萍

2012年11月

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# Chapter ①ne

## Structure and Layout of a Business Letter



### I. Introduction

Business English is standard English applied to specific business purposes. In today's highly developed and toughly competitive business world, few international business transactions can be carried out successfully without correspondence at some point. Therefore, business correspondence is still a basic activity involved in trade, and remains a very important form of communication even nowadays. Business letters, including cables, telexes, e-mails and faxes are the silent salesmen of companies, representing its close contact with the outside world and delivering their companies' images to the public. Business letters are written for exchanging information and bridging over the desires between buyers and sellers, and they are often an arrangement or regarded as evidence of a contract. Therefore, efficient letter writing in English is very essential and indispensable in international trade.

Every business message is designed to achieve a specific business objective. Its success depends on what it says and to what extent it induces a favorable response from the reader. Good quality paper, an attractive letterhead and neat appearance of documents help achieve a good impression of the company, but they are less important than the message they carry. The most effective letter should be easy to read and easy to understand. They must be friendly and courteous.

In order to write a good and effective business letter, the writer should be equipped with the following skills: a good command of standard English, knowledge of business theories and practice, and knowledge of technical terms and skills in salesmanship.



### II. Principles of good business writing

Business letters play an important role in developing goodwill and friendly trade relationships. A business letter is considered successful when the receiver interprets the message as the sender intended and at the same time it achieves the sender's purposes. In order to meet these objectives, the writer should always bear in mind the essential qualities of business letters, which can be summarized in the following 7 C's principles.

#### 1. Clarity

The writer should try to express himself clearly, so the reader will understand correctly.



To achieve this objective, the writer should be quite clear about what he wants to say, and convey his meaning with appropriate words in correct sentence structures.

Use expressions with precise/accurate meaning. Don't use words with vague meaning such as "seem" "perhaps" "maybe" "almost". Avoid ambiguous sentences. For example, "It is estimated that...", "it seems like ...", "We perhaps can deliver the goods in April."

Write in plain English. "Plain" means simple, clear and easily understood. Expressing yourself in simple English will make your message clear at first reading.

In short, good, straightforward and simple language is what are needed for business letters.

## 2. Conciseness

Conciseness means saying things in the fewest possible words. A concise business letter should say things briefly but completely without losing clarity and courtesy. Follow the Principle "KISS" (Keep It Short and Simple). Use no more words than what are needed to make your meaning clear. Busy businessmen and business women today do not have time to read long documents, and they welcome the art of letter which is direct and to the point.

In most cases, keep your sentences short and avoid the over-frequent use of such conjunctions as "and" "but" "however", for these words make sentences longer.

Don't be wordy. Use plain, familiar words and prefer short words to long ones, a single word to an elaborate phrase.

Avoid using such padded expressions as "it should be noted that...", "due to the fact that..." and etc.

### For examples,

I am in receipt of your letter of 8 July which we received today.	( × )
Thank you for your letter of 8 July.	( √ )
I should be glad if you would be good enough to advise me when it would be convenient for us to arrange to meet to discuss this matter further.	( × )
Please let me know when we can meet to discuss this.	( √ )
We require furniture which is of the new type.	( × )
We require new-type furniture.	( √ )
Don't hesitate to contact me.	( × )
Please contact me.	( √ )
Please feel free to contact me.	( √ )

### 3. Courtesy

Courtesy is, not in using polite phrases, but in showing a sincere You-attitude. It is the quality that enables us to refuse to perform a favor and at the same time keep a friend. A courteous writer should be sincere and tactful, thoughtful and appreciative.

Deal promptly. Answer letters on the day you receive them if you can.

Respect the receiver, respect their views, and respect their customs and habits.

Take a friendly and modest tone. For example,

Cold, aloof	Friendly, warm
Your letter has been received.	We have received your letter.
Your complaint is being looked into.	We are looking into your complaint.
It is regretted that the goods cannot be delivered today.	I'm sorry we cannot deliver the goods today.

Use active instead of passive voice. Active voice makes the tone more interesting and lively, gives your writing a focus, shows responsibility and is more personal and natural. But passive voice makes your writing vague, denies responsibility and creates a distance between you and your reader.

Never accuse your reader of making a mistake.

Never be unsympathetic, condescending or rude.

Always be grateful for a favor.

Always be sincere and clear.

### 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/her feelings in mind and try to put yourself in his/her place. Plan the best way to present the message for the reader to receive.

Use the language and message for the receiver's needs. It's also better to focus on the positive rather than the negative approach. Positive writing will give the reader a better impression and ultimately improve its effectiveness, while negative language triggers negative results.

#### For example,

If you do not return your form before August you will be too late to attend the conference. (Negative)



Please return our form by 31 July so that we can register your name for the conference. (Positive)

I write to send my congratulations. (Negative)

Congratulations to you on your promotion. (Positive)

We won't be able to send you the brochure this month. (Negative)

We will send you the brochure next month. (Positive)

Avoid irritating expressions like these: *our failure to reply; your neglect; your refusal to cooperate; you fail to; you have ignored; it is not our fault; you cannot expect; we must insist; you should know.*

## 5. Concreteness

To make the message specific, definite and vivid is the key point of concreteness. Avoid being too general, vague and abstract, especially when the writer is requiring a response, solving problems, making an offer or acceptance, etc.

Always aim to include all necessary details in your letters such as dates, times, figures, sum of money and technical words.

### For example,

The meeting has been postponed. (Vague)

The meeting has been postponed to Monday 14 July at 10 o'clock. (Concrete)

These brakes can stop a car within a short distance. (Vague)

These Goodson power brakes can stop a 2-ton car within 24 feet. (Concrete)

Various aspects of this equipment make it a good choice. (Vague)

This machine is a good choice because it is more compact and less expensive than other ones in the market. (Concrete)

### 6. Correctness

As applied to a business message, correctness means appropriate and grammatically correct language, factual information and accurate and reliable figures, as well as the right forms and conventions.

To guarantee correctness of a business letter, the writer should always bear in mind the following:

- Choose only accurate facts, words and figures;
- Be clear about the meaning of all the terms and jargons used;
- Be honest about the things you say;
- Use the correct level of language;
- Observe all the writing principles.

### 7. Completeness

A business letter should include all the necessary information, for an incomplete message may result in increased communication costs, loss of goodwill, sales and valued customers.

It is essential to check the message carefully before it is sent out.

All in all, good business letter writing is to write simply, and in an easy and natural way just like one friendly person talking to another.



## III. Parts of a business letter

Broadly speaking, most business letters are composed of the following 13 parts.

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. letterhead 信头        | 8. body 正文                  |
| 2. date 日期              | 9. complimentary close 结尾敬语 |
| 3. reference 编号         | 10. signature 签名            |
| 4. inside address 封内地址  | 11. enclosure notation 附件   |
| 5. attention line 指明收信人 | 12. carbon copy notation 抄送 |
| 6. salutation 称呼        | 13. postscript 附言           |
| 7. subject line 事由行     |                             |



Among them, letterhead, date, reference, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, and signature are standard factors and must be contained in a formal business letter. The others are optional parts. Whether to use optional parts depends on the specific situation. The approximate locations of these parts in a business letter are as follows:

### LETTERHEAD

(Date)

(Reference)

(Inside Address)

---

---

(Attention Line)

(Salutation)

(Subject Line)

(Body)

---

---

---

(Complimentary Close)

(Signature)

(Enclosure Notation)

(Carbon Copy Notation)

(Postscript)



### 1. Letterhead

Letterhead designs, expressing the personality of a company, vary with business organizations and are generally printed on the company's stationery. Usually, it may be positioned at the center or at the left margin on the top of the page.

A business letterhead contains all or some of the following elements: the sender's company name, postal address, postcode, telephone number, telex number, fax number, and even the logo of the company (some picture or slogan for a symbol of the company).

If a sheet of letter paper does not have a printed letterhead on it, the name and address of the sender's company should be typed on the left or right margin.

*New World Computers, Inc.*  
*1881 Long Beach Street*  
*Los Angeles, CA90025*  
*Tel: (213)686 0000    Fax: (213)686 0001*

### 2. Date

Every letter should be dated—never send out a letter without a date. The date should be placed two lines below the letterhead either on the right or on the left, which depends on the styles you decide to use.

The names of months are preferably spelled out in full and not abbreviated. Avoid using figures, because practice to write dates varies in different countries. British practice follows the order of day, month and year, while it is the US practice to write in the order of month, day and year. For example, 6/8/2010 could be taken as either June 8 or August 6, 2010. The recommended forms for dates are as follows:

*June 14, 2010*

*14 June 2010*

There is a growing tendency that the DAY is expressed in cardinal numbers, e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4... instead of ordinals, e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th..., because when dating a letter, beginners are apt to write 1th, 2th, 3th, 21th, 22th, 23th, and 31th, or 11st, 12nd and 13rd.

### 3. Reference

The reference number is generally used as a useful indication for filing and linking with previous correspondence, so it must be easily seen. It is often placed two lines below the letterhead or the date. The reference may include a file number, department code or/and the initials of the signer followed by that of the typist of the letter. It is often typed in short form as "Our Ref.:" for the sender's reference number, and "Your Ref.:" for the recipient's. If both