

全方位商务英语系列教材

English Correspondence for
International Business

国际商务信函写作

董晓波 主编



对外经济贸易大学出版社

University of International Business and Economics Press

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**English Correspondence for
International Business**

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对外经济贸易大学出版社
中国·北京

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

国际商务信函写作 / 董晓波主编. —北京: 对外
经济贸易大学出版社, 2013
全方位商务英语系列教材
ISBN 978-7-5663-0809-2

I. ①国… II. ①董… III. ①商务-英语-信函-写
作-高等学校-教材 IV. ①H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2013) 第 211637 号

© 2013 年 对外经济贸易大学出版社出版发行

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国际商务信函写作
English Correspondence for
International Business

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北京市山华苑印刷有限责任公司印装 新华书店北京发行所发行
成品尺寸: 185mm × 260mm 18.5 印张 428 千字
2013 年 9 月北京第 1 版 2013 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-5663-0809-2

印数: 0 001 - 3 000 册 定价: 34.00 元

前 言

随着中国经济的迅速发展,对外交流合作的不断深入以及信息科学技术的飞速发展,国际商务形式更加灵活,内容更加丰富多样,对外联系和信息交流日趋频繁。电子商务的日益发展和普及在给人们带来极大便利的同时,也对人们的国际沟通能力提出了极大的挑战。中国社会需要大量外语基础好,又精通国际商务规则的高素质的复合型人才。为了满足各大专院校培养复合型商务英语人才以及社会上各阶层国际经贸工作者的需要,我们特编写了《国际商务信函写作》一书。

本书运用国内外商务交际的最新研究成果,从原则出发,突出商务写作的特点,在培养学习者分析和判断能力的同时,启发学习者思考和创造。本教材的编写宗旨是:致力于解决学习者在商务英语写作中面临的主要问题,即如何学以致用,把课堂学习同就业需要有机结合;把商务背景知识、语言知识和语言技能有机结合。书中既介绍了商务函电写作的理论知识和业务技巧,又总结出标准模式、提供大量的范例和表达方式,并附有相关的合同及各种单证范本。

本书内容全面详实,共包括 18 个单元,涵盖了外贸函电、合同协议、求职写作、日常办公写作和商务报告等各种主要商务英语写作任务类型。各单元均遵循统一体例,分三部分。第一部分为概述部分,概要介绍当前单元所涉及的商务知识和商务文体的性质、特点和格式等;第二部分为样例部分,例文后附有新词难词注解及编者的简要分析评论,以帮助学习者更好地理解掌握每一种商务文体的写作技巧和要点;第三部分是练习部分。这部分为学习者提供了自我检查的机会。学习者可以按照自己不同的学习需求,选择适合自己的习题进行实际操练。为了便于读者自学,所有的习题均配有参考答案,请到出版社的网站上下载。下载网址: <http://www.uibep.com>。

本书可供国际贸易、工商管理、法律、财税、英语等专业的二、三年级本科生作为复合型专业英语教材使用,也可供具有一定英语基础的商务工作者学习参考,还可作为进出口从业人员的商务英语写作手册。

本书由董晓波主编,陈钟梅副主编,王娇娇、姚肖敏、梁昕诺、孟浩、马瑞、张在花参编。在整个编写过程中,我们力求完美,但是限于水平,不乏偏颇和疏漏之处,恳请广大同仁和读者不吝指正,以便充实与完善。

董晓波

2013 年 6 月

于南京东方城紫金山麓

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Introduction to Business Letter Writing

（商务信函写作概论）



Introduction

Business communication refers to all the messages that are sent and received for business purposes. In international business communication among people from different countries, messages can be transmitted by written and electronic correspondence (such as letter, memo, fax, e-mail) or through oral media (such as telephone, voice mail, teleconferencing). As a matter of fact, a good business letter plays an important role in trade. It can help you reach a deal, improve customers' satisfaction, promote the sale of our products, keep a good impression of our company and increase friendship and obtain complete understanding between the parties involved. So it is of the very importance for you to master the skills of reading and writing a good business letter that presents ideas interestingly and clearly to enable readers to understand with the least possible effort.



Layout of a Business Letter

A business letter may have as many as 12 parts or more, each having different function and conveying different message. Below is a sample letter with nearly all the necessary parts of a business letter. We shall explain them one by one.

China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Imp. & Exp. Corp.
8 Jianguomen Nei Dajie
Beijing 10005, China
Telephone: 86-10-6526-8888
Fax: 86-10-6527-6028
E-mail: carl@cofco.com.cn

1. Headline

10. Our Ref.
Your Ref.

2. Date
Date: 15th November, 20--

3. Inside Name and Address
Messrs H. Ronald & Co.
556 Eastcheap
London, E.C. 3, England

4. Attention Line
Attention: Import Dept.

5. Salutation
Dear Sirs,

6. Subject Line
Aquatic Products

7. Body
We thank you for your enquiry of 15th November.
In compliance with your request, we are sending you herewith a copy of our illustrated catalogue and a quotation sheet for your reference.
All prices are subject to our confirmation for our aquatic products have been selling well this season. Therefore, we would suggest that you advise us by a fax in case of interest.
We await your early favorable reply.

8. Complimentary Close
Yours truly,

9. Signature
China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Imp. & Exp. Corp.
Sig. _____
(Manager)

10. Enclosure
Enclosures
cc our Shanghai Branch Office

11. Copy
P.S. We require payment by L/C for a total value not exceeding USD50, 000.

12. Postscript

1) **Letterhead:** A letterhead is the heading at the top of a sheet of letter paper. It usually consists of a name and an address, and a logo or corporate design, and sometimes a background. Letterhead may also refer to a piece of letter paper imprinted with such a heading.

2) **Date:** including the accurate year, month and day.

3) **Inside address:** The inside address should include the receiver's name and title, company name, street address, city, state (province), post-code, and country (if necessary). They are typed at the upper left-hand margin of the sheet, starting two to three lines below the last line of the letterhead.

4) **Attention line:** The attention line is usually used when the writer of a letter wants it to be handled by a specific individual or section of the firm. Otherwise, you don't have to use it. The attention line may be underlined or typed in capitals:

ATTENTION: DR. BLAKE WOOD

Or: Attention: Dr. Blake Wood

5) **Salutation:** Salutation is placed two lines below the inside address. The salutation is "Gentlemen" if the letter is addressed to an organization. In business correspondence, the most commonly used salutation forms are:

Dear Sirs, (British Style)

Gentlemen: (American Style)

Dear Sir,

Dear Madam,

Dear Mr. Brown,

Whether married or unmarried, a woman is always addressed as "Dear Madam", never as "Dear Miss". The Americans prefer to use "Gentlemen" while the British use "Dear Sirs". Even when the firm's name is the name of a single individual, the salutation of plural form is preferred.

In writing to a firm consisting of both men and women, or even to a firm consisting of women alone, the salutation of "Gentlemen" is preferably used.

The salutation of "Dear Sirs" is followed by a comma and "Gentlemen" is followed by a colon.

6) **Subject line:** Subject line usually uses a brief phrase to define what the letter is going to talk about. It can either be placed under the salutation or above it.

7) **Body of the letter**

This part is the most important one in business correspondence. The body of the letter generally consists of four essential parts.

① Opening (or Introduction)

The opening is actually the background of this letter. It indicates the referring letter, contract or letter of credit to which response will be made.

② Details

The details refer to the enquires, problems, requirements, etc. which will be put forth by the letter. Some relative details will be illustrated in this part.

③ Response (or Action)

In this part the expected response or possible decision will be expressed here.

④ Close

In this part a short close must be made politely. Attention must be paid to the keeping of friendly relations between the letter writer and the letter receiver. Business development should not be hindered by a discourteous letter close.

In writing the body of the letter you must always ask yourself about the purpose of writing this letter. You must always consider the best ways of accomplishing your hope and conveying your ideas to your correspondent. Try your best to streamline your letter and use short sentences and short paragraphs for giving your correspondent a brief letter to read fast. Start a new paragraph for each point you wish to stress and make your letter to be read easily and clearly and as well inspire the action or response you desire.

8) **Complimentary close:** courtesy expressions used when ending the letter.

Complimentary Close is used to provide the letter with a courteous ending. The correct position for complimentary close is two lines below the body of the letter to the right side of the page, in line with the date block at the top.

In business correspondence, “Yours truly” is the style used most frequently. Here are some more styles which can be used: Yours sincerely, Sincerely yours, Yours faithfully, Faithfully yours.

If continuation sheets are needed, plain paper of the same quality as the letterhead must be used and typed with a heading to show the following:

- (1) The number of the sheet (in the center of the page)
- (2) The name of your correspondent (on the left-hand side)
- (3) The date of the letter (on the right-hand side)

Example:

— P2 —	
China Textile I / E Corp.	Nov. 1 st , 2009

9) **Signature:** signature of the sender

The signature is the signed name of the person writing the letter. It is signed by hand in black or blue ink. Since the hand-written signature is illegible, the name of the signer should be typed below the signature. The name should be written out in full, as initials may be misleading or confusing. It is common to have the writer's name typed several lines below the complimentary close, leaving space between for the hand-written signature, followed by one's job title or position.

If the writer writes the letter for his firm, not for himself, he should type the name of his firm in capital letters below the complimentary close, followed by his signed name right below it.

10) **Enclosure**: If something is enclosed, note it below the Signature.

Enclosure 4 samples

Encl. Price List

11) **Copy notation**

When copies of the letter are sent to others, type c.c. below the signature at the left margin.

c.c. The Osaka Chamber c.c. Mr. G well

12) **Postscript**

When the letter writer forgets to mention or to emphasize something in his letter, he may add his postscript two spaces below the copy notation, as,

P.S. The catalogue will be airmailed to you under separate cover.

However, the adding of a “P.S.” will show that the writer’s letter is lack of good planning and careful consideration, so the adding of a “P.S.” should be avoided as far as possible.



Letter Styles

Below are three popular styles for business letters. However, whatever the form you use, you should always keep a proper margin for your letter which will make your letter more effective.

1) **Block Style** (齐头式)

除了信纸的信头 (letterhead) 已印制于公司专用信纸的中央顶端, 其它各项均集中于信纸的左端。

2) **Semi-block Style** (混合式)

又称“Modified Block Style with Indented Paragraphs”。

混合式把日期 (date) 和参照号 (references) 的位置固定在右边, 以方便归档和检索工作的进行; 结尾语 (complimentary close)、签名 (signature) 及打印的名字 (typed name) 可放中间, 信纸的信头 (letterhead) 等其余部分放在信纸左端。

3) **Indented Style** (缩行式)

缩行式可以选择以上两者任意一个形式, 只有正文 (main body) 部分起头处向内缩五、六个空格。

以下将这三种形式生动直观地表现出来。

6 国际商务信函写作

1) 齐头式

<u>Letterhead</u>	
<u>Date</u>	
<u>Inside Address</u>	

<u>Salutation</u>	
<u>Main Body</u>	

<u>Complimentary Close</u>	
<u>Signature</u>	

Example:

Jill & Johnson Co. Ltd.	
28 Linkin Street, Toronto, Canada	
Tel: *****	E-mail: *****
Fax: *****	Post Code: *****
20 July, 2009	
Mr. ***	
General Manager	
Jiangsu Textile Imp. & Exp. Corp.	
14 Renming Street, Gulou District	
Nanjing 210097, China	
Our Ref. No. *****	
<u>Attention: General Manager</u>	

Dear Mr. Lee,

Re: Establishing Business Relationship

Your name and good experiences of managing the import and export businesses in the line of textile industry have been known to us for a long time, but much to our regret, we have not yet established definite business relationship between us.

As you know, it is our policy to trade with the businessmen of all countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Our firm has been keeping long direct relations with our competitive domestic manufacturers. We believe the establishing of our business relationship will greatly help the economic development of our two nations.

We hope to receive your reply as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Jill & Johnson Co. Ltd.

Signature(hand-signed)

Jill Smith (typed Our Branch)

2) 混合式

Letterhead

Date _____

Inside Address

Salutation

Main Body

_____.

Complimentary Close

Signature

Example:

Jill & Johnson Co. Ltd.	
28 Linkin Street, Toronto, Canada	
Tel: *****	E-mail: *****
Fax: *****	Post Code: *****
27 July, 2009	
Mr. ***	
General Manager	
Jiangsu Textile Imp. & Exp. Corp.	
14 Renming Street, Gulou District	
Nanjing 210097, China	
Dear Sirs,	
<u>Re: Expediting the Delivery of the Goods</u>	
With reference to our 2,000 dozen silk dresses under our Sales Confirmation No. K963, we think it is our duty to remind you that the date of delivery is approaching, but we still haven't received your Shipping Advice. Since our L / C has already been opened for one month, please expedite the delivery of the goods to meet the urgent needs of our customers.	
In addition, we would like to inform you that any delay in delivery of our goods will effect the prospective business relationship between us.	
Looking forward to your prompt reply.	
Yours sincerely,	
Jill & Johnson Co. Ltd.	
Signature (hand-signed)	
Jill Smith (typed Our Branch)	

3) 缩行式

<u>Letterhead</u>	
<u>Inside Address</u>	<u>Date</u> _____

Salutation

Main Body

Complimentary Close

Signature

Example:

Jill & Johnson Co. Ltd.
28 Linkin Street, Toronto, Canada
Tel: ***** E-mail: *****
Fax: ***** Post Code: *****

12 November, 2009

Mr. ***

General Manager

Jiangsu Textile Imp. & Exp. Corp.

14 Renming Street, Gulou District

Nanjing 210097, China

Dear Sirs,

Mr. James Green, president of our Corp. and Mr. Joseph Johnson, Marketing Manager, would like to visit China to continue our discussion on the production line. They are planning to leave Toronto at the beginning of December and to stay in your city about one week.

Would you please let us know your opinion on this planned visit? If their visit is agreeable and convenient for you, please request your Embassy here to issue them the necessary visa. We would be very glad if you would offer us your suggestion on their itinerary.

Sincerely
Henry Smith



Writing Principles of Business Letters

These seven principles all begin with the letter “C”, and we can call them the “7C’s”.

1. Clarity

The writer should express his aims, ideas and requirements clearly not only by distinct and understandable wordings, but also by correct phrases, tenses, voices and sentence structures in order not to be misunderstood or misinterpreted. The writer had better follow the following tips:

- 1) Choose short, familiar, and conversational words instead of long, unfamiliar ones.
- 2) Construct effective sentences and paragraphs. Short sentences and paragraphs are easy to understand. Therefore, the business letter writer should try to avoid wordy sentences and lengthy paragraphs.
- 3) Use facts, examples, illustrations and other visual aids to improve the clarity, if appropriate.

Compare:

Economical—

Will you please return the enclosed card and arrange a convenient time for an interview?

Wordy—

At this time I am writing to you to enclose the postpaid appointment card for the purpose of arranging a convenient time when we might get together for a personal interview.

2. Courtesy

When writing to your correspondents, it is necessary for you not only to be polite, but also to be sincere and tactful, thoughtful and appreciative. It is also a kind of courtesy for the tradesmen to answer the letters and the enquiries promptly. Any delay in dealing with the matters is discourteous.

3. 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. There is an old saying: “Put yourself into the reader’s shoes.” It means that you must always show your consideration for your correspondents.

4. Conciseness

Conciseness is saying what you have to say in the fewest possible words without losing clarity and courtesy. Businessmen today have many letters to read and welcome the art of letter that is direct and to the point. To achieve conciseness, the writer should try to avoid wordiness and redundancy.

Please compare the following sentences:

- 1) —We require furniture which is of the new type.
—We require new-type furniture.
- 2) —We have begun to export our machines to countries abroad.
—We have begun to export our machine.

5. Correctness

Correctness refers not only to correct usage of grammar, punctuation and spelling, but also to standard language, proper statement, accurate figures as well as the correct understanding of commercial jargons. To write correctly, the writer should follow the following tips:

- 1) Pay attention to the formality of the language, use the correct level of language and write your letter accordingly.
- 2) Use right approaches. Business writers use different approaches depending on the nature of their messages and the readers.
- 3) Include only accurate facts, words and figures.
- 4) Keep acceptable writing mechanics.

6. Concreteness

The enquiries of others about something and your answers to the others' letters must be made with reality and concreteness. Any ambiguous and vague words must not be used and the information must be supplied with definiteness and concreteness.

7. Completeness

The business letters must consist of complete and intact information. The incomplete information will fail to enable the tradesmen to seize the business opportunities of doing mutually beneficial trades.



Other Forms of Business Letters

Nowadays, both faxes and e-mails are widely used in trade communication. In fact, either a fax or an e-mail usually adopts a much simpler letter layout but the body of the message remains the same as that of a letter.

1. Fax

Fax (short for facsimile) has become indispensable to many individuals and businesses, increasing the speed of communication and changing our idea of “response time” from days to minutes. It can send messages not only to use many acronyms or short forms of words. People can use fax to send all kinds of messages, such as making an appointment, changing an appointment time (or place), canceling an appointment, making all kinds of invitations, congratulations and appreciations, etc. Knowing how to write a fax message in the correct form becomes a must for all who want to go into the business world. Here are some tips on