



21世纪高等院校国际经济与贸易、商务英语、应用英语等专业规划教材/专业系列教材

# 国际商务函电

International Business  
Communication

主 编 / 刘 丽

副主编 / 陈红兵 周 敏 李画画 高 慧

江西人民出版社 / 全国百佳出版社

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# 前言

国际商务英语函电是国际商务往来通用的一种联系方式和专业语言,也是开展对外贸易和国际经济合作等业务活动的重要工具。掌握国际商务英语函电的基本知识,并熟练地加以操作运用,是从事对外经贸业务人员必须具备的一个重要条件。

《国际商务函电》是国际经济与贸易专业的主干专业基础课程。为了适应我国广泛开展对外贸易与经济合作等国际商务往来的需要,《国际商务函电》这门课程的主要任务是培养学生在走上工作岗位后能够迅速适应对外经贸业务活动的需要,帮助经贸院校学生和外贸工作者系统地学习和掌握国际商务英语函电的各种行文方法、格式、专业词语及其语言文体特点,掌握有关国际商务函电写作及国际商务活动相关的词汇、句型及其相关的专业知识,从而提高在外贸业务活动中正确使用英语进行各项国际商务通讯联系和交易活动的能力和水平,使其成为具备高素质的应用型人才。

本书根据国际商务英语的特点,结合我国对外经济贸易业务通讯联系的实际情况和需要,确定课文情景、业务环节和功能项目,并尽量照顾到个别较重要的常用贸易方式;同时结合每课的特定情景,有系统地重点介绍有关国际商务通讯的语言形式、体裁和写作技巧、规则,以及使用习惯等基本知识。本书的语言材料系根据当前对外经贸业务活动中的通讯联系往来函电,本书汲取了国内外同类书的一些新成果,紧密结合我国外贸业务实际,按照编写本书的需要,经过适当的补充和必要的改写加工,有系统地进行编写的,同时,总结和归纳了国际经贸业务中的常用术语、常用短语、句型结构和缩略语。

本教材按照进出口外贸业务的流程,在内容和结构上分为七大部分:

第一部分介绍了外贸函电的书写原则和特点;第二部分介绍了开发信和调查资信情况的咨询;第三部分介绍了外贸交易磋商的过程,即询盘、报盘、还盘和接受;第四部分介绍了订货和签订外贸合同;第五部分介绍了外贸合同内容的磋商,包括包装、运输、保险、支付、争议和索赔;第六部分介绍了各种国际贸易方式,包括代理、加工贸易、装配贸易、补偿贸易、合资经营、技术转移、招投标等;第七部分介绍其他的杂务信函,包括邀请函,感谢信,祝贺信,道歉信,约见信,通知、要求、催办信,访问信,求职函等。



本书在编写前期搜集了大量的资料,采用“篇、章、节”的结构,在每篇、每章开始之前,对本篇内容的重点、难点加以说明,使学生在在学习之前对整篇主要内容有所了解。在编写时注重内容体系和模块的安排,大模块篇篇相连,小模块环环相扣,组成系统的“知识链”,从而使本书的结构完整,内容更加系统、连贯并且紧贴外贸实际。

1. 针对性。在了解外贸专业基础知识的同时,重点培养外贸业务的实际操作能力。

2. 实用性。选取大量的、实用的外贸函电样本,通过对样本案例的分析,熟悉外贸业务中各种信函、电子邮件,通过大量的技能训练把基础英语和外贸英语有机结合起来,使学生具备撰写外贸英语书信的能力。

3. 系统性、连贯性。按照外贸业务流程使学生容易理清教材的知识体系。本书结构严谨,在层次上循序渐进、由浅入深,集国际经贸实务的中英文应用于一体,有利于学生更深入地学习运用英文的读写能力,又利于学生的课后复习和自学。

本书可作为各高等院校国际经济与贸易专业、商务英语专业、国际商务专业、电子商务专业等相关专业《外经贸英语函电》或《国际商务函电》课程的教材,也可供从事外贸业务等国际商务活动工作者学习参考。

本书由刘丽担任主编,负责全书的设计和统稿工作;陈红兵、周敏、李画画、高慧担任副主编。参编人员及具体的编写分工如下:周敏(武汉理工大学华夏学院)编写第一部分,李画画(山东科技大学泰安校区)编写第二部分,刘丽(湖北工业大学商贸学院)编写第三、四、五部分,陈红兵(湖北工业大学商贸学院)编写第六部分,高慧(华中师范大学汉口分校)编写第七部分。

在本书编写过程中,得到相关学校的校、系领导的大力支持,许多外贸公司有关业务部门也给予积极协助,提供了大量素材,在此一并表示衷心的感谢!同时,参考了大量的书籍和教材,在此对参考文献的编者表示感谢。

由于编者的水平有限,书中内容难免有缺点和不足之处,敬请各位读者、教学工作者,结合实际情况,提出具体意见,加以指正。

编者

2013年12月



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### I. Introduction

In today's highly developed and toughly competitive society, business communication between individuals and groups is becoming increasingly frequent and important.

Every business produces paperwork. Generally speaking, the function of a business letter is to get or to convey business information, to make or to accept an offer, to deal with various businesses. A prospective business needs to convey various kinds of business information to its employees, clients, trading partners and funding bodies in order to operate the business and to promote products and services. Business writing serves to pass on information, to express ideas, to exchange feeling and to deal with social business.

The whole secret of good business letter writing is to write simply, in an easy and natural way—like one friendly human being talking to another, to make your letters then, sound as much as possible like good conversation.

If a business letter is to achieve its purpose, the writer should have: a good command of standard English; knowledge of business theory and practice; knowledge of technical terms; knowledge of psychology skills in salesmanship. Therefore, it is necessary for people who engage in foreign affairs to have a good command of the linguistic features and writing techniques in practical English writing.

### II. Principles of business letter writing

A business message is considered successful when the receiver interprets the message as the sender intended it and it achieves the senders' purpose. In order to meet these objectives, American experts in business communication developed seven Cs' principles: Clearness, Conciseness, Correctness, Courtesy, Consideration, Concreteness, Completeness



### 1. Clearness

In order to achieve the Clearness you should not convey more than one idea in a sentence. You should not introduce more than one topic in a paragraph. You should not deal with more than one matter in a letter.

For example:

Instead of saying: I am writing to apply for admission to your university.

You can say: I am writing to apply for admission to the graduate school of your university in the spring of 2010.

### 2. Conciseness

Effective writing is concise—each word, sentence, and paragraph counts. Conciseness means to write in the fewest possible words without sacrificing completeness and courtesy. Because a wordy message requires more time to write and read, business people put a high premium on conciseness in business messages. Conciseness will give emphasis to the message.

Here are some examples:

example 1:

Instead of saying: We should be obliged if you could contact Mr. Smith at an early date.

You can say: Please contact Mr. Smith soon.

example 2:

Instead of saying: With reference to your Order 319, the goods were dispatched on the 13 of this month.

You can say: We sent your Order 319 on 13 April.

### 3. Correctness

You have to make sure that both the language and facts are correct. In terms of language, you should make sure that you make no grammatical mistakes. Pay attention to punctuation for it will affect the meaning of the sentence.

Grammar mistakes often occurred in business writing, here are some examples:

(1) Grammar mistakes with pronouns:

Our competitors' prices are 2% ~3% lower than (us) (ours).

(2) Grammar mistakes with verbs:

It is one of the machines that was (were) delivered last week.

(3) Grammar mistakes with conjunctions:

This fridge not only is attractive (is attractive not only) in proper price, but also in good quality.

(4) Grammar mistakes with subjects:

example 1:



While studying the report, the telephone rang.

Rewriting: While I was studying the report, the telephone rang.

example 2:

Depositing money with us, our bank can pay you high dividends.

Rewriting: Depositing money with us, you earn high dividends.

(5) Grammar mistakes with punctuation:

☞ Our shop, in America, was destroyed by fire. 在美国我们的商店被烧毁了。

From this sentence, we know that the writer has only one shop.

☞ Our shop in America was destroyed by fire. 我们在美国的商店被烧毁了。

Here we know that the writer has more than one shop.

You should also make sure that there are no typing mistakes. Pay special attention to numbers, such as quantity, price and so on.

#### 4. Courtesy

Review of actual business correspondence reveals that special attention should be devoted to assuring the courtesy of business communication. By courtesy we mean treating people with respect and friendly human concern. Effective writers visualize the reader before starting to write. They consider the reader's desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reactions to their request.

Here are some examples:

example 1:

Instead of saying: I am in receipt of your order for 1,000 tons of Black Tea.

You can say: Thank you for your order for 1,000 tons of Black Tea.

example 2:

Instead of saying: We shall be able to offer you free customer service for your newly purchased refrigerator for 3 years.

You can say: You will be pleased to hear that you will soon be able to have a free customer service for your newly purchased refrigerator for 3 years.

**Adopt "you approach" when you convey a good news.**

example 3:

Instead of saying: "Your letter is not clear at all. I cannot understand it."

You can say: "If I understand your letter correctly..."

**Avoid using "you approach" when conveying bad news. In this situation, you have to handle it tactfully.**

#### 5. 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.

Here are some examples:

example 1:

Instead of saying: We do not believe you will have causes for dissatisfaction.

You can say: We feel sure that you will be entirely satisfied.

example 2:

Instead of saying: We won't be able to send you the brochure this month.

You can say: We will send you the brochure next month.

## 6. Concreteness

Business writing should be vivid, specific and definite rather than vague, general and abstract, especially when the writer is requiring a response, solving problems, making an offer or acceptance, etc.

Here are some examples:

example 1:

Instead of saying: We wish to confirm our telegram yesterday.

You can say: We confirm our telegraph of January 18.

example 2:

Instead of saying: We have drawn on you as usually under your L/C.

You can say: We have drawn on our sight draft No. 115 for the Invoice amount, US \$ 45,000 under your L/C No. 178 of China Construction Bank.

## 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 information is lacking, the reader will have to ask you 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.

Here is an example:

Dear Sirs,

With reference to your letter of March 3, we are pleased to accept your offer of 230 sets of sewing machines as per your offer sheet No. 221. Please go ahead and apply for your Export License. As soon as we were informed of the number of your Export License, we will open L/C.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Hill



### III. Structure of business letters

#### 1. Seven Principal Parts

A business letter has seven structural parts: (1) the heading (letter-head), (2) the date, (3) the inside address, (4) the salutation, (5) the body of the letter, (6) the complimentary close, (7) the signature (handwritten and then typed).

##### (1) Heading

The heading tells where the writer wrote the letter. Since most companies use stationary with printed letter-head; the company name, address, telephone, telex or fax numbers, and logo (the company symbol).

Example:

Golden Trading Company Ltd.

34 Northern Avenue, New York, U. S. A.

Tel: 1234567 Telex: 2345667GBC Fax: 4455666

##### (2) Date

The date tells when the writer wrote the letter. Under the printed letterhead, you can type the date in full, in the logical order of day, month, year. The position of the date depends on the style you use. When writing on blank paper, type the name of your firm, its address, and the date at the right or left margin, depending on the style you choose.

There are different ways of writing the date. The following two are recommended.

September 15, 1994

15 September 1994 (Note the Omission of the comma)

In British correspondence, the date is on the right and could be after the inside address.

There is a growing tendency to omit the-th, -rd, -nd and-st that follow the day.

Do not abbreviate or use figures for the month. Note:

Wrong:

Sept. 15, 1994

9/15 1994 or 15/9, 1994

Example:

SKYVIEW ENTERPRISES

7111 Tetraro Place Sarasota, Fl 33031 (813)598 - 1026

January 20, 1995

##### (3) The Inside Address

The inside address contains the name and the address of the addressee, the person or company you are writing to. It is on the left two spaces below the date line. If you know the name and ti-



title of the person, you should include them. In addressing an individual in a company, the inside address contains both the individual's name and that of the company. The address should be the same as the one on the envelope.

Courtesy titles are used in business letters. "Mr." "Ms." "Mrs." or a substitute form should never be omitted from the inside address. When writing to a woman always address her as she signs herself. It is considered correct to address a woman "Ms." unless she has signed herself "Mrs."

Esquire or Esq. may be used in addressing prominent attorneys or other high ranking professional men who do not have other titles. "Esq." always follows the name, separated from it by a comma. "Mr." does not precede the name when Esquire or Esq. is used. e. g. Stone, Esq. "Mr." or "Esq." is used in England for addressing a single man. Other common titles include "Prof", "Dr", "Rev (reverend)", "Hon (honorable)" (used for senators, congressmen, ambassadors, governors, judges, mayors, and heads of government departments), etc. "Messrs" (Plural form of Mr.) may be used in addressing a firm of men, or men and women, when the name includes a personal element. e. g. Messrs Marvin, Tobin and Smart. Examples of the inside address:

① *To an anonymous official in the company*

Sales Manager  
office Systems Pty Ltd  
124 Oak Street  
Chatswood  
NSW 2067  
Australia

② *To a company*

Messrs Kato Co., Ltd  
Nichome Ginzo Nishi  
Chuo-ku, Tokyo

(4) *The Salutation*

The salutation is the greeting to the reader. It should be typed flush (exactly on the same level) with the left margin, the first line two spaces below the last line of the inside address. The most common salutation consists of: Dear plus the recipient's name.

Here are some ways to write the salutation.

Dear Sirs/Gentlemen—to a company

Dear Sir—to a man if you do not know his name

Dear Madam—to a woman if you do not know her



Dear Mr. Smith—to a man

Dear Mrs. Smith—to a married woman

Dear Miss Smith—to an unmarried woman

Dear Ms Smith—to a married or unmarried woman

Dear John—to a friend or someone you know well

As the use of the first name in salutation is an informal practice, it is not recommended for more formal commercial correspondence. We do not, however, use both the first and the last name in the salutation. It is wrong to open a letter with “Dear Mr John” or “Dear Mr John Smith”.

Note that Gentlemen, is the American and Dear Sirs, is the British way of opening a letter to a company when you write to a firm, not to a particular person.

### (5) The Body

The body of the letter is the message that the writer has to convey to the recipient. It begins two spaces below the salutation. The body of the letter may consist of one paragraph only, or of as many paragraphs as needed.

There should be margin at least one inch on both sides of the paper, at the top, and at the bottom. If your letter is very short, you should make your margins larger.

There is single space between lines unless the letter is very short. Double spaces are between paragraphs.

When the indented style, or modified block style with indented paragraphs is used, indent the first line of each paragraph five to ten spaces.

### (6) The Closing

The closing ends the letter. The complimentary close is two spaces below the last line of the body. Capitalize only the first word. Begin it slightly to the right of the center of the page, except in full block and block style.

There are many ways to write the complimentary close. “Yours sincerely” is most commonly used. “Sincerely” is the most popular complimentary close in America. “Yours faithfully” is British usage in a letter with “Dear Sir” or “Dear Sirs” as salutation.

The way you close a letter depends on how you open it. Notice the following chart, which gives the appropriate complimentary close to use with various salutations.

### (7) Signature

The signature is the signed name or mark of the person who writes the letter or the firm which he or she represents. It is written in ink immediately below the complimentary close. As many hand-written signatures are illegible, the name of the signer is usually typed below the signature and followed by his job title or position. Leave 3 lines for a handwritten signature.

Letters predominantly in the first person singular are signed by the name of the writer. Letters





in the first person plural or impersonal passive are usually signed with the name of the firm. Below the name of the firm is the writer's name.

Only the person who can represent the company is able to sign on behalf of the company. If that person is not available, then the person who is given the authority to sign can sign for the company. In this case you use pp or per pro.

①For a person who has been given the authority to sign. (由得到公司授权可以代表公司签字的人签署)

Yours faithfully,  
for/pp The Overseas Co. Ltd  
(Signature)  
W. Black  
Marketing director

②For a person who has the authority to represent the company to sign. (由有权代表公司的人签署)

Yours sincerely,  
(Signature)  
B Davis  
Managing Director  
The Overseas Co. Ltd

③The letter is signed by a person in his official capacity to indicate the exact degree of authority. (由具体表明其权限的人签署)

Yours sincerely,  
The Overseas Co. Ltd  
(Signature)  
Philip Wang  
The Assistant Sales Manager

## 2. Nine Optional parts

### (1) Reference number 编号

A firm or company usually assigns a reference to correspondence, and this is intended for quotation in the reply. This ensures that the reply goes to the right man, or in a large organization may be the key to a complicated filing system. Companies have different ways to form their reference numbers. These numbers should be quoted in the letters of reply. They are usually placed on the top left-hand side opposite the date.