

新编商务英语

函电

English for Business
Correspondence

主 编 廖国强 黄银冬



高等教育出版社
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前 言

国际贸易是我国经济发展的重要部分和强大推动力。改革开放以来,外贸业务迅猛发展,各行各业对能用外语处理国际经贸业务的复合型人才的需求也随之越来越大。《新编商务英语函电》紧密结合我国对外贸业务的实际需要,通过大量的实例,系统介绍了外贸业务活动中各种商务英语函电的格式与结构、写作特点、常用专业术语、相关句型和常见表达方式等,使学习者能通过理论的引导和具体实例,举一反三,学以致用,从而提高处理对外贸易业务的英语水平。

本书共分 24 单元,从商务英文函电写作的基本技能到各种涉外环节的论述,均注重了理论联系实际,并配以思考练习,使学习者在外贸实践中逐渐增强自己应用英语的能力。每单元含 5 个部分。第一部分是要点提示,让读者了解该单元重点;第二部分是理论导入,对涉及该章节的知识或技能进行简述;第三部分是函电范例,供使用者参考、学习、模仿;第四部分是对该函电范文中的疑难点、专业术语、表达以及惯用句型等的分析、注解;第五部分是自测练习,以帮助读者加深对该单元内容的理解、掌握与巩固。本书具有以下特色:

一、针对性强

本书内容涉及整个商务活动中典型的涉外工作环节与任务,如资信调查、建立交易、促销、询盘、报盘、还盘、订货、确认、支付方式、催款、包装方式、装运、保险、投诉、索赔、理赔、贸易代理、商务电邮、商务传真等多章内容,具有很强的针对性。

二、实用性强

本书特别注重实用性,除商务活动中典型的涉外工作环节外,还介绍了商务英语函电写作的基础知识和写作技巧,以及商贸便函和商务报告的写作基础知识和写作技巧等。实例种类丰富,新颖实用,写作风格多样。另外,在书末附录中还提供了销售合同范本、《联合国国际货物销售合同公约》、《国际贸易术语解释通则》供读者参考或自学之用。

三、时代性强

本书内容能紧跟时代,是为适应新形势下全球社会经济的发展和广大读者对商务英语函电书籍的需要而编写的。其优势在于体现国际贸易中新的贸易方式,注重了新理论、新知识的导入,要点突出、内容新,比如商务电子邮件、商务电子传真、电子商务等的基础知识和写作技巧,这些新内容在同类多数书中几乎处于空白状态。

四、实践性强

本书以应用型人才培养为编写定位,在编写上注重了形式和内容上的创新,比如融入了电子商务等方面新的知识点,编写要点突出,简洁,而且从英文函电写作的基本技能到各种涉外环节的论述,均注重理论联系实际。除提供参考、模仿的大量实例外,每章都配以思考练习,使学习者能在学中用、用中学,着重函电写作的能力训练,在外贸实践中逐渐增强应用英语的能力。

五、涉及面广

本书既适用于不同层次、不同水平的社会各行业涉外从业人员、英语爱好者和大中专院校国际贸易、国际管理、国际金融、电子商务、市场营销、经贸英语、涉外文秘等专业学生,同时还可以作为从事国际贸易人员的培训及自学用书。使用者在选用本书时,也可根据实际情况,进行适度的取舍或补充。

本书在编写过程中,参考了国内外许多相关资料,限于篇幅,在此一并表示诚挚的谢意。由于编写时间有限,不妥之处在所难免,敬请广大读者和同仁批评指正。

编者

2011年9月

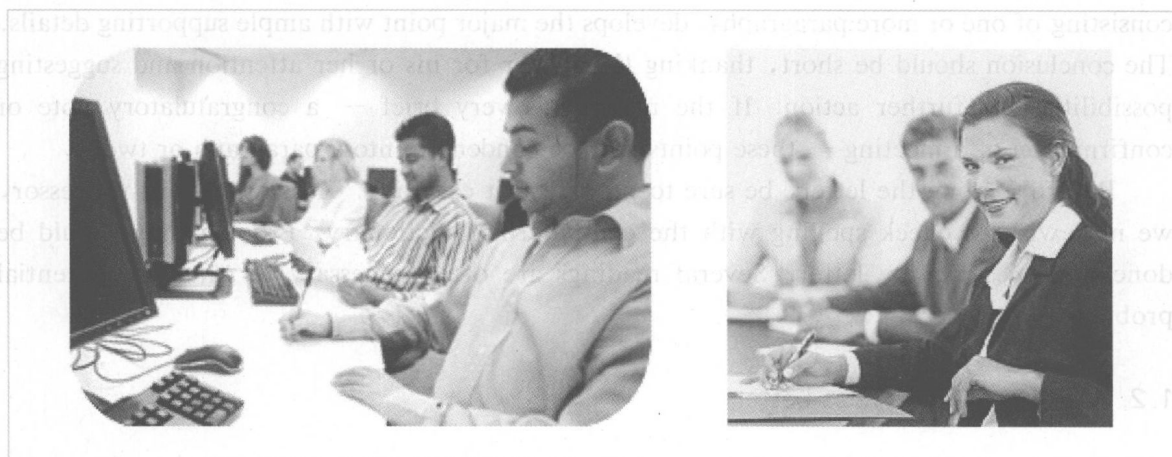
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1 Writing Skills of Business Letters

(商务信函写作技巧)



1.1 Focal Points

- 1) Understanding the importance of business letters
- 2) Components of business letters
- 3) Formats of business letters
- 4) Styles of business letters

1.2 Lead-in

Business letters reflect the competence and professionalism of the person sending it. The quality of its contents and presentation is an advertisement for the company. Business letters should always be neat and easy to read. The format should be attractive and uncluttered.

Business letters should always maintain a positive, courteous tone. The goal is to earn the

goodwill of the person reading the letter. Business letters will vary in format and content depending upon their purposes. The tone can be formal or informal depending on the occasion. A business letter may be an invitation for a golfing date to a friend or an application for employment to a large, impersonal corporation. Be sure to strike an appropriate tone.

Business letters in a company or an organization usually follow a consistent format. Check to see if your firm follows a particular manual or house style. Many computer software programs have defaults that will determine the width of margins, size and style of type fonts, ragged or justified (even) right margins, and so on. These defaults can be overridden^①, if necessary, to fit your company's house style.

Business letters can generally be broken down into three parts. A brief introductory paragraph states the reason for the letter, setting a courteous stone. The body of the letter, consisting of one or more paragraphs, develops the major point with ample supporting details. The conclusion should be short, thanking the reader for his or her attention and suggesting possibilities for further action. If the message is very brief — a congratulatory note or confirmation of a meeting — these points may be condensed into a paragraph or two.

Before sending the letter, be sure to proofread it carefully. If using a word processor, we may wish to check spelling with the computerized dictionary. Proofreading should be done slowly, letter by letter. Several readings are often necessary to catch all potential problems.

1.2.1 Parts of a Business Letter

Heading. The heading contains the writer's address. The writer's name is not included and it is already printed if letterhead stationery is used.

Dateline. The date on which the letter is written is included. This is usually typed in one of two ways: (Begin with the day, no comma) 15 January 20 __ or (Begin with the month; use a comma) December 1, 20 __.

Inside address. The inside address shows the name and address of the recipient of the letter. This information helps prevent confusion. Also, if the recipient has moved, the inside address helps to determine what to do with the letter. In the inside address, include the appropriate title of respect of the recipient; and copy the name of the company exactly as that company writes it. When you do have the names of individuals, remember to address them appropriately: Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and so on. If you are not sure what is correct for an individual, try to find out how that individual signs letters or consult the forms-of-address section in a dictionary.

Salutation. The salutation directly addresses the recipient of the letter and is followed by a colon (except when a friendly, familiar, sociable tone is intended, in which case a comma is used). If you don't know whether the recipient is a man or woman, the traditional practice

has been to write “Dear Sir” or “Dear Sirs” but that’s sexist!² To avoid this problem, salutations such as “Dear Sir or Madam”, “Dear Sirs or Mesdams”, “Dear Friends” or “Dear People” have been tried but without much general acceptance. Deleting the salutation line altogether or inserting “To Whom It May Concern” in its place, is not ordinarily a good solution either. It’s impersonal.

The best solution is to make a quick, anonymous phone call to the organization and ask for a name; Or, address the salutation to a position name: “Dear Chairperson” , “Dear Director of Financial Aid” , for example.

Subject or reference line³. The subject line replaces the salutation or is included with it. The subject line announces the main business of the letter.

Body of the letter. The actual message of course is contained in the body of the letter, the paragraphs between the salutation and the complimentary close.

Complimentary close⁴. The “Sincerely yours” element of the business letter is called the complimentary close. Other common ones are “Cordially” , “Faithfully” or “ Faithfully yours.” You can design your own, but be careful not to create florid or wordy ones. Notice that only the first letter is capitalized, and it is always followed by a comma.

Signature block. Usually, you type your name below the complimentary close, and sign your name in between. If you are a woman and want to make your marital status clear, use Miss, Ms. , or Mrs. in parentheses before the typed version of your first name. Whenever possible, include your title or the name of the position you hold just below your name.

End notations. Just below the signature block are often several abbreviations or phrases that have important functions.

- **Initials.** The initials are those of the writer of the letter, and the ones in lower case letters just after the colon are those of the typist. If someone other than yourself typed the letter you will include your initials in capital letters followed by the typist’s initials in lower case in the following format, AG/gs or AG:gs.
- **Enclosures.** To make sure that the recipient knows that items accompany the letter in the same envelope, use such indications as “Enclosure” , “Encl.” , “Enclosures (2)” . For example, if you send a resume and writing sample with your application letter, you’d do this: “Encl. : Resume and Writing Sample.” If the enclosure is lost, the recipient will know.
- **Copies.** If you send copies of a letter to others, indicate this fact among the end notations also. If, for example, you were upset by a local merchant’s handling of your repair problems and were sending a copy of your letter to the Better Business Bureau, you’d write this: “cc: Better Business Bureau.” If you plan to send a copy to your lawyer, write something like this: “cc: Mr. Raymond Mason, Attorney.”

Following pages. If your letter is longer than one page, the heading at the top of subsequent pages can be handled in one of the following ways:

Mr. Ronald Kleiberg 20 __	- 2 -	6 June
Mr. Ronald Kleiberg	6 June 20 __	page2
Mr. Ronald Kleiberg 6 June 20 __ Page 2		

Examples of following-page header format.

If you use letterhead stationery, remember not to use it for subsequent pages. However, you must use blank paper of the same quality, weight, and texture as the letterhead paper (usually, letterhead stationery comes with matching blank paper).

1.2.2 Business Letter Formats

If you are writing a business letter, select one of the common formats as shown in the example letters listed below. These include the full block letter, the modified block letter, and the semi-block letter.

Full block letter

This format is the most streamlined[®] letter style, because all parts and all lines begin at the left margin.

NU LETTERHEAD/ LOGO	
2 - 5 blank lines _____	July 16, 20 __ Mr. John Doe Senior Vice President Special Products Division Nabisco East Hanover, NJ 07936
1 blank line _____	Dear Mr. Doe:
1 blank line _____	I enjoyed meeting you yesterday and sharing with you information about the School of Music. We would welcome your participation in our activities. Based on your comments. I think the area where you might have the greatest impact is outreach. There are a variety of programs from which to choose, and I have enclosed materials to give you a bit of background.

Thank you for your interest in the School of Music, and I will be in touch next week.

1 blank line _____

4 blank lines _____

Toni-Marie Montgomery
Dean
School of Music

1 blank line _____

TMM:ak
Enclosures

Modified block letter

This format is the most popular letter style used in business. All lines except the return address or the heading (if used), the date, and the closing lines begin at the left margin.

NU LETTERHEAD/ LOGO

July 16, 20__

_____ 2 - 5 blank lines _____

Mr. John Doe
Senior Vice President
Special Products Division
Nabisco
East Hanover, NJ 07936

1 blank line _____

Dear Mr. Doe:

1 blank line _____

I enjoyed meeting you yesterday and sharing with you information about the School of Music. We would welcome your participation in our activities.

1 blank line _____

Based on your comments. I think the area where you might have the greatest impact is outreach. There are a variety of programs from which to choose, and I have enclosed materials to give you a bit of background.

1 blank line _____

Thank you for your interest in the School of Music, and I will be in touch next week.

1 blank line _____

Sincerely,

_____ 4 blank lines _____

Toni-Marie Montgomery
Dean
School of Music

_____ 1 blank line _____

TMM:ak
Enclosures

Semi-block letter

In this format, all lines except the first line of each paragraph, the return address or the heading (if used) and the closing lines begin at the left margin. The format is generally perceived to be more “friendly” or casual in appearance than the modified block form.

NU LETTERHEAD/ LOGO		July 16, 20__
	_____ 2-5 blank lines _____	
	Mr. John Doe Senior vice President special Products Division Nabisco East Hanover, NJ 07936	
1 blank line _____	Dear Mr. Doe: (colon)	
1 blank line _____	I enjoyed meeting you yesterday and sharing with you information about the School of Music. We would welcome your participation in our activities.	
1 blank line _____	Based on your comments. I think the area where you might have the greatest impact is outreach. There are a variety of programs from which to choose, and I have enclosed materials to give you a bit of background.	
1 blank line _____	Thank you for your interest in the School of Music, and I will be in touch next week.	
1 blank line _____		Sincerely, (comma) _____ 4 blank lines _____
		Toni-Marie Montgomery Dean School of Music
	_____ 1 blank line _____	
	TMM:ak Enclosures	

Which of these formats to use depends on the ones commonly used in your organization or the situation in which you are writing. Use the simplified letter (with the salutation omitted) if you lack the name of an individual or department to write to.

1.2.3 Style in Business Correspondence

Writing business letters and memos differs in certain important ways from writing reports. Keep the following advice in mind when you write and especially when you revise

your business letters or memos.

State the main business, purpose, or subject matter right away. Let the reader know from the very first sentence what your letter is about. Remember that when business people open a letter, their first concern is to know what the letter is about, what its purpose is, and why they must spend their time reading it. Therefore, avoid round-about beginnings. If you are writing to apply for a job, begin with something like this: "I am writing to apply for the position you currently have open . . ." If you have bad news for someone, you need not spill all of it in the first sentence. Here is an example of how to avoid negative phrasing: "I am writing in response to your letter of July 24, 20__ in which you discuss problems you have had with an electronic spreadsheet purchased from our company."

If you are responding to a letter, identify that letter by its subject and date in the first paragraph or sentence. Busy recipients who write many letters themselves may not remember their letters to you. To avoid problems, identify the date and subject of the letter to which you respond:

Dear Mr. Stout:

I am writing in response to your September 1, 20__ letter in which you describe problems that you've had with one of our chainsaws. I regret that you've suffered this inconvenience and expense and . . .

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I have just received your August 4, 20__ letter in which you list names and other sources from which I can get additional information on the manufacture and use of plastic bottles in the soft-drink industry . . .

Keep the paragraphs of most business letters short. The paragraphs of business letters tend to be short, some only a sentence long. Business letters are not read the same way as articles, reports, or books. Usually, they are read rapidly. Big, thick, dense paragraphs over ten lines, which require much concentration, may not be read carefully or read at all.

To enable the recipient to read your letters more rapidly and to comprehend and remember the important facts or ideas, create relatively short paragraphs of between three and eight lines long. In business letters, paragraphs that are made up of only a single sentence are common and perfectly acceptable.

"Compartmentalize"® the contents of your letter. When you "compartmentalize" the contents of a business letter, you place each different segment of the discussion — each different topic of the letter — in its own paragraph. If you were writing a complaint letter

concerning problems with the system unit of your personal computer, you might have these paragraphs:

- *A description of the problems you've had with it*
- *The ineffective repair jobs you've had*
- *The compensation you think you deserve and why*

Study each paragraph of your letters for its purpose, content, or function. When you locate a paragraph that does more than one thing, consider splitting it into two paragraphs. If you discover two short separate paragraphs that do the same thing, consider joining them into one.

Provide topic indicators at the beginning of paragraphs. Analyze some of the letters you see in this section in terms of the contents or purpose of their individual paragraphs. In the first sentence of any body paragraph of a business letter, try to locate a word or phrase that indicates the topic of that paragraph. If a paragraph discusses your problems with a personal computer, work the word "problems" or the phrase "problems with my personal computer" into the first sentence. Doing this gives recipients a clear sense of the content and purpose of each paragraph. Here is an excerpt before and after topic indicators have been incorporated:

Problem: I have worked as an electrician in the Decatur, Illinois, area for about six years. Since 20__ I have been licensed by the city of Decatur as an electrical contractor qualified to undertake commercial and industrial work as well as residential work.

Revision: *As for my work experience*, I have worked as an electrician in the Decatur, Illinois, area for about six years. Since 20__ I have been licensed by the city of Decatur as an electrical contractor qualified to undertake commercial and industrial work as well as residential work.

List or itemize^⑦ whenever possible in a business letter. Listing spreads out the text of the letter, making it easier to pick up the important points rapidly.

Place important information strategically in business letters. Information in the first and last lines of paragraphs tends to be read and remembered better. Information buried in the middle of long paragraphs is easily overlooked or forgotten. Therefore, place important information in high-visibility points. For example, in application letters which must convince potential employers that you are right for a job, locate information on appealing qualities at the beginning or end of paragraphs for greater emphasis. Place less positive or detrimental information in less highly visible points in your business letters. If you have some difficult things to say, a good (and honest) strategy is to de-emphasize by placing them in areas of less emphasis. If a job requires three years of experience and you only have one, bury this fact in

the middle or the lower half of a body paragraph of the application letter. The resulting letter will be honest and complete; it just won't emphasize weak points unnecessarily. Here are some examples of these ideas:

Problem: In July I will graduate from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics. Over the past four years in which I have pursued this degree, I have worked as a lab assistant for Dr. Alison Laszlo and have been active in two related organizations, the Student Dietetic Association and the American Home Economics Association. In my nutritional biochemistry and food science labs, I have written many technical reports and scientific papers. I have also been serving as a diet aide at St. David's Hospital in Lawrence the past year and a half. (The job calls for a technical writer; let's emphasize that first, then mention the rest!)

Revision: In my education at the University of Kansas, I have had substantial experience writing technical reports and scientific papers. Most of these reports and papers have been in the field of nutrition and dietetics in which I will be receiving my Bachelor of Science degree this July. During my four years at the University I have also handled plenty of paperwork as a lab assistant for Dr. Alison Laszlo, as a member of two related organizations, the Student Dietetic Association and the American Home Economics Association, and as a diet aide at St. David's Hospital in Lawrence in the past year and a half.

Problem: To date, I have done no independent building inspection on my own. I have been working the past two years under the supervision of Mr. Robert Packwood who has often given me primary responsibility for walk-throughs and property inspections. It was Mr. Packwood who encouraged me to apply for this position. I have also done some refurbishing of older houses on a contract basis and have some experience in industrial construction as a welder and as a clerk in a nuclear construction site. (Let's not lie about our lack of experience, but let's not put it on a billboard either!)

Revision: As for my work experience, I have done numerous building walk-throughs and property inspections under the supervision of Mr. Robert Packwood over the past two years. Mr. Packwood, who encouraged me to apply for this position, has often given me primary responsibility for many inspection jobs. I have also done some refurbishing of older houses on a contract basis and have some experience in industrial construction as a welder and as a clerk in a nuclear construction site.

Find positive ways to express bad news in your business letters. Often, business letters must convey bad news; a broken computer keyboard cannot be replaced, or an individual cannot be hired. Such bad news can be conveyed in a tactful way. Doing so reduces the chances that business relations with the recipient of the bad news will end. To convey bad news positively, avoid such words as “cannot,” “forbid,” “fail,” “impossible,” “refuse,” “prohibit,” “restrict,” and “deny” as much as possible. The first versions of the example sentences below are phrased in a rather cold and unfriendly negative manner; the second versions are much more positive, cordial and tactful:

Problem: Because of the amount of information you request in your letter, simply cannot help you without seriously disrupting my work schedule.

Revision: In your letter you ask for a good amount of information which I would like to help you locate. Because of my work commitments, however, I am going to be able to answer only a few of the questions

Problem: If you do not complete and return this advertisement contract by July 1, 20 __, you will not receive your advertising space in this year’s Capitol Lines. If we have not heard from you by this deadline, we will sell you your advertisement space to some other client.

Revision: Please complete the enclosed contract and return it to us by July 1, 20 __. After this deadline, we will begin selling any unrenewed advertisement space in this year’s Capitol Lines, so I hope we hear from you before then.

Problem: While I am willing to discuss changes in specific aspects of this article or ideas on additional areas to cover, I am not prepared to change the basic theme of the article; the usability of the Victor microcomputer system.

Revision: I am certainly open to suggestions and comments about specific aspects of this article, or any of your thoughts on additional areas that you think I should cover. I do want, however, to retain the basic theme of the article; the usability of the Victor microcomputer system.

Focus on the recipient’s needs, purposes, or interests instead of your own. Avoid a self-centered focusing on your own concerns rather than those of the recipient. Even if you must talk about yourself in a business letter a great deal, do so in a way that relates your concerns to those of the recipient. This recipient-oriented style is often called the “you-