



21世纪高职高专专业英语系列教材

外贸函电

专业英语

• 王建培 编著

English Correspondence for International Trade



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社



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前言

国际贸易是各种要素的跨国界或地区的流动和交换的经济活动。这里除了有货物、人员、资金的跨境流动外，还有与这些要素相关信息的跨境流动。可以说，没有跨境的信息交流，就没有国际贸易的产生和发展。我们还可以这样说，没有信息在交易参与各领域的流动，国内贸易也不会产生和发展。信息的交流是否准确以及交流的方式是否得当与国际商务活动的成功与否有着直接的关系。准确得当的信息交流会促成交易和贸易关系；反之，则会阻碍交易和影响贸易关系。

当今，信息传递可供选择的手段很多，有口头的，如电话和面谈；有书面的，如纸质信函和电子信函，或介于两者之间的传真、电报等，还有通过行动来传递信息的。由于参与一桩跨境交易的当事方和环节远比国内交易要多，涉及的问题也远比国内的要复杂，在很多情况下书面的外贸函电（尤其是纸质的）是国际商务沟通的重要手段，有时甚至是其他方式不可替代的。从这种意义上来说，外贸函电是国际贸易过程中不可或缺的，阅读、翻译和撰写外贸函电是从事国际贸易专业人员必备的技能。

外贸函电作为一门专业课程，其特点可以用三句话来概括：外贸函电传递的是专业信息；外贸函电表达的是商务情绪；外贸函电要有扎实的语言功底。首先，外贸函电传递的都是与国际贸易活动有关的信息。参与跨境贸易的各当事方之间在建立业务关系、交易的谈判和合同的履行等方面通常都要进行大量的信息交流和交涉，这是外贸函电产生的基础和前提。外贸函电涉及的都是与交易商品、交易参与方和货款支付等有关的信息，因而它是一门专业性极强的课程。其次，外贸函电是情感润滑剂。外贸函电在传递与交易有关信息的同时，也在传递各种情绪。这一点从教材中的样信中都可以得到印证。比如，在建交函中要表达期待的情绪；在资信调查环节中收到调查结果后要表达感激之情；在收到订单和

信用证后要表示感谢之情；在处理争议的过程中，控制自己的情绪，做到有理、有节、有利，更是维护业务关系和自身利益所必备的素质。实际上，商道上的制胜之道在于为人之道。做得好，还要说得好和写得好！另外，英语作为国际商务活动中的通用语言，也是外贸函电的主导语言。要达到传递信息和情绪这样两个目的，显然需要扎实的语言功底，这一点是不言自明的。掌握常用的英语阅读、写作和翻译等一般技能是做好商务函电的一个重要前提，但即便是有非常扎实的英语语言功底，也不见得就能写好商务函电。我们还需要解决的是如何将这些技能与实践性、专业性非常强的国际贸易结合起来，使之成为在这一领域能够运用自如的沟通工具。我们需要强调的是，语言和专业的结合，并不是像很多人认为的那样，把专业词汇掌握就够了，这样看问题未免过于表面化了。其实，在这方面需要做的还有很多，比如国际贸易方面的专业知识、业务流程、商务习惯等，很多都超出了函电课程本身的范围。外贸函电方面的语言功夫很显然需要从语言和国际贸易这样两个方面来获取。

以下是本书编写的几个特点。

一是关于本教材选取的角度。在国际货物买卖整个流程中参与方有很多，除了作为交易主体的进出口双方外，还有中间商、银行、承运人、保险人、海关、商检机构等，其间围绕一桩交易会有很多信函往来，这些都是国际商务函电应该涉及的范围。不过，从这些信函产生的源头来看，都是为实现货物的交接和货款支付提供服务的。因此，本教材选取的角度是进出口双方从建立业务关系、合同谈判和履行以及因执行合同产生争议的处理这一流程的信函往来，也即函电的主角是进出口双方。当然，进出口双方同其他参与方以及其他参与方之间的信函往来也有所涉及，但不是本教材的重点，涉及的目的是为读者提供一个更为全面的画面。

二是注重运用能力的培养。外贸函电是为满足国际贸易活动交易参与方之间信息沟通和情感交流的需求而产生的。与理论课程不同，本课程主要是提高学生与国际贸易往来信函的处理能力，主要包括阅读理解能力、翻译能力和写作能力。为了达到这一目的，本课程在每个模块的开始有意识地增加了相关专业背景知识和专业术语的介绍，样信的解析方面不仅有专业语言点的注释，还以写作小贴士（Writing Tips）的形式对每种情景的特定内容进行了梳理和总结，可以起到举一反三的作用。为提高训练强度，特意在样信分析后增加了相应的补充阅读材料。另外，在课后练习的设计方面，注意针对性，对重要的知识点通过不同的形式进行反复训练，达到提高实战能力的目的。

三是本教材由五大模块组成，即导入性模块、建立业务关系模块、贸易合同谈判模块、合同条款模块和争议处理模块。模块主要是按国际货物买卖流程来进

行的。与该课程的其他一些教材相比，增强了系统性和逻辑性，更便于学生对课程的目的和结构从总体上进行把握，提高学习效果。

本书得以出版需要感谢的人很多。首先要感谢的是武汉大学出版社的大力支持，特别感谢出版社编审谢群英女士的鼓励和督促。在本书的编写过程中编者参考了大量的资料，选取了其中的一些经典样信，衷心感谢这些编著者。还要感谢我的同事、学生和家人。本书如能对使用者有所裨益，当是本人对大家最好的回报了。对于这一点，我是满怀期待的。

由于专业知识和语言能力所限，加上成书时间较为仓促，书中遗漏和错误在所难免，恳请广大读者批评指正。

编 者

2011 年 9 月于武汉汤逊湖畔

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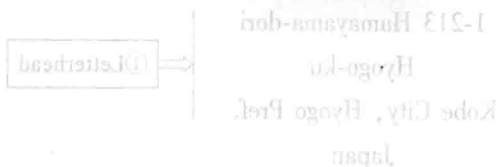
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Module One Introduction



This part intends to pave the way for the following modules and mainly deals with three matters: the layout and formats of English business letters, some fundamental issues in business writing and frequently used vocabulary relating to commodity. As we know, every walk of life has its own behavioral pattern and business letter writing in each field has its own specific style. This is also true for international business correspondence. To be a good international trader, one has to follow the writing style in this trade, namely, to communicate as international traders do, not only in contents but also in forms. The first matter is a formal issue concerning the different parts of a business letter and how these parts are arranged and also the addressing of the envelope. A well-arranged layout and format not only makes the letter attractive to the addressee in appearance but also helps deliver the information more clearly and effectively. The second matter discusses two subjects: general writing rules and specific principles followed in business letter writing. One point to be borne in mind is that in order for the rules and principles to serve as writing guidelines, hard practice in writing and reading is absolutely necessary. As the commodity is the subject matter and the center of a business transaction, it is crucial to specify the commodity in terms of its name, quality and quantity. As there is no proper place to examine this problem in the following modules, the last part lists some frequently used terms concerning the specification of quality and quantity of commodity to complement and facilitate the smooth flow of the following modules.

▶ 1.1 The Structure and Forms of English Business Letters

1.1.1 The Structure of English Business Letters

An English business letter differs itself from other types of English writing in several

aspects, especially in terms of its components. Simply by skimming its appearance one can know a writing is a letter even without reading the passage itself. As the following specimen shows, a business letter contains several relatively fixed parts. For the purpose of illustration, names of the parts in the specimen are put in the frames.

Actex Co. Ltd.

1-213 Hamayama-dori
Hyogo-ku
Kobe City, Hyogo Pref.
Japan

① Letterhead

3 June, 2006

② Date

Mr. Teo Pin

Singapore Moulds and Tools Centre Pte Ltd.

Blk 6020#01-02

Ang Mo Kio Industrial Park 3

Singapore 569474

③ Inside Name & Address

Dear Mr. Teo,

④ Salutation

Re: Arrangements regarding Mr. Tang's visit

⑤ Subject Line

I have received your letter concerning your wish to send Mr. Tang Ngoh Tiong to visit us at Actex Co. Ltd. I completely agree that a visit by one of your senior staff would be beneficial to both our organizations.

I should therefore like to arrange a suitable time for Mr. Tang to visit so that he derives maximum benefit from his time with us.

From our point of view, he can stay as long as he wished. May we suggest a week-long visit, followed up by periodic visits afterwards?

If it is convenient, perhaps he could join us on 15 September.

Please let me know if this arrangement is satisfactory.

⑥ Body

Yours sincerely,

⑦ Complimentary Closing

Ken Fukuzawa
Public Relations Officer

⑧ Signature

KF/hs ⑨ Abbreviation for Dictator & Typist (Reference)

CC Mr. Kokubo (General Manager)
Mrs. Smithson (Marketing Manager)

⑩ Carbon Copy Notation

As can be seen, this specimen contains 10 parts, and there are situations in which other parts may be required. The following lists all the 13 parts that may appear in an English business letter according to the sequence of their appearance. Before we move on to illustrate each part, it is necessary to point out that not every letter is made up of all the 13 parts. In other words, not all the 13 parts have to be put in one same letter. The parts with asterisk on the following list are optional, that is, they are put in a letter just in case of need.

- (1) Letterhead 信头
- (2) Reference * 存档文号
- (3) Date 日期
- (4) Inside name & address 封内名称和地址
- (5) Attention line * 经办
- (6) Salutation 称呼
- (7) Subject line * 事由
- (8) Body 正文
- (9) Complimentary closing 结尾敬语
- (10) Signature 签字
- (11) Enclosure * 附件/随附
- (12) Copy notation * 抄送
- (13) Postscript * 附言/再启

(1) **Letterhead**

This part contains the writer's information and usually includes his or her company's name, address, postcode, telephone number, fax number and email address. The

purpose of this part is to provide the reader with the sender's essential information and with the return address.

Remark 1

The sequence of the address should follow: number, street, city, post code and country. e. g.

The Teleson Company	
198 Market Street	————→ number and street
Dallas, Texas 65236	————→ city ad post code
U. S. A.	————→ country

Remark 2

Sometimes, the business line and names of the company's board of directors are also included in the letterhead. e. g.

	Graden & Jones	
	Limited	
	Directors:	Upper Bridge Street
director ←	D. C. Graden	Leeds 2
director ←	P. G. Jones	Telegraphic address:
	Tel: Leeds 234567	GRAJO LEEDS

Remark 3

If it is printed, it is often put in the up-center; if it is typed, it is often put at the left margin of the paper.

(2) Reference *

This part is used mainly for the purpose of filing and usually includes a file number, a department code or the initials of the dictator/signor followed by that of the typist of the letter. It is marked "Our ref:..." and "Your ref:...". Here, "Our ref" refers to the writer's file number and "Your ref" refers to the reader's file number. Sometimes, the initials of the dictator/signor and typist may be put below the signature, as shown in the above specimen.

This part is usually put two lines below the letterhead or two lines below the date

line or on the same line with the date.

(3) *Date*

The date shows the time when the letter is sent.

There are different ways to express the date in different countries and regions. For example, in Britain, the sequence is the date, the month and the year, and in the United States, it is the sequence of the month, the date and the year.

Therefore:

3/4/2011 is 3rd April, 2011 in Britain, but 4th March, 2005 in the United States.

To avoid such confusion, it is recommended to write the month and the year in full instead of using abbreviations. In so doing, confusion can be avoided no matter whether the date is put before or after the month and no matter whether the date is given in cardinal form or ordinal form. The date of 2005/07/09 (computer time sequence) can be written in the following four ways and they are all acceptable and give no concern for confusion.

9 July, 2005; July 9, 2005; 9th July, 2005; and July 9th, 2005.

The date is usually put two lines below or above the reference, or on the same line with the reference.

Remark

From the above illustration, we can see the date line and reference line can change their positions with each other or that they may appear on the same line.

(4) *Inside name & address*

This part provides some essential information on the addressee, usually including his or her name and title, the company name and address. This practice is quite different from that in China. It would be treated as unnecessary and redundant for a Chinese business letter, as both the writer and addressee know such information. So why bother? The logic is that should the letter be sent to a wrong address, the addressee will know who should actually get it and transfer it to the right address, saving time and avoiding trouble.

When addressing this part, we should pay special attention to the sequence of the

subparts in this part and to the title given to the addressee of the letter.

A. The sequence is as follows:

Addressee's name

His or her title

Company name

Company address

B. Title given to the addressee:

I. When the letter is addressed to a company and there is no specific addressee, omit it.

II. When there is a specific addressee, give the title as follows:

a. commonly used title such as *Mr.*, *Esq.*, *Miss*, *Mrs.*, or *Ms.*

b. special title if the addressee has one, such as Doctor, Professor, Colonel or Sir before the addressee, and Ph. D or M. P. after the addressee, followed by his or her official position. For example:

① Dr. E. Browning

President

② A. Jones, Ph. D.

③ Sir C. Rivers, M. P.

This part is usually put two lines below whichever of the date line and the reference line that is put below the other part.

(5) Attention line *

This part is used to direct the letter to a specific individual or section of the company. It generally follows the inside name and address with no punctuation after the word attention. Sometimes, it is underlined for the purpose of emphasis. e. g.

The Space Engineering Co. Ltd.

Brasenose Street

Manchester

M60 8AS

Attention the Sales Manager

or:

Attention the Marketing Department

(6) *Salutation*

The salutation is the polite greeting with which a letter begins, and is placed two lines below the inside name and address or the attention line (if there is a such line). The following table shows different ways to address the addressee in different situations.

Dear Sirs,	To a company
Gentlemen: (US. style)	To a company
Dear Sir or Madam,	To a company
Dear Sir,	To a man whose name is unknown to the writer
Dear Madam,	To a woman whose name is unknown to the writer
Dear Mr. Smith,	To a man
Dear Mrs. Smith,	To a married woman
Dear Miss Smith,	To a single woman
Dear Ms. Smith,	To a woman unsure if married or not
Dear John,	To a close friend

(7) *Subject line**

The subject line is actually a part of the body of the letter and it is used to summarize the topics of the letter and facilitate filing. It is especially useful when the message is complicated or deals with several issues. The addressee will be able to figure out the main ideas of the incoming letter with a quick glance and make his or her decision about how to deal with the letter. The subject line usually occupies one line and is put above each main idea of the message. It can be underlined for the purpose of emphasis. If the message deals with several issues, the writer may use several subject lines. “Re:”, “Subject:” or “Sub:” may lead the subject and this line is usually underlined for the purpose of emphasis. e. g.

- ① Re: Recommendation of Joyce Lane
- ② Subject: Recommendation of Joyce Lane
- ③ Sub: Recommendation of Joyce Lane
- ④ Recommendation of Joyce Lane

(8) *Body*

This part contains the actual message of the letter and is usually made up of three parts: the beginning, the main message and the ending.

The beginning can be used to make introductions, to arouse the addressee's interest or to refer to previous correspondence between the two parties. For the main message, don't put several issues into one paragraph and it is suggested that each paragraph discusses only one issue, thus facilitating reading by the addressee. And also remember to put the most urgent or important issue at the beginning of the message. This is especially important when the letter is long or in electronic form. The ending can be used to express the writer's action plan, make requirements upon the addressee, or draw a conclusion to the message.

Another point to be borne in mind is that, in addition to the delivery of the actual message, attention should also be paid to the tone of the message, that is, the way the message is delivered. Different situations will require different tones, such as expectation, regret, sincerity, apology, etc.

(9) *Complimentary closing*

Complimentary closing is merely a polite way of ending an English business letter just as the salutation politely begins the letter. As both the salutation and complimentary closing add nothing substantial to the main message, they can even be omitted in simplified form used at present. Yet, if both parts are used, they should agree with each other, that is to say, when a formal salutation is used, the complimentary closing should also be formal; when an informal salutation is used, the complimentary closing should also be informal, as can be shown in the following table.

Dear Sirs,	Yours respectfully, (US. Br. style)	Very formal
Gentlemen:	Yours faithfully, (Br. style)	Formal
Dear Sir or Madam,	Yours truly, (US style)	
Dear Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. /Miss Smith,	Yours sincerely, Yours cordially,	Less formal
Dear John,	Best wishes, Warmest regards	Informal