

应用型本科商务英语系列教材  
省级精品在线开放课程商务英语函电与合同配套教材

International Business  
Correspondence and Contract

# 商务英语 函电与合同

主 编 ◎ 洪 菁 马升慧  
副主编 ◎ 张 冰



对外经济贸易大学出版社

University of International Business and Economics Press

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中国·北京

## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

商务英语函电与合同 / 洪菁, 马升慧主编. —北京:  
对外经济贸易大学出版社, 2021.4  
应用型本科商务英语系列教材  
ISBN 978-7-5663-2260-9

I. ①商… II. ①洪…②马… III. ①国际贸易-英语-电报信函-写作-高等学校-教材②国际贸易-英语-合同-写作-高等学校-教材 IV. ①F74

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2021) 第 054873 号

## 商务英语函电与合同

## International Business Correspondence and Contract

洪菁 马升慧 主编

责任编辑: 谭利彬

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出版发行: 对外经济贸易大学出版社  
社 址: 北京市朝阳区惠新东街 10 号  
网 址: [www.uibep.com](http://www.uibep.com)  
资源网址: [www.uibepresources.com](http://www.uibepresources.com)

邮政编码: 100029  
邮购电话: 010-64492338  
发行部电话: 010-64492342  
E-mail: [uibep@126.com](mailto:uibep@126.com)

成品尺寸: 185mm×260mm

印 张: 13.75

字 数: 318 千字

ISBN 978-7-5663-2260-9

印 刷: 北京时代华都印刷有限公司

版 次: 2021 年 4 月北京第 1 版

印 次: 2021 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

定 价: 45.00 元

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# 前言

国际贸易越来越依赖线上交流，正式大单贸易越来越依赖邮件往来，函电书写知识越来越重要。《商务英语函电与合同》旨在帮助学生在国际贸易实务的框架和背景下学习和掌握函电与合同的应用，通晓对外贸易工作中函电的原则、技巧和方法，提高对外经贸工作中的书面表达能力，认识到良好的交流和交际能力在商务活动中的重要性，以适应外经贸工作过程中用书面形式与客户进行联络的实际业务需求。

本书基于工作过程编写，实用性强。其内容包括：商务信函写作概览，建立业务关系，询盘，报价、报盘与还盘，达成交易，付款方式，开证与改证，包装、唛头与装运，保险，代理，投诉与索赔，合同等。本书选取内容与学习资源建设力求专业、实用，符合学生认知规律，扩展性强，能够激发学生热情。

本书与实践案例充分结合，注重语言使用和课程内容的专业性。本书大量使用英达沃实业有限公司的信函、单证和合同，并综合参考了厦门双和业塑胶制品有限公司以及厦门宝丽金实业有限公司的业务材料，使函电教材与国际贸易实践更加紧密结合，充分反映了现实国际贸易函电的交易特点。

该书编辑团队建立同名省级精品网络开放课程，与本书章节对应，设有单元测验、期中期末考试题库、讨论题，在学银在线（网址：<http://www.xueyinonline.com/detail/216648144>）和中国大学慕课（网址：<https://www.icourse163.org/course/FJJXXY-1461380163>）开放，有利于开展线上线下混合式教学、翻转课堂和学生自学。

本书样信及所选合同较为详尽，种类丰富，写作风格多样，能够让学生学到切实可行的国际贸易函电与合同的撰写和翻译技巧。本书还详细介绍了国际贸易函电写作原则、信件样式和当下交际方式，也介绍了合同语言风格，合同条款，采用了英达沃实业合同、中外国际贸易常用合同模板和一份美式合同。本书对信函的语言点进行了总结，并提供了典型句式，有利于函电教学与学习。

本书主编同时教授国际贸易和中国对外贸易概论等课程，能将函电写作教学与国际贸易实务知识紧密结合，使学生不仅懂得如何处理语言和篇章，更加懂得如何恰当处理具体国际贸易事件，避免语言正确但处理不当，从而使学习更为系统。每个章节设有相关知识扩展阅读。本书的习题多样化，既有语言练习题目，也有写作和角色扮演题目，学生学习过程生动活泼。

本书适用于各高校商务英语专业、国际贸易专业，国际贸易公司和其他需要教授国际贸易函电与合同的学校。



通过学习本书的内容，学生能够准确理解国际贸易过程中的函电与合同，熟练写出符合职场标准的国际贸易函电，准确表达国际贸易合同中的条款，具备国际贸易函电与合同的实际运用能力，成为具有优秀函电和合同书面能力的国际贸易人才，能够适应国际经济合作的要求，能够为区域经济和社会发展做出贡献。

本书由洪菁和马升慧担任主编，张冰担任副主编。其中，洪菁编写了第 2、3、6、7 单元，马升慧编写了第 1、4、5、12 单元，张冰编写了第 8、9、10、11 单元。

本书的编写与出版得到了福建江夏学院各级领导的大力支持，得到了英达沃实业有限公司总经理叶维正、业务总监白植文、行政部门经理吴焘焘，厦门双和业塑胶制品有限公司总经理苏友章、业务总监胡英，以及厦门宝丽金实业有限公司总经理陈尔奇的热情帮助，在此一并表示衷心感谢。

编 者

2021 年 1 月

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# ***Unit 1***

## **An Overview of Business Letter Writing**



### **Teaching Objectives**

Business letter writing should be appropriate for the business environment, target readers and the communication trends.

Upon completion of this unit, you will:

- ◆ Understand the 7 principles of business letter writing;
- ◆ Know the principal and optional parts of business letters;
- ◆ Know how to organize letter formats and envelopes;
- ◆ Know the trend and characteristics of e-mails and faxes.

A letter written for business purpose is a business letter.

In the international trade nowadays, e-mails, faxes and some instant message software and platforms improve communication efficiency. However, printed letters are still crucial for collaboration and cooperation. For instance, quotation letters mailed to the buyers allow them to view the goods and discuss the purchase with more convenience. Contracts sent to the buyer show more formality and respect if accompanied with a sales confirmation letter.

Enquiry letters, offer letters, order letters, acknowledgement letters, and letters specifically discussing shipment, packing, insurance or claims are some of the business letters discussed in this book. All these letters can be written as e-mails or printed versions. Keep in mind that letters represent us and our company in our absence. They should all follow certain principles and adopt proper formats.

### **1. The principles for effective writing**

In international trade, correspondence plays a vital part in concluding the transactions. Correspondence has to follow the 7Cs principles. The 7Cs principles are completeness, clarity, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, concreteness, and correctness.



(1) Completeness

A business letter should contain all necessary information and answer all the questions while responding to all the requirements. A lack of information frustrates the receiver and necessitates another letter asking for the information.

We can use five “Ws” (who, what, where, when, why) and one “H” to check if our letter is complete. Let’s use the five “Ws” and one “H” to check if the following letter which places an order is complete. This is an order for basketball suits of the Endeavour Industry Co., Ltd.

Hi Ella,

Thank you for your efforts. Your design and quality are truly more desirable. Our Board of Trustees has agreed on an order with your company on your renewed terms.

Commodity: Basketball suits with the materials and design as agreed upon

Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Quantity: 120 sets

Price: US\$26.50 per set FOB Fuzhou, with the total to be US\$3,599.00 including the shipping cost

Packing: 1 set per polybag; 40 sets per carton (58\*33\*33; GW11kg)

Payment: T/T before production

Shipment: 15 days within placing of the order

The sizes and the numbers to be sublimated on the back are as follows, with one grey set and one black set to be produced for each number.

6 size S (#31, 57, 56, 55, 54, 53)

22 size M (#1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 77, 99, 35, 37, 41, 43, 45)

20 size L (#2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 66, 88, 36, 38, 72)

9 size XL (#52, 51, 50, 49, 48, 47, 45, 46, 44)

3 size XXL (#60, 59, 58)

Please pay attention to the sizes, Ella. I’m worried about the sizing being too small. Would you please check the sizing chart I sent you carefully, please? Players are 5 feet 7 to 6 feet 1. They are between 150lbs and 240lbs.

Thanks,  
Camille

Who wants to order? Our school. Our Board of Trustees makes the final decision.

What does the school want? Basketball suits with the materials and design as agreed upon.

When does the school need the goods? 15 days within placing of the order.

Where? The goods will be shipped from Fuzhou.



How will the payment be made? T/T before production.

Thus, we know this is a letter that is basically complete with the necessary information of five “Ws” and one “H”.

### (2) Clarity

We should present our meaning in a clear manner. How to make our correspondence clear? We should choose our words appropriately and try to express complex ideas with words that our readers understand. F.L. Lucas in his book *Style: The Art of Writing Well* offered the advice that we achieve clarity “mainly by taking trouble and by writing to serve people rather than to impress them.”

A lot of short choppy sentences will also confuse our readers. Our sentences should be proper in length in regard to the meaning and logic.

Ambiguous expressions should be avoided. For example, “your goods should reach us before Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>”, in which “before” means something happens earlier than a particular time. Some people believe “before Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>” means the days earlier than but not including Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> while other people believe “before Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>” means the days earlier than and including Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>. Thus, cautious business dealers use “on or before a date” or “not later than a date”.

Another example is a period of time, which should be made clear as to the beginning and the end. One way of expression is “for five days, from and including May 7<sup>th</sup>”.

### (3) Conciseness

We should keep our correspondence simple. The less flowery our correspondence is, the more accessible it will be. When we use the best words and proper sentences and paragraphs to express our ideas, our correspondence will have greater effectiveness and less room for interpretation. It is bad manners to waste the readers’ time with unnecessary details or redundant expressions. We should be careful about the level of details of our letters and only give necessary details. We need to edit and reedit our correspondence to strike out every single word that does not serve our intention.

Empty phrases should be edited out and common redundancies should be deleted.

Redundant expressions	Recommended expressions
absolutely/certainly/surely/essentially guaranteed	guaranteed
a definite decision	a decision
a difficult dilemma	a dilemma
to postpone until later	to postpone
to order the same identical products again	to order the same products again
since the time when	since
an unintended mistake	a mistake
a usual custom	a custom



The business correspondence should use less formal words than those adopted in contracts. We should use “start” instead of “commence”, “end” instead of “terminate” and “try” instead of “endeavor”.

(4) Consideration

We should focus on how the content of our correspondence will benefit our readers. Addressing readers directly as “you” helps to render a considerable perspective. We can use the second person (you, your, and yours) more frequently, not just the first (I, me, mine, we, us, and ours). Emphasizing what readers want or need to know is likely to generate goodwill and lead to positive results. As the seller, rather than focus on our products, our service, or ourselves, we should stress how our readers will benefit from complying with our message.

Me attitude: I have requested that your order be placed today.

You attitude: You will receive your products by Wednesday if your order is placed today.

Me attitude: We allow a 5% discount for cash payment.

You attitude: You earn a 5% discount when you pay cash.

(5) Courtesy

Courtesy is like oil, which helps remove friction and win friends. In business correspondence, discourtesy damages both friendship and business. We should be polite and courteous even if we are writing a complaint letter. This indicates our professionalism.

Being courteous also requires us to use more positive expressions and fewer negative ones.

Don'ts	Dos
You state ...	Many thanks for your letter ...
We can't accept your request ...	We regret to inform that ...
We cannot help you with ...	We suggest that you ...
We cannot help you unless ...	We shall be pleased to help you if ...

(6) Concreteness

Concreteness is a quality which need come to the fore. Details are needed to make our correspondence convincing or effective. The order letter example under the first principle surely demonstrates concreteness with the specific terms and the size figures.

“Our product quality is good” can be made concrete by giving details as “We have been supplying to the European markets for eight years and enjoy good reputation for our high quality and expertise.”

(7) Correctness

Such writing basis as grammar, punctuation, and spelling impacts the effectiveness of our business letter and we should always proofread it carefully. Language usage mistakes lead to misunderstanding and do no good to our professionalism.



## 2. The principal and optional parts

Writing to a business partner is not the same as writing a letter to a friend. We are writing in order to conclude business. There are certain expectations regarding format and style. Business letters indicate our professionalism.

### The principal parts

#### (1) Letterhead or return address

Companies usually use printed paper with a letterhead when sending letters. A letterhead bears a specially designed logo, the name, the address and other contact details at the top of the sheet. Other contact details can include the telephone number, the e-mail, the fax number and the website address. If a letterhead is not used, our name and address can be written in the top left-hand corner or top right-hand corner of the letter. In the case without a letterhead, the telephone number and the e-mail address are optional and can be given if they are helpful for the recipient.

#### (2) Date

The date on which the letter is completed should be written immediately below the letterhead or the return address. Since some countries use the month-day-year format and others use the day-month-year format, we should avoid confusion by transcribing the month in word form like “Dec. 28, 2020” rather than number form. Usually, the date is indicated in the upper right hand corner.

#### (3) Inside address

The inside address includes the recipient’s name, the recipient’s job title if appropriate, the company name, the address and the zip code. The inside address should be aligned to the left margin when using standard business stationery.

The inside address is necessary for future filing because the envelope, after receipt of the letter, can be thrown away. The addresses are arranged from the most detailed element to the most general, from the room number to the country, inverse to the Chinese format.

#### (4) Salutation

Salutation contains the words to greet the recipient. It is also known as the greeting. The type of salutation depends upon the writer-recipient relationship.

It generally includes words like “Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. [Surname],” “Dear Sir/Madam,” “Respected,” and “Sir/Madam.” If we are familiar with the recipient, or we are on first-name terms with the recipient, we can use the person’s first name, like “Dear Joseph:”.

Special titles can also be used as the salutation, like “Dear Dr. Young,” “Respected Prof. Watson,” “Dear CEO Byrne:” and “Dear Sales Manager.”. When we write to a few recipients, we make a list of them like “Dear Ms. Proctor, Mr. Byrne and Dr. Coulson:”.

If we are business partner and at the same time, friends with the recipient, we may use such salutation as “Hi Barry.”.

In business letters, a comma (,) often follows the salutation. A colon is also frequently used and is more formal than a comma.

Salutation is often placed two spaces below the last line of the inside address or the attention line (if used).



### (5) Body

The main purpose of a letter to convey a message or request an action is realized through the body. Usually, we begin the body with a brief statement of the purpose and give a series of paragraphs to outline the issue at hand.

Opening Part: The first paragraph of the letter often introduces the writer or refers to the previous correspondence if any and states the purpose.

Main Part: This part states the main idea and the reasons. It must be clear, concise, complete, and to the point.

Concluding Part: This part concludes the business letter showing the suggestions or the need of the action and the expectation of the sender.

Our business letters should be kept concise and a length of two-to-five paragraphs is ideal for most business letters.

### (6) Complimentary close

Complimentary close is a humble and polite way of rounding off a business letter. The most generally used complimentary closes are:

Yours faithfully,

Yours truly,

Respectfully yours,

Yours sincerely,

Thanks,

(Best) Regards,

Complimentary close is written in accordance with the salutation. “Faithfully” is usually quite formal and is matched with “Dear Sirs” or “Dear Madams”. In the American style, the salutations “Gentlemen” and “Ladies” are matched with “Truly” “Yours truly” or “Truly yours”. “Sir” or “Madam” shows less endearment than “Dear Sirs” or “Dear Madams” but more respect, so they are matched with “Respectfully yours” or “Yours respectfully”.

If we know the recipient and we call him or her Dear [Surname], like “Dear Mr. Morgan,” we can end our letter with “Sincerely yours” or “Yours sincerely”.

If we are on first-name terms with the recipient, we can end our business letters with “(Best) Regards” or “Thanks” (informal).

### (7) Signature

The signature is the signed name. After the complimentary close, we leave a line space and print our name and job title (with our contact number if necessary). In the space, we sign our name.

When we sign our names on behalf of other people, we use “For” to show that.

### **The optional parts**

#### (1) Reference No.

Reference number is used for referencing and filing. If our letter is a reply letter, we can



use “Your reference” to give the correspondent’s reference number against the first line and “Our reference” to give our reference number against the second line. The reference number, if used, should be given above the inside address.

#### (2) Attention line

An attention line is a line usually placed below the inside address and above the salutation in a business letter, directing the letter to one specified.

Sometimes we don’t know the name of the person who should receive the letter but do know his or her title. We address the letter to his or her firm or company. To ensure prompt attention, we use an attention line to mark the letter to him or her.

Attention: Director of Marketing

It would look silly to write Dear Director of Marketing. An attention line makes more sense when using the title alone. When we know the recipient’s full name and title, it is standard to omit the attention line and just include their name and title both in the inside address and in the salutation.

#### (3) Subject line

The subject line is a brief statement mentioning the reason for writing the letter. It should be clear, eye catchy, short, simple, and easily understandable. A subject line helps the recipient understand what the letter is about quickly.

There are basically three forms to give the subject line.

- ① “Subject:” or “Re:” begins the subject line.
- ② The subject line is presented in bold.
- ③ The subject line is presented in capitals or with the initials capitalized.

If we write a letter about the proposed delay of the delivery, we can present the subject line in the following forms.

- ① Re: Proposed delay of the delivery.

Subject: Proposed delay of the delivery.

- ② **Proposed delay of the delivery.**

- ③ **PROPOSED DELAY OF THE DELIVERY.**

Proposed Delay of the Delivery.

The subject line is put generally below and sometimes above the salutation.

#### (4) Enclosure

If we enclose any documents like a catalogue or a pricelist with the letter, we should write “Enclosure” or “Encl.” beneath the signature block. The documents included can be anything like cheques, drafts, bills, receipts, invoices, etc. We may list the documents or we may indicate the number of files we enclosed against “Enclosure”.

Examples:

Enclosure: A catalogue

A price list

Encl.: 4



(5) Carbon copy

The carbon copy line is needed when the copies of a letter are sent to other persons, who are denoted as C.C. After the C.C. annotation, we list the names of the other recipients. Thus, each recipient knows who the other recipients are.

Example:

C.C.: Mr. Martyn Green, Director of Sales

Dr. Emma Coulson, Marketing Manager

(6) Postscript

When we want to add something other than the message in the body of the letter, we use “P.S.”. Sometimes, we forget something and use a “P.S.”. Sometimes, we purposefully use a “P.S.” to add a personal touch with handwriting. Sometimes, we use it as a one last convincing argument.



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Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mr. Fred Hattwell  
Manager  
Childrappy Toys Co., Ltd.  
124 Industry Road  
Sunderland, England

Dear Mr. Hattwell,

We thank you for your enquiry of Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and are pleased to send you our latest catalogue for your reference.

You can rest assured that our textiles are of high quality with excellent craftsmanship. If you find any of our products of interest to you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We are looking forward to your favorable reply.

Yours sincerely,

*Lucia Liu*

Lucia Liu





<b>The Letterhead</b>
Date: _____
Inside Address _____ _____ _____
Salutation: Subject: _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Complimentary close, <i>Signature</i> Name and job title

**Modified block letter format:** Modified block letter format, also called the alternative block letter format, is identical to the block format save that the date, the complimentary close and the signature block appear on the right side of the page. Unless we are using the letterhead, our return address will also appear on the right. The subject can be left aligned or centered.



<b>The Letterhead</b>	
	Date: _____
Inside Address	
_____	
_____	
Salutation:	
Subject: _____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
	Complimentary close, <i>Signature</i> Name and job title

**Semi-block letter format:** Semi-block letter format is identical to the block format, except that the first line of each paragraph is indented and the paragraphs are not double-spaced.