

Chapter 1 Business Letters

1.1 Introduction

Business letter is the most frequently used form of communication. It is very important in the business world. Business executives are supposed to write good business letters as to carry out business routine efficiently. If a businessman is unable to write an effective business letter, it is very difficult to represent himself positively, which may cause some problems in doing business.

All business letters have two main functions. One is to ask for and give a reply to an inquiry, offer, order or complaint. The other one is to keep a record of all the important facts for ready reference. An effective business letter will say what the writer wants it to say clearly and simply. It should be precise, straightforward, relevant and action-centered. It should also be written in a friendly and formal style using plain language. Thus, in order to communicate effectively, you should ensure that the letters portray you as approachable, caring, effective and professional. In addition, you should be very familiar with the established layout and practice of business letters. There are three styles of business communication: the blocked style, the indented style and the semi-blocked style. The blocked style with open punctuation is the most popular method of display for business letters, because it is considered to be businesslike, simple and professional.

The business letter can tell readers a lot about the writer and the writer's company. A business letter that is neat, easy to read, and presents a professional image will leave a good impression on the reader. Such a letter helps the writer as much as the reader, and will probably mean an earlier reply. In today's global market place, the reader's first impression often comes from the appearance of the documents and the quality of the paper. So you should pay some attention to the paper quality, the paper color, the paper size and margins. Firstly, never use paper that is too flimsy. Secondly, white is the standard color for business purposes, although light colors such as gray and ivory are sometimes used. Thirdly, the size of papers varies slightly from country to country. In the United States, the standard paper size for business documents is 8.5 by 11 inches. Last but not least, the document is to be centered in the page, leaving at least one-inch margins all around. We can use word-processing software to achieve the balance by defining the format.

This chapter is intended to develop skills in writing good business letters. It contains guidelines on developing personal writing style, using appropriate tone and composing effective communications in modern business language.

1.2 Writing Guide

1.2.1 The Essentials of Business Letter Writing

Since the main purpose of business correspondence is to convey a message, the letter should be written in language that is easily understood. The writer must make sure that it should be free from grammatical blemishes, and also free from the slightest possibility of being misunderstood. There are certain essential qualities of business letters, which can be summed up in the following 7 “Cs” principles.

1. Clarity

You must try to express yourself clearly, so that the reader can understand. To achieve this, you should keep in mind the purpose of the letter and use appropriate words in correct sentence structures to convey your meanings. We should also avoid ambiguous sentences. Otherwise, the business letter will cause trouble to both sides. All in all, good, straightforward and simple language are needed for business letters.

2. Conciseness

Conciseness means saying things in the fewest possible words. The elimination of wordy business jargon can help to make a letter clearer and at the same time more concise. If conciseness conflicts with courtesy, then make a little sacrifice of conciseness. Generally speaking, to achieve conciseness, one should try to avoid wordiness or redundancy.

3. Courtesy

Courtesy is not mere politeness. It should hardly be necessary to stress the importance of courtesy in your letters. One of the most important things is promptness. Punctuality will please your customer who dislikes waiting for days before he gets a reply to his letter. Differences are bound to occur in business, but with diplomacy and tact they can be overcome and settled without offence on either side. Remember that it's nearly always wrong to doubt a statement made in good faith by the other side and even worse to contradict it. In letters we should always keep in mind the person we are writing to, see things from his point of view, visualize him in his surroundings, see his problems and difficulties and express our ideas in terms of his experience.

4. Consideration

Consideration emphasizes You-attitude rather than We-attitude. When writing a letter, keep the reader's requests, needs, desires, as well as his feelings in mind. Plan the best way to present the message for the reader to receive.

5. Correctness

Correctness here refers to appropriate and grammatically correct language, factual information and accurate reliable figures, as well as the right forms and conventions. All facts should be checked and double checked. Special attention should also be paid to name of goods, specification, quantity, figure, unit, etc.

6. Concreteness

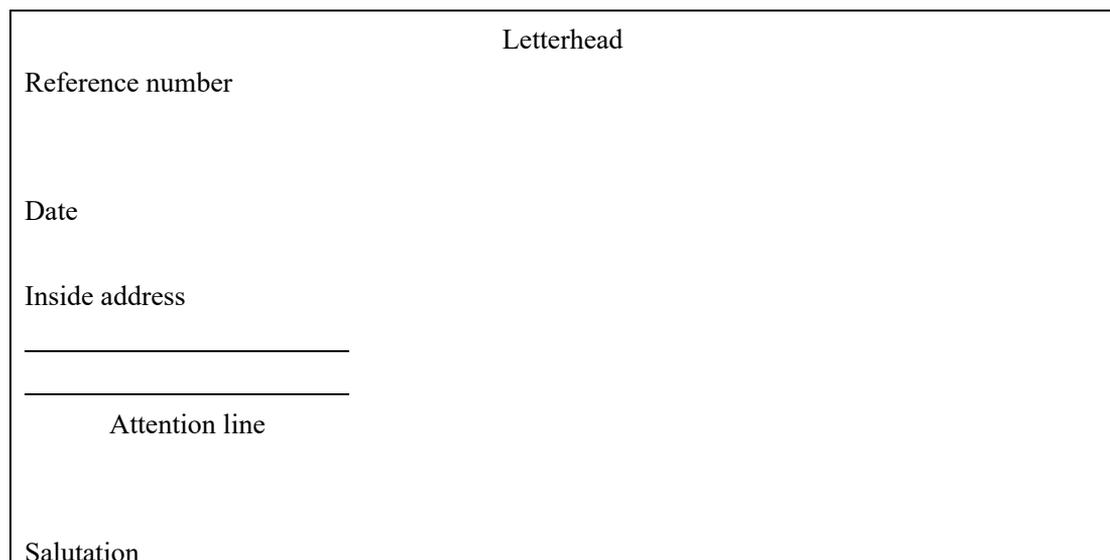
To make the message specific, definite and vivid is the key point of concreteness. The writer must ensure that the letter contains all the information the recipient needs to act upon. Put yourself in reader's place. It is necessary to check the message carefully before it is sent out.

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 piece of information is lacking, the reader will have to ask 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.

1.2.2 The Structure of Business Letters

Business letter has its special formats. In the formal business letters, we usually use 12 factors. They are letterhead, reference number, date, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject line, body, complimentary close, signature, IEC block, postscript. Among them, letterhead, date, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close and signature belong to the standard factors and must be contained in the formal business letters. Whether to use other factors depends on the specific situation. The approximate locations of these factors in a business letter are as follows:



Subject line
Body

Complimentary close
Signature
IEC block
Postscript

While the horizontal placement of letter parts may vary, the vertical order of these parts is standard. The followings are the most common components and formats.

1. The Basic Components of Business Letters

1) Letterhead

For letters to outsiders, many companies use letterhead stationery which is professionally printed at the top of the page, though some are printed at the bottom or even at the upper-left corner of the page. The letterhead indicates the name, address, telephone, fax number and E-mail address of the company sending the letter. It helps the recipient to identify the company from which the sender comes just at a glance. If letterhead stationery is not available, you can type the heading, which includes a return address, and leaves about a two-inch top margin.

2) Date

Writing date in English goes in two styles: one is American style, and the other is British style. The standard order of typing the date in the U.S. is month, day, year. For example: September 12, 2018. While in Britain, the standard order is day, month, year. For example: 12 September, 2018. The day can be written or typed in either cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) or in ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.). The month and the year had better not be written in their abbreviation forms, otherwise, it may easily cause confusion. For example, 12/09/2018 in the U.S. would mean December 9, 2018, while in Britain it means 12 September, 2018. There is no rule for the date placement. If you use letterhead stationery, place the date one to three blank lines beneath the letterhead. If without letterhead, place the date immediately below the return address.

3) Inside Address

Generally, the inside address should include some or all parts of the following: the name of the recipient, the department name, company name, suite or room number, street address, city, postcode, state/province and country. Of all these parts, postcode is very important, it helps to facilitate mechanical mail-sorting. The inside address appear on the left margin and usually start two to four lines below the date. They appear exactly the same way as on the envelope.

If the receiver of the letter is in the U.S., the address also includes the name of the state which must be typed in capitalized two letter abbreviation followed by ZIP code. The same way is also used for the provinces and territories in Canadian address.

Precede the addressee's name with a courtesy title (such as Mr., Ms. or Dr.). If you do not know whether the person is a man or a woman, and you have no way to find out, omit the courtesy title and give the full name.

The person's job title can be placed on the same line of the person's name, or on the line below. Try to square the address as much as possible. If the title appears on the same line, place a comma between the name and the title. If it appears on the next line, dispense with the comma. e.g.:

(1) Mr. Dick Eaton, President

(2) Ms. Patricia T. Higgins

Assistant Vice President

If the name of a specific person is unavailable, you may address the letter to the department, followed by the name of the company. e.g.:

(1) Customer Service Department

Acme Construction Company

(2) Director of Personnel

International Trading Co., Ltd.

In order to avoid ambiguity, when you write letters to other countries, always include the name of the country, even if the city mentioned is the country's capital.

The following examples show all the information that may be included in the inside address.

Dr. H. C. Armstrong
Research and Development
Commonwealth Mining Consortium
The Shelton Building, Suite 391
353 Second St. SW
Calgary, AB T2P
Canada

Mr. Thom Collins, President
164 Bay Road
Liquorland
Oklahoma City, OK 73125
U.S.A

4) Salutation

The salutation is the polite greeting with which a letter begins. Place it two lines below the inside address. The salutation should correspond to the first line of the inside address, that is, if the first line of your inside address is a name of a person, the salutation is “Dear + the name”. Its form depends upon your relationship with the receiver. The customary formal greeting in a business letter is “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam” used for addressing one person; and “Dear Sirs”, “Dear Mesdames” or “Gentlemen” for addressing two or more people. If the addressee is known to you personally, a warmer greeting such as “Dear Mr. Smith” is preferred. Quite often now companies are owned and/or managed by women, and it is more and more customary to use the greeting: Dear Madam or Sir, if you are not sure whether the letter will be read by a man or a woman. If the addressee is a group, use “Ladies and Gentlemen”. Or you may use a polite description, such as “Dear Friends”, “Dear SPA supporters”. End the salutation with a colon, or a comma.

5) Body

This is the most important part of a letter. It expresses your idea, opinion, purpose and wishes, etc. It usually begins from one or two lines below the salutation. Lines within a paragraph should be single-spaced and double-spaced between paragraphs. There is no strict rule regarding the content of the letter, but it usually includes three parts: the opening paragraph, the middle paragraph and the closing paragraph. The opening paragraph refers to any previous correspondence or introduces the purpose of the letter. The middle paragraph supports the opening and/or provides additional information. The closing paragraph is short and serves as a request, suggestion, or looks to the future. When writing, pay attention to courtesy, clarity, conciseness, consideration, completeness, concreteness and correctness.

6) Complimentary Close

The complimentary close, like the salutation, is purely a matter of custom and a polite way of bringing a letter to a close. It appears one or two lines below the last line of the body. Capitalize

the first word and end with a comma. The expression must match the salutation reflecting the relationship between the sender and the receiver of the letter. The main words in complimentary close are as follows: sincerely, faithfully, cordially, respectfully and truly. These words may appear in any of these combinations: Your sincerely, Sincerely yours. The expression used must suit for the occasion.

7) Signature

The writer's signature consists of a handwritten signature and a typewritten signature. Type the name under the complimentary close, leaving enough blank lines (usually leave three blank lines) to sign your name. Never "sign" with a seal or stamp. Then type the signature identification and title. The writer's signature should be placed between the complimentary close and the typed signature.

Sincerely yours,

(signature)

Harry Smith

The letterhead indicates that you are representing your company. However, if your letter is on plain paper and you want to emphasize that you are speaking legally for the company, you may type the company's name in capital letters below the complementary close and place the title of the message sender on the same line with or below the typed name.

Very truly yours,

ALVERS, INC

(signature)

Harry Smith, Project Manager

2. Additional Components of Business Letters

1) Mailing or In-house Notation

Mailing notation shows the specific means of delivery for the convenience of verification. Besides there are two other commonly used forms of mailing notation, e.g. by courier and by EMS. Type them two lines below the date and in all capital letters.

Mailing notations: e.g. "special delivery" "airmail" "registered mail" "certified mail"

In-house notations: e.g. "personal" "confidential".

CONFIDENTIAL

2) Reference

The reference may include a file number, department code or the initials of the signer followed by that of the typist of the letter. Type the reference below the letterhead in short form as “Our ref. :” for the sender’s reference, and “Your ref. :” for the recipient’s. The purpose of this is to facilitate filing of the letter and link it with previous correspondence.

3) Attention Line

The attention line is used to name the specific individual the letter is addressed to. It is usually placed between the inside address and the salutation or within the inside address and centered over the body of a letter in the indented style. Its abbreviation is Attn. It suggests that the sender hopes the letter receives the immediate attention of a certain person or a specific department.

4) Subject Line/Caption

The subject line is the general idea of a letter. It calls recipients’ attention to the topic of the letter. It is often inserted between the salutation and the body of a letter, usually two lines below the salutation. It is also useful as a guide for filing. Some companies omit the word “Subject:”, some replace it with “Re:” or “re:” (meaning “regarding”), and some underline the subject line. The following forms are commonly used:

SUBJECT: SALES CONFIRMATION NO. 5678 FOR 300MT OF SOYBEAN OIL

<u>Subject: Sales Confirmation NO. 5678 for 300Metric Tons of Soybean Oil</u>

5) Multiple-page Letter Heading

When typing a multiple-page letter, use letterhead for the first page. The following page or pages should have the same quality, size and color as the first page. The multiple-page heading bears the name of the recipient or his/her organization, the page number, and the date. The following styles are often used for multiple-page letters:

Ms. Katherine Black	Page 2	October 9, 2018
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Ms. Katherine Black	-2-	October 9, 2018
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Ms. Katherine Black Page 2 October 6, 2018
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6) Reference Initials

Consisting of the signer’s initials in capitals followed by a slash or colon followed by the lowercase initials of the person preparing the letter, this item serves as reminder of who prepared the letter. It should be placed at the left margins, two or three lines below the signature. When you type your own letter, don’t use initials. When the signature block includes the writer’s name, use only the typist’s initials. Reference initials are usually given in the form of “author’s initials/typist

initials”, or “author’s initials: typist initials”.

RS/sm

RS:sm

RS:SM

7) Enclosure Notation

When there is something enclosed with the letter, type the word “Enclosure”, or an abbreviation of it(Encl.) in the bottom left-hand, a double spaces under the reference initials, with a figure indicating the number of enclosures, if there are more than one. You can use any of the following styles:

Enclosure

Ence.

Enclosure:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purchase Order No. 1234 2. Check No. 123 |
|--|

8) Carbon Copy Notation

When you send a copy of the letter to a third person, place a notation directly below the enclosure notation or reference initials. The copy notation is indicated with “CC”, or “cc” which is a holdover from the days of carbon copies. Many companies are now using “PC” (for photocopy). e.g.:

PC: Margaret Ruth

CC: Margaret Ruth

cc: Margaret Ruth

9) Postscript/P.S.

If you wish to add something you forget or for emphasis, you may usually add the postscript two lines below the carbon copy notation. Postscript may be preceded by “P. S.”, but this is not strictly necessary. In business letters, postscript is not commonly used, while in personal letters, it frequently appears. This item is usually used in the informal styles of letters. The adding of a P.S. should, however, be avoided as far as possible, since it can appear as afterthoughts, indicating a lack of planning. But studies show that postscripts are one of the first things people read and remember, especially when it is handwritten. It sometimes serves the purposes as a message that requires emphasis, or as a personal note. Look at the following example to see where the different parts go in a business letter.

P.S.: You get 5% discount if you book the space by the end of this month.

1.2.3 The Formats of a Business Letter

There are various ways in which the component parts of a business letter can be laid out on the page. Choice of letter format is a matter of individual taste, but it is better to follow established practice, to which the business world has become accustomed. A good plan to make correct practice habit is to adopt one form of letter format and stick to it. The three main formats are as follows.

1. Blocked Format

With this letter style, all letter parts begin at the left margin. Because this style can save the typist's time, so it has come to be much widely used and preferred now. The loss of clarity occasioned by the absence of indentations may be made good by increasing the number of separating line-spacing between paragraphs. The specific layout of letter components in this format are as follows:

LETTERHEAD	
Date	
Addressee	
Inside Address	
Salutation:	
Re: Blocked Format	
<p>This easy-to-type letter is becoming more and more popular and is widely used in many of today's modern offices.</p> <p>It is a very efficient style because everything begins at the left margins, thereby eliminating the need for tabs.</p> <p>But critics say it looks somewhat crowded and imbalanced.</p>	

Very truly yours,

(Signature)

Typed name

2. Semi-blocked Format

Like blocked format, all letter parts begin at the left margins, except the dateline, complimentary close, company signature and writer's identification, which are set against the right-hand margins. They are placed in this position for filing and reference purposes. It is also named as a modified blocked format. The specific layout of letter components in this style are as follows:

LETTERHEAD	
	Date
Addressee	
Inside Address	
Salutation:	
Re: Semi-blocked Format	
Modified block style has traditionally been the most commonly used of all letter styles.	
The most notable difference between this style and the full block is that the date and complimentary close start at the center, or slightly to the right of center.	
This letter style is appealing to the eye and is very popular.	
	Very truly yours
	(Signature)
	Typed name

3. Indented Format

The indented format may follow the same layout as either the blocked or semi-blocked

formats, but will differ in that the paragraphs will each be indented by four or five spaces. It is a traditional format, especially in Britain. The specific layout of letter components in this format are as follows:

LETTERHEAD	
	Date
Addressee	
Inside Address	
Salutation:	
Re: Indented Format	
The distinguishing features of this letter format are that the subject line is indented and all paragraphs are indented too.	
It is important to remember that two tabs must be set: one for the date and complimentary close and one for the indentation of the subject line and paragraphs.	
This letter style may use more time to type than the previous two.	
	Very truly yours,
	(Signature)
	Typed name

1.2.4 The Format of Envelopes

The envelope should match the stationery in color and style. Most companies have the return address in the upper-left corner of the envelope, giving the same information as the letterhead. Otherwise you must type or write your return address the same way as you do for the inside address, usually in smaller typeface than the name and address of the receiver. Name and address of the receiver is always single-spaced with all lines aligned on the left, and they should be in all capital

letter, with no punctuation at the end of each line. The order in writing the address is from the smallest division to the largest, just opposite to the Chinese custom in writing addresses.

The in-house notation is placed three lines down the return address and is in all capital letters. The stamp is put at the upper right corner of the envelope with mailing notation, if there are any, given in all capital letters below the stamp.

The format of the address on the envelope can be in blocked or indented style, but it is better to keep the same format with the inside address of the letter.

Skyline Farm Machinery Manufacturing Company 56 Fuan Street, Tianjin, China Tel.: 0086-22-2236 5566	Stamp
PERSONAL	MS. DAWN ROBERTS ASIAN FOOD-PROCESSING CO., LTD. 100 KING'S RD HANOI, VIETNAM
BY AIR	

Example 1 (Blocked style)

Linda Smith 12 King's Avenue Rechemmond Surrey TW6 ISJ Britain	Stamp
PERSONAL	MR. GARRY MARSHALL 6345 GLENWOOD DRIVE ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87001 U.S.A.
PAR AVION	

Example 2 (Indented style)

Jack Sill Central Business Consultants Hyde Towers Hong Kong	Stamp
DR. DAWEI ZHANG NO. 305 JINHUI BUILDING NANJING RD. HEPING WARD TIANJIN, CHINA	

Example 3 (Mixed style)

1.3 Letters for Example

1.3.1 Letter One

PHILIP TEA EXPORTS LTD. PO Box 36, Kaduna, Nigeria Phone: (035) 523471 Telex:20717 Our Ref.:VA/ym/48576
June 6, 2018
Plybox Co., Ltd. PO Box 65, Jacksonville Florida 32203 For the attention of Mr. Robert Keats
Dear Sirs,
Subject: OVERDUE TEA-CHEST DELIVERY
We wrote to you on June 1 asking for the prompt delivery of our monthly supply of tea chests, which was already 10 days overdue on that date. We have not yet received any delivery or explanation for the delay.
We should appreciate that it is of utmost importance that we are not to let down our customers. If we cannot meet their requirements at the time we agreed upon, we would risk losing them to our competitors.

We ask you, therefore, to deliver our tea chests within a week. Failure to do so will force us to seek quotations urgently from other suppliers.

We sincerely hope that we shall be able to continue doing business with you.

Faithfully yours,

Philip Tea Exports Ltd.

(Signature)

Charles Lai

Managing Director

Enclosure: A copy of our order No.4881

C.C. Michael Konrad

Alicia Montara

Peter D. Schaeffer

1.3.2 Letter Two

Athena House Group

Athena House West Street London SW1Y 2AR

Tel:+44 (0) 20 8302 0261 Fax:+44 (0) 20 8302 4169 E-mail: althena@intl.co.uk

DA/ST

10 May, 2018

Mr. Craig Tomkinson

Manager

Goodison Hotel

42 St Michael's Drive

Leeds

LS1 9EG

Dear sirs,

Will you please send us a copy of catalogue and current price list for garments? We are interested in garments for both men and women, and also for children.

We are one of the leading garment dealers in this city and have branches in eight neighboring towns. If therefore the quality of your garments is satisfactory and the prices are right, we expect to place regular orders for fairly large quantities.

In this case, we should like to know whether you are able to allow us a special discount. This would enable us to maintain the low selling prices that have been an important reason for the growth of our business. In return, we would be prepared to place orders to guarantee annual minimum turn-over, the figure to be mutually agreed.

I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Douglas Allen
Sales Manager

1.3.3 Letter Three

This letter contains the basic parts (blocked letter style).

PHILIP TEA EXPORTS LTD.
PO Box 36, Kaduna, Nigeria
Phone: (035) 523471 Telex:20717

10 July, 2018

Mrs. Lorry Mason
National Geographic Society
475 Kenwood St.
Duluth, MN55811
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Mason,

Thank you for your letter of 3 July, concerning your forthcoming visit to my company. I'll be glad to meet you at the time of your visit. Please confirm your flight number, so that my assistant,

Helen Wei will be seeing you at the airport.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

Jenny Chen

1.3.4 Letter Four

This letter contains the basic parts and additional parts (semi-blocked letter style).

===== ***TIANJIN TRADE FAIRS*** =====

No. 56 Nanjing Rd. Tianjin 300045 China
Tel.:86-22 2366-5783 Fax: 86-22 2366-5758

Our ref.: TF001

Your ref.:

November 20, 2018

CERTIFIED MAIL

Asian Food-processing Equipment Co., Ltd.
100 King's Road
Hanoi, Vietnam

Dear Sirs,

RE: THE FIFTH TIANJIN AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT FAIR

The Tianjin Agricultural Equipment Fair will take place from 5 to 13 January, 2018. This fair is an opportunity for both manufacturers and buyers from all over the world to seek business opportunities.

We are now accepting provisional bookings of space. Each year we receive more bookings than we can accommodate. So we advise you to book early if you want to take part in the fair. For representatives from overseas, we are able to arrange visas. (Please provide full passport details.)

Your company would find it worthwhile to have a stand at the fair. Price of the floor space is US \$ 150 per sq. m. (min. 15m²) and payments should be made to a/c 2680805346, Bank of China, Tianjin Branch.

Should you require any further information, please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

TIANJIN TRADE FAIR
(Signature)
Anna Chen, Manager

Enclosure: 10 free VIP tickets to the fair

cc: Eric Long, General Manager

P.S.: You will get 3% discount if you book the space within this month.

1.4 Words and Phrases

1. **routine** *n.* the usual or normal way in which you do things 惯例; 常规
2. **straightforward** *adj.* easy to understand, simple 易懂的; 简单的
3. **portray** *v.* to represent or describe (someone or something) in a painting, film, book or other artistic work 描绘; 描述; 描写
4. **approachable** *adj.* friendly and easy to talk to 可接近的; 平易近人的; 亲切的
5. **punctuation** *n.* special marks that you add to a text to show the divisions between phrases and sentences, and to make the meaning clearer 标点; 标点符号

6. **flimsy** *adj.* lacking solidity or strength 易坏的；脆弱的
7. **free from** 解除；没有……的
8. **blemish** *n.* a mark on something that spoils its appearance 污点；缺点；瑕疵
9. **clarity** *n.* the quality of expressing ideas or thoughts in a clear way 清晰；清楚；明确
10. **ambiguous** *adj.* having more than one meaning, so that it is not clear which is intended 歧义的；含糊的；不明确的
11. **conciseness** *n.* short and clear, with no unnecessary words 简明
12. **elimination** *n.* the removal or destruction of something 排除；除去
13. **wordy** *adj.* using too many formal words 多言的；冗长的
14. **jargon** *n.* technical words and expressions that are mainly used by people who belong to the same professional group and are difficult to understand 行话
15. **courtesy** *n.* polite behavior that shows that you have respect for other people 谦恭；礼貌
16. **redundancy** *n.* a situation in which something is not used because something similar or the same already exists 冗余
17. **be bound to** 一定要
18. **diplomacy** *n.* the management of relationships between countries, or (fig. approving) skill in dealing with people without making them angry or unhappy, or offending them 外交；交际手段
19. **tact** *n.* the ability to be polite and careful about what you say or do so that you do not upset or embarrass other people 得体
20. **in good faith** 诚信的；老实的
21. **stationery** *n.* the items needed for writing, such as paper, pens, pencils and envelopes 文具；信纸

1.5 Notes

1. Essentials of Business Letter Writing 商务信函写作的要求（清晰、简洁、礼貌、体谅、正确、具体和完整）

2. The Basic Components of Business Letters 商务信函的基本构成成分

1) **Letterhead** 信头

信头包括公司或集团的名称、地址、电话号码、电传号码、电子邮件地址等。信头一般是印好的。如：

Optical Products Corp.
123 Monmouth Parkway
Long Branch, NJ 07784

Tel: 813-688-1186

Fax: 813-688-112

E-mail: swihgo@welorlolor.net.cn

2) **Date** 日期

日期位于信头的下面, 其写法有英式和美式之分。如:

21 March, 2018/21 March 2018 (BrE)

January 24, 2018/January 24 2018 (AmE)

3) **Inside name and address** 封内名称及地址

封内名称及地址即收信人名称及地址, 它与信封上的地址完全相同。设置封内地址的目的在于方便信件的归档、避免差错等。当信封是开窗信封 (**Window Envelope**) 时, 封内地址还可以当作信封上收件人的地址。封内地址一般位于信头下, 它主要包括以下几个要素:

- (1) the name of the recipient (收件人姓名)
- (2) the department name (部门名称)
- (3) company name (公司名称)
- (4) suite or room number (房间号或门牌号)
- (5) street address (街道名称)
- (6) city (城市名称)
- (7) postcode (邮编)
- (8) state/province and country (州/省和国家名称)

例如:

a.

Mr. James D Keats
General Sales Manager (Import)
W. Brownlaw & Co.
P.O. Box 62, Kirkcaldy
Fife, Scotland

b.

Mrs. George Allen
The Principal
The College of Culture and Language
52 Fruitdale Street
Lowa City, IA 55240-4761

4) **Salutation** 称呼

称呼是写信人对收信人的尊称, 多以 “Dear” 开头, 一般位于封内地址或指定收信人姓名的下面两行, 通常是从左边顶格写起, 在后面加上冒号或逗号。例如:

- (1) Dear Sir:/Dear Madam,
- (2) Dear Sirs:/ Dear Mesdames:

(3) Dear Mr. Smith:/Dear Ms. Alexander:/Dear Mrs. Donovan:/Dear Miss Essiet:

(4) Dear Felix Bryan:

5) **Body** 正文

正文是信函最重要的一部分，表达了写信人的观点、意见、目的、愿望等。正文通常位于称呼下一行或两行位置处，行与行之间设置单倍行距，段落与段落之间设置双倍行距。通常情况下，正文由三部分构成。第一部分是开头语（**Opening Sentence**），习惯上开头语是写信人对收信日期、编号、简要内容等做简要叙述，使对方立即知道此信是针对哪封信而写的；如果是首次信函联系，则利用开头语做简单的自我介绍，简明扼要地表明写此信的意图。开头语一般自成一段。第二部分为信函内容。最后一部分是结束语（**Closing Sentence**），用以总结信中所谈及的事项，对收信人提出希望和要求，其位置是在正文之后另起一段。

6) **Complimentary Close** 结束敬语

与称呼一样，结束敬语是表示写信人的一种谦称，以较礼貌的方式结束信函。结束敬语位于正文后一行或两行处，首字母需大写，后面加上逗号。每封信的结束敬语必须与开头的称呼相匹配，以反映发信人与收信人的关系。常用的结束敬语如下表所示。

最正式的（一般用于对上级的回信）	Respectfully, Respectfully yours, Yours respectfully, Very respectfully
正式的	Yours truly, Very truly yours, Yours faithfully, Faithfully yours
普通式的（对方来信时多以名字来称呼）	Yours sincerely, Sincerely yours, Very sincerely yours
简略式的（表示亲密）	Cordially yours, Cordially

7) **Signature** 签名

签名包括亲笔签名和打印签名，位于结束敬语下方。签名是商务信函中极为重要的部分，因为签名具有一定的法律效力。签名者对信中所叙述的内容承担一定的责任，因而签名要清晰可辨，独具风格。签名可用全签署，如：James Adolf；也可用简略签署，即姓名用全称，其余部分则取其第一个字母，如：J. Adolf。如果写信人是代表公司，则要将公司的名称打印在签名之前；如果写信人不在场，可让秘书或其他人代签，在姓名前面加上 P.P.（Per Procurationem）或 For；如果写信人是女性，则可在签名的后面加上 Miss, Mrs., Ms. 等。此外，由于签名往往潦草而不易识别，在签名下面一行必须将签署的姓名打印出来。如果写信人有职位，也应在其姓名下打印出来。

3. Additional Components of Business Letters 商务信函的其他成分

1) **Mailing or In-house Notation** 邮递方式

邮递方式位于日期下方两行处且以大写字母表示。

2) **Reference** 编号

编号是便于参考查阅之用的，通常位于信头下方。它包括卷宗号、部门代码、主办人（寄信人和打字人）姓名的首写字母。

3) **Attention Line** 主送，简写为 Attn.。

当发信人希望直接将此信发给特定的人或部门处理而且又知晓其姓名或部门名称时可

以使用主送, 通常在封内地址及称呼之间或在封内地址内且在缩行式正文上方中心处写上收件人或部门。例如:

- (1) Attention: Mr. John P. Rogers, President
- (2) For the attention of Mr. James P. Dahl
- (3) Attention: Personnel Department
- (4) Attention of Sales & Marketing Department
- (5) For the attention: Miss Wang Ying
- 4) **Subject Line/Caption** 标题或事由

标题或事由概括了信函大意, 位于称呼及正文之间, 通常在称呼下方两行处, 以便引起收信人注意, 使其立即知道信件的主旨, 也有利于归档、查阅。事由要简洁, 说明商品的名称、数量、合同号、信用证号等即可。

5) **Multiple-Page Letter Heading** 多页信的标题

当信函不止一页时, 在首页注明信头, 其后的各页纸张应该同第一页具有相同的质量、大小和颜色。多页信的标题应有收信人名称或其所在机构、页码和日期。

6) **Reference Initials** 主办人代号

主办人代号位于左边, 签名下面空两行或三行处, 作用是便于双方了解关于某事的主办人和打印此信人的姓名。

7) **Enclosure Notation** 附件

附件位于主办人代号下面空两行处。如果附件不止一个, 应注明 2 Encls. 或 3 Encls. 等, 或者详细列明具体的附件。例如:

- Enc.: 1 quality certificate (一份质量证明)
 2 commercial invoices (两张商业发票)
 1 B/L (一张海运提单)
 1 packing list (一张装箱单)

8) **Carbon Copy Notation** 抄送

如果写信人将此信抄送给其他个人或团体, 同时让收信人知道此信抄送给哪些人或团体, 那么就在信末左下角注明“C.C.”或“c.c.”字样, 随后写上有关人员或团体的名字。如果副本寄给两个或两个以上的人, 就按姓名的字母顺序来排列。例如:

- (1) C.C.: Peter D. Schaeffer
- (2) c.c.: Group Personnel and Training Manager, BHL
 The Senior Training Office, BHL

bcc 的意思是“密抄送”。当发信人不希望其他人知道某人过目某封信时, 可以使用 bcc 将信中密抄送某人。抄送直接位于附件或主办人代号下方。

9) **Postscript/P.S.** 附言

若写信人在信的正文中忘了写而又想补充某事时, 常常在 P.S. 后加上想补充的内容, 放在抄送下方空两行处。例如:

P. S. The sample will be forwarded under separate cover next Friday.

在商务信函中, 一般不用附言; 但在私人信函中, 附言会较为频繁地使用。尽管附言

能够起到强调的效果，但是在较为正式的商务信函中应尽量避免使用，因为使用附言会显得写信人办事不够周密。

4. Formats of a Business Letter 商务信函的格式

商务信函有不同的格式，选用什么样的格式因人而异。不过有些公司的所有信函都采取统一格式，以体现公司的独特风格。常见的商务信函格式包括以下三种。

1) **Blocked Format** 平头式或全齐头式

在平头式（全齐头式）商务信函中，所有信行都是从左边界开始，并且整封信中均无行首缩格。这种格式简单，易于打印，是商务信函中最常采用的一种格式。

2) **Semi-blocked Format** 半齐头式

在半齐头式商务信函中，日期、信尾敬语和签名是从纸张中线偏右处开始打印的，其他的要素均从左边界开始。这是一种比较保守的格式。

3) **Indented Format** 缩行式

在缩行式商务信函中，信的正文中每一行通常都要缩进 4~5 个空格，其他要素的位置与半齐头式的位置相同。

1.6 Useful Expressions

1. We wrote to you on 15 January asking for the prompt delivery of our monthly supply of tea chests, which was already 10 days overdue on that date.

我们 1 月 15 日写信给你们，要求按月向我方供应的茶叶箱迅速装运，这已经比约定日期迟到 10 天了。

2. We should appreciate that it is of utmost importance that we are not to let down our customers.

我们应意识到不让顾客失望是非常重要的。

3. Failure to do so will force us to seek quotations urgently from other suppliers.

未能做到这些将迫使我们紧急向其他供应商寻求报价。

4. We are one of the leading garment dealers in this city and have branches in eight neighboring towns.

我们是该城市的最主要的服装经销商之一，并且在八个邻近市镇设有分支机构。

5. If therefore the quality of your garments is satisfactory and the prices are right, we expect to place regular orders for fairly large quantities.

如果贵方服装质量令人满意，价格合理，我们将大量地进行常规订购。

6. This fair is an opportunity for both manufacturers and buyers from all over the world to seek business opportunities.

此次展销会为那些来自世界各地的寻求商业合作的制造商和买主提供了机会。

1.7 Exercises

1. Answer the following questions.

- (1) What are the 7 Cs when people talk about the certain essential qualities of business letters?
- (2) What are the basic components and additional components of business letters?
- (3) What are the three letter formats?

2. Choose the best answer to complete the following statements.

- (1) A letterhead includes _____.

A. name of the company	B. the E-mail address
C. address of the company	D. all of above
- (2) The inside address contains all of the following information, except _____.

A. company name	B. the date of typing of the message
C. the name of the city and the country	D. the name of the state
- (3) For a multiple-page letter, _____ should only be used on the first page.

A. letterhead	B. paper of the same quality
C. paper of the same size	D. paper of the same quality
- (4) A mail notation should be included in which of the following cases: _____.

A. the exact address is unknown	B. the sender has something exciting mentioned in the letter
C. the letter is confidential and only readable to someone intended	D. none of the above
- (5) What does the subject line tell the recipients?

A. What the letter is about.	B. When the letter has been sent.
C. Who wrote the letter.	D. Who typed the letter.

3. Arrange the following in the proper form as they should be set out in a letter.

- (1) Sender's name: China National Light Industrial Products Import & Export Corporation, Shanghai Branch
- (2) Sender's address: 123 Jiefang Road, Shanghai, China
- (3) Sender's Fax Number: 86-22-67891236
- (4) Sender's e-mail address: linda@mail.zlnet.com.cn
- (5) Date: March 18, 2018
- (6) Receiver's name: H. G. Wilkinson Company Limited
- (7) Receiver's address: 456 Lombart Street, Lagos Nigeria

(8) Salutation used: Dear Sirs

(9) Subject Line: Sewing Machines

(10) The message:

① We thank you for your letter of March 6 inquiring for the captioned goods.

② The enclosed booklet contains details of all our Sewing Machines and will enable you to make a suitable selection.

③ We look forward to receiving your specific inquiry with keen interest.

(11) Complimentary close used: Yours faithfully,

4. Address an envelope to the above letter.

Answers for Reference

