

Part One

Basic Knowledge of Modern Business Correspondence

Study Aims

- To be familiar with the functions, the format and layout of business correspondence
- To know the latest development of business correspondence writing
- To grasp the principles of correspondence writing
- To be able to address the envelope
- To be able to format and layout business correspondence
- To be able to rewrite business correspondence in the form of E-mail

The Language of Modern Business Correspondence



【Text】课文

1. Concept of Business Correspondence

Business Correspondence is a business letter written in English. But as communication means developed the letters are not limited to paper letter, can also be telegram (电报), telex (电传), fax (传真), E-mail (电子邮件), online communication language (线上交流语), such as Instant Messages (即时消息), website mail (站内信), etc.

Nowadays telegram, telex, fax are few used, while E-mails, online communication language have been increasing rapidly due to the low cost, fast and convenience of internet. But the writing of all the correspondences is based on that of letter, so writing letter is mainly introduced in the textbook.

2. Functions of Business Correspondence

Business correspondence is still a basic activity involved in trade, and remains a very important form of communication even nowadays. The functions of business correspondence are as follows:

- Insuring that your message is accurately received, particularly for technical or highly detailed information.
- Serving as a part of a company's permanent record.
- Functioning as written contracts, fully recognized by courts.

- Acting as formal or informal public relations material. Your letter represents you & your firm.

3. Seven Principles of Business Correspondence Writing

A good business correspondence is brief, straightforward, and polite. If possible, it should be limited to one page.

Here are two letters. One is about an inquiry and the other is the reply to it.



Example 1

A Letter of Inquiry

Dear Sir,

One of our customers is interested in your bicycles, particularly Model No.PA-18.

Please send us a copy of your illustrated catalog, quoting your prices FOB Shanghai if possible. Please indicate the time of delivery you usually offer.

Yours faithfully,



Example 2

Reply

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of August 10, enquiring for our bicycles. As requested, we enclosed a price list and a copy of our catalog for your consideration. All prices are quoted FOB Shanghai, subject to our final confirmation. Generally, delivery can be made in two months from receipt of an order.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Faithfully yours,

Encl. As stated.

The following principles should be involved in formal business correspondence.

(1) completeness 完整

A business correspondence should include all the necessary information you intend to send. All the questions the reader asked should be answered because those are the matter he is

concerned and interested in. The complete letters can make us obtain the expectation effect and with no other writing a letter, to build better corporate reputation. So it is essential to check the message carefully before it is sent out.

(2) concreteness 具体

Make the message specific, definite and vivid. What the letter comes to should be specific, definite rather than vague, abstract and general.

- For example, some qualities or characters of goods should be shown with exact figures instead of words like short, long or good.
- Give specific time (with date, month, year and even offer hour, minute if necessary).
- But avoid expressions such as yesterday, next month, immediately and etc.

(3) clarity 清楚

The writer must try to express his meaning clearly so that the reader will understand it well.

The writer should do as follows:

- Apply the KISS formula — “Keep it Short and Simple”.
- Choose short, familiar, conversational words.

Avoid unfamiliar words, abbreviations, or slang to make the messages easy to understand, e. g. : It's better to say “after”, “use” and “January”, instead of “subsequently”, “utilize” and “Jan.”.

- Use short sentences.

Short sentences lead to clear meaning and easy understanding. The average sentence length is 17-20 words. You can use sentences containing 3-40 words. If there are more than 40 words in a sentence, you can consider rewriting it into more than one sentence.

- Have paragraphs of suitable length.

In business writing, it is suitable for paragraphs to less than 8 lines. If a paragraph is too long, it may make the main idea unclear and lead to a loose structure.

- Make ideas clear.

Put one idea in a sentence, put one topic in a paragraph, and put one subject in a letter.

(4) conciseness 简洁

A good business correspondence should be precise and to the point. Avoid wordy languages and redundancy, or repetition, and eliminate excessive detail:

- Shorten or omit wordy expressions.

- Include only relevant statements.
- Avoid unnecessary long sentences, relative pronouns, abstract subjects, and passive verbs.

(5) courtesy 礼貌

Avoid irritating, offensive, or belittling statements and answer letters promptly. Answer letters in good time and write to explain why if you fail to do it promptly. Even if you don't think the recipient is right, you should still respond tactfully and politely.

(6) consideration 体谅

Consideration emphasizes You-attitude rather than We-attitude. Focus on the positive approach. When writing a letter, keep the reader's request, needs, desires, as well as his feelings in mind.

☐ We allow 3 percent discount for cash payment.

☒ You earn 3 percent discount when you pay cash.

☐ We won't be able to send you the brochure this week.

☒ The brochure will be sent to you next week.

(7) correctness 正确

Correctness not only refer to proper expression with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, but also appropriate tone. Do not understate nor overstate as understatement might lead to less confidence and hold up the trade development while overstatement would throw you in an awkward position. Apply all other pertinent C qualities.



【Broaden Knowledge】拓展知识

当今外贸函电的主要形式是外贸电子邮件和线上外贸英语(网上外贸英语),与传统的
外贸信件相比,有其独自的特点。

一、外贸电子邮件的特点

当今外贸电子邮件已经成为外贸函电的主要形式,其写作特点与传统的信件有较大的
区别。

外贸电子邮件作为外贸函电的一种形式,除了具有传统外贸函电(信件)的 7C 原则
(完整、具体、清楚、简洁、礼貌、体谅、正确)外,又有其独自的特点:①口语化、网络
语言化;②朴实、人性化;③标题鲜明;④回复迅速;⑤内容更加简洁。

二、线上外贸英语的特点

1. 买卖双方在线交流具有“即时性”特点，其语言比较口语化，也不太注重格式，给人以亲切感。如采用短句、重复、不确定的指代等，使用“just”、“and”、“you see”等口语特征词。

2. 在线交流语还具有非常明显的网络语言特征。如广泛使用缩写（u=you, r=are 等）、首字母缩略词（cu=see you, oic=oh I see 等）、表情符号等。同时，由于买卖双方大都不是来自英语母语国家，在线交流语言还会存在较多的拼写和语法错误，需要我们加以辨别，避免误解。

三、即时通信

即时通信（Instant Messages）是网上通过即时通信服务（Instant Messaging）发送的信息，包括文字、图片、视频等。Instant Messaging 的缩写是 IM，这是一种可以让使用者在网络上建立某种私人聊天室的实时通信服务。

目前在互联网上受欢迎的即时通信软件包括腾讯 QQ、益信、微信、钉钉、百度 HI、飞信、易信、阿里旺旺、京东咚咚、飞语、yy、Skype、Google Talk、icq、FastMsg、parox 等。



【Words & Expressions】生词解释

1. client ['klaɪənt] *n.* 顾客，客户，委托人
2. correspondence [ˌkɒrɪsˈpɒndəns] *n.* 相应，通信，函电，信件
by/through correspondence 用通信的办法
in correspondence with 和……一致；与……有通信联系
teach by correspondence 函授
3. organization [ˌɔːgənaɪˈzeɪʃən] *n.* 组织，机构，团体
4. customer ['kʌstəmə] *n.* 消费者
5. as follows 如下
6. permanent ['pɜːmənənt] *adj.* 永久的，持久的
7. written contract 书面合同
8. court [kɔːt] *n.* 法院，庭院，朝廷，宫廷
9. straightforward [streɪtˈfɔːwəd] *adj.* 正直的，坦率的，简单的，易懂的，直截了当的
adv. 坦率地

10. principle ['prɪnsəpl] *n.* 法则, 原则, 原理
11. essential [i'senʃəl] *n.* 本质, 实质, 要素, 要点
12. catalog ['kætələg] *n.* 目录, 目录册
v. 编目录
13. draw one's attention 引起某人的注意
14. special offer 特殊报价, 特价优待
15. vague [veɪg] *adj.* 含糊的, 不清楚的, 茫然的, 暧昧的
16. conversational [kən'veɪʃənəl] *adj.* 对话的, 会话的, 健谈的
17. term [tɜ:m] *n.* 学期, 期限, 期间, 条款, 条件, 术语
18. redundancy [rɪ'dʌndənsi] *n.* 冗余
19. repetition [ˌrepɪ'tɪʃən] *n.* 重复, 循环, 复制品, 副本
20. precise [pri'saɪs] *adj.* 精确的, 准确的
n. 精确
21. omit [əu'mɪt] *vt.* 省略, 疏忽, 遗漏
22. irritating ['ɪrɪteɪtɪŋ] *adj.* 使愤怒的, 刺激的, 气人的
23. approach [ə'prəʊtʃ] *n.* 接近, 逼近, 走进, 方法, 步骤, 途径, 通路
vt. 接近, 动手处理
24. discount['dɪskaʊnt] *n.* 折扣
25. cash [kæʃ] *n.* 现金
vt. 兑现
26. brochure [brəʊ'ʃjuə] *n.* 小册子
27. overstatement ['əʊvə'steɪtmənt] *n.* 大话
28. figure ['fɪgə] *n.* 外形, 轮廓, 体形, 图形, 画像, 数字, 形状, 身份
vt. 描绘, 塑造, 表示, 象征, 演算, 认为
vi. 出现, 考虑, 出名, 扮演角色
29. nondiscriminatory [ˌnɒndɪs'krɪmɪnətəri] *adj.* 一视同仁的, 不歧视的
30. online communication language 线上交流语



【Key Words】关键词

1. business

n.

(1) [C, U] 日常工作；职业

He tries not to let (his) business interfere with his home life. 他尽量不让日常工作妨碍他的家庭生活。

(2) [U] buying and selling (esp. as a profession); commerce; trade 买卖（尤指作为职业）；商业；贸易

We don't do (much) business with foreign companies. 我们跟外国公司没有（多少）生意来往。

He's in (i.e. works in) the oil business. 他做油类生意。

(3) [C] commercial establishment; firm; shop 商业机构；公司；商店

have/own one's own business 有自己的商行

(4) [U] thing that one is rightly concerned with or interested in; duty; task 理应关心的事；职责；任务

It is the business of the police to protect the community. 保障社会的安全是警察的职责。

My private life is none of your business/is no business of yours. 我的私生活与你毫不相干。

2. contract

n.

合同，契约：两个或两个以上当事人之间达成的一种协议，尤指具有法律效力的书面协议。

written contract 书面合同

award a contract [美] 授予（合同）；委托（某人）承包

sign a contract 签订合同

bind oneself by contract 有契约约束

a breach of contract 违反合同

break the contract 撕毁合同；解除婚约

draw up a contract 草拟合同

negotiate a contract 缔结契约

keep a contract 遵守〔履行〕合同

vt.

定约：通过合同契约开始从事；通过正式协议制定或确定

contract a marriage 订婚

vi.

开始受协议约束或制定协议

They contracted to build the new bridge. 他们签订合同造新桥。



【Practice in Class】课上实践操作

将本单元的 Example 1 和 Example 2 翻译成汉语，并举例说明具有哪些写作特点。



【Exercises】练习

1. 回答下面的问题

- (1) What forms does the correspondence include?
- (2) What are the functions of a business correspondence?
- (3) We often hear people say the seven C's. What are they?
- (4) Do we use complicated words in our letters? Why?
- (5) If conciseness conflicts with courtesy, what would you do?
- (6) How to express your meaning clearly?

2. 翻译英文信函里的下列词汇

To:

Bcc:

Subject: _____

Save Draft: _____

Cc: _____

Attachment: _____

Unit 2

Formats and Layout of Modern Business Correspondence



【Text】课文

1. Formats of Business Correspondence

When writing business correspondence, you must pay special attention to the format used. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of formats.

(1) Indented form 缩头式

Indented form is the traditional British practice with the heading usually in the middle and the date on the right-hand side. The “Inside Address” should be indented and the first line of each paragraph indented.

Letter Head	
Inside Address	Date

Dear Sirs,	

Yours Faithfully,
Signature

(2) Block form 齐头式

Block form is the most popular practice of writing business correspondence. The Inside Address & the first line of each paragraph should not be indented. No punctuation in Tel, Telex or Cable number, Salutation, subject line, Complementary close, etc.

Letter Head

Date
Inside Address

Dear Sirs,

Yours Faithfully,
Signature

(3) Semi-block form 半齐头式

Semi-block form is the mixture of the above two formats. The Inside Name and Address should not be indented but the first line of each paragraph, date and the closing salutation should be indented.

The following table shows examples of the different formats.

Letter Head

Date

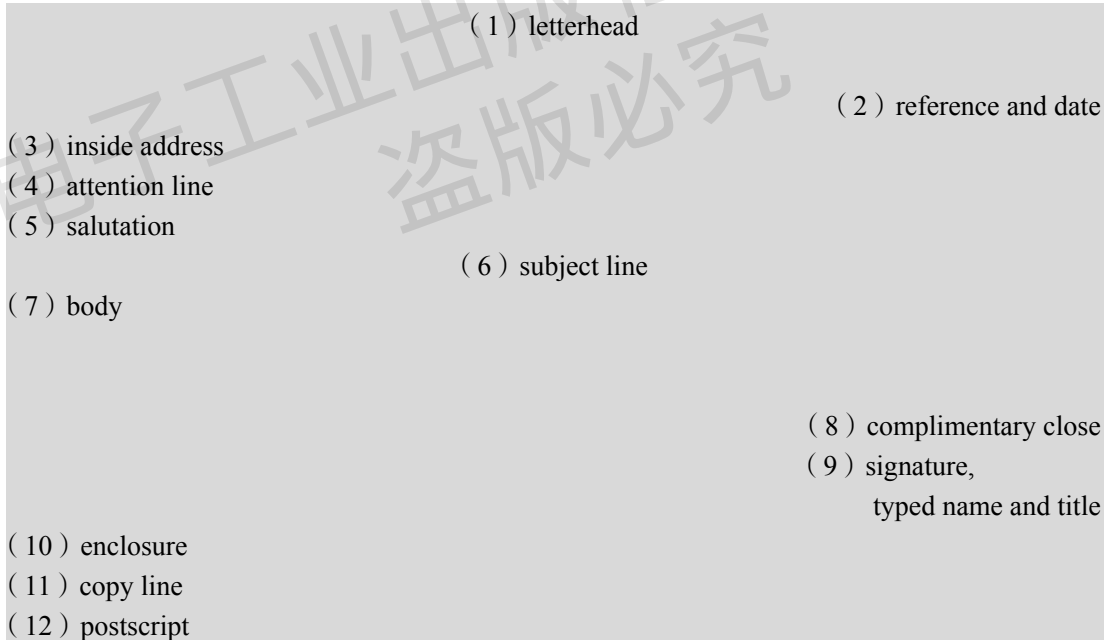
Inside Address

Dear Sirs,

Yours Faithfully,
Signature

2. Layout of Modern Business Correspondence

Most business correspondence have seven standard parts. They are letterhead, date, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close and signature. When appropriate, any of the following optional items can be included: the reference number, attention line, subject line, enclosure, carbon copy and postscript.



(1) letterhead 信头

Letterhead designs vary with business organizations and occupy the top of the first page. They may be positioned at the center or at the left margin the top of the page. A business letterhead, usually printed, contains all or some of the following elements: The company's name,

address, postcode, telephone number, telex number, fax number and even some picture or slogan for a symbol of the company.

(2) reference and date 编号, 日期

A typewritten date is necessarily included in the heading. The date is usually placed two lines below the last line of the letterhead at left margin for full block style or ending with the right margin for indented style. It is usual to show the date in the order day / month / year (English practice) or month / day / year (American practice). It is always best to write the month in full because the British dating system is different to the American dating system (8 / 10 / 2007 is 8th October 2007 in Britain but August 10th in America). Avoid giving a date in figures and abbreviations—7 / 4 / 2007 or 4 / 7 / 2007.

(3) inside address 封内地址

The inside address is the recipient's address typed directly below the date line at the left hand margin. The inside address of a letter to an individual consists of the person's courtesy title, name, business or executive title (it should be used immediately after the name) and address. When the letter is to a group, the inside address includes the full group name and the address. Care should be taken to address the recipient exactly as on the envelope.

(4) attention line 注意项

An attention line is considered a part of the inside address and it leads the letter to a particular person or department when the letter is addressed to a company. It is usually between the inside address and the salutation or above the inside address, as shown in examples.

Attention: Import Dept.

For the attention of Mr. J. L. Donna, Sales manager.

Attention of Mr. Standard, General Manager.

(5) salutation 称呼

Salutation is placed at the left margin two lines below the inside address and two lines above the body of the letter. Considered a polite greeting with which a friendly business letter begins, the personal salutation must be appropriate for the first line of the inside address. The word "dear" always comes before the name of the person you are writing to, even if you don't know them. However, what follows after "dear" determines how you are going to write the ending of your business letter.

If the letter is addressed to an individual man, It is usual to use:

Dear Mr. Smith,

Dear Ms. John,

Dear Prof. Hobart,

Dear Dr. Walter,

If the letter is addressed to an individual woman, It is usual to use:

Madam, for all women, married or unmarried.

Ms, it is a trend as the courtesy title for all women, married or unmarried.

Miss, for unmarried woman.

Mrs.(Mistress), for married woman, followed by her husband's family name.

When addressing a letter to a firm, Dear Sirs would be used.

(6) subject line or caption line 事由(标题)

The subject heading is regarded as a part of the body of a business letter. Usually it is placed between the salutation and the body of a letter to call attention to what content the letter is about. For example:

Dear Ms. Smith,

Our New catalog

Dear Sir or Madam,

Closure of bank account No. 4356889

(7) body 正文

The actual message is contained in the body of the letter, the paragraphs between the salutation and the complimentary close. The body of a business letter typically has three paragraphs:

Introductory paragraph

One or two body paragraph

Concluding paragraph

(8) complimentary close 结尾敬语

Business letter should end with a closing, such as:

Yours faithfully, (if you don't know the name of the person you're writing to)

Yours sincerely, (if you know person's name and have used it at the beginning of the letter)

Best wishes (or kind regards), (If your letter is informal and you know the person fairly well)

Sincerely, (The most common closing in the US)

Capitalize only the first word in the complimentary close, and follow all phrases with a comma.

Note: “complimentary close” should be in keeping with “salutation”, as follows:

1) to the recipient of a letter you are familiar with

Dear Stephanie (first name)

...

Regards,

2) to the recipient of a letter you know about name and so on

Dear Mr Stephanie Dowell (full name)

...

Yours sincerely,

3) normal writing (British)

Dear Sirs / Dear Madam

...

Yours faithfully,

4) normal writing (American)

Gentlemen:

...

Sincerely / truly,

(9) signature 签名

The signature mainly consists of the addresser's signature, the typed name of his and his business title. The complimentary close may not be followed by the name of the company if it is previously printed on the letterhead. The addresser should sign the letter by hand and in ink above the typed name which the typed post follows immediately.

Sincerely yours,

ABC COMPANY

John Smith

John Smith

Sales manager

(10) enclosure 附件

“Enc.” or “Encs.” is typed two lines spaces after the signature of the addresser when something is sent along with the letter. An enclosure can be anything in the envelope in addition to the message itself. Examples are as follows:

Enc.: 1 Price List

Encs.: 2 Price List / 2 Invoices

Encl: As stated

If the enclosed are more than one, the number should be marked.

(11) copy line 抄送

The copy line is used to let the reader know that other people are being sent a copy of the document. Use the following symbols:

c: for copy

cc: for carbon copy

bc: for blind copy

Follow the symbol with the names of the other recipients listed either alphabetically or according to organizational rank. If you don't want your reader to know about the other copies, type “bc” on the copies only, not on the original.

(12) postscript 附言

When you find something forgotten to be included in the letter body before the envelope is to be sealed up. You may state it after the signature in a postscript with a simple signature again. The adding of a P.S. should, however, be avoided as far as possible. For example:

P.S.: the pricelist was sent to you on August 9th.

3. Envelope Addressing

Learning how to address an envelope is very important as the envelope helps to convey the image of a company. The three important requirements of envelope addressing are accuracy, legibility and good appearance. The common remarks are:

private 私人信

confidential 机密信

registered 挂号邮件

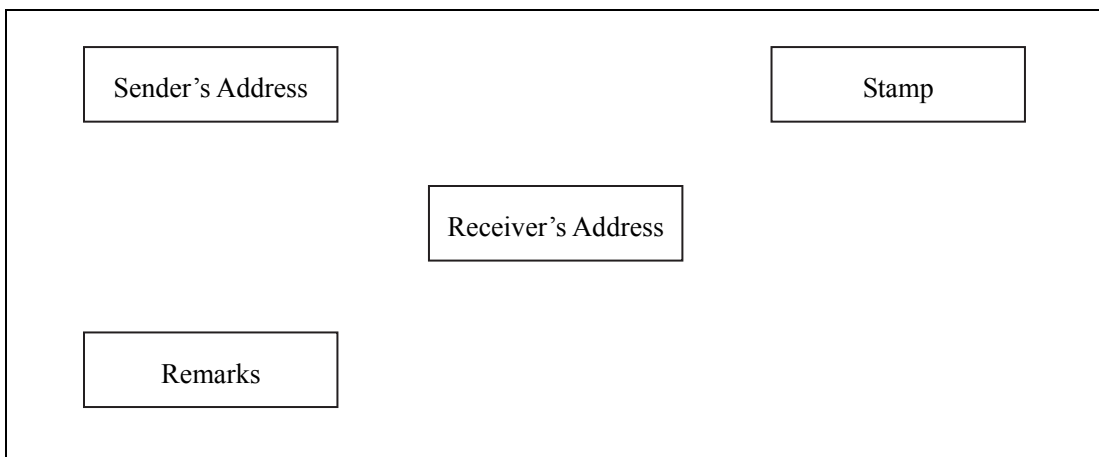
express 快递邮件

ordinary mail 平信

immediate (Urgent) 急件

printed matter 印刷品

sample 样品



4. Layout and Format of E-mail 电子邮件的结构和格式 (见图 2-1)

The heading includes the following contents: from, to, date, subject, cc, bcc, attach files, etc.

The layout of E-mail is like that of a letter, including heading, salutation, body, close and signature. But sometimes it just has the parts of body and salutation, while the parts of close and signature are omitted.

The format of E-mail is same as that of letters.

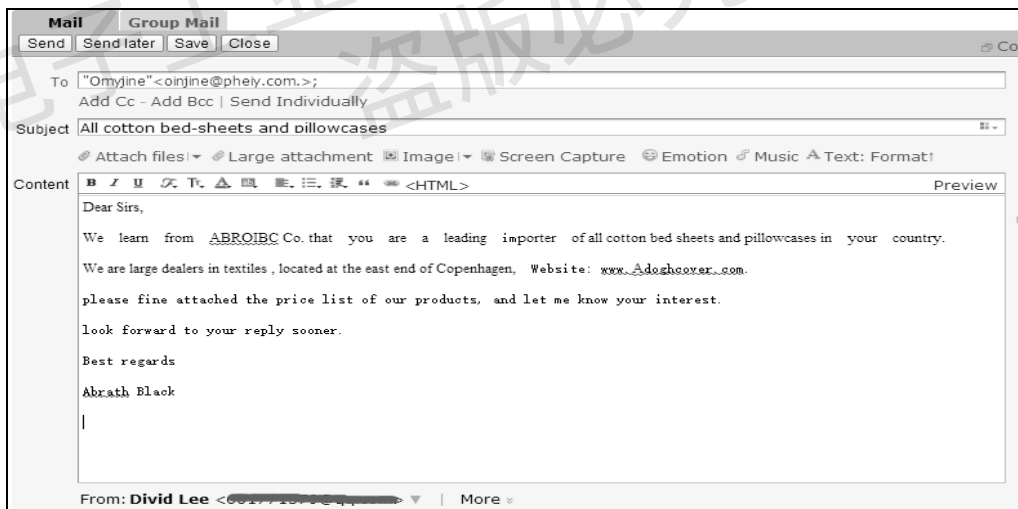


图 2-1 电子邮件的结构和格式



【Words & Expressions】生词解释

1. format ['fɔ:mæt] *n.* 开本, 版式, 形式, 格式

vt. 安排……的格局(或规格), [计] 格式化(磁盘)

2. pay attention to 注意

3. generally speaking 一般而言

4. indented [in'dentɪd] *adj.* 锯齿状的, 犬牙交错的, 缩头式(函电格式的一种)

5. block [blɒk] *n.* 木块, 石块, 块, 街区, 印版, 滑轮, 阻滞, (一)批

vt. 妨碍, 阻塞

6. punctuation [pʌŋktʃu'eɪʃ(ə)n] *n.* 标点, 标点符号

7. salutation [sælju(:)'teɪʃən] *n.* 称呼

8. complementary close 结尾敬语

9. attention line 注意项

10. enclosure [in'kləʊʒə] *n.* 附件, 围住, 围栏, 四周有篱笆或围墙的场地

11. carbon copy 复写本, 副本

12. postscript ['pəʊstskript] *n.* 附言, 后记

13. business organization 企业组织

14. margin ['mɑ:dʒɪn] *n.* 页边的空白, (湖、池等的)边缘, 极限, 利润, 差数,
(时间、金额等的)富余

15. slogan ['sləʊgən] *n.* 口号, 标语

16. executive [ɪg'zekjʊtɪv] *adj.* 实行的, 执行的, 行政的
n. 执行者, 经理, 主管人员

17. caption ['kæpʃən] *n.* 标题, 说明, 字幕

vt. 加上标题, 加上说明

18. catalog ['kætəlɒg] *n.* 目录

19. closure ['kləʊʒə] *n.* 关闭

vt. 使终止

20. signature ['sɪɡnɪʃə] *n.* 签名, 署名, 信号

21. in addition to 除……之外

22. alphabetically *adv.* 按字母顺序地

23. seal up 密封住

24. original [ə'rɪdʒənəl] *adj.* 最初的, 原始的, 独创的, 新颖的
n. 正本, 原物, 原作



【Notes】注释

1. sales manager 销售经理

相关的词汇：

board of directors 董事会

chairman 董事长

director 董事

managing director 总经理

business manager 业务经理

regional manager 区域经理

plant manager / Factory Manager 厂长

supervisor 主管

CEO (Chief Executive Officer) 首席执行官

CFO (Chief Financial Officer) 财务总监

2. agency 代理

相搭配的词汇：

buying agent / purchasing agent 采购代理

selling agent / sales agent 销售代理

general agent 总代理

exclusive agent / sole agent 独家代理



【Key Words】关键词

1. letter

n. 字母；信；许可证；字面意思；文学，纯文学；文学知识；文学家，作家

2. signature

n. 署名，签名；识别标志，鲜明特征

put one's signature to a letter 签名于信件

add / put one's signature to 在……上签名/盖章

over one's signature 经某人签名



【Practice in Class】课上实践操作

以你的实际身份给进口商发函，使用齐头式将下列信息恰当地安排在信封上。

(1) The seller

yourself

(2) The buyer

Jennifer White

ABC Corporation

Add: 23 Rytic pep Road, Jericho, Oxford Y4 3DP England



【Exercises】练习

回答下列问题

(1) What are the three kinds of formats of a business correspondence? Which one is the most popular one?

(2) Most business correspondences have seven standard parts. What are they?

(3) What are the main elements of a business letterhead?

(4) What's the function of the subject line of a business letter?



【Summary】总结

The seven principles of business letter writing: completeness, concreteness, clarity, conciseness, courtesy, consideration, correctness.

When writing business correspondence, you must pay special attention to the format used. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of formats: Indented form, Block form, Semi-block form.

Most business correspondence have seven standard parts: letterhead, date, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, and signature.