
UNIT 4 EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE-I

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
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- 4.5 Grammar: Prepositions
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you will learn:

- *What is external business correspondence*
- *Differences between formal and informal correspondence*
- *Types and functions of external business correspondence*
 - Informative and Persuasive Letters
 - 0. routine letters
 - 1. sales letters
 - 2. mail shots
 - *Letters for Special Purposes*
 - *Problem Letters*
- *How to write*
 - *Routine Letters*
 - 0. Letter of inquiry
 - 1. Letter seeking information
 - 2. Letter of request
 - 3. Letter of quotation
 - 4. Tenders and bids
 - Sales Letters
 - 5. Prospecting letter

6. Cover letter with offers etc
7. Follow up letters
8. Sales appreciation letters

The other kinds of external business correspondence shall be discussed in Part II of this unit.

4.1 WARM UP

There are two letters written by the same person for different purposes. Are they the same in tone, format and content? What is same / different about them?

Letter 1

5, Yamuna Canal Road
New Presidency Colony
Meerut, UP.
23rd June 2017

Hi Priya

How are you doing? Fine, I hope. Have you decided which college/University you wish to join after plus two? Guess what? I have got admission in a Delhi University college, Miranda House and I'm excited as well as sad about it. I'm going to join the hostel and I'm wondering if I'll be able to settle in. Y'know there's a lot of cultural and attitudinal differences between living in a small town and a big, bustling metro. I have lived a sheltered life with my parents here and the first few months may be very difficult for me. I have such mixed feelings about joining DU. I wish you had also decided to join Miranda House. It would have been fun to be there together. Less heartbreak and homesickness.

How are your parents and others at home? When are you coming back from Mumbai? Do make it soon so that we can meet before I leave. Convey my regards to your parents.

Loads of love

Shanu.

Letter 2

Shantanu Ranjan
Apt # 151, Indra Apts
Sector-19, Dwarka, N. Delhi – 77.

To
Mr Suvin Datta
Customer Relationship Manager
Nokia Telecom
Karol Bagh
New Delhi - 2.

Date: 12 Oct 2017

Dear Mr Datta

I had recently bought a new mobile phone – Nokia Lumia 900 - from your showroom. However, after using it for less than even a month, I find that it switches off after one hour of use. At times, the screen becomes blank. It is extremely disturbing that my new and expensive mobile is malfunctioning. As the phone is within a two-year warranty period, I request you to replace it immediately. The sale receipt no. is 034 dated 10th Sept 20XX

Thank You

Yours Sincerely
Shantanu Ranjan

Both letters are examples of external correspondence. However, **letter 1** is informal, friendly, and non-business in content and context, but the second letter is formal in tone and language. It is written as a complaint in a business context. It is important to know how to write these formal business letters. That is why you should know how formal and informal modes of correspondence differ in language, tone and content.

Formal	Informal
It is addressed to person/ organization known or unknown to us and makes a specific point.	It could touch on different topics and is addressed to a known person.
Its primary purpose is to convey information.	It is usually an expression of the writer's personal and private thoughts. It conveys feelings and topics of interest to the recipient of the letter.
Its language is formal and polite and contains related linguistic features.	It has conversational and informal elements. For example, exclamatory expressions (That's great!), questions (When do we meet?), contracted forms (I'll go), etc. are used in such letters.
Clarity, brevity, conciseness and completeness mark this kind of letter. It is also characterized by logical and cohesive organization.	Multiple subjects can be the content of such a letter. It may even sound unorganized and rambling. Logical continuity is not its strong point.

Can you find some more differences?

4.2 LANGUAGE FOCUS

We will read about the way language can be used.

4.2.1 It can be said that the use of language involves five broad categories: **the informative** (to convey information which may be true or false), **the evocative** (to bring about a response from the other person), **the expressive** (to convey feelings/thoughts/emotions etc.), **the evaluative** (to express aesthetical, ethical or functional judgments), and **the performative** (to accomplish a social action like apologizing for one's mistakes). These categories are not mutually exclusive. A sentence may be used in more than one way on any given occasion to denote similar/different meanings. We use language both spoken and written for specific purposes. The words and phrases used to convey one purpose would have to be changed to fulfill another purpose. Chunks of language that serve a specific purpose can be referred to as structures. These are often formulaic expressions that fulfill language functions. They also provide different levels of formality to create a variety of moods. For example, "I'm afraid this is really not possible" is a polite way of refusing something. A number of ways of conveying the same intent is possible in situations of differing degrees of formality. For example:

No way (most informal)

Not possible

Absolutely not

This is simply impossible / not possible

It appears difficult that this may happen

I'm afraid this is really not possible

I'm sorry it may not be possible for this to happen

I regret to inform you that this may not be possible (most formal)

4.2.2 It is true that there are certain conventions we have to follow in business correspondence. However, instead of using an excessively formal style of writing which is full of jargon and stilted official language, try a more personal, down-to-earth style. Expressions like 'query' (for request or question), 'I wish to state', 'be assured', 'be advised that', and 'herewith' etc are both old-fashioned and pretentious. The tendency to use outdated phraseology makes our language stylized and pompous. See the letter given below. Other than its archaic language, please note the format of the company address/letterhead at the top, date of writing it, and the receiver's address for future reference. The salutation or greeting "Dear Mr Singh" should be 2 spaces below the last address line.

Saxena & Company
Kirti Nagar
New Delhi – 20.
25 Sept 2016
Mr Sharad Singh
Apt #101, Hiranandini CGHS
Rohini, New Delhi – 68.

Dear Mr. Singh

Thank you for your gracious letter of the 7th instant. In response to your query, I wish to state that we no longer sell the equipment you enquired about. You are advised to approach Friends & Co. for this, as they could possibly help you in this matter. You may address further correspondence to that firm for assistance in the matter.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

.....

(Shashi Saxena)

Store Manager

A letter like this deserves to be rephrased. There are some words and phrases you wish you could delete. That's right! Words/phrases like 'gracious', 'of the 7th instant', 'I wish to state', and 'You are advised' can be replaced with less archaic and more contemporary forms. Now read the re-written letter given below. Does it sound better?

Dear Mr. Singh

Thank you for your letter of 7th Sept 2016.

I'm sorry to say that we no longer sell the equipment you enquired about. However, we are aware that Reach & Co. deals with such items. The company executives may be able to help you. You may like to write to them for assistance.

Sincerely yours,

.....

(Shashi Saxena)

Store Manager

Check Your Progress 1

Apart from being polite and clear, you should be concise too. Here are some more examples of words/phrases you must avoid in your writing. Can you replace them with concise and more modern forms? See the answers given at the end of the unit to check your responses.

- 1) In due course
- 2) Please find attached the file you requested
- 3) It was realized by Mr Sareen that we must cut down costs
- 4) There are some rules that must be observed
- 5) I beg to state that
- 6) After a dialogue with you
- 7) Causative factors
- 8) The issue of utmost importance is collaboration
- 9) Answer in the affirmative
- 10) In accordance/compliance with your request
- 11) Pursuant to our conversation
- 12) I enclose herewith the papers
- 13) Notwithstanding the fact that
- 14) In the majority of circumstances
- 15) In the event of

4.3 READING

4.3.1 Read the text below and then answer the questions that follow:

There are various kinds of business letters which may be classified according to the nature of the situation for which the letter is written. They can be broadly classified as **Informative** and **Persuasive** Letters (Routine and Sales Letters), **Letters for special purposes** and **Problem** letters. We have given you samples of different kinds of letters which you can use as a model to write your own letters.

Informative and Persuasive Letters

- Routine letters may include the following:
 - ❖ Enquiries, seeking information and requests
 - ❖ Quotations
 - ❖ Orders and acceptance
 - ❖ Payment
 - ❖ Tenders and bids

- Sales Letters
 - Prospective or Promotional letters
 - Cover letters with offers, fliers, catalogues etc.
 - Proposal letters
 - Follow up letters
 - Sales appreciation letters
- Mail shots

Letters for special purposes

- ✓ Agency Letters relating to banks, insurance agents/company, government and regulatory agencies etc.
- ✓ Personnel letters relating to employment
- ✓ Circulars
- ✓ Status enquiries
- ✓ Seeking finance

Problem letters

- ⌘ Complaints and follow ups
- ⌘ Concessions
- ⌘ Collection Letters on account of overdue/pending payment

Let us now look at some of these letters

Informative / Persuasive Letters

Letter of Enquiry

These are generally addressed by prospective buyers to possible suppliers of goods to seek information regarding availability of goods and the terms and conditions of supply and delivery. Such a letter may include a description and specifications of goods required.

[Date]

[To - Name]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

Subject: Eco-friendly services for a green earth

Dear [Ms/Mr last name]

We saw the brochure of your organization, *Greener Earth*, and were very impressed with good work you are doing to create awareness about

sustainable development of the country along with a clean healthy environment. Our company shares this concern for our planet. We also learnt that you require the same services that we offer for setting up industries in a way that does not harm the environment. If you could let us know the details and requirements of your new venture, we'd be glad to plan the project with you. We'd also welcome and appreciate a visit from you to our work stations to know our method of working.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address, if not using your letterhead]

Letter seeking information (for a product)

[Date]

[To - Name]

[Company]

Your address if not using your letterhead

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

[City, State PIN code]

Subject: Information about product <product name>

Dear [Ms/Mr last name]

I recently saw some information about your product <location of information> and it interested me enough to contact you. This product may fill a need that I currently have for <product description> and if it proves to be reasonably priced, well-made and backed by a reputed company, I will certainly become a customer of yours. Please send any brochure or all the information available about <product name> to the address below. I look forward to receiving your material. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address, if not using your letterhead]

Letter of Request

Such letters may include requests for goods and services/sponsorships etc. or for information of various sorts (like the example given above).

[Date]

[To - Name]

using letterhead

Your address if not

[Company]

[City, State PIN code]

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

Dear [Ms/Mr last name if you know it or Madam/Sir]

As you well know, businesses in particular areas <mention location/area of business e.g. South Delhi > have to stick together when it comes to promotions. That is why I'm writing for your assistance. You may be aware that <company name> is putting together <event name>, to be held <event date> at <event location>. This will be an opportunity to meet many members of the community and generate a tremendous amount of positive press coverage. That's why we would like to get <other company name> on board as an organizer.

There are plenty of benefits from being part of <event name>, from great public relations to a lot of fun for your employees. At this point, we're looking for a company that can <describe the work you need>. If that sounds like something your people can handle, we'd love to have you on board. If you are interested in being a part of <event name>, give me a call at <phone number> and we can work out the details. I look forward to working with you and your staff. Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Designation/title] - optional

Letter of Quotation

When an enquiry is received about goods from a prospective buyer, a letter of quotation has to be sent in reply. Business quotations should give complete information about the nature and quality of goods asked for, time and mode of delivery, prices, any additional charges for packing and shipping or other services, and terms of payment.

[Senders Name]

[Address line 1]

[Address line 2]

[State, PIN Code]

[Letter Date]

[Recipients Name]

[Address line 1]

[Address line 2]

[State, PIN Code]

[Subject: Normally bold, summarizes the intention of the letter] - Optional-

Dear Ms / Mr [Recipient's Name]

Season's Private Ltd. is happy to submit our proposal and bid for the project you advertised last week. We have attached a document that details

- 2) A bid usually means making a financial offer. For example, at an auction you might make a bid of a certain price for a painting. A tender means that you will offer a service/item at a certain price.
- 3) Generally, bidding is a less formal affair than tendering. More frequently, tenders are on a large-scale, whereas bids can be as small scale as an offer for an article for Rupees 1000/- or as large as a proposal to purchase an original painting of M. F. Hussain for lakhs.
- 4) However, they are related in a manner that one of the most crucial part of an excellent bid or tender will be the assurance given by the bidder or tenderer for being capable of delivering or buying in compliance to the terms stated.
- 5) Bids and tenders are evaluated according to a particular method. An acceptable bid is lowest priced yet technically feasible and still conforming to the requirements.
- 6) Precisely what decides the success of bidding or tendering? Normally, the top bid proposed by a bidder, or the least expensive offer presented by a tenderer decides the winning bid or tender. Nevertheless, this may not always be the rule. That is why authorities often announce at the time of inviting sealed tenders, that they reserve the authority to reject any bids or tender without setting any rationale. They want to reserve the option to consider other terms of fulfillment of the needs, which might have been left out at the time of bid or tender. However, there is the danger in this practice of inviting corruption, especially in tendering for big projects.
- 7) Besides the price offer, the key to successful bids and tenders is to persuade the reader about a person's credibility by supplying adequate, legitimate and unbiased evidence. As an example, an engineering company may persuade through showing the jobs completed by it as well as its financial stability. In short, the success of bids and tenders depends on how far the company has been able to establish its declared and assessed ability, trustworthiness and dedication.

A sample tender invitation letter in a newspaper:

By Fax & By Post (Fax No.:) [Name and Address of Supplier / Service Provider] [Date] Our ref.: Dear Sir / Madam, Sub: Invitation for Tender for the Provision of [Type of Goods / Services] at [Name and Address of Building]
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We are writing on behalf of [*Name of the Owners' Corporation*] (hereafter referred to as the Corporation) to invite you to submit a tender with regard to provision of [*Type of Goods / Services*] for the construction of the new school building.

Goods / Services to be Provided

The vendor is required to provide the following goods / services. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the detailed specifications / schedule of services of the goods / services.

Item Description

- 1.
- 2.

Validity of Tender

The tender shall be valid for at least 6 months from the date of the tender.

Eligibility Requirements (for Services only)

To be eligible for consideration of its tender, a tenderer should meet and submit proof of the requirements and documents as detailed at Appendix 2.

Anti-Bribery and Anti-Collusion

The tenderer shall abide by the probity requirements at Appendix 3.

Submission of Tender

Please submit the duly completed and signed Form of Tender (*Appendix 4*) and Declaration Form (*Appendix 5*) in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential – Tender Documents for Provision of [*Type of goods / services*] at [*Name of Building*]" and send the documents at [*Address of the Corporation for Return of Tender*] on or before [*Time and Date for Return of Tender*].

LATE SUBMISSION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the tenderer to go through the specification and requirements before submitting the tender.

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of [*Name of the Corporation*]

Enclosures: List of documents like Form of Tender etc.

Sales Letters

The main aim of this kind of communication is publicity and advertisement of a company's products and/or services offered in anticipation of growth in sales and customer base. The different types of sales letters are:

Prospecting letters - This is sent to prospective or potential customers for your products or services.

Cover letters – They accompany catalogues, fliers, information sheets and offers by companies.

Proposal letters – These are written to take on new products, services etc.

Follow up letters – They help to outline in writing what you and the recipient have discussed in a meeting or by a phone call and what you two have decided. They can also work as reminders to customers who may have discontinued patronizing your products or may be in the form of replies to queries by customers.

Sales appreciation letters – Such appreciation letters acknowledging a customer's clientele build both good will and business.

Some important factors to consider while writing sales correspondence:

- ❖ While composing a sales letter, you should be able to catch the attention of your reader with an effective opening and generate an interest in her/his mind to know more.
- ❖ Identify your potential customers' need. Sales letters should not only be about what you have to sell; they should address the customer's need and how you can satisfy this need.
- ❖ A sales letter should make the act of purchasing easy. It should clearly state what the customer is expected to do in case s/he wishes to buy a product. The action to be taken should be within easy reach and possibility of the customer.
- ❖ You should also indicate reader benefit, that is, how the action performed will benefit the receiver of the letter
- ❖ Be polite and conversational in your sales letters. Don't try to be comic or flippant as most people regard parting with their money as a serious business.
- ❖ Check and revise your letter for accuracy.

Prospecting letter

[Date] [To - Name] [Company] [Address] [City, State PIN code]

Dear [Ms/Mr last name]

I enjoyed meeting you and our last conversation at the conference on medical equipment held at [location] on [date]. It provided a boost to all retailers and wholesalers of such equipment as it gave us a good chance of networking with each other.

In this context, I would like to mention that I am in the business of selling blood pressure instruments. I have enclosed a flier of my company's [company name] product. I hope you will consider buying our instruments and recommending us to your contacts. We assure you of high-quality products at reasonable prices. Thank you and please give us a chance.

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address if not using letterhead]

Special Offer letter

[Date]

[To - Name]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

Dear [Ms/Mr last name if you know it or Madam/Sir]

This is to announce our Special Discount Offer that we are making on all orders for the following items for the month of [month] only:

[List items here]

This discount is available on any order set for delivery from [date] through [date]. This is our way of saying thank you for being such a valued customer. We hope you will take advantage of this offer and will send us your purchase order today. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address if not using company letterhead]

Follow up letter 1

[Date]

[To - Name]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

Dear [Ms/Mr last name]

We have noticed that you have not been buying our products recently and we are wondering if there is a problem. If you have any complaints regarding our products or services please don't hesitate to call us and let us know the reason for your dissatisfaction. I am sure we can solve your problem.

I am enclosing a discount coupon valid for your next order as an incentive to continue buying our products and services. As an added incentive, we will extend this discount to a year's purchases if you place a standing order for the whole year.

We look forward to having you back as our valued customer.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address if not using company letterhead]

Follow up letter 2

[Date]

[To - Name]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, State PIN code]

Dear [Ms/Mr last name]

Thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the position of computer engineer. I enjoyed our lively interaction and learning more about your company.

The interview has strengthened my enthusiasm and interest in working for you. The importance you give to your clients and your policy of open communications mesh well with my own philosophy of business relationships. I believe my education and experience fit the job requirements, and if offered the position, I am certain I would make a valuable addition to your team.

I would like to reiterate my strong interest in working with [company name]. Your company and this position offer the exact opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at [telephone number] if any more information is required. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Mailshots

A mailshot is like a prospecting letter. It may be in the form of a letter, coupon, magazine or flyer and is sent directly to a person's home in order to garner more business for your company. It is a way of advertising directly and targeting those people who would most likely use your business. It is used to acquire customers, retain them and encourage them to spend more. However, it is still often referred to by the many who receive a mailshot as junk mail.

Whether targeting consumers (business-to-consumer) or businesses (business-to-business), mailshots are precise and personal form of marketing. It is one of the few media that enables you to know exactly who you are talking to, where they live and what interests them. Information about your customers is crucial to any mailshot. This may already exist in its most basic form as a list of your existing customers' names and addresses. The other option is to buy a list of potential customers to match your target audience. It is a highly targeted, highly personal, highly successful form of marketing. In UK alone, mailshots are worth over £25 billion in sales revenue each year.

Mailshots can be of two types - "warm", which means they are more specialized, or "cold", (sometimes referred to as 'door-to-door') that are unaddressed and similar to the grocery store ads that arrive in mail-boxes once a week. They work because they are personalized, creative, responsive, measurable and cost effective. They can be in the form of letters, postcards, leaflets, brochures, catalogues, videos/DVDs, samples, coupons etc. It is upto you to choose the form of advertising.

Now that you have seen how business letters are written for different purposes, answer the following questions:

Check Your Progress 2

1. What are the different kinds of business letters?
2. What factors should be kept in mind while making an enquiry?
3. What are the details that need to be included in a letter of quotation?
4. What are the differences between tenders and bids?
5. What are the different kinds of sales letters?
6. Are prospecting letters and mailshots the same? Analyze both forms of correspondence and bring out their sameness/differences in terms of effectiveness and prices.
7. Prepare a checklist of writing effective sales letters. Collect 2-3 samples of sales correspondence and see if they are effective. If not, what changes would you like to make in them?

4.4 LISTENING

Check Your Progress 3

Listen to the audio recording and then complete the sentences. You may listen to it more than once if required.

Answer the following questions briefly:

1. What is 'Business English' (BE)?
2. Why do people study BE?
3. What is lingua franca?
4. What do you understand by the word 'Anglosphere'?
5. Who is Braj Kachru?
6. What does BE mean to different people?

4.5 GRAMMAR: PREPOSITIONS

Check Your Progress 4

Fill in the blanks using appropriate prepositions.

- i. Thank you _____ your time and effort _____ helping me out.
- ii. Kindly send the following items listed _____ your latest catalogue.
- iii. The customer was asked to choose _____ two payment options.
- iv. I received today one _____ the defective garments we talked _____ a week ago _____ the telephone.
- v. At the board meeting the members fought _____ themselves.
- vi. I am a graduate _____ Delhi University and I have been working _____ a part time basis with an NGO which helps _____ educate the children living _____ the streets.
- vii. Most banks prefer that their customers withdraw money _____ cheque.
- viii. All our products comply _____ international safety standards.
- ix. I am serious _____ buying a new computer.
- x. _____ garments, we also sell accessories.
- xi. Our office is _____ the Trade Center.

4.6 WRITING

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) Write an enquiry letter to *Rathore Furniture* about office chairs and tables you want for the Working Stations at your company headquarters.
- 2) Draft a tender notice on behalf of your company inviting offers/quotations for renovation of the head office.
- 3) You want to announce your new product. Write either a prospecting letter or a mailshot which you believe will give you more response and business.

⌘ 4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Soon
2. The file you requested is attached
3. Mr Sareen realized that we must cut down costs
4. Some rules must be observed
5. I wish to say
6. After talking to you
7. Causes
8. The most important issue is collaboration
9. Answer/say yes
10. As you asked for/ requested
11. After what we talked / spoke about
12. I enclose the papers
13. Although/ even though
14. Usually
15. If

Check Your Progress 2

Do it yourself

Check Your Progress 3

4.4 Business English is English language especially related to international trade. It is a part of English for Specific Purposes and can be considered a specialism within English language learning and teaching; for example, the teachers' organization IATEFL has a special interest group called BESIG. Many non-native English speakers study the subject with the

goal of doing business with English-speaking countries, or with companies located outside the Anglosphere but which nonetheless use English as a shared language or lingua franca. Much of the English communication that takes place within business circles all over the world occurs between non-native speakers. In cases such as these, the object of the exercise is efficient and effective communication. The strict rules of grammar are in such cases sometimes ignored, when, for example, a stressed negotiator's only goal is to reach an agreement as quickly as possible. You can read more on the subject in linguist Braj Kachru's theory of the "expanding circle".

Business English means different things to different people. For some, it focuses on vocabulary and topics used in the worlds of business, trade, finance, and international relations. For others it refers to the communication skills used in the workplace, and focuses on the language and skills needed for typical business communication such as presentations, negotiations, meetings, small talk, socializing, correspondence, report writing, and so on. In both of these cases it can be taught to native speakers of English, for example, high school students preparing to enter the job market.

It can also be a form of international English. It is possible to study Business English at college and university; institutes around the world have on offer courses (modules) in BE, which can even lead to a degree in the subject.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_English)

Check Your Progress 4

- i. for, in
- ii. in
- iii. between
- iv. of, about, on
- v. among
- vi. of, on, to, on
- vii. by
- viii. with
- ix. about
- x. besides
- xi. beside

Check Your Progress 5

Do it yourself.