

**Grammar and Punctuation in Business Letter Writing**

**Dr. Wilailak Riach**

**B.A. (English), M.A. (Language and Communication),  
EdD**

**Business English Program**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Udon Thani Rajabhat University**

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## **Preface**

This textbook is designed to assist learners who are interested in enhancing their written communication skills in the business context. The focus of this book is on grammar, punctuation and language use in different kinds of business letters e.g. letter of enquiry, letter of order, letter of complaint and application letter. Relevant chapters in this book include an overview of written communication, business letter format, punctuation in business letter and grammar in business letter writing. The examples of grammatical errors of language learners are also presented. It is expected that learners can develop their writing skills and pay attention to punctuation marks and grammatical aspects so that they can write effectively in the business environment.

Dr. Wilailak Riach



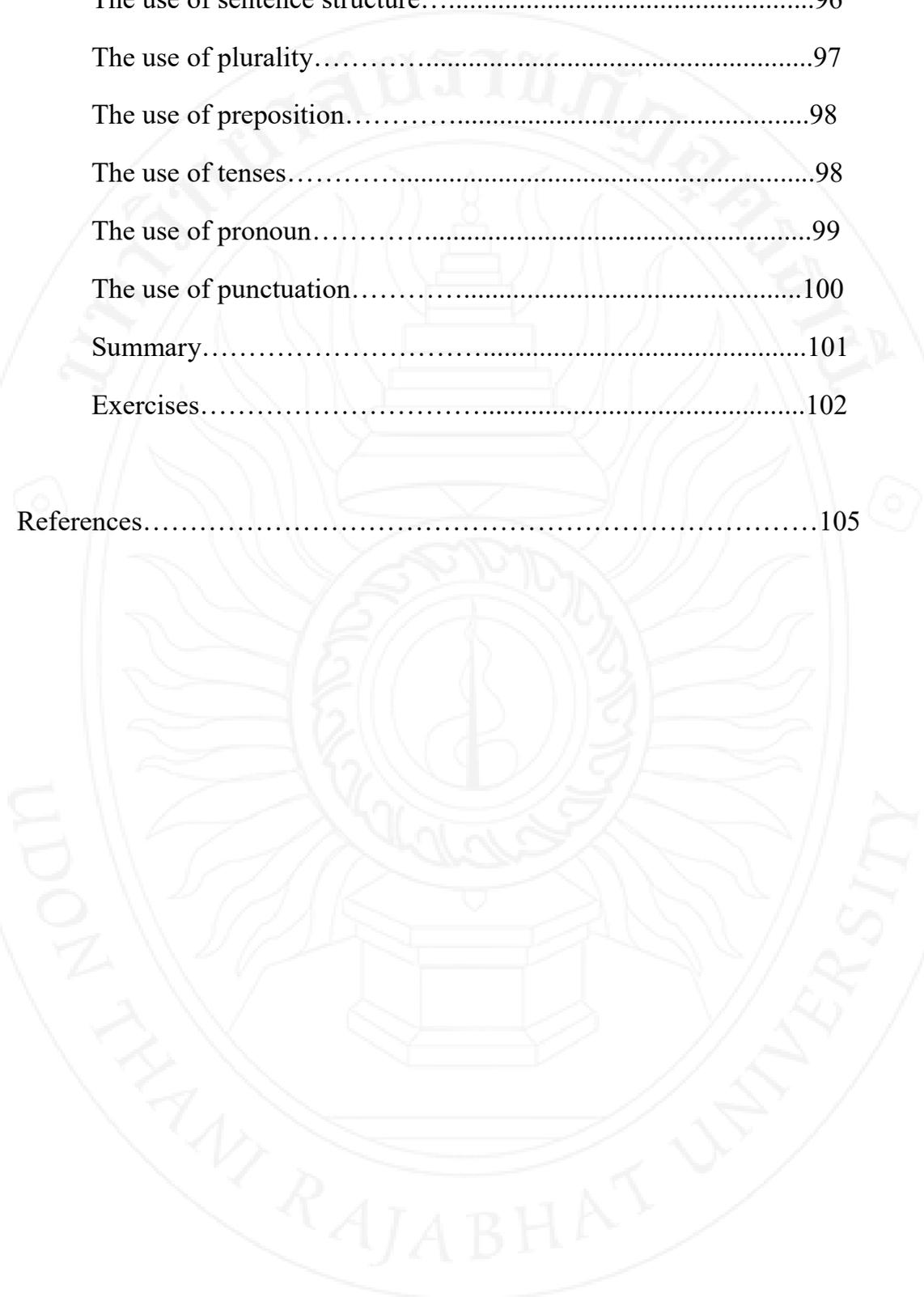
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## Unit 1

### Overview of written communication

#### Warm up questions

1. In your opinion, is written communication essential for business transactions? Why?

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.....

.....

2. Can you think of 4 written documents that employees have to deal with in the business organisations?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

#### Introduction

Business communication has a major role to play in the commercial world (Zheng, 2015). People exchange information through written forms e.g. emails, letters, memos or faxes (Ashley, 2013). According to Sharma & Mohan

(2012), in the business contexts, people write letters everyday and most of the time they might have to write to someone they have never met. In the tourism industry where verbal communication is mostly used on the job, it can be seen that written communication is required. According to Riach (2008), tourism professionals in hotels, airlines and travel agency use writing skills to accomplish their daily tasks such as exchanging emails, writing reports or memorandums.

## Written communication in busienss contexts

In the business contexts, effective written communication skills are highly required in any business workforce. As we can see from job advertisement below, an administrative staff, a company secretary or an executive secretary are expected to have excellent writing skills. Therefore, it is extremely important for university students to enhance their writing competency in order to meet the job requirements of the potential employers.

### Job Ads 1

#### **Office Secretary/(Female)/karachi office**

**Qualification:** Graduate

**Experience:** Minimum 3-5 Years

Well groomed, fluent in English, efficient handling of office work with effective communication skills, Computer literate with sound knowledge of MS Office, Outlook etc.

(E-mail CV to [hanan.saghree@csg-pk.com](mailto:hanan.saghree@csg-pk.com) by 10 Sept, 2011.)

## Job Ads 2

# REQUIRED

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

A well reputed company in Gujranwala needs to hire an EXECUTIVE SECRETARY with the following capabilities.

- Candidate must have a Masters degree.
- Having minimum 6-8 year experience in relevant field from a well reputed Organization.
- Candidate must have excellent written / verbal communication skills.
- To Organize & Maintain CEO's office & plan / assist him in time management regarding his scheduled commitments. To handle day-to-day office / routine work efficiently including drafting minutes of meeting, memos, diary management, general secretarial and administrative services.

We offer market-based compensation and a modern work environment with excellent growth prospects. Interested candidates who fulfill the above mentioned criteria are requested to submit their application by **02 July 2012 c/o Daily Nawa-i-Waqt Box No. 952 , Lahore.**

**Please mark the position applied for on the top of the envelope.**

PID (L) 3375

(Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com))

When a person is sending a letter to someone, it is clear that he or she is communicating. However, it should be noted that written communication is rather different from verbal communication. In written communication, Muckian & Woods (1996) state that the receiver has no opportunity to seek for clarification at that moment and the sender has no opportunity to defend his or her argument. Even though it is possible for the receiver to seek for more information from the sender and another letter can be sent, this definitely takes time, effort and expenses. Therefore, business letters have to be written in a way that is easily understood and effectively designed to accomplish their goals. Obviously, it is the responsibility of the writer to create a successful communication. If the employees deliver unclear or confusing written messages either internal or external, it then can lead to misunderstandings, delays, lost business and poor relations between individuals, departments, and companies (Ashley, 2013).

## Effective business letters

To communicate successfully with other people in different organisations, a good and well-prepared business letter is required. Obviously, there are essential qualities that the writer should be taken into consideration when writing business letters. Muckian & Woods (1996) propose the 7cs for effective business writing: clear, complete, concise, concrete, constructive, conversational and correct.

### 1. Clear

To help the reader understand the message immediately, the language of a business letter needs to be clear and unambiguous. There should be no jargon or unfamiliar terms. Moreover, the writer must deliver a clear thought or idea in each paragraph of the letter. If a high school student wants to write an enquiry letter to ask for details about a summer course at Hong Kong University, it is important to make it clear for the receiver in the first paragraph what particular subject or area he/she intends to study. Then the specific response from the person in charge can be provided.

### 2. Complete

It is essential that a business letter has to be complete in itself. That means all necessary information should be given to the reader. For example, when writing a letter of order, it is important to mention all relevant details of the products required such as item number, colour, size, quantity, date of delivery, terms of payments and mode of transportation. Once the receiver gets all the important details, the right products can be sent without delay which is the ultimate goal of business enterprise.

### **3. Concise**

A good business letter should be concise, which means that the writer should be able to say something that is necessary without using too many words. Writers should keep in mind that all relevant details should be put into one page. Sharma & Mohan (2012) point out that in the business context, people are always busy and they receive dozens of letters every day. It will be irritating for them to go through long and wordy introductions which will definitely waste their time. Therefore, it is better for the letter writer to say something in a straight-forward manner and keep the sentences short in order to get the attention of the reader.

### **4. Concrete**

The term “concrete” refers to something that is definite and specific. There should not be more than one topic in one letter. When writing a business letter about a particular issue, all the facts, details or numbers that the readers need to know have to be properly mentioned. For instance, if the writer wants to about a recent order that has failed to arrive, it is important for the writer to identify the shipping code and contents of that order. This can be put in the subject of the letter. This particular information will definitely encourage the receiver to take prompt action and speed the shipment process.

### **5. Constructive**

The content of a business letter should be constructive or positive rather than negative as we want the recipient to give a prompt reply or take some action. Therefore, it is necessary for the letter writer to choose words or phrases that reflect a positive tone so that his/her goal can be accomplished. For

instance, when writing a letter of complaint, it is wise to be polite and firm in order to receive a better response. Zheng (2015) points out that writers should always think about readers' needs and expectations and write a business letter in a polite and tactful way.

## **6. Conversational**

The purpose of writing business letters is to communicate with the recipient. Therefore, the tone of the letter should be conversational, which means that it should stimulate a friendly and warm conversation. Words and expressions used in the letter should not be too formal. Writing in a more casual style will generally result in a more effective communication. However, when choosing words or expressions in business letters, it is important for the writer to think about the reader's position, cultural background, age or gender. Then the tone or style of the letter can be adjusted (Dignen, 2000).

## **7. Correct**

Accuracy is an important attribute of business letter writing. Business letters cannot be effective if they are not accurate. This includes errors in sentence structure, facts, figures, grammar, spelling, punctuation. Obviously, grammar and spelling errors will create a bad impression on the reader. It is essential for the writers to proofread their letters many times especially if they write on behalf of the company. Grammar and spelling mistakes can be checked by using a good dictionary or spelling and grammar checking in the computer. Asking your friends or your colleagues to proofread your work is also a good option (Dignen, 2000).

## Writing process

Creating a meaningful and effective business letter is not an easy task. It involves a lot of thinking, planning and preparation. For instance if you are writing a letter to apply for a job, you have to organise your letter carefully and choose the appropriate language and tone to attract your potential employer. Moreover, it is a must to check your grammar, spelling and punctuation and make sure that there is no mistake in your letter.

Business letter can create impressive relationship and positive outcome among business enterprise. At the same time poor business writing can cause negative impact for the company image or the company reputation. Therefore, it has to be written with great care. Before writing any business documents, it is essential to plan carefully. According to Stroman, Wilson & Wuson (2014, p. 302) there are a few issues for the writer to keep in mind before writing. Firstly, the writer should establish a clear objective. Some questions that should be asked when planning a business letter such as will the letter give information?, will it request information? or will it ask for action? Secondly, the writer should have all necessary information on the subject. This is important for all business writing as we need to have some data from previous correspondence to refer to or to double-check the information. Relevant data can be product number, reference number, delivery date, shipment details or appointment details.

According to Dignen (2000, p. 158), to produce a successful and professional business letter, it is essential to follow the writing process.

1. You should plan before you write.
  - You should establish a clear objective before writing.
  - You should plan how much time you will need.
  - You should decide what and how much to write.
  - You should write in order to get the answer that you want.
2. You should know your reader.
  - You should include only relevant information in your letter.
  - You should remain courteous and polite.
  - You should adapt your style and tone to the reader's position, cultural background, age or gender.
3. You should structure the information in your letter clearly.
  - You should format your letter with a professional layout.
  - You should make a clear opening and conclusion.
  - You should write in a logical sequence.
  - You should organize your ideas into paragraphs.
  - You should use headers or bullet points to highlight key points.
4. You should select the right language.
  - The language should be concise.
  - You should avoid jargon, abbreviations and complex words.
  - You should be careful not to repeat words and phrases.
  - You should pay attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation.

5. You should evaluate, amend and save your letter.
  - You should give yourself time to review content, format, language and style.
  - You should check grammar, spelling and punctuation once more.
  - You should get feedback from your colleagues.

## Summary

In a business context, people interact with one another via letters, memos or emails. Business letters are written for different reasons for instance to apply for a job, to order products, to request for some information or a catalogue, to confirm an agreement or to complaint about products or services. To write a good business letter, there are essential qualities that the writer has to take into consideration. The content of the letter has to be clear, complete, concise, concrete, constructive, conversational and correct. It is therefore the responsibility of the letter writer to create a professional and successful written communication.

## Exercises

### Exercise 1

Instructions: Answer the following questions.

1. What are essential qualities for effective business letter?

.....

.....

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What are main purposes for writing business letters?

2.1 .....

2.2 .....

2.3 .....

2.4 .....

2.5 .....

3. In your idea, is it necessary for office workers to have business writing skills? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. What will happen if you do not proofread your letter before sending?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Exercise 2

Instructions: Write (T) if the sentences are true and write (F) if the sentences are not true.

..... 1. These days English language is used very little in the world of work.

..... 2. In the business contexts, people write for different reasons such as applying for a job or asking for information.

..... 3. Written communication is the same as verbal communication.

..... 4. It is necessary for the writers to write their letter as clear as possible.

..... 5. In order to create a better understanding the letter has to be complete in itself.

..... 6. If you are not sure about the name of the receiver, you should check.

..... 7. The tone of business letter should be negative.

..... 8. It is not necessary to plan business letters.

..... 9. Grammar plays an important role in business letter writing.

..... 10. The write should use polite language in business letters.

..... 11. It is acceptable to have spelling errors in business letters.

..... 12. Before writing a letter, we have to think about the purpose of writing.



## Unit 2

### Business letter format

#### Warm up questions

1. In your opinion, does each business organisation use the same letter format?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What format will you use when writing a business letter?

.....

.....

.....

.....

#### Introduction

Among all correspondence, business letter has a very unique character. It has a standard format and it is used in a rather formal context. The main purpose of using business letter is to establish and maintain business relationship with external business contacts. Business letters tend to follow similar patterns.

According to Loughheed (2003), there are three formats for business correspondence: block, semi-block or modified block and indented format. In business contexts, block style is the most widely used (Ashley, 2013).

Regarding the block format, everything begins at the left margin starting from the sender's address or letter head, date, inside address, salutation, subject or attention line, body, complimentary close, signature and enclosure.

For the semi-block or modified block format, everything begins at the left margin except the date, complimentary close and signature.

For the indented format, every paragraph in the letter is indented.

The examples of letter format are as follows:



**BLOCK FORMAT: BUSINESS LETTER**

Address of the writer Line 1	1
Address Line 2	
Date (Month Day, Year)	2
Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. Full name of recipient.	3
Title/Position of Recipient.	
Company Name	
Address Line 1	
Address Line 2	
Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name:	4
Subject: Title of Subject	5
Body Paragraph 1	..... ..... .....
Body Paragraph 2	..... ..... .....
Body Paragraph 3	..... ..... .....
Closing (Sincerely...),	7
Signature	8
Your Name (Printed)	9
Your Title	
Enclosures (2)	10
Typist Initials.	11

Source: Lougheed (2003)

**MODIFIED BLOCK FORMAT: BUSINESS LETTER**

	Return Address Line 1 1 Return Address Line 2
	Date (Month Day, Year) 2
Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. Full name of recipient. 3 Title/Position of Recipient. Company Name Address Line 1 Address Line 2	
Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name: 4	
Subject: Title of Subject 5	
Body Paragraph 1 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .	
Body Paragraph 2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .	
Body Paragraph 3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .	
	6
	Closing (Sincerely...), 7
	Signature 8
	Your Name Your Title 9
Enclosures (2) 10 Typist Initials. 11	

**INDENTED FORMAT: BUSINESS LETTER**

	Return Address Line 1 1 Return Address Line 2
	Date (Month Day, Year) 2
Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. Full name of recipient. 3 Title/Position of Recipient. Company Name Address Line 1 Address Line 2	
Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name: 4	
Subject: Title of Subject 5	
Body Paragraph 1 .....	
Body Paragraph 2 .....	
Body Paragraph 3 .....	
	6
	Closing (Sincerely...), 7
	Signature 8
	Your Name Your Title 9
Enclosures (2) 10 Typist Initials. 11	

Source: Lougheed (2003)

## Parts of business letters

According to Alexander & Jones (1997), there are important parts in a typical business letter. However, it should be noted that many business firms use their own style which their staff are expected to follow.

The essential parts of a business letter are as follows:

### 1. Letterhead / sender's address

Business letters usually have a printed letterhead on the top middle of the page. It contains all of the information of the company such as complete address, telephone number, fax number, company website and e-mail address (Lougheed, 2003). Logo of a company is part of the letterhead.

#### Examples:

- 1.1 Udon Thani Rajabhat University  
64 Thaharn Rd., Muang District,  
Udon Thani 41000, Thailand  
Tel: +66 (42) 211040  
Fax: +66 (42) 243296  
Website: [www.udru.ac.th](http://www.udru.ac.th)
  
- 1.2 DK Book Center  
437 Phyathai Road,  
Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330  
Thailand



**For example:**

- 3.1 Mrs. Rosanna Yates  
The Chief Consultant  
Hanworth Market Research Consultants  
Hanworth House, Blakeney Street,  
Fresno, CA 93740
- 3.2 Mr. Thomas Morgan  
Editor in chief  
BBC London  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Egton Wing, BBC Broadcasting House,  
Portland Place, London, W1A 1AA

**4. Salutation**

Salutation is a word or phrase that is used to begin a letter. It is an important component of a business letter. It is like greeting a person in verbal communication. In business letter writing, the choice of salutation depends upon the personal relationship between the writer and the reader (Sharma & Mohan, 2012). The guideline for using salutation is as follows:

- Dear Sir or Madame :           to a company
- Dear Sir:                           to a man if you do not know his name
- Dear Madam:                   to a woman if you do not know her name
- Dear Mr. Smith:               to a married or unmarried man

Dear Ms. Smith: to a married or unmarried woman

Dear Mrs. Smith: to a married woman

Dear Miss Smith: to an unmarried woman

Dear John, to a friend or someone you know well

(Source: Littlejohn, 2008, p. 9)

Note: For American English, “Gentlemen’ can also be used in a letter to a company (Ashley, 2013).

## 5. Subject

The significance of using subject of the letter is that it attracts the attention of the receiver immediately. It helps him/her to quickly know what the letter is about. The subject of the letter should be written in a short statement.

### **For example:**

Subject: Your order No. PL21587

Subject: Thai TESOL International Conference

Subject: Offer of Employment

Subject: Hotel booking for Mr. Simon Reeds

Subject: Training Program for UDRU staff

## 6. Body of the letter

The body of a business letter is written in formal language. Regarding a general rule, most business letters should be concise and written in a straightforward manner. In the business world, a busy employee does not have time or interest in reading confusing details. Therefore, each letter you write must be perfect in spelling, grammar, sentence structure, appearance and format.

Generally, the body of business letter consists of three parts.

### (a) Opening part

The opening part is the introductory part of the letter. The main purpose is to inform the reader what you are writing about.

### (b) Main part

The main part usually contains details or subject matter of the letter. It should be precise and clear in order to make it easier for the readers to understand.

### (c) Concluding part

The concluding part contains statements of the sender for instance what he/she expects the reader to do.

## 7. Complimentary close

Concerning proper business practice, it is essential to end a business letter politely. Importantly, the complimentary close must be in accordance with the salutation. It should be noted that there is a comma after the end of the complimentary close and only the first word in the complimentary close is capitalized.

**For example:**

### Salutation

Dear Sir or Madam:

Dear Mr. Baker:

### Complimentary close

Yours faithfully,

Yours sincerely,

## 8. Signature

The signature is written immediately below the complimentary close.

## 9. Name of sender

The part includes the printed version of your name, and your title or position can be put underneath it.

## 10. Enclosure (Enc. / Encl.)

This is required when the writer wants to attach some documents to the reader such as transcripts, resume, photos, receipts, price lists, invoices etc. These enclosures are listed one by one in serial numbers.

**For example:**

Encls: (i) resume

(ii) transcript

Encl: Invoice No. TR008/99

Encl: Travel itinerary

**11. Reference initials**

Sometimes you will see two sets of initials at the bottom of a business letter. The first set is the writer's and is capitalized. The second set is the typist's and is lower case. A Slash (/) separates the two sets of initials.

Writer/typist

WR/js

**12. cc**

The letters cc stand for carbon copy. A cc tells us who else received a copy of the letter. It should be noted that cc is not capitalized, and is always followed by a colon (:).

**Summary**

Business letter has a unique character. It is rather formal. There are essential parts in business letter which are sender's address, date, recipient's address, salutation, subject, body of the letter, complimentary close, signature, sender's name and signature and enclosure. However, the format and style of the letter is different from one company to another company.

# Exercises

## Exercise 1

Instructions: Match the words in column A with examples in column B.

### Column A

1. Subject
2. Salutation
3. Job title
4. Complimentary close
5. Date
6. Enclosure
7. Sender's name
8. Sender's address

### Column B

- a. Yours sincerely,
- b. Sales manager
- c. June 13, 2015
- d. (i) resume
- e. Mr. Weera Thammawong
- f. Purchase Order No. SJ 0032879
- g. Nokia Co., Ltd.
- h. Dear Sir:
- i. 64 Thahan Road, Udon Thani

## Exercise 2

Instructions: Answer the following questions.

1. What is a cc?

.....

2. When do we use an enclosure?

.....

3. How many parts are there in a business letter?

.....

4. What is a block format?

.....

5. What is a semi-block format?

.....

6. What is an indented format?

.....

7. What is a subject of the letter?

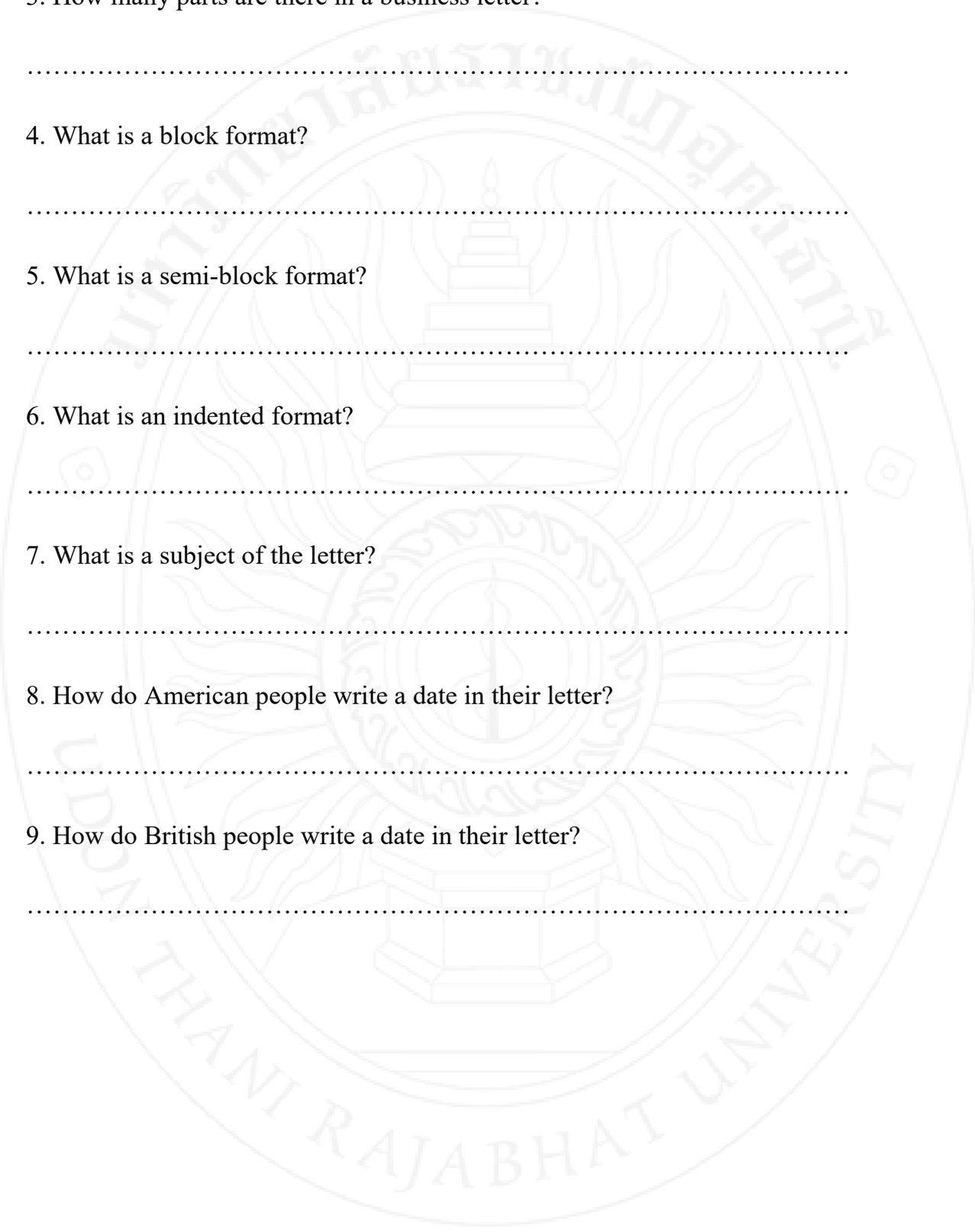
.....

8. How do American people write a date in their letter?

.....

9. How do British people write a date in their letter?

.....



## Unit 3

### Punctuation in business letter

#### Warm up questions

1. Do you think punctuation is essential for business letter writing? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. List punctuation marks that you use when writing a letter.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### Introduction

Punctuation is very important for business letter writing because it helps readers understand the meaning of a written text (Raimes, 2006). Therefore, professional writing needs good punctuation (Dignen, 2000). Your letter can cause confusion if you do not place full stop at the end of the sentence or put comma in the wrong place. Sharma & Mohan (2012) note that when we speak,

we use pauses between utterances to make our meaning clear. Similarly, when we write, we use certain marks of punctuation to guide the readers through a piece of writing.

## Punctuation marks

Punctuation marks used in business letter writing are as follows:

### 1. Full stop (.) (American English: period)

1.1 A full stop or period is used at the end of the sentence.

(Emmerson, 2013).

#### For example:

- Please find attached our invoice No. KL2245.
- We would like to apologize for the delay of our shipment.
- We look forward to meeting you.
- I am writing regarding the product No. KL0089114.
- I would like to confirm the meeting with you on Friday.

1.2 A full stop or period is used in some abbreviations.

#### For example:

Time: 7 a.m., 8 p.m.

Month: Dec., Jan.

Road: Fifth Ave., Thahan Rd., Plenty Rd.

Department: Finance Dept., Personnel Dept.

Company: Coca Cola Co., Ltd., Nike Co., Ltd.

1.3 A full stop or period is used after titles.

**For example:**

Mr. Smith, Mrs. Jenkins, Ms. Suparat

Dr. Somsak, Prof. Simkin, Asst. Prof. Supapong

## 2. Comma (,)

2.1 A comma is used to separate two words or a list (Raimes, 2006).

**For example:**

- March 19, 2015
- The company produces engines, machinery, electric appliances and computers.
- We order desks, chairs and conference tables.
- I am a positive, energetic and active person.

2.2 A comma is used in a salutation with friends or someone you know very well.

**For example:**

- Dear Tom,
- Dear Mary,
- Dear Teera,

2.3 A comma is used in a complimentary close.

**For example:**

- Yours sincerely,
- Yours faithfully,
- Yours truly,

2.4 A comma is used after an adverb.

**For example:**

- Unfortunately, we do not produce a leather sofa any longer.
- Unfortunately, we regret to inform you that we have not received shipment details.

2.5 A comma is used to separate a dependent clause from the main clause.

**For example:**

- As you will see from my cv, I have basic experience in sales promotion.
- If you need more details, please let me know.
- Further to our discussion, I am pleased to inform you that we will place an order by tomorrow.

2.6 A comma is used to separate geographical names, dates, and other elements in the address.

**For example:**

- His office is located in North Melbourne, Australia.
- The management meeting will be held on Monday, August, 4, 2014.
- Please send the parcel to Mr. Mike Sanders, 25 Crawley Road, New Zealand.

2.7 A comma is used after introductory words.

**For example:**

- Technically speaking, it is possible to repair the washing machine.
- As requested, I enclose a copy of language training program.
- As requested, I am attaching the COM file.

2.8 A comma is used before a coordinating conjunction in compound sentences only. Coordinating conjunction includes and, or, but, so (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

**For example:**

- I can speak Italian, and I also speak good French.
- I have been working abroad for many years, so I am not worried about working in Germany.
- My mother tongue is Thai, but I have been studying English for ten years.

- We received your order letter yesterday, but we did not receive the attachment.

### 3. Colon (:)

A colon is used to introduce a list of things.

**For example:**

- Please send the following items by Friday:
  - 25 reams of A4 paper
  - 12 boxes of red pen
  - 17 packs of plastic folder
- The dates for the next three meetings are as follows:
  - April 21<sup>st</sup>      July 23<sup>rd</sup>      October 25<sup>th</sup>
- Regarding the meeting on Friday, please be informed that the President would like to discuss three key issues: manpower, target goal and budget.

### 4. Semicolon (;)

A semicolon is used to connect two sentences which are closely related.

**For example:**

- Thaitech wants have a meeting; they are worried about the delay of the shipment.
- Please note that the goods will be sent on 23 October; you will get them before Christmas.

## 5. Apostrophe ('s or s')

5.1 Apostrophe is used to indicate something that belongs to a person or a group of people.

**For example:**

- The sales report is on the manager's desk. (There is one manager)
- We have attached the applicants' details. (There are several applicants)

5.2 Apostrophe is used to show where the letters are missing.

**For example:** I'll, he's, they've, we're, I'm, it's

5.3 Apostrophe is used to refer to a decade.

**For example:** 1970's      1980's

## 6. Question mark (?)

Question mark is used at the end of the sentence.

**For example:**

- Could you inform us date and time of the visit of Mr. Shinsuke please?
- Could you send us the confirmation letter by email?

## 7. Hyphen (-)

Hyphen is used between two parts of a compound noun or adjective

**For example:**

job-seeker

co-founder of the company

a two-week holiday

the north-east region

well-planned campaign

house-to-house survey

## 8. Capital letters

The use of capitals is a device to make a written message easy to read and understand (Sharmar & Mohan, 2012).

8.1 We use capital letters with names of people.

**For example:**

Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer,

Ms. Taylor Swift, Mr. Thanin Jiaravanon, President Valdimir Putin

8.2 We use capital letters with job titles

For example:

Professor John Smith, Asst. Prof. Sompong Rakdee,

Dr. Nancy Chang, Sales Manager, Human Resources Manager,

Vice President, Managing Director

8.3 We use capital letters with names of organizations.

**For example:**

Udon Thani Rajabhat University, La Trobe University,  
Bangkok Bank, Oxford University Press, the Hilton Hotel,  
Novotel Hotel, Adina Apartment, Bureau of Statistics,  
Commonwealth Bank

8.4 We use capital letters with the first word in a sentence and  
personal pronoun (I)

**For example:**

- I am writing to enquire about basic conversation course at your university.
- We would like to make a complaint about the hotel staff.
- If you need more information, please feel free to contact us.
- I am interested in purchasing the conference table and chairs.

8.5 We use capital letters with days, months, holidays.

**For example:**

- Monday, Thursday, March, July, New Year's Day, Ramadan,  
Songkran Day, Easter holiday, Christmas

8.6 We use capital letters with buildings, roads and places

**For example:**

- The White House, the Grand Palace, Tienanmen Square,  
Thahan Road, Route 66, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Rama IV Road,

Phuket, Bangkok, Auckland, London, New York,  
Asia, Europe, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Middle East

8.7 We use capital letters with nationalities, languages, religions and ethnic groups.

**For example:**

- Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, English, Australian, Spanish, Jewish, Christian, Asian, Native American

8.8 We use capital letters with abbreviations.

**For example:**

- USA, UK, NASA, UNESCO, BKK, UCLA, B.A., B.E., M.A.

8.9 We use capital letters with all the words in the opening and the first word in the closing of a letter.

**For example:**

Dear Sir:

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Yours faithfully,

Yours sincerely,

## Summary

Punctuation is essential in business letters because it helps readers understand the meaning of the written text. The writers have to make sure that they use correct punctuation in their writing. Punctuation markers used in business letter writing consist of full stop, comma, colon, semicolon, question marks, and capital letters.

## Exercises

### Exercise 1

Instructions: Match the words in column A with symbols in column B.

#### Column A

1. colon
2. semicolon
3. hyphen
4. apostrophe
5. full stop
6. comma
7. question mark

#### Column B

- a. 's
- b. .
- c. ,
- d. ;
- e. :
- f. ?
- g. -

**Exercise 2**

Instructions: Rewrite following sentences by using correct capital letters.

1. the letter was sent on january 23, 2014.

.....

2. we are looking forward to hearing from you.

.....

3. i am writing to confirm the meeting with mr. steven king.

.....

4. the meeting about the project in germany will be held on monday at 10a.m.

.....

5. please be informed that mr. alex will come to visit our factory on Tuesday.

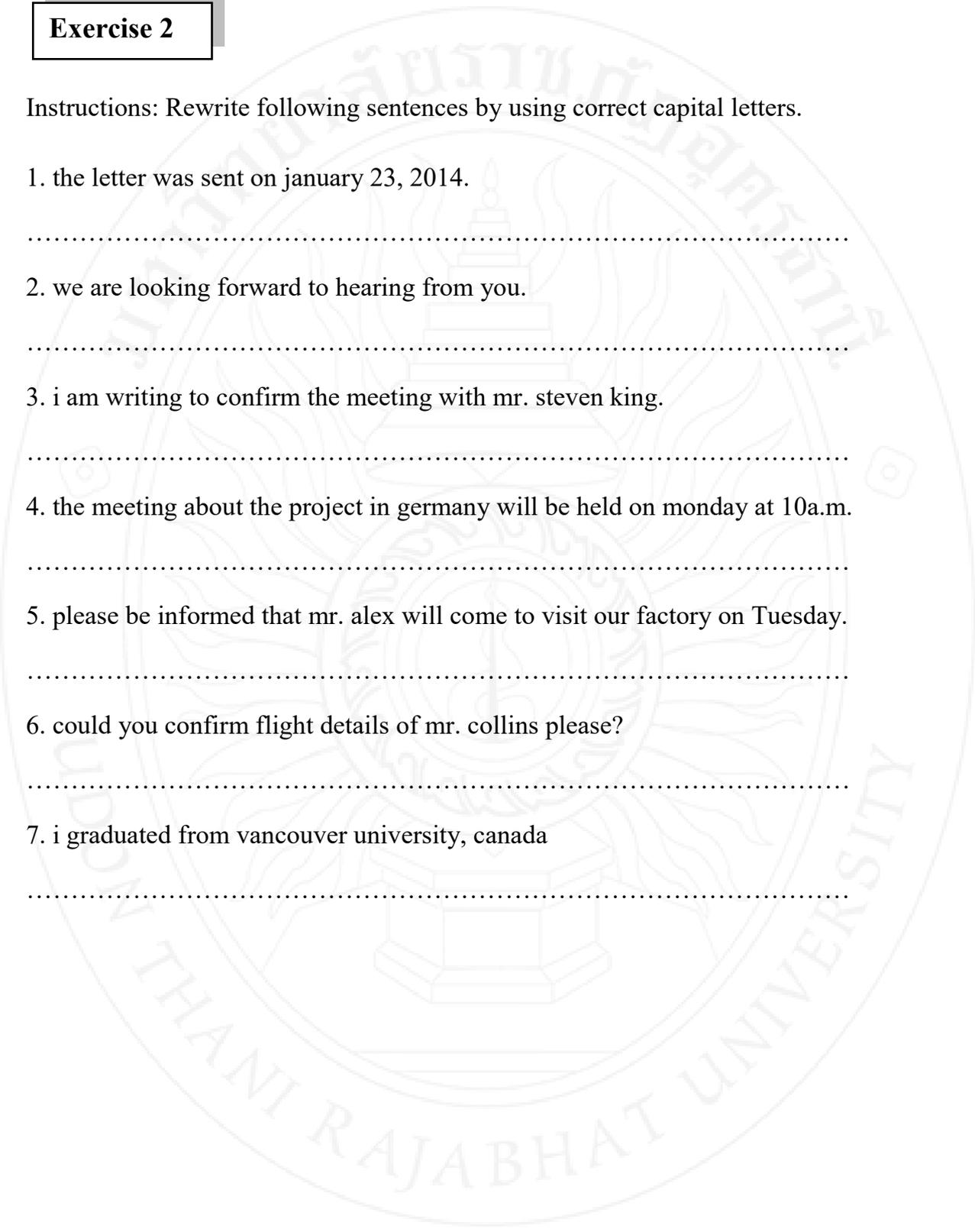
.....

6. could you confirm flight details of mr. collins please?

.....

7. i graduated from vancouver university, canada

.....



### Exercise 3

Instructions: Put (✓) in front of words that are capitalized correctly. Then rewrite words that need to be capitalized.

1. President Obama
2. the university of oxford
3. Ontario Province
4. United states
5. british Commonwealth
6. february
7. spring
8. New York
9. Department of agriculture
10. the air Force
11. william j. morgan
12. Panama Canal
13. mississippi river
14. South korea
15. ambassador gibson
16. professor jones
17. Dr. Fowler
18. Southern France



## Unit 4

### Language use for confirmation letters and enquiry letters

#### Warm up questions

1. What is the purpose of sending a confirmation letter?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What is the purpose of sending an enquiry letter?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### Introduction

According to Johnson (2006), people write business letters for different purposes for instance asking for information about particular products, confirming business issues, complaining about staff, services or products or applying for a job or confirming an agreement. Definitely, language use in each business letter is different in terms of vocabulary and expressions used or

writing style. For instance language use in letter of enquiry whether in the introductory part or in the main part will not be the same as language use in the application letter. Regarding business transactions, Zheng (2015) notes that business letters can be divided into four categories: routine business letters, good-news business letters, bad-news business letters and persuasive business letters.

## Language use for confirmation letters

A confirmation letter is sent to confirm details or to put oral agreements or decisions into writing. A telephone conversation should be followed up with a letter as it is easy to forget things or matter discussed. Some phrases that can be put in the letter include “I would like to confirm details of our discussion as follows: .....

” (Littlejohn, 2008). Besides, writing is a permanent record. It can be kept or can be used as a reference for by parties when dealing with each other. When placing an order by phone, Ashley (2013) points out that it should be confirmed in writing. Importantly, the writer should state all of the details in a confirmation letter (Lougheed, 2003). The advantage of writing a letter is that the letter provides a chance for the writer to make any necessary or additional points and confirm terms or conditions that have already been agreed.

It is important for the writer to state all of the necessary details in a confirmation letter (Lougheed, 2003). It should be noted that the information provided in each confirmation letter is different according to the different purposes of writing.

**For example:**

- a confirmation for a meeting should cover details such as date and time of the meeting, location or venue of the meeting, topic of the meeting, details of contact person etc.
- a confirmation of employment should cover details such as effective date of employment, job title offered, salary, fringe benefits, details of contact person etc.
- a hotel reservation confirmation should cover details such as guest name, arrival and departure date, number of guests staying, room rate, type of room, pick up details, flight details, special requests etc.
- a confirmation of student enrollment should cover details such as name and last name of a student, name of the university, name of the faculty or program studied, academic year of enrolment, name of the degree, details of contact person etc.
- a confirmation of an order should cover details such as order reference number, terms of payment, delivery channel, delivery date, shipment details, quantity of items ordered, code or number of each item etc.

## Content of confirmation letters

### 1. You should tell the receiver what you are confirming.

- I am confirming the arrangements for your reception party on January 13.
- I am writing to confirm our meeting regarding company policy.
- With reference to our discussion, I would like to confirm your order of leather jackets and leather shoes.
- With reference to our telephone conversation, I would like to confirm the appointment with you and your team on Friday May 18, 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

### 2. You should give details of the issue or subject that you intend to confirm.

- The meeting will be held at Charoen Hotel, Udonusadee Room, on March 21, 2013, 9am – 11am.
- Your order will be delivered tomorrow by van at 9am and it should arrive at your store by 4pm.
- As agreed in our telephone conversation, we are going to discuss a mutual cooperation between the two universities.
- I can confirm that your starting salary will be ..... and your employment will commence on .....
- In view of your satisfactory performance, you have been confirmed for the post of Assistant Sales Manager at Mason Co., Ltd.

### 3. The letter can be ended as follows:

- We are looking forward to meeting you there.
- We hope the meeting will be successful.
- We are looking forward to a fruitful outcome.
- Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.
- Should you have any doubt or queries, you can contact me at 801-223-4543.
- You can reach me at 0813456272 in case of any changes. I look forward to meeting you.

## Useful phrases in confirmation letters

When writing a confirmation letter, there are polite phrases that can be used in the letter.

**For example:**

### Opening

- With reference to our discussion on 10 June, 2012, I would like to confirm our meeting regarding the .....
- We would like to confirm the booking as follows.....
- We are pleased to confirm that .....
- I am pleased to offer you the position of .....
- We are pleased to confirm your order for the office equipment.

### Closing

- I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the company.

- Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at .....
- We look forward to meeting you next week.
- We are looking forward to the interview.

## Samples confirmation letter

### Letter A: Confirming airplane reservation

(Name of the Writer)  
(Company Name)  
(Address)

(Date)

(Name of the Receiver)  
(Company Name)  
(Address)

Dear (name of the receiver):

This is to confirm our phone conversation this morning.

Could you make two Business Class reservations, London-Kobe return, in the names of Mr. P.R. Dell and Ms. B. Newsome. Outward flight DA164, departing Heathrow at 10.05 a.m. on Wednesday 12 June, return flight DA165, departing Kobe at 20.30 p.m. on Tuesday 18 June.

Please send the tickets for my attention and charge to our account.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)  
(Your name)  
(Your title)

**Letter B: Confirming student enrollment**

(University Name)

(Address)

(Date)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that Ms. Jane Foster is currently enrolled as a full-time student at La Trobe University in the Faculty of Education for the 2014 academic year, reading towards the degree of Bachelor of Education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

(Your name)

(Your title)

(Source: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/forms>)

**Letter D: Confirming a workshop participation**

(Name of the Writer)  
 (Company Name)  
 (Address)

(Date)

(Name of the Receiver)  
 (Company Name)  
 (Address)

Dear (name of the receiver):

This letter confirms your attendance at the Management Workshop scheduled for September 9-13, 2013 at the Sheraton Hotel, Toronto. The sessions run from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. each of the five days. There will be a cocktail reception Monday evening from 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Please be sure to review the enclosed course material prior to Monday's opening session. Familiarity with the case study will increase your learning experience and enhance class participation.

You must make hotel arrangements on your own using the attached forms. Be sure to mention that you will be attending the Management Workshop to receive the most favourable rate. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are looking forward to seeing you in Toronto.

Yours sincerely,  
 (Signature)  
 (Your name)  
 (Your title)  
 Enc.

(Source: Adapted from Muckian & Woods, 1996, p. 78)

## Summary

To sum up, the aim of sending a letter of confirmation is to confirm details or to put any oral agreements or decisions into writing. In professional settings, the purpose of writing a confirmation letter may be different. For instance, you can send a letter to confirm a meeting, confirm a booking, confirm an appointment, confirm an interview or confirm employment. The language used in the letter has to be clear and concise so that the reader can understand the message immediately and ,importantly, there should be no confusion between the writer and the receiver. Moreover, when confirming an appointment, the concept of cross-cultural differences has to be taken into consideration. For instance, if you make an appointment with British or American people, you have to be on time as they always keep their time and they expect people whom they contact to keep their time as well.

## Exercises

Instructions: Discuss with your peers. Underline the error in each sentence and write the correct sentence.

1. You have been confirm for the position of an executive secretary.

.....

2. We are please to confirm the following order.

.....

3. I am writing to confirming our meeting.

.....

4. With references to our phone conversation, I would like to confirm your booking.

.....

5. I am confidence that our meeting will be beneficial for both of us.

.....

6. If you need any help, please contract us at this number.

.....

7. I look forward to meet you next week.

.....

8. I am write this letter to confirm my acceptance of your offer for a receptionist job.

.....

9. This is to confirming that Ms. Ladda Thammarak is a full time student at UdonThani Rajabhat University.

.....

10. This letter confirm your attendance at the Language Teaching Conference.

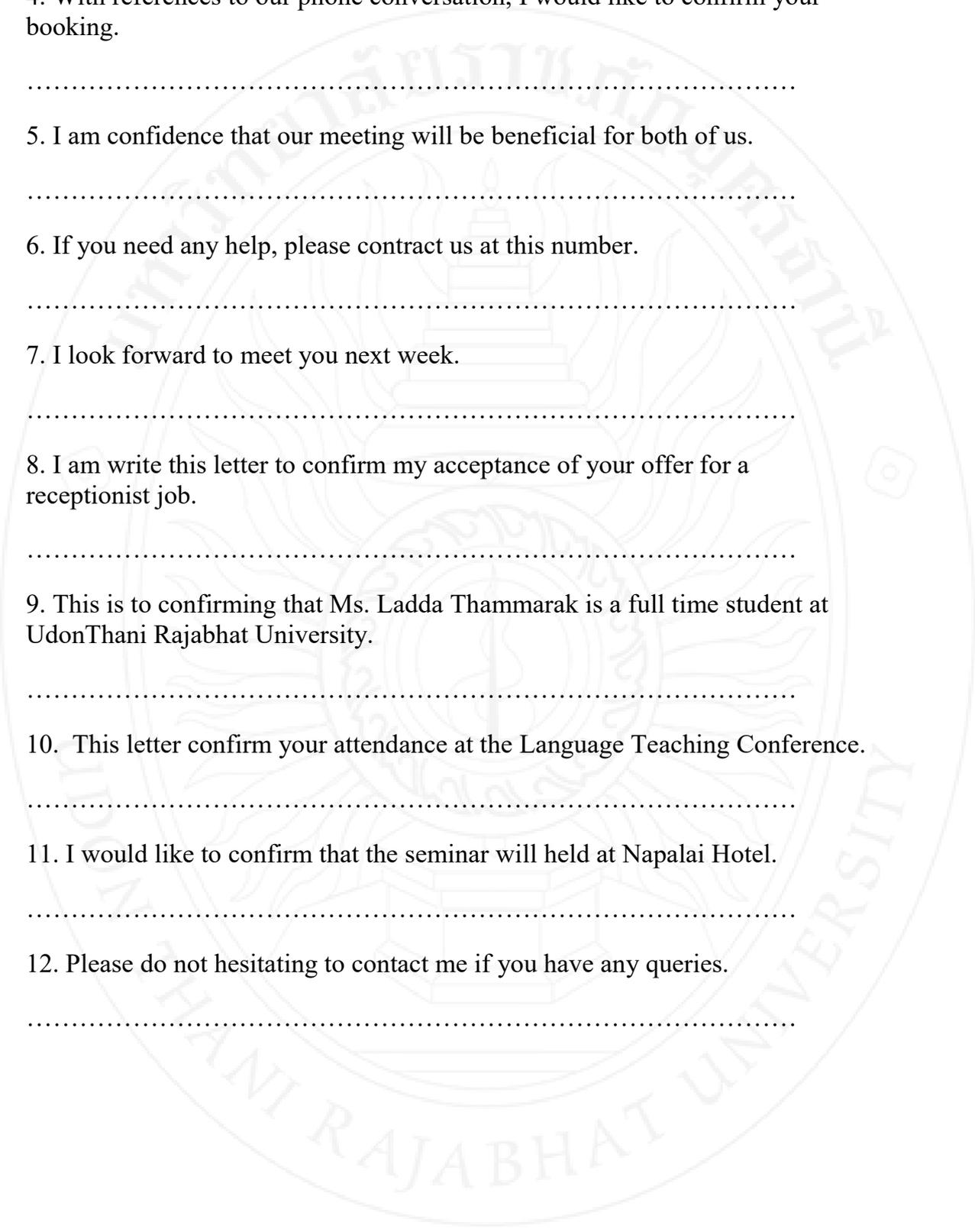
.....

11. I would like to confirm that the seminar will held at Napalai Hotel.

.....

12. Please do not hesitating to contact me if you have any queries.

.....



## Language use for enquiry letters

Business letters are written to fulfill several purposes. For instance, a customer might write a letter to enquire about quotations and catalogues (Millan & Toselli, 1997). A university student might ask for details of a scholarship or a research grant. A secretary might want to obtain information about a business conference for the management. This kind of letter is called an enquiry letter (or inquiry in American English). Generally, the main reason for writing this letter is to obtain some information which is not available on a company website or a newspaper article (Lougheed, 2003).

When writing an enquiry letter it is necessary to use formal language with soft and positive tone. It should be noted that when asking about the products or services the writer has to be specific and state exactly what he/she wants (Ashley, 2013). Moreover, the letter has to be addressed to the person who is most likely to respond in a positive and helpful manner. If the writer is not sure of who that might be, it is wise to make a few phone calls to identify a possible contact person. That person's name should be placed in the inside heading and the salutation of the enquiry. It should also be included on the top line of your envelope.

Letters of enquiry needs a response by the recipient; therefore, it is important to write a letter in such a way that you are likely to get a favourable response. At first, letters of request or letters of enquiry may look easy, but they require some thought, planning and revision. Ashley (2013) points out that a letter of enquiry should not be too short or too long. It should provide all the relevant information that the recipient needs.

## Content of enquiry letters

Generally, body of a letter consists of three parts: opening, main message and closing (Littlejohn, 2008).

### 1. Opening: You should tell why you are writing

- I have read your advertisement from the Bangkok Post dated 22 November about the new whirlpool baths and spas.
- I recently saw your website about the new tablet with dual-touchscreens.
- We have heard a lot about the indigo hand woven products made by local people.

Then, you should tell who you are or what sort of organization you are.

For example:

- We are one of the main product design companies in Italy.
- Our company is a leading manufacturer of wooden furniture in Europe.
- We are one of the largest travel agencies in Singapore.

### 2. The main message: You should tell what you require

- Could you please send us your latest catalogue and price list?
- Please send us your catalogue with prices, sizes and colours of sofas and chairs.
- We would like to have more information about the package tour to the north of Thailand.

- I am interested in a business communication course for beginners. I would be grateful if you could send me details of course outline and course fees.

### 3. Closing: You should thank the readers for their assistance

- Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.
- Thank you for your attention. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.
- We are looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

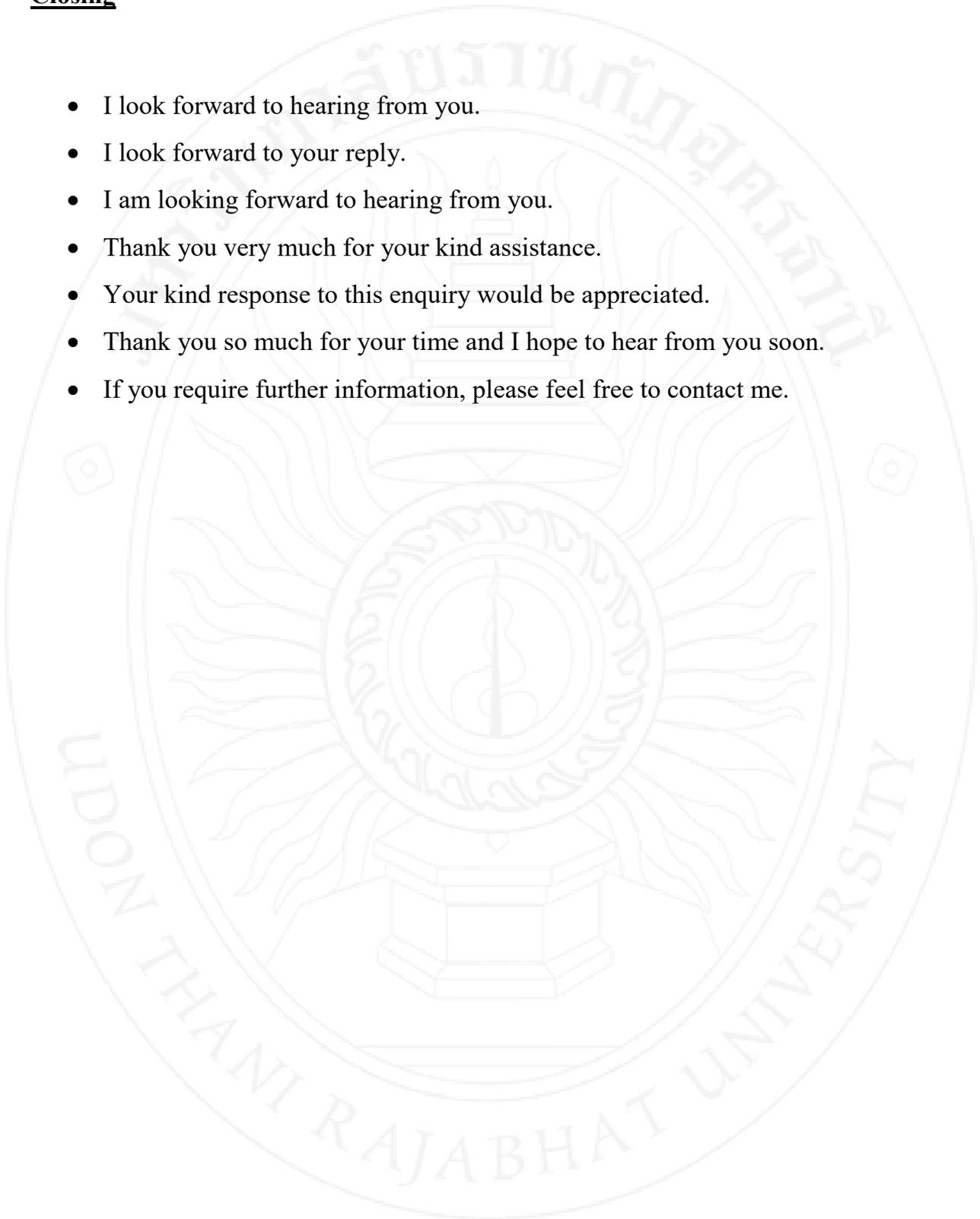
## Useful phrases in enquiry letters

### Opening

- I am/ We are interested in .....
- Could you please send me/us ....?
- Would you please send .....
- I/We would like to know about .....
- I am writing to enquire about .....
- I/We would be grateful if you could inform me/us about .....
- I/We would be grateful if you could tell me/us about .....
- I/We would be grateful if you could give me details/ information of .....
- I am writing to find out more details about .....
- I/We would also like to have more details about .....

**Closing**

- I look forward to hearing from you.
- I look forward to your reply.
- I am looking forward to hearing from you.
- Thank you very much for your kind assistance.
- Your kind response to this enquiry would be appreciated.
- Thank you so much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.
- If you require further information, please feel free to contact me.



## Samples enquiry letter

### Letter A

Prosper Design Co., Ltd.  
127 Jubilee Building,  
Nathan Road, Hong Kong

7 October 2014

Utex Computing Co.,Ltd.  
89 Chenjong Street,  
Guangzhou,  
China

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are one of the largest product design companies in Hong Kong. We have seen your website about the new computer notebook and laser printer. Would you kindly send us your latest catalogue and a full price list.

We are looking forward to receiving your reply.

Yours faithfully,

*Thomas Ang*  
Thomas Ang  
Marketing Manager

(Source: Author's work)

**Letter B**

Coffee Taste Co., Ltd.  
257 Fifth Avenue,  
Olympia, CA 98501

September 12, 2014

Home Deco Co., Ltd.  
87 Downing Street,  
New York, NY 16704

Dear Sir or Madam:

With reference to your advertisement in House and Home Magazine dated 10 September, could you please send us your latest catalogue of coffee making machines and ice cream-making machines. We would also like to know if it is possible to make purchase online. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

*Kris Brown*

Kris Brown  
General Manager

(Source: Author's work)

## Letter C

72 Moo 2 Haisok Village,  
Nasaad Subdistrict, Sangkhom District,  
UdonThani 41260  
Thailand

December 12, 2014

University of Melbourne  
234 St. Kilda Road, South bank,  
VIC, Australia

Dear Sir or Madam:

I recently saw your university website about a product design course for beginners. I am interested in taking this course and would be grateful if you could give me more details about course structure, course fee and admission procedure for the course as these details are not available on the website. Would you send the information to my email address - [siri@hotmail.com](mailto:siri@hotmail.com).

I am looking forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

*Sirimas Kedmanee*

Sirimas Kedmanee

(Source: Author's work)

## Summary

To sum up, the purpose of writing a letter of enquiry is to seek for specific details or information from the receiver such as catalogues, quotations, brochures or samples of the product. Before writing a letter, you should organize your information and have the information in hands so that you know what to ask for. The polite form of language should be used in the content of the letter. The length of the letter should be fairly short; however, it should be long enough to explain what the sender is enquiring about. Importantly, the writer should include all contact details so that the reader can get in touch easily.

## Exercises

Instructions: Each phrase below has one word missing. Add the missing word by choosing one word from the following list.

**about      for      from      to      in      of**

1. With reference to your letter 3 March 2012

.....

2. Thank you so much your time.

.....

3. We apologize the delay.

.....

4. Thank you sending me the brochures.

.....

5. I look forward to hearing you soon.

.....

6. If you need more information, please do not hesitate contact us.

.....

7. Could you give me more details the project in Paris?

.....

8. Thank you your interest in our products.

.....

9. I am writing enquire about hand woven products.

.....

10. Please send us information your product range and a price list.

.....





## Unit 5

### Language use for order letters and complaint letters

#### Warm up questions

1. What is the purpose of writing the letter of order?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What is the purpose of writing the letter of complaints?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### Language use for order letters

Letter of order is the means that customers have of purchasing goods and services by mail or by fax (Millan & Toselli, 1997). In any business correspondence, an order letter is usually sent directly to the person who is responsible for handling the order. According to Sharma & Mohan (2012), a clear and firm order is the only thing that interests the receiver. Moreover, the

language used in the letter has to be polite. Littlejohn (2008) mentions that in business, if you are polite, you will usually get a better response and better service. Therefore, letter of order should be written with care and it is the responsibility of the writer to proofread the letter many times before sending. If the letter is incomplete or has errors, it might slow down the process which is obviously not good for the business. Before writing a letter of order, Sharma & Mohan (2012) point out that it is important for the writer to have complete details related to the order.

**For example:**

- Name of the product
- Specifications of the product
- Quantity ordered
- Model number/ catalogue number
- Payment details
- Location or places where the products should be sent
- When you need the products
- Size, colour, and quality also needs to be mentioned

## Content of order letters

When writing an order letter, there are particular issues that should be identified in the letter.

### **1. You should tell the receiver straight away what you are ordering.**

- I would like to order 5 tape recorders and 10 portable speakers.
- We are pleased to place an order for 30 grey-coloured desks No. K110 and 30 black-coloured chairs No. K220.
- Thank you very much for your quotation. We are interested in buying the following office equipments.
- I have enclosed Purchase Order A217 for 50 Toshiba laptops (Satellite Pro L300-12F).

### **2. Terms of payment can be confirmed.**

- As we discussed on the phone, you offered to give a 10 percent discount.
- As we agreed, the invoice will be paid 30 days after delivery of the products.
- Once we have received the books, we will transfer money to Siam Commercial Bank, Silom Branch.
- We would like to confirm that payment is to be made by a bank draft.

**3. Details of delivery dates and channels of delivery can also be mentioned in the letter of order.**

- These items should arrive no later than November 23, 2013. Please send them by airfreight.
- It is essential that the goods are delivered at the beginning of March. Please ship by scheduled freighter to avoid any delays.
- Delivery before 10 February is a condition of this order. Please send the products by rail.
- Book cases and tables should be delivered as soon as possible, but no later than April 25. We prefer delivery by road.

**4. The letter can be ended as follows:**

- We are looking forward to hearing from you.
- If you have any questions concerning our order, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- We are looking forward to placing further orders in the near future.
- I look forward to receiving your confirmation.
- If our sales targets are met, we shall be placing further orders in the near future.

## Useful phrases in order letters

### Opening

- We would like to order/ to purchase .....
- We would like to place an order as follows.....
- Could you please send me/us ....?
- Please find attached our official order No .....

### Closing

- We look forward to hearing from you.
- We are looking forward to your reply.
- We hope to hear from you soon.
- We look forward to receiving your confirmation.

## Samples order letter

### Letter A

50 Arlington Street  
Boston, MA 02116

June 12, 2014

Deluxe Marketing Inc.  
223 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 03912

Dear Mr. Ramos:

Regarding your April catalogue, kindly send me the following goods by courier:

3 pairs of white canvas shoes, size 4, B width - \$50.00 each

2 black sweaters, round neck, size 28 No. B22 - \$60.00 each

3 brown sweaters, V neck, size 32 No. K04 - \$ 65.00 each

Please send the above materials within a week. I have enclosed a cheque of \$200.00 in advance for the order. The remaining payment will be made after I receive my order.

Yours sincerely,

*Stephen*

Stephen Wang

Enc.

(Source: adapted from Ashley, 2013, p. 65)

**Letter B**

69 Plenty Road  
Bundoora,  
Melbourne 3076

March 25, 2014

TMT Telephone Co., Ltd.  
69 Waterdale Road  
Melbourne 3078

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Please send me through DHL Express one unit of the Panasonic cordless telephone, model No. Kx 038961 B. I have enclosed a cheque of \$159.00 as full payment of the unit plus parcel charge.

Yours sincerely,

*Josh*

Josh Cooper

Enc.

(Source: Author's work)

**Letter C**

431 West Oakdale, Apt 4B  
Chicago, IL 8745

May 23, 2014

Ms. Rosemary Baker  
World Bookstore  
29 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA

Dear Ms. Baker:

I would like to order the following books as advertised in Home Magazine:

1 copy of Guide to Cooking Vol.4	\$25.00
1 copy of Interior Designing	\$35.00
1 copy of Guide to Outdoor Living	\$25.00

Please deliver the books by post to the address given above. As agreed upon, these books will be paid for upon delivery.

Yours sincerely,

*Lily*

Lily Palacio

(Source: Author's work)

## Summary

In sum, a letter of order should be clear and complete. It should be sent directly to the person who is responsible for handling the order. All necessary details for the order has to be stated in the letter in order to avoid confusion or miscommunication between both parties such as product name, product number, quantity required, payment details, required date for the product, delivery channel and so on. Importantly, a letter of order has to be written with care. Proofreading is a must before sending the letter.

## Exercises

Instructions: Look at the following sentences and circle the one that shows politeness.

1. a. You must send the products right away.  
b. Could you send the products as soon as possible?
2. a. You have made mistakes with my order.  
b. I am afraid there is a problem with the order.
3. a. Thank you for your order No.....  
b. I get your order No.....
4. a. Please send the items by seafreight.  
b. I want you to send the items by seafreight.

5. a. The price for the printer is too expensive.  
b. We think the price for the printer is rather high.
6. a. If you want any information, just contact me.  
b. If you require any information, please feel free to contact me.
7. a. I am interested in purchasing the following items.  
b. I want to buy the following items.
8. a. Tell us if you cannot deliver the goods before June 1.  
b. Please contact us if you are unable to deliver the goods before June 15, 2014.

## Language use for complaint letters

Typically, a complaint letter or a claim letter is sent when customers are not satisfied with a particular product or service they received. In a business world, customers can be upset or unhappy for different reasons. According to Sharma & Mohan (2012, p. 118), some common dissatisfactions include:

- services do not meet customer's expectation or satisfaction
- goods are dispatched to the wrong destinations
- goods have arrived too late
- goods are packed in bad conditions
- the amount of the products received is less than the required quantities.

Complaints can be conducted in many ways. Customers can make verbal complaints. Moreover, they can fax, email or write a letter to a company to express their discontent. However, Ashley (2013) points out that a complaint letter should be used for cases that are larger or more serious. When writing a letter of complaint, one of the most important things is that it should reach the right department and it should be written to the head of the department who is responsible for the mistake (Sharma & Mohan, 2012). Besides, it is best to make a complaint as soon as you realize a mistake has been made. Ashley (2013) notes that delay can weaken your case and can complicate the matter as details may be forgotten.

The tone of a complaint letter should be polite but firm. In business circumstances, you should avoid being rude to people and you should not write a complaint letter or a claim letter when you are in anger. According to Ashley (2013, p. 100), nothing is gained by being rude to the individual you are writing to. You might offend someone who has nothing to do with the errors. It is best to use passive and impersonal structures in the letter.

Sentences that should not be used in a complaint letter are as follows:

- You must correct your mistake as soon as possible.
- You made an error on the statement.
- You do not understand the terms of discount. We told you to deduct discount from net prices, not CIF prices.

The tone of the letter is getting softer if the following sentences are used:

- The mistake must be corrected as soon as possible.
- There appears to be an error on the statement.

- There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding terms of discount. Discount is deducted from net prices, not CIF prices.

(Ashley, 2013, p. 101)

## Content of complaint letters

According to Emmerson (2013, p. 95), generally the body of a complaint letter or a claim letter has four parts:

### 1. You should start your letter as follows:

- I am writing to complain about the poor service we received from your company.
- I am writing to complain about the quality of a product I bought from your website.
- I am writing in connection with my order FS 690 which arrived this morning.
- I am writing to complain about the delivery of 5 fax machines which we received today.
- I am writing to draw your attention to the negative attitude of some members of your team.

### 2. You should focus on a complaint.

- Your shipment of file cabinets arrived damaged on May 12.
- We only received two of the three cartons of copy paper that we ordered on April 10.

- We ordered 200 bottles of olive oil on 4 May. However, we found that 50 bottles were badly damaged.
- There seems to be an error in the invoice.
- The equipment that I ordered has not been delivered.
- The goods were in poor condition.
- The product I received was below standard that I expected.

**3. You should request for an action.**

- I would like you to cancel the order and credit our account for the two manuals we did not receive.
- I would like to receive the two additional software packages by November 15.
- Could you send us a correct bill as soon as possible?
- Please replace the faulty goods as soon as possible.
- If we do not receive the goods by the end of this week, we will have to cancel the order.
- Please replace the faulty goods as soon as possible.
- If we do not receive the goods by the end of this week, we will have to cancel the order.

**4. You should end the letter as follows:**

- I hope you will deal with this matter promptly as it is causing considerable inconvenience.
- I look forward to receiving your explanation of these matters.
- Thank you for your attention to this matter.
- Thank you for your assistance in this matter.
- We would appreciate an early reply.

## Useful phrases in complaint letters

### Opening

- I am writing to complain about .....
- We would like to inform you that.....
- I am writing to inform you that .....
- I am writing with reference to order No.....
- I am writing in connection with my order .....
- I am writing in connection with my booking .....
- I wish to express my dissatisfaction with

### Closing

- I would appreciate your looking into this.
- We would appreciate your early reply.
- Thank you for your attention to this matter.
- Please let me know what action you propose to take in this matter.
- I look forward to receiving your payment.
- I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

## Samples complaint letter

### Letter A

Intercity Bank  
Jalan Thamin 58,  
Jakarta 11196

30 May 2014

Mr. S. Basuki  
Jakarta Furnishings  
Jalan Arjuna 7,  
Jakarta 11190

Dear Mr. Basuki:

**Re: Order No. 768197**

I am writing in connection with the above order for some office furniture. Unfortunately, we have not yet received the filing cabinets which were a part of this order. We would be grateful if you could deliver them as soon as possible or refund our money.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

***Jennifer***

Jennifer Long  
Office Manager

(Source: Littlejohn, 2008, p. 37)

**Letter B**

Soft Tech Co., Ltd.  
856 Cheung Sha Wan Road,  
Cheung Sha Wan,  
Kowloon, Hong Kong

27 December 2014

Mr. George Lucas  
Canon House Co., Ltd.  
12 Cecil Ave., Cannington,  
Perth, WA 6000  
Australia

Dear Mr. Lucas:

**Re: Delivery of digital cameras**

I am writing to complain about the delivery of 30 digital cameras, order No. PW 315, which we received today.

I would like to inform you that the packaging was damaged and the cameras are not of saleable quality. I attach photographs of the damage. Please arrange to have them collected and send us a replacement consignment as soon as possible.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

*Megan*

Megan Smith  
Sales Manager

Enc.

## Summary

Before writing a complaint letter, you should have relevant details in hands such as reference number of the order, where and when the goods were bought or invoice number. At the beginning of the letter, you should say exactly what the problem is. For instance, there seems to be an error in the invoice, the equipment that I ordered has not been delivered or the goods were in poor condition. Then, you should express whether what action you want the company to take. For instance, you need a full refund for the damaged goods, you want the company to send a replacement or you want the company to deliver the missing products as soon as possible. The purpose in writing a complaint letter is to sort out the problems not to accuse anyone. Therefore, it should not be personal and emotional. The language used in the letter should be polite, firm, clear and right to the point.

## Exercises

Instructions: Complete the following sentences by using words given in the box.

refund, deal, inform, appears, connection, complain,  
matter, damaged, replacement, urgent, complaint

1. I am writing in ..... with the service of your staff.
2. We would like to ..... you that we have not received the goods yet.

3. I am writing to ..... about the quality of the products I bought from your website.

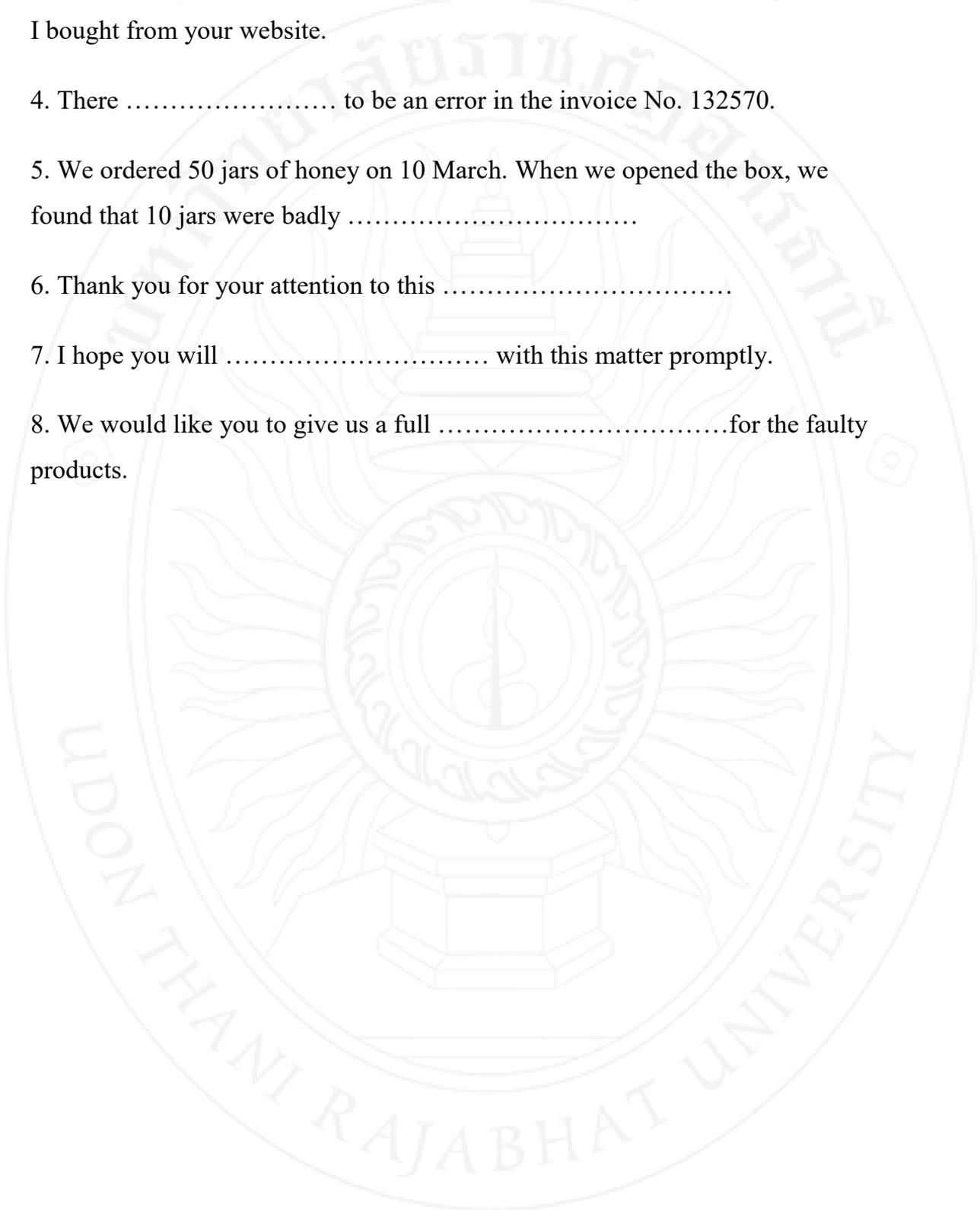
4. There ..... to be an error in the invoice No. 132570.

5. We ordered 50 jars of honey on 10 March. When we opened the box, we found that 10 jars were badly .....

6. Thank you for your attention to this .....

7. I hope you will ..... with this matter promptly.

8. We would like you to give us a full .....for the faulty products.



## Unit 6

### Language use for application letters

#### Warm up questions

1. In your opinion, what is the purpose of writing an application letter?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Is it necessary to proofread the application letter before sending? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### Introduction

An application letter or cover letter is a document that is sent with your résumé to provide additional information about your skills and experience as well as reasons why you are interested in the job you are applying for (Smith (2010). Even though both job application letter and résumé are required for the application process, it should be noted that the content and writing style are slightly different. Résumé summarizes all of your qualifications, skills and

experience; however, the application letter expands your best qualifications to show the potential employer how you can help the organisation meet its needs and how you differ from other applicants.

As the purpose of sending an application letter is to get an interview, it is essential for the applicant to use his/her own letter to create a first impression from the recruiters. The recruiters might have to deal with hundreds of applications for one position, so your letter has to stand out from the others. It has to be convincing as well as informative. If your application is read, that means you have a better chance to go through to the next round. However, if you make errors such as you misspell the name of the company, obviously the prospective employer will probably reject your letter (Sharma & Mohan, 2012).

For university students, an application letter might be the first important business letter that they will write when they graduate. As the competition in the world of work is high these days, the applicants have to try their best to promote themselves and sell their skills. However, there is no need to exaggerate your knowledge or your ability in order to attract the reader. When sending an application letter, it is essential to be honest and sincere about yourself and to say only what is true and can be supported by documents (Sharma & Mohan, 2012).

## Content of application letters

The aim of sending a letter of application is to attract the potential employer's attention and have a job interview. The content of the letter has to be informative and right to the point. For instance you can start the letter with what you wish to apply for so that the reader can identify your intention right away. The letter of application should be long enough to show the recruiter about your skills, your abilities and your work experience. Hobbs & Keddle (2007, p. 59) suggest that the content of an application letter can be organized into 4 parts as follows:

### **1. You should say clearly which job you are applying for and how you found out that the job was available.**

- I am applying for the Game Designer position posted on your website.
- I am writing to apply for the position of Personal Assistant that I saw advertised on your website. I am enclosing my CV for your consideration.
- I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Manager with reference to your advertisement in "The National Herald" dated July 18, 2012.
- I am applying for the position of Executive Secretary that was advertised in the Bangkok Post dated 10 March 2013.

**2. You should describe yourself generally and say why you are interested in the job.**

- I am interested in this position because I am looking for an opportunity to contribute to growing business and I feel that my experience and skills make me an ideal candidate.
- I am currently working as a sales representative at Home Production. I feel that my professional background makes me suited for the demands of this position.
- With my degree in Computer Science and Information Technology, I will be able to apply many skills to the Game Design position.
- I am currently a Personal Assistant to the Sales Manager of an engineering company.

**3. You should describe your skills, experience and qualities and how they are suited to the job.**

- I am a conscientious person who works hard and pays attention to details.
- I have more than seven years' experience in writing newsletters and brochures. In addition, I am a fast and versatile writer.
- I speak good French and Italian and I use both languages in my secretarial work.
- I have a full understanding of the life cycle of a software development project.
- As you can see from my CV, I have strong administrative skills and I can deal with pressure.

- I can handle stress and lead teams. Moreover, I can complete the assigned projects in a given time. These skills will help me in getting along well with your company.

**4. You should ask for an interview and give your contact details such as your phone number or your email address.**

- I am available for an interview at your convenience. I can be contacted at .....
- I look forward to speaking with you about this employment opportunity.
- Thank you for taking the time to consider this application. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
- I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you.
- I would be very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss this application further. I can be reached at .....
- I am looking forward to your positive reply. You can contact me by phone at .....or my email address.....

## Useful phrases in application letters

### Opening

- I am writing to apply for the position of ..... as advertised in .....
- I would like to apply for the position of ....., reference .....
- I am applying for the position of .....
- I am writing this letter to apply for .....
- With reference to your advertisement in ..... I would like to apply for .....
- I have attached my CV for your consideration.
- Attached please find my CV for your consideration.
- I am enclosing my résumé for your consideration.

### Body

#### **Describing about yourself and your skills**

- With a degree in ....., I have a full understanding of .....
- Currently, I am working as a .....
- I am good at .....
- I have ..... years experience in .....
- I have strong .....skills
- As you will see from my CV I can .....
- I specialize in .....
- Course work has prepared me well for .....
- My responsibilities as a summer intern included .....

## Closing

- I am available for an interview at your convenience. You can contact me at .....
- I look forward to speaking with you about .....
- I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you.
- I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
- I would be very pleased to have the opportunity to .....
- I would welcome the opportunity to .....



## Samples application letter

### Letter A

478 Barton Avenue  
Coventry  
CV6 2LK

12 September 2014

Mr. Thomas Miller  
Human Resources Department  
Holiday Inn London  
57 Welbeck St., London WC1 4HY

Dear Mr. Miller:

I am writing to apply for the position of hotel receptionist, reference M21.

As you will see from my CV, I have already gained three years experience in the front office department. My responsibilities included assisting clients with hotel rooms and hotel facilities, providing information and dealing with enquiries and complaints.

I am a positive and energetic person. I enjoy being with clients and holidaymakers and I can deal with pressure very well. I think I have strong communication and organizational skills. I also have a good command of French and Spanish. I am confident that my skills and experience would be useful for your organization.

I would be happy to have the opportunity to discuss this application further. I look forward to your positive reply.

Yours sincerely,

*Jenny*

Jenny Harrison

Encl. CV

(Source: adapted from Walker & Harding, 2011, p. 56)

## **Letter B**

Linda Spencer  
78 Golden Lane, Dublin

July 20, 2014

Wista Consultants  
45 Wood Quay, Dublin

Dear Sir / Madam:

I am writing to apply for the position of Personal Assistant that I saw advertised on your website. I am enclosing my CV for your consideration. I am interested in this job because I am looking for an opportunity to contribute to a growing business and I feel that my experience and skills make me an ideal candidate.

I am 24 years old, with a degree in Business Studies, and I am currently working as a Personal Assistant. I have been there for two years and have gained valuable experience in administration, dealing with clients and teamwork.

As you can see from my CV, I have strong word-processing skills and I am able to use spreadsheets. The team are appreciative of the quality of the documents and letters I produce. I am enthusiastic and enjoy working with a variety of people. I am also well-organized and would enjoy the challenge of organizing events.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application further. I am available for an interview at your convenience. You can contact me at 098 1776543. I look forward to hearing from you.

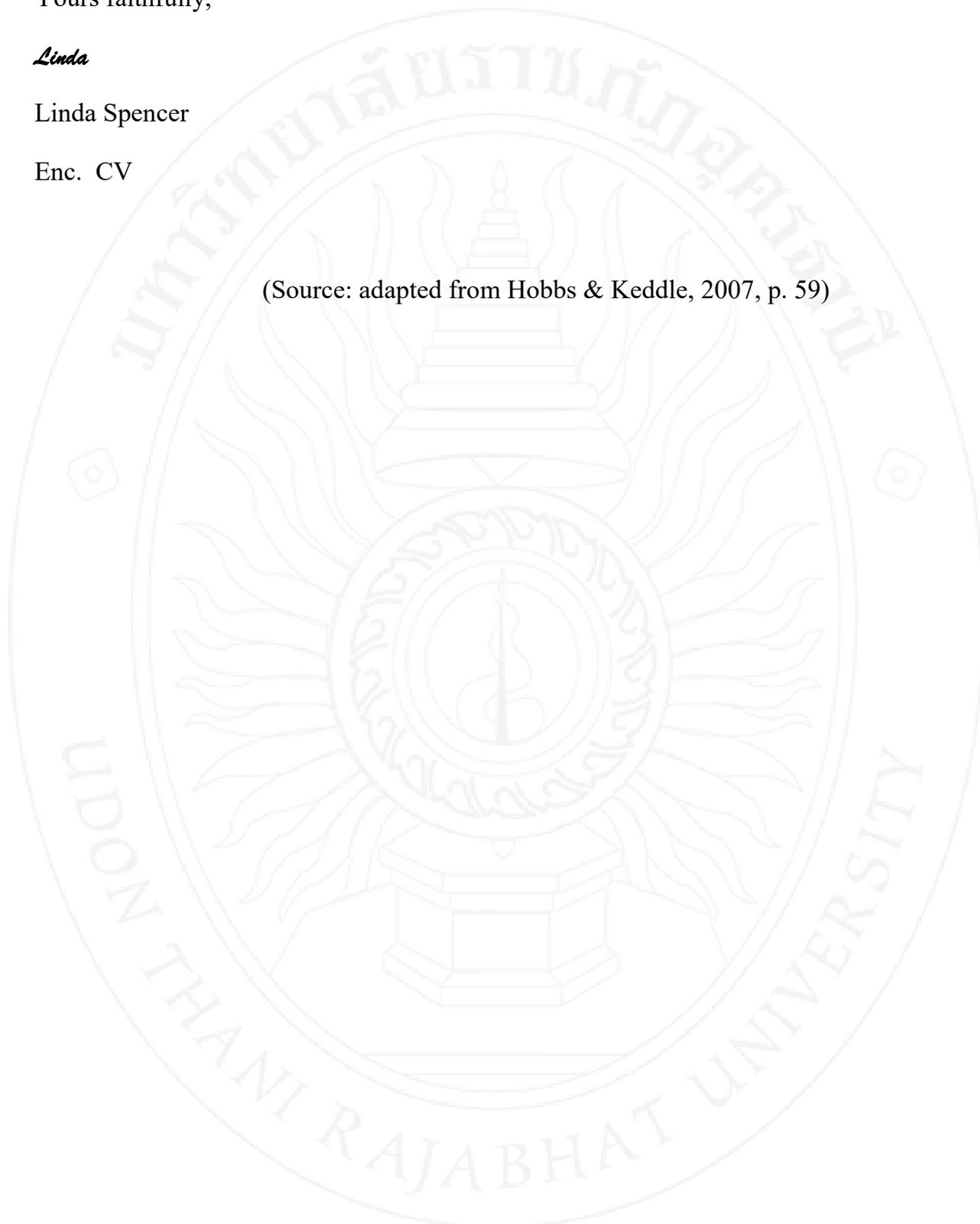
Yours faithfully,

*Linda*

Linda Spencer

Enc. CV

(Source: adapted from Hobbs & Kedde, 2007, p. 59)



**Letter C (US style)**

Michelle Chang  
4334, Sunset Boulevard,  
Lincoln, NE

October 14, 2014

Ms. Erin Lenhardt  
HR Manager  
1210 Polaroid Av.  
St. Paul, MN

Dear Ms. Lenhardt:

I wish to apply for the position of Sales Representative advertised through Monster.com. After acquiring a bachelor's degree in design, I joined Albatross Advertising in November, 2010 as a trainee in the Accounts Department. Currently I am an Account Representative handling three of our most promising brands: LiteWait vacuum cleaner, Nebraska Furniture Mart, and Chimney Rock Art Gallery.

My bachelor's degree in design, with a major in community and regional planning, not only familiarized me with demands of buildings and landscapes in our 21<sup>st</sup> century living but also acquainted me with concepts of media and design. I joined Albatross because I wanted to see if my education had equipped me to inform, persuade, and help customers with regard to products and brands.

During my nearly two-year tenure at Albatross as Account Representative, I have created and given insightful presentations to clients. As a result of my performance, the agency has entrusted me with three of its most promising accounts, as I mentioned above.

I would be delighted to have an opportunity for a personal interview to further make my case for the position. You can contact me at [mchang@myemail.com](mailto:mchang@myemail.com).

Yours sincerely,

*michelle*

Michelle Chang

(Source: Locker & Kienzler, 2013, p. 436)

## Summary

To sum up, an application letter or cover letter is a document that is sent along with your résumé to provide additional information about your skills and experience as well as reasons why you are interested in the job you are applying for. To get a chance for the interview, your letter has to attract the potential employer and your qualifications should match what the employer is looking for.

Obviously, the content of the application letter should be informative and based on facts. In the first paragraph of the letter, you should tell the reader what position you are applying for and how you found out about the job. Next, you should describe the specific skills and qualifications that match the job profile. Then, you can highlight your previous position or educational background that would benefit the job you wish to work for. In the last paragraph you should ask for an opportunity for a job interview and provide your contact details. As the employment competition is very high, it is important that your application letter should be flawless. You must proofread your letter many times before sending it.

## Exercises

Instructions: Choose the best answer.

1. a. I am interesting in applying for a job.  
b. I am interested in applying for a job.
2. a. With reference in your advertisement in June 12,  
b. With reference to your advertisement in June 12,
3. a. I have attached my cv for your consider.  
b. I have attached my cv for your consideration.
4. a. I am write to apply for a receptionist.  
b. I am writing to apply for a receptionist.
5. a. I am good in English and French.  
b. I am good at English and French.
6. a. I have strong written and spoken skills.  
b. I have strong written and spoken skill.
7. a. I specializing in computer software.  
b. I specialize in computer software.
8. a. I am available for an interview at your convenient.  
b. I am available for an interview at your convenience.
9. a. I look forward to hear from you.  
b. I look forward to hearing from you.

10. a. I can be reach at 0821178923.

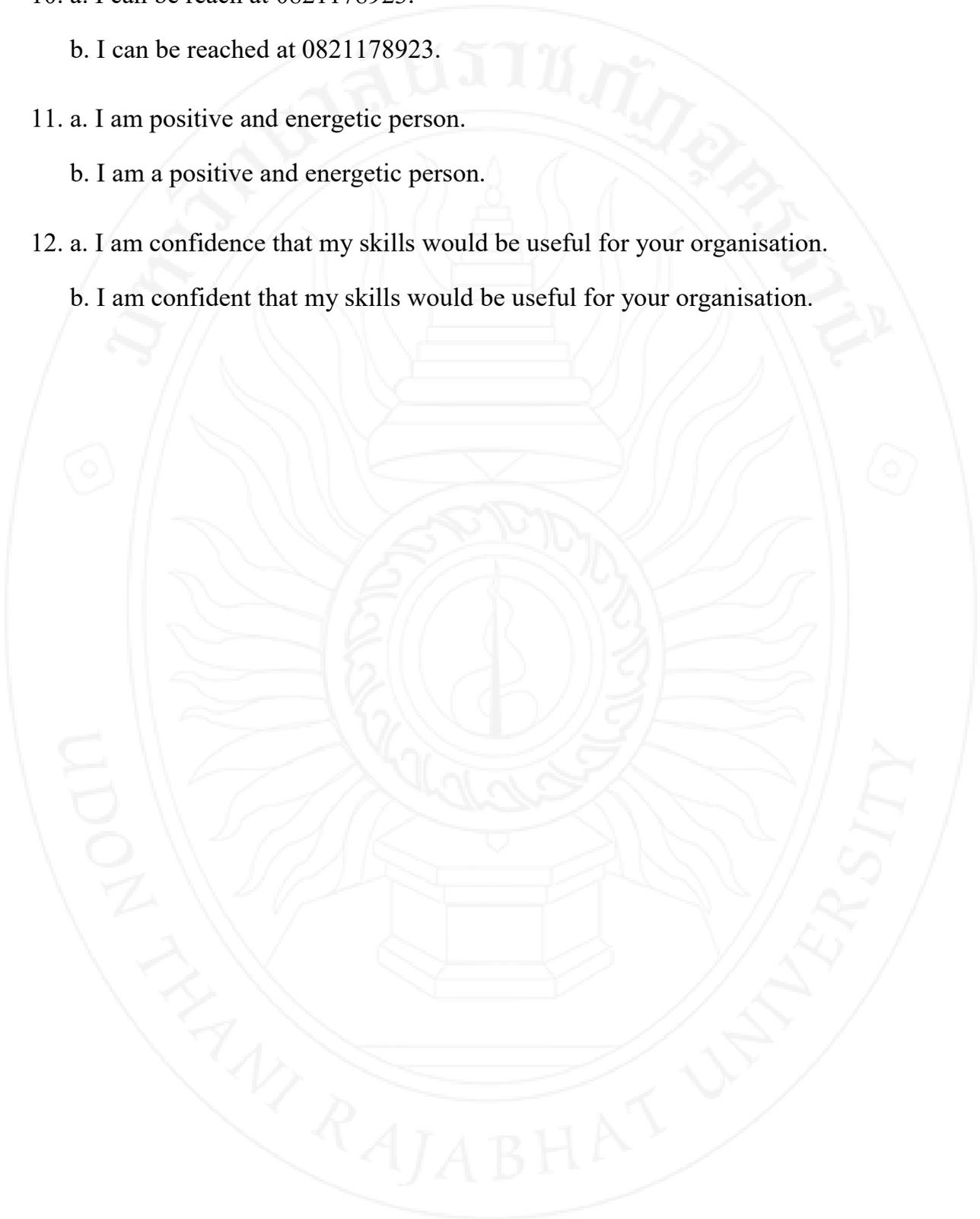
b. I can be reached at 0821178923.

11. a. I am positive and energetic person.

b. I am a positive and energetic person.

12. a. I am confidence that my skills would be useful for your organisation.

b. I am confident that my skills would be useful for your organisation.



## Unit 7

### Grammar in business letter writing

#### Warm up questions

1. Do you think grammar is necessary for business letter writing? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Have you confronted any grammatical problems when writing a letter?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### Introduction

Grammar is regarded as one of the crucial elements in business letter writing. To create a professional and effective business letters, it is very important for letter writers to follow grammatical rules. The writer should have proper sentence structure knowledge. For instance you should know that each sentence must begin with a capital letter, each sentence must end with a full

stop or a question mark or each sentence must contain standard word order e.g. subject, verb, object. The use of capital letters is essential in business letters. You should use capital letters with name of people, company, road, city, place, country, day, month, job title etc.

The use of correct form of tense is considered essential in business letter writing as it can help readers understand your written messages. For instance if you wish to talk about general facts about yourself or talk about current situations, you should use simple tense. If you want to talk about activities that finished in the past, you should use past tense. If you want to talk about activities or events that will happen in the future, you should use future tense. If you want to talk about an action that is in progress at the time you are speaking, you should use present continuous tense.

## Grammatical difficulties of language learners

Apparently, writing tends to be the most difficult skills for learners to master (Rattanadilok Na Phuket & Othman, 2015; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). Regardless of long period of English study, it seems unavoidable for non-native learners to make errors when writing in English. According to the study of Muhsin (2016), students find applying the rules of English grammar and use of tenses difficult. As a result, they write sentences with incorrect grammatical features.

Within the Thai pedagogical context, learners confront difficulties in learning the target language. The reason is that the grammatical feature of Thai language is very different from English grammar (Kaweera, 2013). Language errors made by Thai students tend to derive from interferences from their

mother tongue so that their written English appears to be word by word translation (Iamsiu, 2014; Kaweera, 2013).

However, it seems impossible for learners to learn a language without committing errors. From the author's experience in teaching business writing course, it is common for students to make mistakes when writing a letter. Their grammatical mistakes vary for instance they misuse tenses, they ignore articles, they misspell words, they add extra verb, they omit subject or they use wrong pronoun. According to Ellis (2008), errors should not be avoided as they are part of the learning process. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to recognize the importance of grammar. Then they can pay more attention when writing business letters.

## The use of infinitive markers

Infinitive marker (to) seems to be one of the writing problems of Thai students. In English grammar, some verbs must use the –to form such as expect to, need to, want to, manage to, hope to or agree to. However, from the author's experience, students tend to omit (to) in their sentences.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Mr. Chris will **come visit** our company.
2. We would like **inform** you that .....
3. I am writing **apply** for a job.

### Error correction

1. Mr. Chris will **come (to) visit** our company.
2. We would like **(to) inform** you that .....
3. I am writing **(to) apply** for a job.

## The use of articles

From the author's experience, the use of articles has long been a problematic area for nonnative students. Such errors occurred because articles are not used in the Thai language. They should use 'the' when talking about specific nouns and they should use 'a / an' when talking about generic or nonspecific nouns. However, they tend to ignore articles in their writing tasks.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Please attend meeting on Friday.
2. Could you inform us hotel booking of Mr. Kenjiro please?
3. Mr. Frank would like to talk about revenue of this year.

### Error correction

1. Please attend (the) meeting on Friday.
2. Could you inform us (the) hotel booking of Mr. Kenjiro please?
3. Mr. Frank would like to talk about (the) revenue of this year.

## The use of sentence structure

According to Raimes (2006), a proper sentence must contain a subject that is stated only once. However, from the author's experience students tend to extra subject in their sentences.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Mrs. Francis **she** cannot come to the meeting.
2. The course work in Bangkok **it** has prepared me well for this job.
3. Please be advised that the items **they** are in stock.

### Error correction

1. Mrs. Francis cannot come to the meeting.
2. The course work has prepared me well for this job.
3. Please be advised that the items are in stock.

## The use of plurality

According to grammatical rules, plural nouns can be formed by adding (s) or (es). However, from the author's experience, some students fail to follow the rules. The omission of plural form is most likely caused by native language interference of the students, as they do not use the plural form in their Thai language.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Our company would like to order 10 **computer table** and 10 **printer**.
2. Please deliver 3 **cooking book** by post.
3. I would like to order **12 black shoe**.

### Error correction

1. Our company would like to order 10 computer tables and 10 printers.
2. Please deliver 3 cooking books by post.
3. I would like to order 12 pairs of black shoes.

## The use of preposition

From the author's experience, it seems that students are confused with the use of preposition. They tend to use incorrect prepositions in their writing tasks such as using 'at Nov.' instead of 'on Nov' or 'on the meeting' instead of 'in the meeting'.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Would it be possible to have an interview with you in Friday?
2. Please deliver the order in 24 Nov.
3. We are looking forward to seeing you at the near future.

### Error correction

1. Would it be possible to have an interview with you on Friday?
2. Please deliver the order on 24 Nov.
3. We are looking forward to seeing you in the near future.

## The use of tenses

Concerning grammatical rules, the purpose of the future tense is to inform the reader of events which will happen at a specific time in the future. The forms of the future tense can be will + verb or will be + verb (ing). From the author's experience, some students do not follow grammar rules. Instead of using the future tense, students use the present tense for the future event. Obviously, the misuse of tenses can cause misunderstanding in the business context.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. We **transfer** money to your bank account tomorrow.
2. Please note that we **ship** your order at the beginning of March.
3. We **place** an order in the near future.

### Error correction

1. We will transfer money to your bank account tomorrow.
2. Please note that we will ship your order at the beginning of March.
3. We will place an order in the near future.

## The use of pronoun

It is obvious that Thai students are confused with the use of pronouns which are rule-governed. According to the author's teaching experience, students tend to face grammatical difficulty in identifying differences between

subject pronoun e.g. 'he', object pronoun e.g. 'him', possessive adjective e.g. 'his', and reflexive pronoun e.g. 'himself'.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. If your need more details, please do not hesitate to contact us.
2. We are looking forward to hearing from your.
3. We look forward to receiving you confirmation.

### Error correction

1. If you need more details, please do not hesitate to contact us.
2. We are looking forward to hearing from you.
3. We look forward to receiving your confirmation.

## The use of punctuation

The use of accurate punctuation is important and necessary in business letter writing. From the author's experience, punctuation problems of the students include wrongly placed full stops, misspell words, misuse capital letter in the first word of a sentence or when writing day and month. They also use inaccurate apostrophe.

### Examples of students' grammatical errors

1. Dear sir
2. Your sincerly
3. It would be greatful if you could sent me the catalogue.
4. We are looking forward to recieveing your reply.

5. 23 posri road muang distric udon thani
6. With reference to your letter dated 10 feburary.
7. i would like to have more details about english course.
8. The good were damaged.

### **Error correction**

1. Dear Sir:
2. Yours sincerely,
3. It would be grateful if you could send me the catalogue.
4. We are looking forward to receiving your reply.
5. 23 Posri Rd., Muang District, Udon Thani
6. With reference to your letter dated 10 February,
7. I would like to have more details about an English course.
8. The goods were damaged.

## **Summary**

Grammatical knowledge is essential for written communication. It is a must to follow grammatical rules. When writing a business letter, it should be written with great care and the writer should proofread many times before sending. The writer should carefully check punctuation, spelling and tenses. If the writer sends a letter with unclear or confused messages, this can definitely cause misunderstanding and delays. Therefore, it is necessary for language learners to be well-equipped in terms of writing proficiency so that they can perform their written tasks effectively.

## Exercises

### Exercise 1

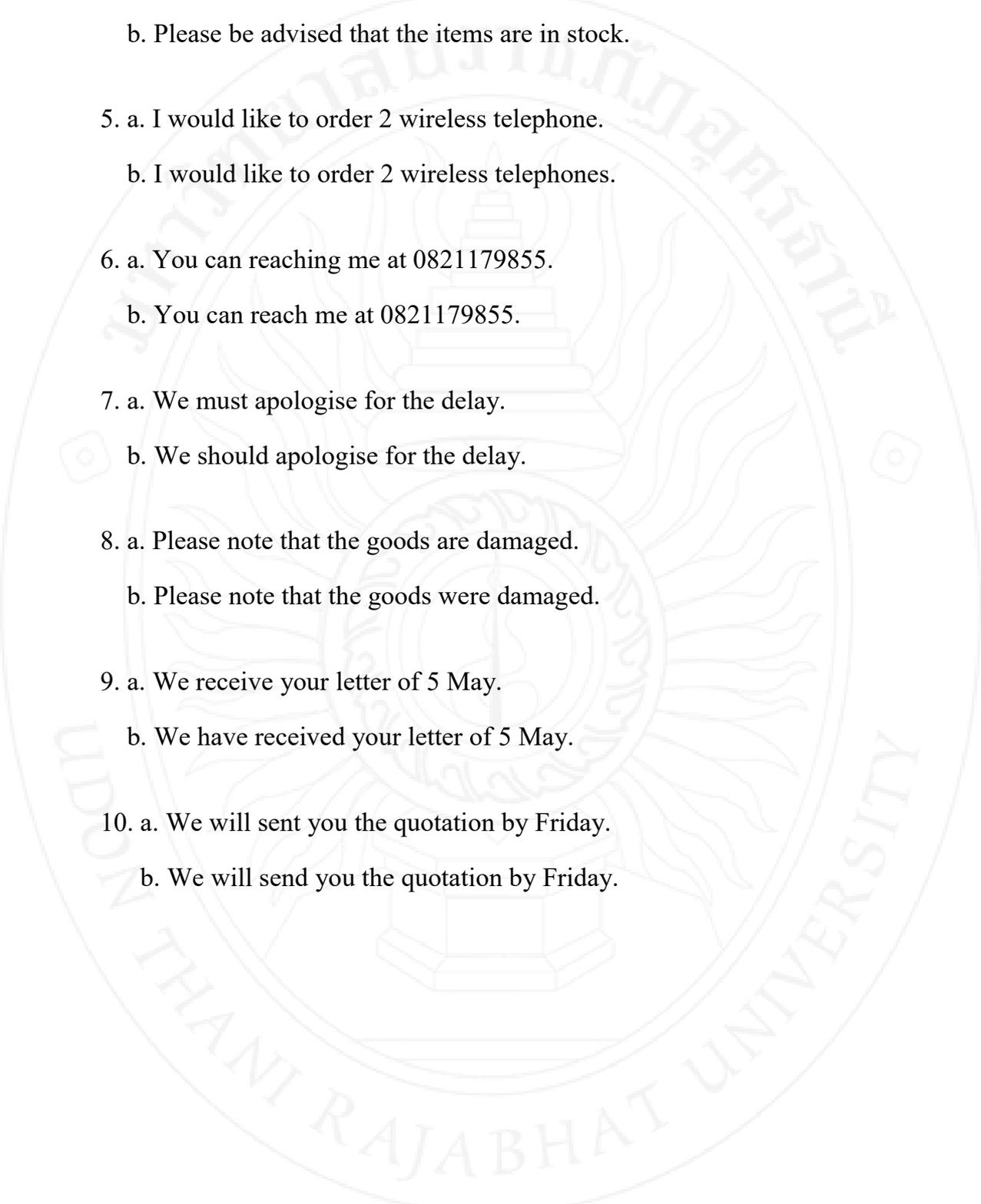
Instructions: Underline the correct answer.

1. I work / worked as a receptionist in Prince Hotel in 2010.
2. I graduate / graduated with a degree in biology.
3. I think / thought that my organizational skills are good.
4. I am writing to enquire / enquired about the course.
5. I would like to order / ordered the following items.
6. I am / was writing to confirm about the meeting.
7. I am / was available for an interview anytime.
8. I am / was a hard working person.

### Exercise 2

Instructions: Choose the best answer.

1. a. The meeting will be held at Grand Hotel.  
b. The meeting will be held on Grand Hotel.
2. a. Please deliver the order in Dec.  
b. Please deliver the order on Dec.
3. a. We are looking forward seeing you.  
b. We are looking forward to seeing you.

- 
4. a. Please be advised that the items is in stock.  
b. Please be advised that the items are in stock.
5. a. I would like to order 2 wireless telephone.  
b. I would like to order 2 wireless telephones.
6. a. You can reaching me at 0821179855.  
b. You can reach me at 0821179855.
7. a. We must apologise for the delay.  
b. We should apologise for the delay.
8. a. Please note that the goods are damaged.  
b. Please note that the goods were damaged.
9. a. We receive your letter of 5 May.  
b. We have received your letter of 5 May.
10. a. We will sent you the quotation by Friday.  
b. We will send you the quotation by Friday.



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