

ESP

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES · ADVANCED

Maritime Business English

Professional communication for
ship owners, brokers, charterers and
cargo operations.

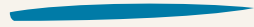


BROKERS · CHARTERERS · CARGO OPERATIONS

MARITIME BUSINESS ENGLISH

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Overview



MODULE 1

Key Vocabulary

Chartering, cargo, and port terminology.

MODULE 2

Broker Communication

Dialogues and negotiation strategies.

MODULE 3

Charter Negotiations

Terms, conditions, and fixture notes.

MODULE 4

Cargo Communications

Shipper and receiver communications.

MODULE 5

Email Writing

Professional templates and grammar.

MODULE 6

Grammar Focus

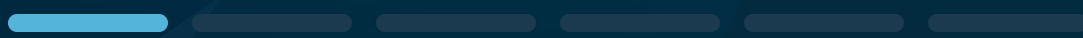
Modals, conditionals, formal register.

MODULE ONE

Key Maritime Vocabulary

Chartering, cargo and port terminology — the building blocks of every fixture.

MODULE 1 OF 6



Chartering Terminology

Time Charter **T/C**

Hire a vessel for a set period; the owner crews it, the charterer pays fuel and port costs.

Voyage Charter **V/C**

Hire for a single voyage; the owner covers costs, the charterer pays freight per ton.

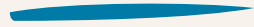
Bareboat Charter **B/C**

The charterer takes full control, including the crew. Also called a “demise charter.”

Charter Party **C/P**

The contract between owner and charterer setting out all the terms.

Chartering Terminology



Laytime

The time allowed for loading or discharging without an extra charge.

Demurrage

The penalty a charterer pays when the agreed laytime is exceeded.

Despatch

A bonus to the charterer for finishing faster than the laytime allowed.

Fixture

The agreed deal between owner and charterer — “the vessel is fixed.”

Cargo Operations Vocabulary

B/L

Bill of Lading

Title document and cargo receipt.

Manifest

Full list of all cargo on board the vessel.

Stowage

Diagram of cargo placement in the holds.

NOR

Notice of Readiness

Confirms the vessel is ready to work.

SOF

Statement of Facts

Records port times for laytime.

Draught

Draught Survey

Weighing cargo by water displacement.

Cargo Operations Vocabulary

Stevedore

Firm or workers loading and unloading at port.

Tallyman

Counts and records cargo during handling.

Consignee

Named receiver of the cargo on the B/L.

FIO

Free In / Out

Charterer pays for cargo handling.

Liner Terms

Owner covers handling within the freight.

DWT

Deadweight

Maximum weight a vessel can carry.

MODULE TWO

Broker Communication

Effective dialogue strategies for ship owners working through their brokers.

MODULE 2 OF 6



Dialogue 1 — Initial Inquiry

OWNER

Good morning. I understand you may have a cargo requirement for the Black Sea region. Could you provide some details?

BROKER

Good morning. Yes — charterers want a Supramax for 50,000 MT of grain, loading Constanta, discharging Alexandria. Would your vessel be available mid-February?

OWNER

Our MV “Aegean Star” should be open Marmara around February 12th. She’s 56,000 DWT with five holds. What rate are charterers indicating?

BROKER

They’re working around USD 18 per metric ton. Laytime would be 4,000 MT per weather working day, SHINC.

OWNER

That could work as a starting point. We’d need to discuss demurrage terms. Could you send us the main terms?

KEY LANGUAGE Modal verbs — could, would, should — create professional distance and politeness in negotiations.

Modal Verbs in Negotiations

COULD / WOULD

Polite requests and tentative offers.

“Could you confirm the laycan dates?”

“Would USD 20/MT be acceptable?”

MAY / MIGHT

Possibility and uncertainty.

“The vessel may arrive earlier than expected.”

“We might consider a shorter laycan.”

SHOULD / OUGHT TO

Expectations and recommendations.

“The vessel should complete discharge by Friday.”

“We should receive the fixture recap today.”

MUST / HAVE TO

Obligation and necessity — contractual only.

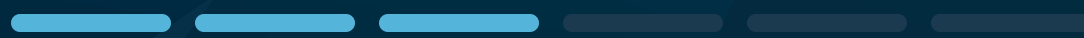
“NOR must be tendered within 6 hours of arrival.”

MODULE THREE

Charter Negotiations

Terms, conditions, and fixture discussions — proposing without committing.

MODULE 3 OF 6



Dialogue 2 — Negotiating Terms

OWNER

We've reviewed the main terms. If charterers could increase the rate to USD 19.50, we would be prepared to fix.

BROKER

I'll put that to charterers. Were they to agree on USD 19, would you consider accepting a shorter laycan?

OWNER

Provided that demurrage remains at USD 12,000 per day, we could accept a 5-day laycan instead of 7.

BROKER

Should charterers fail to present clean documents, would you require a Letter of Indemnity?

OWNER

Yes — an LOI would be required if we were to release cargo against unclean documents. Please confirm all subjects.

KEY LANGUAGE

Conditional structures — if / provided that / unless / should / were to — allow proposals without full commitment.

Conditionals in Negotiations

FIRST CONDITIONAL

Real possibility — if + present, will.

“If charterers agree to USD 19, we will fix.”

SECOND CONDITIONAL

Hypothetical — if + past, would.

“If charterers agreed to USD 19, we would fix.”

“WERE TO” — FORMAL

Very formal; written negotiation.

“Were charterers to increase the rate, we would fix.”

“SHOULD” INVERSION

Formal alternative to “if.”

“Should the vessel arrive early, inform charterers.”

PROVIDED THAT

Sets an explicit condition.

“Owners agree, provided that demurrage is USD 12,000.”

UNLESS / EXCEPT IF

States a negative condition.

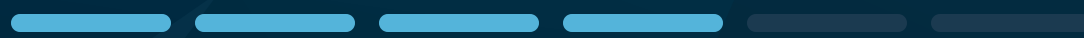
“Fixture concluded unless charterers fail subjects.”

MODULE FOUR

Cargo Communications

Working with shippers, receivers, and agents through loading and discharge.

MODULE 4 OF 6



Dialogue 3 — Cargo with Shippers

OPS MGR

I'm calling regarding MV "Aegean Star" at Constanta. We need to clarify the cargo specifications before loading commences.

SHIPPER

The cargo is 48,500 MT wheat, max 14% moisture. Is the Master satisfied with the pre-loading survey?

OPS MGR

The holds are considered ready. However, we would appreciate receiving the stowage plan for the five holds.

SHIPPER

It will be forwarded to the Master. Any concerns about the loading rate? We're planning 3,000 MT/day SHINC.

OPS MGR

Acceptable. Please ensure documentation is made available for the Master's review 24 hours before completion.

KEY · PASSIVE VOICE

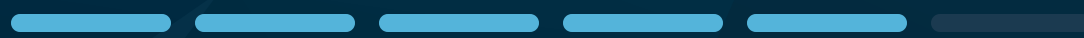
"is considered," "will be forwarded," "is made available" — the passive voice focuses on actions, not individuals.

MODULE FIVE

Professional Email Writing

Templates, structure, and formal language for the written fixture trail.

MODULE 5 OF 6



Email — Vessel Availability Inquiry

SUBJECT MV AEGEAN STAR — Open Black Sea Mid-Feb

Dear Mr. Johnson,

OPENING Further to our telephone conversation, I am writing to confirm the availability of MV “Aegean Star” for your consideration.

DETAILS She is a 56,000 DWT Supramax (2015), 5 holds / hatches, 4×30T cranes — currently discharging at Marmara, complete Feb 10th.

OFFER We would be pleased to offer her for your grain cargo ex-Constanta.

REQUEST Kindly advise charterers’ requirements regarding laycan.

Best regards,
Captain A. Papadopoulos

KEY PHRASES

“Further to our conversation...”

Formal reference to prior contact.

“I am writing to confirm...”

States the purpose clearly.

“We would be pleased to offer...”

Polite, professional offer.

“Kindly advise...”

Formal request for information.

Email — Fixture Confirmation

SUBJECT MV AEGEAN STAR — Fixture Confirmed

Dear Mr. Johnson — we are pleased to confirm the fixture of MV “Aegean Star” on the following basis:

CARGO	48,500 MT (+/- 5%) wheat
LOAD / DISCH	1SB Constanta / 1SB Alexandria
LAYCAN	Feb 12–17, 2025
FREIGHT	USD 19.00 PMT FIOST
LAYTIME / DEM.	4,000 MT PWWD · USD 12,000 PDPR

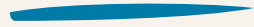
Kindly note all subjects are lifted. We hereby declare the fixture concluded.

Best regards, **Capt. A. Papadopoulos**

ABBREVIATIONS

ISB	One Safe Berth
PMT	Per Metric Ton
FIOST	Free In / Out Stowed Trimmed
PWWD	Per Weather Working Day
SHINC	Sundays & Holidays Incl.
PDPR	Per Day Pro Rata

Formal Register in Emails



INFORMAL → FORMAL

“I want to know...” → “I would be grateful to learn...”

“Please send...” → “Kindly forward...”

“We got your email...” → “We acknowledge receipt of...”

PASSIVE VOICE

Shifts focus from actor to action — more diplomatic.

Active: “We will send the documents.”

Passive: “The documents will be forwarded.”

HEDGING LANGUAGE

Protects against liability if circumstances change.

Direct: “The vessel will arrive Monday.”

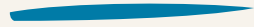
Hedged: “The vessel is expected to arrive Monday.”

OPENINGS & CLOSINGS

Open: “With reference to...” · “Further to...”

Close: “We look forward to...” · “We remain at your disposal.”

Essential Phrases



MAKING INQUIRIES

“Could you advise whether...”

“We would appreciate clarification on...”

“Kindly confirm the status of...”

MAKING OFFERS

“We are pleased to offer...”

“We would be prepared to consider...”

“Subject to details, we could accept...”

NEGOTIATING

“While we appreciate your position...”

“We would need to insist on...”

“As a compromise, we suggest...”

CONFIRMING

“We hereby confirm that...”

“Please note all subjects are lifted...”

“This is to acknowledge receipt of...”

REQUESTING

“We would be grateful if you could...”

“Please arrange for...”

“Kindly ensure that...”

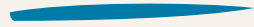
EXPRESSING CONCERNS

“We regret to inform you that...”

“We must draw your attention to...”

“We are concerned about...”

Practice Exercises



1 Transform to Formal Register

Rewrite formally: (1) “We want USD 20 per ton for this cargo.” (2) “Send us the charter party as soon as you can.”

2 Complete the Dialogue

Fill the blanks with modal verbs (could / would / should / may / might): “___ you confirm whether charterers ___ be interested in a 10-day laycan?”

3 Email Writing Task

Write a brief email to a broker explaining a 3-day delay due to weather. Include an apology, a new ETA, and a request for understanding.

4 Role-Play Scenario

Negotiate a time charter: the charterer offers USD 15,000/day; you need USD 17,000/day. Use conditionals and modals.

COURSE SUMMARY

What you've covered

- ✓ Maritime chartering & cargo vocabulary
- ✓ Modal verbs for professional negotiation
- ✓ Conditional structures for flexibility
- ✓ Formal register in business communication
- ✓ Professional email-writing templates

“Clear communication is the anchor of successful maritime business.”