

言簡意賅

yan2 jian3 yi4 gai1

There are many ways to write a resignation letter. Those leaving on good terms may want a longer letter to express gratitude, but even those who quit in less amicable (友好的) circumstances will usually refrain from showing outright hostility. There is really no point adding to whatever ill will (敵意) there may be in the old workplace.

Is being brief a plus for resignation letters? Some obviously think so. The resignation letter of a reporter at a mainland newspaper caught the attention of netizens and became viral. It consisted of only one line: “我的胸太大，這裡裝不下。” - “My bosom is too big for this place.”

“胸” (*xiong1*) could mean “bosom” or “breast.” Apparently the reporter was not referring to the dimension of her body parts, as “胸” (*xiong1*), in this context, should mean “胸懷” (*xiong1 huai2*) - “mind,” “heart,” “ambition” or “aspiration.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

Many were impressed, saying the letter was short, punchy and to the point, which can be described by the idiom “言簡意賅” (*yan2 jian3 yi4 gai1*).

“言” (*yan2*) is “speech,” “words,” “簡” (*jian3*) is “simple,” “brief,” “意” (*yi4*) means “a meaning,” “an idea,” “an intention,” and “賅” (*gai1*) is “complete,” “full,” “comprehensive.” Literally, “言簡意賅” (*yan2 jian3 yi4 gai1*) is “words simple, meaning full.”

The idiom means “what one says is precise and to the point,” “concise and pithy,” “compendious” (簡明的). Being precise and concise is the key to effective communication, and the style to aim for is “言簡意賅” (*yan2 jian3 yi4 gai1*).

Terms containing the character “簡” (*jian3*) include:

簡單 (*jian3 dan1*) - simple, brief

簡易 (*jian3 yi4*) - simple and easy

簡化 (*jian3 hua4*) - to simplify

簡介 (*jian3 jie4*) - a brief introduction