The language of signs and notices

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each advanced concept with its meaning.

1 regulatory discourse	____	a visibility of how a rule is applied and challenged
2 deontic modality	____	b meaning treated as already accepted
3 performative force	____	c interaction of wording, layout, colour and symbols
4 presupposition	____	d language that governs permitted or required conduct
5 scope ambiguity	____	e uncertainty about which words a restriction applies to
6 linguistic landscape	____	f public display of languages and messages in a place
7 multimodal salience	____	g degree of permission, obligation or prohibition
8 procedural transparency	____	h capacity of wording to enact an official action

2 Complete the discourse-analysis collocations.

deontic | institutional | linguistic | multimodal | procedural | regulatory | scope | visual

1 _____ discourse

2 _____ authority

3 _____ modality

4 _____ ambiguity

5 the public _____ landscape

6 _____ hierarchy

7 _____ salience

8 _____ transparency

3 Choose the concept that best explains the effect.

1 *Access is hereby revoked* enacts a decision: *performative force / presupposition*.

2 *Return to the approved route* assumes one exists: *presupposition / scope ambiguity*.

3 *No dogs or bicycles beyond this point* regulates conduct through *deontic modality / procedural transparency*.

4 *Visitors with bags must report to security* may have *scope ambiguity / multimodal salience*.

5 Which languages appear on city signs forms a *linguistic landscape / performative force*.

6 A red border and large icon create *multimodal salience / presupposition*.

7 A notice explaining appeal rights provides *procedural transparency / deontic modality*.

8 Rules that define permitted behaviour are *regulatory discourse / linguistic landscape*.

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4 Complete the critical audit with terms from the box.

deontic modality | linguistic landscape | multimodal salience | performative force | presupposition | procedural transparency | regulatory discourse | scope ambiguity

The notice is part of institutional **1** _____. Its strong **2** _____ marks the action as compulsory, while *hereby prohibited* claims **3** _____. The phrase *return to the designated zone* contains a **4** _____ that such a zone is known. A modifier creates **5** _____ over who must comply. Red type and a warning symbol increase **6** _____. Translation choices contribute to the site's **7** _____. Yet no contact, review process or reason is supplied, weakening **8** _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions concisely.

Signs organise public space

A public notice does more than transmit information: it categorises users, distributes permission and constructs authority. Labels such as authorised personnel create an included group and, by implication, an excluded one. Design choices determine whose attention is captured, while language choice determines who can act on the message. A formally valid notice may therefore remain practically inaccessible. Critical evaluation asks who issued it, under what authority, how compliance is possible and whether reasons, alternatives or appeal routes are visible.

1 What three social actions can a notice perform? _____

2 What does authorised personnel create? _____

3 What do design choices determine? _____

4 What does language choice determine? _____

5 Why may a valid notice remain inaccessible? _____

6 Name two questions critical evaluation asks. _____

6 Paraphrase using the expression in capitals.

1 The wording officially cancels access. **PERFORMATIVE** __

2 The modifier has two possible ranges. **SCOPE** _____

3 Layout and colour make the warning prominent. **SALIENCE** _

4 The notice explains review and appeal routes. **TRANSPARENCY** _

OVER TO YOU

Write a **160-190 word** critical audit of an institutional sign or notice. Evaluate authority, accessibility, multimodal design and routes for clarification or appeal.

[ ] Use at least eight analytical terms. [ ] Identify included and excluded users. [ ] Propose a more transparent version.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced concepts

1 **d** 2 **g** 3 **h** 4 **b** 5 **e** 6 **f** 7 **c** 8 **a**

2 Analytical collocations

1 **regulatory** 2 **institutional** 3 **deontic** 4 **scope** 5 **linguistic** 6 **visual** 7 **multimodal** 8 **procedural**

3 Conceptual distinctions

1 **performative force** 2 **presupposition** 3 **deontic modality** 4 **scope ambiguity**
5 **linguistic landscape** 6 **multimodal salience** 7 **procedural transparency** 8 **regulatory discourse**

4 Critical audit

1 **regulatory discourse** 2 **deontic modality** 3 **performative force** 4 **presupposition**
5 **scope ambiguity** 6 **multimodal salience** 7 **linguistic landscape** 8 **procedural transparency**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Categorise users, distribute permission and construct authority. 2 Included and excluded groups. 3 Whose attention is captured.
4 Who can act on the message. 5 Some users cannot understand or use it. 6 Any two: issuer, authority, compliance, reasons, alternatives, appeals.

6 Paraphrasing - possible answers

1 The wording has **performative force**. 2 The modifier creates **scope ambiguity**. 3 Design increases multimodal **salience**. 4 The notice provides procedural **transparency**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check authority, inclusion, design and procedural accountability.