The language of signs and notices

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each notice with its purpose.

1 Visitors must report to reception.	____	a warns that video recording is taking place
2 Please keep this doorway clear.	____	b expresses regret for disruption
3 Reduced service until further notice.	____	c requires visitors to register
4 Unattended items may be removed.	____	d says objects left alone could be taken away
5 Admission by ticket only.	____	e prevents anything blocking a safety route
6 We apologise for any inconvenience.	____	f limits entrance to people with proof of payment
7 Emergency exit - do not obstruct.	____	g asks people not to block an ordinary entrance
8 CCTV in operation.	____	h says fewer services are available temporarily

2 Complete the notice collocations.

admission | **clear** | **further** | **inconvenience** | **operation** | **reception** | **removed** | **service**

1 report to _____

2 keep the doorway _____

3 reduced _____

4 until _____ notice

5 items may be _____

6 _____ by ticket only

7 apologise for any _____

8 CCTV in _____

3 Choose the clearest and most appropriate notice.

1 At a school entrance: *Visitors must report to reception / Visitors maybe tell office*.

2 On a fire door: *Do not obstruct / Don't put your stuff here*.

3 At a station during repairs: *Reduced service until further notice / Less trains for a bit*.

4 In a theatre: *Admission by ticket only / Get in if ticket*.

5 Above security cameras: *CCTV in operation / We look at you*.

6 Beside luggage: *Unattended items may be removed / Bags alone go away*.

7 Near a delivery entrance: *Please keep this doorway clear / Move*.

8 After a closure notice: *We apologise for any inconvenience / Sorry and stuff*.

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4 Complete the station announcement with words from the box.

admission | clear | further notice | inconvenience | operation | reception | removed | service

Due to maintenance, a reduced **1** _____ will operate until **2** _____. Please keep all emergency routes **3** _____. Unattended luggage may be **4** _____. CCTV is in **5** _____ throughout the station. Visitors requiring assistance should report to **6** _____. **7** _____ to the waiting lounge is by valid ticket only. We apologise for any **8** _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Direct without sounding hostile

Public notices must balance speed, authority and courtesy. An imperative such as Keep clear is direct, while Please keep clear softens the tone without changing the instruction. Must expresses a firm requirement; may in Unattended items may be removed signals a possible consequence. Vague wording can create uncertainty, but unnecessary formality may slow readers down. The best choice depends on urgency, audience and available space.

1 What three things must notices balance? _____

2 Which form is softer: Keep clear or Please keep clear? ___

3 What does must express? _____

4 What does may signal in the example? _____

5 What can vague wording create? _____

6 Which three factors guide wording choices? _____

6 Rewrite as a concise public notice.

1 People visiting the building are required to register. ___

2 There will be fewer buses for an unknown period. _____

3 People must not block this emergency door. _____

4 Security cameras are recording in this area. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **100-120 word** set of notices for a temporary event. Cover entrance, safety, facilities, delays and security.

[ ] Use imperatives and modals accurately. [ ] Keep wording concise. [ ] Match tone to urgency.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Notices and purposes

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

2 Notice collocations

1 **reception** 2 **clear** 3 **service** 4 **further** 5 **removed** 6 **Admission** 7 **inconvenience** 8 **operation**

3 Appropriate notices

1 **Visitors must report to reception** 2 **Do not obstruct** 3 **Reduced service until further notice** 4 **Admission by ticket only**
5 **CCTV in operation** 6 **Unattended items may be removed** 7 **Please keep this doorway clear** 8 **We apologise for any inconvenience**

4 Station announcement

1 **service** 2 **further notice** 3 **clear** 4 **removed** 5 **operation** 6 **reception** 7 **Admission** 8 **inconvenience**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Speed, authority and courtesy. 2 **Please keep clear.** 3 A firm requirement. 4 A possible consequence.
5 Uncertainty. 6 Urgency, audience and space.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 **Visitors must report to reception.** 2 **Reduced bus service until further notice.** 3 **Emergency exit - do not obstruct.** 4 **CCTV in operation.**

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check coverage, tone and economy.