

Case 16: Who wrote the new building rule?

Content note

This case involves disability access and a request for an exception to a building rule. No student should share their own disability, health information or housing situation, so keep the discussion on Sami’s building.

This case explains general rules. It is not legal advice for your situation.

Overview

Students read a short story in which an unsigned notice says a building’s rear door will be locked at 8 p.m. That step-free door is the only one Sami can use. Students compare the notice with last year’s house rules and the entrance plan, and they map how the rule affects different residents. They read HUD’s Fair Housing Act overview as a source of questions, then rewrite the notice or write Sami’s question to the building manager.

Before this case

Students should already be able to:

- summarize a short source accurately
- write a polite request to a named reader
- tell a question from a conclusion

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- quote a notice accurately

Objectives, continued

- ask who issued a rule and what document it changes
- make a specific access request the manager can act on
- keep legal points as questions, not conclusions

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- Evidence A, B and C
- HUD’s Fair Housing Act overview, printed or on screen
- The case rubric, printed on the Check your work page

The task in this edition

Task: Write Sami’s message to the building manager asking about the rule and requesting access after 8 p.m.

Students make: Message, 90—130 words

Pacing

Opener (page 301): 5 min. Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud and go straight to the evidence.

Key terms (pages 302 and 303): 6 min. Short on time: skip. Define authority and reasonable accommodation aloud in one minute.

Pacing, continued

Look at the evidence (page 307): 10 min. Short on time: 8 min. Students fill in the boxes for Evidence A only.

Look at the evidence (page 308): 5 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read the entrance plan aloud; students fill in only its “What it shows” box.

Key idea (pages 309 and 310): 10 min. Short on time: 5 min. Read the first two paragraphs aloud. Skip the code of ethics.

Sort the evidence (page 311): 8 min. Short on time: skip.

Practice (pages 312 and 313): 6 min. Short on time: 6 min.

Your task (page 314): 10 min. Short on time: 6 min. Read the steps aloud. Students fill in only the What I saw box.

Your draft (page 315): 18 min. Short on time: 14 min. Students write the message in class and revise it at home.

Check your work (pages 316 and 317): 8 min. Short on time: skip. Collect messages and score them with the rubric yourself.

Questions to discuss (pages 318 and 319): 12 min. Short on time: 4 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.

Talk about this case at home (page 320): at home.

Case 16 plan, continued

Pacing, continued

Periods: full chapter 98 minutes; one period 50 minutes.

Standards

RI.9-10.1 Support an analysis with solid, complete evidence from the text, both for what it states and for what it implies.

W.9-10.2 Write an explanatory text that presents complex ideas and information clearly and accurately.

W.9-10.5 Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing or rewriting, focusing on what matters most for the purpose and audience.

SL.9-10.1.c Move a discussion forward with questions that connect it to larger ideas, bring others in and test ideas and conclusions.

SL.9-10.1.d Respond to different views, sum up where people agree and disagree, and adjust your view when the evidence calls for it.

D2.Civ.6.9-12 Critique the relationships among governments, civil society and markets. In this case: Students critique the relationship between private landlords, tenants and public housing law.

D2.Civ.12.9-12 Analyze how people use and challenge laws at different levels to address public issues. In this case: Students analyze how residents use fair-housing protections to address rules.

Standards, continued

D2.Civ.13.9-12 Evaluate public policies by their intended and unintended outcomes and consequences. In this case: Students evaluate a rule's intended outcome (security) and unintended effects (access).

D4.7.9-12 Assess options for individual and group action on local, regional and global problems through reflection and causal reasoning. In this case: Students assess options for individual and collective action as residents.

Codes of ethics

- **ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct:** Rule 3.1 Meritorious Claims and Contentions
- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We strive to understand and respect other communicators' intent...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)

Heat map

- ■ □ **Opener (page 301):** Medium
- □ □ **Key terms (pages 302 and 303):** Low
- □ □ **Look at the evidence (page 307):** Low
- □ □ **Look at the evidence (page 308):** Low
- □ □ **Key idea (pages 309 and 310):** Low
- ■ □ **Sort the evidence (page 311):** Medium
- □ □ **Practice (pages 312 and 313):** Low
- □ □ **Check your work (pages 316 and 317):** Low

Try it at your school

Ask who wrote the rule before you argue about it.

- When a new rule is posted where you live or at school, write down the date and take a photo
- Look for who issued it and what document it changes
- Ask a trusted adult to help you ask the building manager or office
- Find your city's or county's tenant or housing help page with an adult

Who to ask: A parent or guardian, the building manager, a local tenant or housing help line, a school social worker

Safety: Don't post neighbors' names, unit numbers or private situations online. Let adults handle lease disputes.

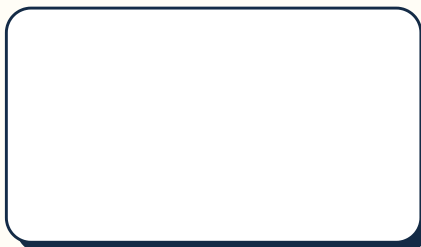
Sources

- Gothamist, “Brooklyn Landlord Does An About Face On Facial Recognition Plan,” November 21, 2019
- Legal Services NYC, “Brooklyn tenants file legal opposition to landlord's application to install facial recognition entry system in building,” May 1, 2019
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), “Fair Housing Act overview,” No date listed

Case 16: Who wrote the new building rule?

An unsigned notice says the building's only step-free door locks at 8 p.m., and Sami's workshop runs later.

On your own Read What happened and underline the two changes the notice announces. About 5 minutes.



Mari hands a yellow sheet to Sami across a white table while Caio listens. This scene comes from Case 4.

Your role: You're the one who photographs the notice and writes down when and where it was found.

New skill: Find who has the authority to make a rule.

What happened

It is Monday morning in Sami's apartment building. A new notice is posted beside the common-room door. It says the rear door will be locked at 8:00 p.m. every night. It also says the common room is "for resident social use only," with "NO BUSINESS USE" in capital letters. The notice has no name, no date and no contact.

That rear door matters to Sami, who lives in apartment 3B and uses a manual wheelchair. It is the building's only step-free entrance. The front entrance has four steps and no ramp. Sami also runs a workshop in the common room, and it goes past 8 p.m.

Your question: Who has the authority behind this notice, and what should Sami ask the building manager?

Caio reads last year's house rules beside the notice. Those rules let residents reserve the common room for classes and resident-run workshops. The new notice does not say whether it replaces them. Before anyone starts arguing, Sami photographs the notice and writes down when and where she found it.

Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud and go straight to the evidence.

Say this

"Suppose this notice appeared by your door tomorrow. What is your first question?" — Write questions on the board. Circle any that ask who wrote it.

Watch for

Misconception: Students assume bold type means the rule is official. **Listen for:** "It's in capital letters, so it's real."

Then: Ask what would prove who wrote it. Write "issuer, date, contact" on the board.

Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.

Heat check

Medium. Students may share their own disability or housing situation.

Cool-down: Say: "Nobody needs to share their own health or home. We're talking about Sami's building."

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 6 minutes.

Authority Authority is the power a person or group has to make or change a particular rule or decision.

En español: autoridad

In this case: The notice uses bold type and capital letters but names no issuer. Sami has to find out who has the power to make this rule.

Reasonable accommodation A reasonable accommodation is a change to a rule or practice that gives a person with a disability equal use of a place.

En español: acomodo razonable

In this case: Sami could ask the building for a key fob for the rear door, so she can get in after 8 p.m.

Documentation Documentation is a record, such as a photo, a note or an email, that shows what was said or done and when.

En español: documentación

In this case: Sami photographs the notice and writes down when and where she found it, before anyone argues about what it said.

Who is involved



Sami

Lives in 3B and runs a workshop in the common room

“Rear door locked at 8. That’s the only door I can get through. My workshop runs later. So, questions. Plural.”

Caio

Reading last year’s house rules beside the notice

“All caps, bold, no name, no date. Somebody made it look official. I still don’t know who.”

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page. Skip this page. Define authority and reasonable accommodation aloud in one minute.

💬 Say this

“Write your first guess now. You will test it against three documents.” — First guesses stay private unless a student wants to share.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think a building must grant every accommodation request. **Listen for:** “She asks, so they have to say yes.” **Then:** Point to the key idea: whether a building grants an accommodation depends on the facts.

📄 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- **Cognates:** authority (autoridad), documentation (documentación), reasonable (razonable), resident (residente), access (acceso), discrimination (discriminación), disability (discapacidad), federal (federal).

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Your first guess

Before you look at the evidence, should Sami follow the new notice?

My first guess is ___, because ___.

➤ My first guess is that she has to follow it, because it says “effective immediately.”

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 302. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 302.

Reading passage

Bold type is not authority

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **Authority:** Authority is the power a person or group has to make or change a particular rule or decision.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** A reasonable accommodation is a change to a rule or practice that gives a person with a disability equal use of a place.
- **Documentation:** Documentation is a record, such as a photo, a note or an email, that shows what was said or done and when.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.
- **Barrier:** A barrier is something that blocks or limits a person from taking part.

The story: Monday morning, 3B

On Monday morning, a new notice is posted beside the common-room door in Sami's apartment building. "NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTS. Effective immediately, the rear door will be locked at 8:00 p.m. nightly. The common room is for resident social use only. NO BUSINESS USE." There is no name at the bottom, no date and no phone number or email.

Sami reads it twice. She lives in apartment 3B and uses a manual wheelchair. The entrance plan in the lobby directory tells the rest. The front entrance has four steps and no ramp, and the side door is for service use only. The rear door is the only step-free way in. She also runs a workshop in the common room that goes past 8 p.m. "So, questions," she tells Caio. "Plural."

Her first move is not an argument. She takes a photo of the notice and writes down when and where she found it. Caio, who rents a room on the block, brings last year's house rules, the ones residents got at lease signing, so they can read the two side by side.

Your role is to help Sami keep a clean record of the notice before anyone starts arguing about what it said.

Stop and think. Sami's first move is a photo, not an argument. Why?

⌚ Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (607 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

❓ Stop and think

1. **After "The story: Monday morning, 3B":** Sami's first move is a photo, not an argument. Why?
2. **After "Finding the source of a rule":** What would you need to know to decide whether Sami's workshop counts as business use?
3. **After "What the law says and what tenants have done":** A building may want a door locked at night. How could it keep that door secure and still let Sami in?

Finding the source of a rule

Authority is the power a person or group has to make or change a particular rule or decision. The notice uses every visual sign of authority, including capital letters, bold type and “effective immediately.” It gives no evidence of who holds that authority. An unsigned notice is not automatically invalid, either. Sami has to find out who issued it and which document it claims to change.

Earlier cases prepared this skill. Case 1 sent you to the original source, and last year’s house rules are one. They say residents may reserve the common room for “gatherings, classes and resident-run workshops” through the building office. Case 4 gave you the **decision-maker**, the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. Case 7 taught you to ask what stage a process has reached. Is this notice final, a draft or a mistake? Nobody knows.

Caio spots the gap in the wording. Last year’s rules allow resident-run workshops. The notice bans “business use” without defining it. Is Sami’s workshop business? The notice never says.

Case 10’s term **barrier**, something that blocks or limits a person from taking part, describes what a locked rear door would mean for Sami after 8. A **reasonable accommodation** is a change to a rule or practice that gives a person with a disability equal use of a place. For Sami, a key fob for the rear door would work. **Documentation** is a record, such as a photo, a note or an email, that shows what was said or done and when. Her photo and note are documentation.

Her message to the building manager will ask three things: who issued the notice, whether it replaces last year’s rules and how she gets in after 8. Neither she nor Caio calls it illegal yet.

? **Stop and think.** What would you need to know to decide whether Sami’s workshop counts as business use?

What the law says and what tenants have done

The Fair Housing Act is a federal law. HUD, the federal housing department, says it bars housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability, and it covers most housing, with some exceptions (HUD, no date listed). HUD has also explained how a person with a disability can ask for an exception to a building rule (HUD, January 31, 2014).

Tenants have used process before. At a Brooklyn complex, a landlord applied to install a facial-recognition entry system. Because the change needed a state agency’s permission, tenants could object, and in November 2019 the landlord withdrew the plan (Gothamist, November 21, 2019).

? **Stop and think.** A building may want a door locked at night. How could it keep that door secure and still let Sami in?

This page continues page 304. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 304.

Sources

Real source | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | No date listed

Fair Housing Act overview

Real source | HUD (YouTube) | January 31, 2014

The Federal Fair Housing Act and Reasonable Accommodations

Real source | Gothamist | November 21, 2019

Brooklyn Landlord Does An About Face On Facial Recognition Plan

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 304. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 304.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document, then fill in both boxes under it. About 10 minutes.

Evidence A | Posted notice

Unsigned notice by the common-room door, found Monday morning

NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTS. Effective immediately, the rear door will be locked at 8:00 p.m. nightly. The common room is for resident social use only. NO BUSINESS USE.

Look closely: Which features give the notice an official look? What is missing?

What it shows

➤ The rear door locks at 8:00 p.m. nightly, and the room is for social use only.

What it leaves out

➤ Who issued it, the date, a contact and what “business use” means.

Evidence B | House rules (excerpt)

Last year’s house rules, given out at lease signing

“Residents may reserve the common room for gatherings, classes and resident-run workshops. Reservations are made through the building office.”

Look closely: What did last year’s rules allow in the common room?

What it shows

➤ Residents could reserve the room for classes and resident-run workshops.

What it leaves out

➤ Whether these rules are still in effect or the notice replaces them.

Case 16 | Look at the evidence | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min. Students fill in the boxes for Evidence A only.

💬 Say this

“Lay the notice beside last year’s rules. What changed, and what does the notice leave out?” — Wait for the missing issuer, date and contact.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students decide the notice is fake because it is unsigned. **Listen for:** “No name means it doesn’t count.” **Then:** Ask what happens at 8:15 if the door is locked anyway. Unsigned does not mean invalid.

📄 Support

- Give the notice and last year’s rules side by side with the changes highlighted.
- Read the entrance plan aloud and sketch it on the board.
- **Cognates:** authority (autoridad), documentation (documentación), reasonable (razonable), resident (residente), access (acceso), discrimination (discriminación), disability (discapacidad), federal (federal).

➡ Stretch

- Ask which document would settle the business-use question, and who holds it.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Entrance plan

Building entrance plan from the lobby directory

Front entrance: four steps, no ramp. Rear door: step-free, opens to the elevator hallway. Side door: service use only.

Look closely: Which entrance is step-free? What happens to it after 8 p.m.?

What it shows

➤ The rear door is the building's only step-free entrance.

What it leaves out

➤ Any other way in after 8 p.m. and how the building handles access requests.

What is still missing from the evidence?

➤ Who issued the notice and why, whether it replaces or adds to the house rules, what Sami's lease says, whether there has been a security problem at the rear door, and how the building handles accommodation requests.

Notes

Case 16 | Look at the evidence | Grades 9–10 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Read the entrance plan aloud; students fill in only its “What it shows” box.

💬 Say this

“Lay the notice beside last year's rules. What changed, and what does the notice leave out?” — Wait for the missing issuer, date and contact.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students decide the notice is fake because it is unsigned. **Listen for:** “No name means it doesn't count.” **Then:** Ask what happens at 8:15 if the door is locked anyway. Unsigned does not mean invalid.

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➡ Stretch

- Ask which document would settle the business-use question, and who holds it.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key idea: authority

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 10 minutes.

A building rule should name who made it, give a date and list a contact. This notice has none of them.

Authority is the power a person or group has to make or change a particular rule or decision. Bold type and capital letters do not show who has that power. An unsigned notice is not automatically invalid, either. Sami has to find out who issued it and which document it claims to change.

A landlord's policy and the law are different sources of rules. The Fair Housing Act is a federal law. HUD, the federal housing department, says it bars housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability. It covers most housing, with some exceptions. Under the Act, a person with a disability can ask a building for a **reasonable accommodation**. A reasonable accommodation is a change to a rule or practice that gives a person with a disability equal use of a place. For Sami, that could be a key fob for the rear door.

Sami cannot yet say the notice breaks the law. She does not know who wrote it, whether it replaces the house rules or how the building handles access requests. Whether a building grants an accommodation also depends on the facts. **Documentation** helps her keep those facts straight. Documentation is a record, such as a photo, a note or an email, that shows what was said or done and when. Her photo of the notice, with the date and place she found it, is documentation.

Professional standards

Adapted from a real source | American Bar Association (ABA), Center for Professional Responsibility

ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct: Rule 3.1 Meritorious Claims and Contentions

Summary: Summary, not a quotation: a lawyer may not bring or defend a proceeding, or argue an issue in it, without a basis in law and fact that is not frivolous. The ABA comment says lawyers must first learn the facts and the applicable law.

In plain words: Before lawyers bring a claim, they must have facts and law that support it.

Question: Before claiming a Fair Housing Act violation, what should Sami learn about the notice's author and the building's access process?

Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Read the first two paragraphs aloud. Skip the code of ethics.

Say this

“Bold type and capital letters: do they tell you who has authority?” — Accept “no,” then ask what would.

“The ABA rule asks lawyers for facts before a claim. What facts does Sami need first?” — List them on the board.

Watch for

Misconception: Students think ABA Rule 3.1 binds Sami.

Listen for: “Sami breaks the rule if she complains.” **Then:** Say: “Rules like this bind lawyers. Each state adopts its own version, and lawyers can be disciplined. It shows how professionals check facts first.”

Support

- Read the summary aloud. Point out the label: it is adapted from a real source, not a quotation.

Stretch

- Try the NCA credo's question: what could Sami ask the building office to learn who wrote the notice and why?

Heat check

■□□ Low.

Professional standards, continued**Your answer**

Sami first needs these facts: ____.

➤ Sami first needs these facts: who issued the notice, whether it replaces the house rules and how the building answers access requests.

In the news

Real source | Gothamist | November 21, 2019

Brooklyn Landlord Does An About Face On Facial Recognition Plan

A throwback about a door rule: the landlord needed state permission to change how tenants got in, and tenants used that process to object.

Real source | HUD (YouTube) | January 31, 2014

The Federal Fair Housing Act and Reasonable Accommodations

HUD explains how a person with a disability can ask for an exception to a building rule.

Notes

This page continues page 309. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 309.

Sort the evidence

On your own Fill in each box of the map: who decides, which rules apply, who is affected and where to ask. About 8 minutes.

Map who made this rule, which rules it has to fit, who it affects and where residents can take a question. Which box is still empty?

Lock the rear door at 8 p.m. and ban business use of the common room

Who decides

Unknown issuer: the owner, the manager or someone else?

Under which rule

Last year's house rules allowed resident-run workshops
Fair Housing Act: disability is a protected characteristic

Who lives with it

Sami and other residents who need the only step-free entrance

Your way in

➔ A local tenant or housing help line, or HUD for a fair-housing concern

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

➔ The building manager's view. I would ask whether there has been a security problem at the rear door.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

Say this

“Fill in who decides, which rules apply, who is affected and where residents can ask. Which box stays empty?” — Wait for the issuer box.

Watch for

Misconception: Students write “the landlord” in the decider box. **Listen for:** “The landlord made it.” **Then:** Ask which document says so. None does. Write “unknown” and how Sami could find out.

Support

- Let students write short labels in each box before they write sentences.

Heat check

Medium. The affected-people box can turn to classmates' own access needs.

Cool-down: Keep answers about Sami and residents in the story. No student speaks for a group.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what Sami should do first and explain why, then fix the two marked lines. About 6 minutes.

The notice says the rear door, the building's only step-free entrance, locks at 8 p.m. It also bans "business use" of the common room. It has no name, no date and no contact. What should Sami do first?

- ☐ A Ignore it until someone signs it, since an unsigned notice may not be official.
- ☒ B Photograph it, compare it with last year's house rules and ask the manager who issued it and how residents get in after 8.
- ☐ C Post online that the building is breaking disability law.

Why I chose it

➤ B. It records the facts and asks about authority and access. A could leave Sami locked out, and C claims a violation she cannot support yet.

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Hi, I saw the notice about the common room and rear door. ① This is illegal and discriminatory against disabled people like me. You can't just make rules like this without asking. Nobody signed it and nobody told us it was coming, so I don't even know if it's real. I'm going to keep using the room for my workshop because the old rules said I could. A lot of neighbors are upset too. ② Please take the notice down. Sami, 3B

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min.

💬 Say this

"It is Monday morning, and the door locks at 8 tonight. What should Sami do first?" — Hold a vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose to post that the building breaks the law. **Listen for:** "Post it everywhere so they get in trouble." **Then:** Ask what Sami knows for sure. Point to the missing issuer and the request she has not made yet.

📖 Support

- Read the three options aloud before students choose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Improve a draft, continued

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

➤ The rear door is the only step-free entrance, so the 8 p.m. lock affects my access.

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ I'd like to request an accommodation, such as a key fob for the rear door.

Notes

Case 16 | Practice | Grades 9–10 educator edition

This page continues page 312.

07 Answer key

A revised version: Hi, I'm writing about the notice posted by the common room on Monday. It says the rear door will be locked after 8 p.m. and bans business use of the room. I use a wheelchair, and the rear door is the building's only step-free entrance, so I need a way to get in after 8. I'd like to request an accommodation, such as a key fob for that door. Could you also tell me who issued the notice and whether it replaces the house rules from last year, which allowed resident workshops? Thank you, Sami, 3B

Other notes on the draft:

- “disabled people like me” Sami’s access need is real and relevant. Describe it concretely: the step-free door.
- “because the old rules said I could” Useful: quote the older rule so the manager can check it.

Grades 9–10

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 10 minutes.

Write Sami's message to the building manager asking about the rule and requesting access after 8 p.m.

Use: The notice, the older house rules and HUD's Fair Housing Act overview.

You'll make: Message, 90–130 words

Time: 50 minutes

- 1 Reread Evidence A and B. Underline the two changes the notice announces.
- 2 Fill in the planner: what Sami saw, what she needs and what she is asking.
- 3 Open the message by naming the notice and where it was posted.
- 4 Ask who issued the notice and whether it replaces last year's house rules.
- 5 Request one specific way in after 8 p.m., such as a key fob.
- 6 Write the message in 90 to 130 words on the Your draft page.

Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

What I saw

On ____, I saw ____.

On Monday, I saw an unsigned notice by the common-room door about the rear door and business use.

What I need

A way in after 8 p.m. through the step-free rear door.

What I'm asking

Who issued it? Does it replace last year's rules?

Case 16 | Your task | Grades 9–10 educator edition

Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Read the steps aloud. Students fill in only the What I saw box.

Say this

"Sami needs two answers: who made this rule, and how she gets in tonight. Which comes first in your message?" — Either order works if both questions are there.

Watch for

Misconception: Messages declare a Fair Housing Act violation. **Listen for:** "This is illegal under the Fair Housing Act." **Then:** Ask what facts Sami has. Turn the claim into a question and a request.

Support

- Message template: what I saw, what I need, what I'm asking
- Model reasonable-accommodation request language

Standards

Common Core: RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.2; W.9-10.5; SL.9-10.1.c; SL.9-10.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.6.9-12; D2.Civ.12.9-12; D2.Civ.13.9-12; D4.7.9-12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Answer key

A strong response:

- Quotes the notice accurately
- Asks who issued it and what document it changes
- Makes a specific access request
- Stays factual and respectful

Your draft

On your own Write your first draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 18 minutes.

Sami's message, 90 to 130 words

Hi, I'm Sami in 3B.

Hi, I'm Sami in 3B. On Monday I saw a new notice by the common-room door. It says the rear door will be locked at 8:00 p.m. and that the common room is "for resident social use only." I use a wheelchair, and the rear door is the building's only step-free entrance. I'd like to request an accommodation so I can get in after 8, such as a key fob for the rear door. Could you also tell me who issued the notice? Does it replace last year's house rules, which allowed resident-run workshops? Thank you, Sami

Pacing

Full chapter: 18 min.

 Short on time: 14 min. Students write the message in class and revise it at home.

Say this

"Read your message as the building manager. What can you say yes to?" — Partners read each other's message aloud.

Watch for

Misconception: Requests stay vague. **Listen for:** "Please fix the door situation." **Then:** Ask for one concrete request, such as a key fob, that the manager could grant.

Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Quotes the notice exactly, so the manager can see which part Sami means.
2. A concrete, checkable fact from the entrance plan.
3. A specific request the manager can say yes to.
4. Asks about authority without accusing anyone.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 8 minutes.

Does your message quote the notice accurately?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it ask who issued the notice and what document it changes?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it make one specific access request?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it stay factual and respectful, with no legal conclusion?	☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No specifics from the notice.	☐ Mentions the notice generally.	☐ Quotes the notice and older rule.	☐ Quotes both and names what is still unknown.
Reasoning	☐ Declares a legal violation.	☐ Complains without a clear need.	☐ Connects the rule to a concrete effect.	☐ Separates the communication problem from the legal question.
Audience & purpose	☐ Hostile or vague.	☐ Polite but no request.	☐ Specific request the manager can act on.	☐ Specific request plus questions that clarify authority.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Tone edits only.	☐ Replaces the conclusion with a question and request.	☐ Explains how each change makes a yes more likely.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: skip this page. Collect messages and score them with the rubric yourself.

Say this

“Mark your level in each row. Then change one sentence so the manager can say yes to it.” — Circulate and ask for one request made more specific.

Watch for

Misconception: Students soften the tone and keep the legal conclusion. **Listen for:** “I said it nicely.” **Then:** Point to the Revision row. Replace the conclusion with a question and a request.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: The message is scored with the case rubric, with a check that legal points are framed as questions and that the request is concrete enough to grant.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** Quotes the notice and older rule.
- **Reasoning:** Connects the rule to a concrete effect.
- **Audience & purpose:** Specific request the manager can act on.
- **Revision:** Replaces the conclusion with a question and request.

This page continues page 316. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 316.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete each sentence frame. About 12 minutes.

- 1 Which missing fact would most change how you see the notice?

➤ Whether it replaces last year's house rules. If it does not, residents may still reserve the room for workshops.

- 2 The notice bans "business use" without saying what that means. What would you need to know to decide whether Sami's workshop counts?

➤ The building's definition of business use, whether Sami charges for the workshop and whether resident-run workshops still count under the old rules.

- 3 A building may want a door locked at night. How could it keep that door secure and still let Sami in?

➤ Keep the door locked to the public but give residents who need it a key fob, as Sami suggests.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ Sami should document the notice and ask the manager who issued it, with a request for a key fob.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The entrance plan, because it shows the 8 p.m. lock falls on the only step-free door.

Pacing

Full chapter: 12 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.

Say this

"Answer with a detail from the evidence. You do not need to share details about your own home." — Post the question numbers and collect one answer per question.

Stretch

- List every kind of resident the 8 p.m. lock could affect, without names or unit numbers, and one question each would ask.
- Going further: Read HUD's Fair Housing Act overview. Which protected characteristic applies to Sami? List two facts you would need before saying the law was broken.
- Going further: The notice affects other residents too. Write a short note from Sami to other residents that explains the change and asks who else it affects. Leave out names, unit numbers and claims you cannot support.
- Going further: Rewrite the notice so every resident can tell who issued it, what changed, when it starts and who to ask. Put your version next to the original. Ask a reader which details they would still want to check.
- Going further: When a new rule is posted where you live or at school, write down the date and take a photo. Look for who issued it and what document it changes. Ask a trusted adult to help you bring your questions to the building manager or school office.
- Research what local tenant organizations exist in your area and what they offer
- Compare federal fair-housing protections with your state's list of protected characteristics

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

- ☞ An unsigned notice isn't official, so Sami can ignore it.

I would change my mind if ____.

- The manager said the notice was a mistake and the door stays open.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Heat check

Question 3: Medium. Students may share their own or a family member's disability, or talk about crime where they live.

Cool-down: Keep the talk on Sami’s building. Say:
“Nobody needs to share a personal or family situation
to answer.”

Talk about this case at home

Case 16: Who wrote the new building rule?

In this case, an unsigned notice in an apartment building says the only step-free door will lock at 8 p.m. Your student compared the notice with last year's building rules and practiced asking who made the new rule.

Questions to talk about

- 1 What should a clear building or school notice include?
- 2 Whom can people ask when a posted rule is unclear?
- 3 Why might someone keep a photo of a notice with the date?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 16 | Talk about this case at home

| Grades 9–10 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Share this page at home, or read it with an adult you trust.”
— Nobody needs to share a personal story to complete it.