

The Scully Protocol: Authoritative Visual Communication & Security Design

Lesson Overview

This lesson combines graphic design, technical writing, and media analysis. Students will channel the analytical, professional, and firm persona of Special Agent Dana Scully from *The X-Files* to design a series of high-authority security notices for a music school. The goal is to balance professional FBI-style aesthetics with clear, stern instructions to prevent disruption and property crime.

Learning Objectives

- **Analyze Persona & Tone:** Identify the key characteristics of Dana Scully's communication style (logical, firm, authoritative, skeptical).
- **Design for Impact:** Use typography and layout to create "Official-looking" signage that commands immediate respect.
- **Technical Writing:** Translate complex security needs into concise, legally-worded, and firm instructions.
- **Problem Solving:** Address specific environmental issues (porch pirates, disruptive knocking) through visual cues.

Materials Needed

- Computer with design software (Canva, Adobe Express, Word, or Google Slides)
- Reference images of FBI credentials and 1990s government office aesthetics
- Measuring tape (to measure the door/doorbell area)
- Cardstock or heavy paper
- Laminator or clear packing tape (for weatherproofing)
- Printer

I. Introduction: The Scully Aesthetic (The Hook)

Imagine you are Special Agent Dana Scully. You are a medical doctor and an FBI agent. You deal with the unexplained, but you rely on science, facts, and strict protocol. Your music school is your "X-File"—a place of order that must be protected from the chaos of the outside world.

The Challenge: Visitors are being disruptive. Porch pirates are loitering. People are knocking like they're in a drum circle. You need to create signage that makes them feel like they are stepping into a federal investigation area, compelling them to follow the rules through the sheer weight of authority.

II. Content & Modeling (I Do)

1. Analyzing the "Federal" Visual Language

Official government notices follow specific design "rules" to project power:

- **Typography:** Use heavy Sans-Serif fonts (like Helvetica, Arial Black, or Franklin Gothic) for commands. Use Serif fonts (like Times New Roman) for the "fine print" to look like a legal document.
- **Color Palette:** Navy blue, stark white, and federal gold or emergency red. Avoid bright "fun" colors.
- **The "Seal":** Every official notice needs a circular seal or badge. We will design a "Music School Security Division" seal.

2. Developing the "Scully" Voice

Dana Scully doesn't say "Please don't knock too loud." She says, "Repetitive acoustic signals are disruptive to internal operations. Cease immediately."

- **Direct:** State the rule first.
- **Logical:** State the consequence (e.g., "Premises are under 24/7 video surveillance").
- **No-Nonsense:** Eliminate "fluff" words like "pretty please" or "sorry."

III. Guided Practice (We Do)

Let's draft the text for our three primary notices together. We want to ensure they sound like they were written by a high-level federal agent.

Notice 1: The Doorbell (Next to the Camera)

Requirement: Request respectful use.

Drafting: "Official Entry Protocol. Depress doorbell once. High-definition imaging in progress. Wait for authorized clearance."

Notice 2: The "No Knocking" Sign

Requirement: No repetitive or obnoxious knocking.

Drafting: "Security Alert: Repetitive percussive entry attempts are prohibited. Unauthorized knocking disrupts sensitive audio recording sessions. Violators will be recorded."

Notice 3: The "Anti-Crime" Perimeter

Requirement: No unannounced visitors, stalkers, or porch pirates.

Drafting: "Federal Level Security: No unannounced visitors. This area is a high-frequency surveillance zone. Evidence of loitering, vandalism, or package theft will be turned over to local authorities for immediate prosecution. The truth is recorded here."

IV. Independent Application (You Do)

Now, step into the role of Lead Designer for the Music School's Security Division. Complete the following tasks:

1. **Measurement:** Measure the space next to your doorbell and on the eye-level section of your door. Your signs must fit these dimensions perfectly.
2. **Visual Design:** Open your design software. Create three distinct signs using the drafts above.
 - Include a "Department of Music Security" circular seal.
 - Add a "Case File" number at the bottom of the sign in a small font (e.g., Case #XF-9204).
 - Use a border—thin double lines usually convey a professional "official document" look.
3. **The "Scully" Polish:** Review your text. Is it clinical? Is it firm? Does it sound like a scientist/agent wrote it?
4. **Production:** Print your designs. If using cardstock, laminate them or use clear tape to protect them from "The Elements" (or "The Paranormal").

V. Conclusion & Recap

Review: Why does the Scully-style sign work better than a handwritten "Please go away" note? Because it uses *Authority Branding* to change the psychology of the visitor. You have turned a simple door into a professional boundary.

Success Criteria:

- Signs are legible from 3-5 feet away.
- Tone is professional, cold, and authoritative.
- Visuals include "official" elements (seals, bold headers, case numbers).
- Specific issues (knocking, loitering, cameras) are addressed clearly.

Differentiation & Extensions

- **For Advanced Learners:** Research actual FBI warning signage regarding trespassing on federal property and incorporate specific legal jargon or "Title 18" style references.
- **For Creative Learners:** Add a small, hidden "Easter Egg" for X-Files fans, such as a silhouette of a flying saucer in the corner of the seal or a signature that looks like "D. Scully, MD."
- **Safety Note:** Ensure the student understands that while the signs look "Official," they should not falsely claim to be a real government building to the point of breaking local laws; they are "stylized professional" notices.