



# Strong Passwords Keep Your Digital Life Safe

KS4 COMPUTER SCIENCE

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## What is a Password?

A **password** is a secret code that only you know. It proves to websites and apps that you are really you—not someone pretending to be you. When you log into your email, games, or social media, you type your password to unlock your account.

## What Makes a Password Strong?

A strong password is hard for hackers to guess. Here are the key ingredients:

**Length matters most.** A password should be at least **12 characters long**. The longer it is, the harder it is to crack. **Mix different types of characters:** use uppercase letters (A-Z), lowercase letters (a-z), numbers (0-9), and symbols (!@#%\$). Avoid using real words, pet names, birthdays, or anything obvious.

Think of it like a lock on your diary. A simple lock with just one number is easy to break. But a lock that needs a long, random combination—like 7K!mP2@xL9\$4—is nearly impossible to crack by accident or force.

## Why Do Passwords Matter?

Hackers use computers to guess thousands of passwords every second. If your password is weak, they might crack it in minutes. Once they do, they can:

Access your personal photos and messages. Steal your money or use your accounts to buy things. Pretend to be you and trick your friends. Download viruses onto your computer.

Think of it like your house key. If you use a key that anyone can copy (like a stick), burglars can easily get in and steal your things. But if your key is unique and complicated, burglars will give up and look elsewhere.

## Tips for Password Safety

Never use the same password for different accounts. If one is hacked, they all are. Use a **password manager**—an app that remembers all your passwords safely so you don't have to. Enable **two-factor authentication** when available—this means you need two ways to prove it's you, like a code sent to your phone.

Strong passwords are your first line of defence against cybercriminals. Take them seriously, and your digital life stays secure.