

Sample Outline – Persuasive Exercise

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Topic: Breaking Bad Password Habits

Purpose: To Persuade

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience to strengthen their passwords.

Thesis: My audience should strengthen their passwords because (1) cyber crime is a serious problem, (2) using better passwords can prevent cyber crime, and (3) using better passwords will protect my audience and give them peace of mind.

Attention Step

- I. **[Attention Getter]** I'm going to start today with a program I wrote that cracks passwords.
[Gesture to screen.]
 - A. Can anybody give me a simple five-letter word? [Enter the word into the program.]
 - B. When I click the run button, the computer will make guesses until it finds the right word.
 - C. Because the computer is able to make millions of guesses each second, it should be able to crack the password in no time. [Click the run button.]
 - D. As you just saw, within a few seconds even this slow computer was able to crack that short password.
- II. **[Topic Justification]** The results from my questionnaire show that everyone in this room uses a computer each day.
 - A. All of you said that you use the Internet for communication, and 85% said you use the internet for banking and social networking.
 - B. Every person here relies upon passwords, and how easily I just cracked that short password should concern you.
- III. **[Credibility statement]** Last November I attended a seminar all about cyber security for my job at the Idaho National Laboratory.
 - A. I went into the seminar with low expectations—I didn't think there was anything left for me to learn on the subject.
 - B. I could not have been more wrong.
 1. When I walked out of that room, I finally understood just how dangerous cyber crime is.
 2. That one, eight-hour class was powerful enough to make me break 25 years of bad habits [hyperbole].
- IV. **[Preview]** I want you to leave here today feeling the same way that I did last November.
 - A. First, you should leave here understanding just how dangerous cyber crime is.
 - B. Second, you should leave here knowing the best way to prevent cyber crime.
 - C. Finally, you should leave here confident that a simple change will protect you and give you peace of mind.

Transition: First, I will talk about the dangers of cyber crime.

Problem/Need Step

- I. **[Statement of the problem]** Cyber crime is any criminal activity that involves a computer.
- II. **[Extent and seriousness of the problem]** As I stated in my first speech of the semester, cyber crime is a serious problem today.
 - A. The financial damage caused by cyber crime is incredible.