

ChatGPT INQUIRY

Short answer up front: you **cannot (and should not try to) break someone else's passcode**. But there are legitimate, supported ways to make the iPad usable again — either by getting the passcode/Apple ID from the donor, or by erasing the iPad and then dealing with **Activation Lock** (if it's enabled). Below I'll give a clear, safe checklist and step-by-step instructions you can follow.

What to know first (legal & practical)

- **Don't try to bypass the passcode.** Intentionally circumventing device locks is a security and legal risk. I won't provide instructions to defeat locks without authorization.
- There are two separate issues:
 1. **Passcode lock** (prevents access to the device).
 2. **Activation Lock** (tied to the donor's Apple ID via Find My iPad). Erasing the device removes the passcode but **does not** remove Activation Lock — you'll need the donor's Apple ID/ password or Apple's help with proof of ownership.
- If the iPad was donated by a reputable organization, they should have removed Activation Lock before donating. Ask them for assistance and proof if needed.

Best, fastest route (recommended)

1. **Ask the donor** (or donation center) for the passcode or to remove the device from their Apple ID (Find My).
 - They can remove Activation Lock remotely by signing into iCloud.com → Find iPhone → selecting the device → Remove from Account.
2. If they won't/ can't, ask them to provide proof of donation/ ownership (receipt, donation paperwork) and then contact Apple Support. Apple may remove Activation Lock if ownership/donation can be proven.

If you want to try to get the iPad back into a factory state yourself (this erases the passcode) continue to the next section — but remember: after erasing, **you may still hit Activation Lock** and need the donor's Apple ID.

How to erase an iPad when you don't know the passcode

You'll need a computer (Mac or Windows) with a cable to connect the iPad.

1) Prepare

- On a Mac with macOS Catalina or later use **Finder**.
- On a Mac with macOS Mojave or earlier, or on Windows, use **iTunes** (latest version).
- Make sure the computer has an internet connection.

2) Put the iPad into recovery mode

(Choose the instructions that match the iPad model.)

iPads with Face ID (no Home button)

1. Quickly press and release **Volume Up**, then **Volume Down**.
2. Press and hold the **Top** button until the screen goes black and then keep holding until the recovery-mode screen appears (a cable pointing to a computer or the Finder/iTunes icon).

iPads with Home button

1. Press and hold **Top (or Side)** and **Home** buttons at the same time.
2. Keep holding even after the Apple logo appears, until you see the recovery-mode screen.

If the normal recovery-mode steps fail, you can use **DFU mode** — that's more technical. Try recovery mode first.

3) Connect to computer & restore

1. Connect the iPad to the computer while it's in recovery mode (or put it into recovery mode while connected).
2. On the computer open **Finder** (macOS Catalina+) or **iTunes**.
3. A dialog will appear: "There is a problem with the iPad that requires it to be updated or restored." Choose **Restore**. This will download the latest iPadOS and install it, erasing all data and the passcode.
4. Wait for the process to finish. Don't disconnect until complete.

4) What happens after restore

- The iPad will boot to the **Hello / activation** setup screens.
- If **Activation Lock** is *not* enabled, you can set it up as a new iPad or restore from a backup.
- If **Activation Lock** is enabled, the iPad will ask for the Apple ID and password that were used to set up Find My iPad. You will need that Apple ID/ password (or the donor to remove it remotely) — otherwise the device is unusable beyond this point.

Activation Lock — how to handle it

- **Best:** ask the donor to remove the device from their Apple ID via iCloud.com (Find iPhone → select device → Remove from Account).
- **If donor is unavailable:** Contact Apple Support. Apple will ask for proof of ownership (or in your case, proof of legitimate donation). Acceptable documents commonly include:
 - Original receipt or proof of purchase showing serial number or IMEI.
 - Donation paperwork listing the device serial number/IMEI and donor signature (if the donor organization issued one).
 - Box or paperwork with the serial number helps.
- Apple can remove Activation Lock in some cases, but it's at Apple's discretion and requires convincing documentation.

How to find the serial number / IMEI (helps Apple or donor)

- If you can't get into the iPad: look on the **original box** or **donation paperwork**.
- Sometimes the serial/IMEI is printed on the back of older iPad models (very small text) or on the SIM tray (cellular models).
- If the iPad turns on to the activation screen, sometimes the serial number is shown on the setup screen (look for an "i" icon).

If the donor is an org (school, charity, library)

- Ask them to provide **proof they wiped and removed Activation Lock** before donating. Reputable organizations often have a refurbishing process; if they didn't remove Activation Lock, ask them to fix that or provide documentation to give to Apple.

Summary checklist you can follow now

1. Contact donor; ask them to either:
 - Provide passcode, or
 - Remove device from their Apple ID via iCloud.com.
2. If donor can't/won't: on a computer, **restore** the iPad using recovery mode (this erases it).
3. If you see Activation Lock after restore, ask donor to remove it or contact Apple Support with proof of donation/ownership.
4. If you want, I can help draft an email to the donor/donation center or a message to Apple Support listing what information to include.

Would you like step-by-step instructions for putting *your specific iPad model* into recovery mode (tell me whether it has a Home button or not), or help composing a message to the donor or Apple Support?