

5

Gambling, gaming and the brain

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Activity introduction

Quick summary

In this lesson students explore the brain's response to gambling and consider the links between gambling and gaming. They use this context as a basis for explicit discussion, considering a variety of potential viewpoints on the issue. This lesson serves as a precursor to the complimentary lesson focused on developing a discussion essay.

Learning intention

To engage in critical discussion about topics relevant to the broader community.

NSW Syllabus outcomes

- **EN4-4B** makes effective language choices to creatively shape meaning with accuracy, clarity and coherence
- **EN4-5C** thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts
- **EN4-7D** demonstrates understanding of how texts can express aspects of their broadening world and their relationships within it

General capabilities

Critical and creative thinking

Literacy

Ethical understanding

Personal and social capability

Relevant parts of Year 7 and 8 achievement standards

NSW Stage 4 English Syllabus Statement

Students make connections between texts, they recognise the main ideas and points of view, and the ways in which texts seek to position responders.

Students who have achieved Stage 4 respond to literary and other texts for enjoyment and to expand their perspectives on their own lives. They engage with images of their real and imagined worlds and explore the relationship between them. They explore texts critically, evaluating content, differentiating between fact and opinion, challenging points of view and identifying, considering and appreciating cultural expressions. They respond to imagery and symbolism in verbal and visual forms. They engage with print, film and digital texts with an informed awareness of the language forms and features and structures of those texts. Students develop personal preferences in what they hear, read and view, and are able to articulate their preference in personal and critical responses.

Australian Curriculum Year 7 Level Description

In Years 7 and 8, students communicate with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments. They experience learning in familiar and unfamiliar contexts that relate to the school curriculum, local community, regional and global contexts.

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view, interpret, evaluate and perform a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts including newspapers, magazines and digital texts, early adolescent novels, non-fiction, poetry and dramatic performances. Students develop their understanding of how texts, including media texts, are influenced by context, purpose and audience.

Australian Curriculum Year 8 Level Description

In Years 7 and 8, students interact with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments. They experience learning in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts that relate to the school curriculum, local community, regional and global contexts.

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view, interpret, evaluate and perform a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts including newspapers, magazines and digital texts, early adolescent novels, non-fiction, poetry and dramatic performances. Students develop their understanding of how texts, including media texts, are influenced by context, purpose and audience.

Topic

Discussion

Unit of work

Stage 4 English

Time required

60 minutes

Level of teacher scaffolding

This lesson requires a medium level of teacher scaffolding. Two videos are included to inform perspectives about the brain's response to gambling and gaming. The key focus is for students to identify a range of perspectives and supporting arguments. Teacher prompting may be required to ensure students are backing up their perspectives and considering a range of views.

Resources required

- Learning intentions display (optional)
- 'Respectful discussion' handout (optional)
- [Inside the brain of a gambling addict – BBC News](#)
- [What are video game loot boxes and do they encourage gambling?](#)
- 'Discussion worksheet – Gaming and gambling'

Keywords

Viewpoint, validation, discussion, conversation.

Teacher worksheet

Teacher preparation

This is the first lesson in a pair focused on developing a discussion essay based upon the connection between gambling and gaming. This lesson focuses on engaging students in a verbal discussion about the brain's response to gambling and the connection between gambling and gaming, considering whether games targeted at our youth develop gambling habits.

Given that gambling can be a high-risk activity and is a priority concern for young people it is recommended that teachers and parents read the Facilitator pack before implementing the lesson. The pack provides teachers and parents with essential information about gambling harm amongst young people and clarifies the nature of gambling-related behaviours as well as how to approach sensitive topics.

It is important that students are aware of the importance of conducting critical and analytical conversations in a respectful manner. Your school may have a specific approach to scaffolding this form of conversation, in which case there is an opportunity in this lesson to reinforce expectations before engaging in discussion. If this is something less explicit within your school, a resource sheet 'Respectful Discussions' has been included to share with your class. You can also become more familiar with approaches by exploring the information on [Peer discussion and conferencing](#) available through the NSW Department of Education. The resource list on this page includes links to information on [Accountable Talk](#), which the prompts and examples in this lesson relate to.

Learning intention

To engage in critical discussion about topics relevant to the broader community.

Success criteria

Students can:

- clearly state their ideas and perspectives.
- respectfully acknowledge the viewpoints of others.
- share opposing perspectives in a respectful manner.
- adjust ideas and perspectives in response to new information or viewpoints.
- identify and record a range of views on a current issue.

Teaching sequence

5 minutes - Lesson introduction

20 minutes - Part A: Gambling and the brain

25 minutes - Part B: Expanding the context

10 minutes - Reflection

Lesson introduction

Display the learning intention and success criteria for the lesson. This can be written onto the board, or the included resource can be displayed. Invite students to read and discuss the learning intention and success criteria to ensure understanding before beginning the lesson.

Part A:

Gambling, gaming and the brain

Step 1

Show the video [Inside the brain of a gambling addict – BBC News](#).

Step 2

Invite students to discuss the information presented in the video, considering the following questions:

- What perspective is shown in this video?
- What is suggested to happen to the brain when someone gambles?
- Is the thrill associated with winning or the gambling experience as a whole?
- What has been left out? Are we shown the brain response when someone loses? How might this additional information be important to forming a thorough understanding of the context?

Step 3

Provide time for students to record a short passage describing how the brain responds when gambling.

Part B:

Expanding the context

Step 1

Explain to students that in this lesson there will be critical discussion about topics and there may be a variety of viewpoints on the issues discussed. If you have a particular framework for respectful conversation, revise the expectations with the class. If your class or school do not already have a framework for this form of conversation, provide students with the handout 'Respectful Discussions' and explore how to ensure that conversations are polite and respectful while also allowing for the sharing of opposing arguments or additional viewpoints.

Step 2

Pose the question:

Do you think video games activate the brain in a similar way to gambling?

Invite students to discuss, encouraging a range of perspectives and arguments. Encourage students to provide reasons for each viewpoint shared, validating their arguments as they contribute.

Step 3

Show the video

What are video game loot boxes and do they encourage gambling?

Once the video has concluded, prompt students to consider the question posed again:

Do you think video games activate the brain in a similar way to gambling?

Invite students to share if their view changed after watching the video? Why/why not?

Step 4

After students have had the opportunity to share how their thinking changed, provide them with 'Discussion Worksheet - Gambling and Gaming' to explore the question below:

Should governments ban loot boxes in video games for those under 18?

Explain that students should spend some time considering what the arguments would be for and against this proposal. What are the reasons that they should ban them? What are the reasons that they shouldn't? Encourage students to try to develop at least three arguments for and three against.

Step 5

Invite students to share all of their ideas for and against and record them onto a T-chart. This can be done digitally or on a poster. This will be referred back to when you complete the second lesson in this sequence.

Reflection

Invite students to independently write a response to the following prompts:

Why is it important to be able to identify all of the points for and against a particular issue?

Who would use this information and when?

Differentiation

Extension - For students who can clearly and concisely explain the for and against arguments with little support, encourage them to present each side of the argument in full paragraphs rather than in dot points in the t-chart. This will give them the opportunity to continue to develop their ideas in preparation for the next lesson.

Provision for Learning Support - If students face difficulty identifying and recording the for and against arguments independently, encourage them to work collaboratively with other students to complete the task, and ensure they record additional ideas when the class share their ideas.

Respectful discussions

When engaging in a critical discussion or debate, the purpose is to share and reflect upon your own ideas and those of others

BUT

It is important to still be polite and considerate during these discussions

Do	Don't
Focus on the topic	Direct opposing comments at individual people
Share a range of arguments and viewpoints	Speak in an aggressive tone
Build upon the ideas of others	Assume your view is the only way to see the topic

If you are sharing a new idea, you could start with:

- I noticed _____
- It seems that _____
- I think that _____ because _____

If you have more supporting arguments for a perspective that has already been shared, you could start with:

- I agree with _____ because _____
- Building upon what _____ suggested, I have also seen/heard/read that _____

If you don't quite understand what someone is suggesting, or you feel like they only partially explained their point, you could start with:

- Could you please tell me more about _____
- Why do you think _____?

If you have an opposing argument, you could start with:

- I would like to point out that _____
- I disagree that _____ because _____
- I understand how _____ however I also noticed that _____
- In my opinion _____
- Could it also be true that _____?

Discussion worksheet – Gaming and gambling

Name:

Consider the following question:

Should governments ban loot boxes in video games for those under 18?

In the table below, record at least three reasons governments **should** ban loot boxes and three reasons they **should not** ban them.

Governments SHOULD ban loot boxes in video games for people under 18 because ...	Governments SHOULD NOT ban loot boxes in video games for people under 18 because ...

Learning intentions

I engage in critical discussion about topics relevant to the broader community.

Success criteria

I can:

- Clearly state their ideas and perspectives.
- Respectfully acknowledge the viewpoints of others.
- Share opposing perspectives in a respectful manner.
- Adjust ideas and perspectives in response to new information or viewpoints.
- Identify and record a range of views on a current issue.