

Assessment task 1

Letter to the editor

February 2024

Copyright © 2022 Office of Responsible Gambling, Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, NSW Government.
Free for use in Australian schools.

Activity introduction

Quick summary

To demonstrate their understanding of gambling, particularly the benefits and disadvantages of poker machines, students will write a letter to the editor outlining their own point of view on the issue, and craft a reflective commentary explaining their authorial decisions. This Assessment task can be completed in isolation or work as complementary to Lesson 6.

Learning intentions

Students will:

- Demonstrate their understanding about the impact of gambling and poker machines on Australian society.
- Use rhetoric to present a point of view.

21st-century skills

Communicating

Community engagement

Creative thinking

Critical thinking

Empathy

Initiative

Leadership

Personal and social skills

NSW Syllabus outcomes

- **EN11-2** uses and evaluates processes, skills and knowledge required to effectively respond to and compose texts in different modes, media and technologies
- **EN11-3** analyses and uses language forms, features and structures of texts, considers appropriateness for purpose, audience and context and explains effects on meaning
- **EN11-5** thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and analytically to respond to and compose texts that include considered and detailed information, ideas and arguments

General capabilities

Ethical understanding

Critical and creative thinking

Literacy

Personal and social capability

Stage 6 Syllabus objectives

Objective A

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- communicate through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

Objective B

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- use language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context.

Objective C

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical.

Topic

Letter to the editor

Unit of work

Stage 6 English

Time required

90 minutes plus (Assessment task parameters at teacher discretion)

Level of teacher scaffolding

Low – students should be able to write their Letter to the editor and reflective commentary independently.

Resources required

- Appendix A: Student worksheet
- Appendix B: Assessment rubric

Keywords

Poker machines, gambling ban, rhetoric, persuasive writing, letter to the editor, problem behaviours, addictive behaviours, assessment task, gambling addiction, gambling harm, persuasive techniques, banning gambling, banning gaming.

Teacher worksheet

Teacher preparation

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

Learning intentions

Students will:

- demonstrate their understanding about the impact of gambling and poker machines on Australian society.
- use rhetoric to present a point of view.

Success criteria

Students can:

- write a letter to the editor presenting a point of view.
- reflect on their own writing and how it achieved the outcome intended.

Teaching sequence

15 minutes - Part A: Introduce the task

60 minutes plus - Part B: Assessment task: Letter to the editor - *Why should poker machines be banned in NSW?*

15 minutes - Reflection

Lesson introduction

Work through this resource material in the following sequence:

Part A:

Introduce the task

Step 1

Once students have completed lesson 6, distribute Appendix A to students, and take them through the assessment task outline. Students may have completed previous lessons and have reference to notes and research, or you may choose to have students write with no supporting documents.

Part B:

Assessment task:

Letter to the editor – *‘Why should poker machines be banned in NSW?’*

Step 1

Students should write their letters to the editor and reflective commentary.

Reflection

Ask students to reflect on how they approached this assessment, and what they think they did especially well, as well as an area they particularly would like feedback on. Encourage students to share this with the teachers to allow feedback to be focused.

Differentiation

- The assessment task could be reimagined as a speech if more appropriate for the cohort, or a choice could be provided to students.
- Students may need scaffolding to assist in the structure of the Letter to the Editor.
- Students may need time to look through and remember the work from lesson six before commencing this task.

Extension

- Students could complete some of their own research into poker machines to build their understanding of the issue, and to supplement their own writing.
- Teachers could ask students to specifically reference an independently sourced newspaper article to ensure their information is relevant and current.
- Students could compare teen and adult gambling addiction data and add this information to their Letter to the Editor.

Provisions for learning support

Students with individual needs could complete a reduced length of the task and present their reflective commentary orally to the teacher.

Teacher reflection

Take this opportunity to reflect on your own teaching:

What did you learn about your teaching today?

What worked well?

What didn't work so well?

What would you share?

Where to next?

How are you going to get there?

Appendix A

Letter to the editor – Powerful poker machines

A 'letter to the editor' is a presentation of a point of view on an issue currently being debated in a newspaper. Such letters are usually written by members of the public in response to a topical matter.

Your task is to:

- Construct a 500-word 'Letter to the editor', presenting your point of view in response to the following questions: *Should poker machines be banned in NSW?*
- Explain in 300 words how effectively your letter communicated the power of poker machines, making close reference to your use of rhetorical and stylistic devices.

Aim to achieve each of the following components in your letter:

- Open with a greeting, for example, 'To the editor'.
- Aim for your opening sentence to spark the reader's attention. Your goal is to immediately declare your position, and also encourage them to keep reading.
- Present a persuasive overview as to why the power of poker machines is an important issue.
- Seek to employ rhetorical and stylistic devices to persuade.
- Support your claims with reputable evidence. If you want to reference published articles cite the date and title in brackets.
- Present your opinion as to the solution to this issue.
- Sign off with your name.

Appendix B

Assessment rubric

Assessment rubric part 1 – Letter to the editor (12 marks)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Effectively composes a letter to the editor which explores the power of poker machines.Effectively crafts a range of language devices or stylistic features to create an engaging and persuasive piece of writing.Demonstrates effective control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.	10-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Competently composes a letter to the editor which explores the power of poker machines.Competently crafts a range of language devices or stylistic devices to create an engaging and persuasive piece of writing.Demonstrates competent control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.	7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Composes a letter to the editor which explores the power of poker machines.Uses some language devices or stylistic devices to create a piece of writing.Demonstrates some control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.	4-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Attempts to compose a letter to the editor which has some relevance to the power of poker machines.Attempts to use some language devices or stylistic devices to create a piece of writing.Demonstrates limited control of language and/or some attempt at structure.	1-3

Assessment rubric

Assessment rubric part 2 – Reflective commentary (8 marks)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains in a detailed and relevant manner how language has been used to create an engaging response in Part 1. Demonstrates effective control of language. 	7-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how language has been used to create an engaging response in Part 1. Demonstrates competent control of language. 	5-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes some reference to the piece of writing in Part 1. Demonstrates some control of language. 	3-4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some relevant information about the piece of writing in Part 1. Has limited control over language. 	1-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some limited information about the writing process. Has little to no control over language. 	1