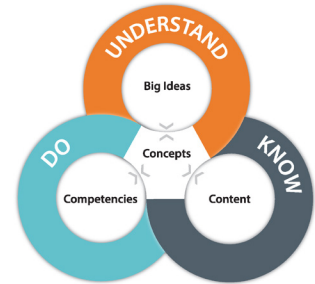


True Stories: BC voices on gambling

This lesson uses two gambling-related articles (in first-person accounts) from [Visions: BC's Mental Health and Substance Use Journal](#). One involves a young person who gets deeply involved in gaming/gambling to cope with bullying at school and ends up in trouble, but he bounces back in a wonderful way. The other involves a young person who ultimately comes to terms with her beloved father and his relationship and choices around gambling and other risky behaviours.

The lesson challenges students to use their imagination and prior knowledge to think, speak and/or write about gambling and its effect on individuals and families. Students also get a chance to share and compare their stories and perspectives with others in order to broaden their understanding and reflect on the sources of their biases and assumptions related to gambling.



Instructional strategies

1. What happens next?
 - a. Choose (or have students choose) one of the [Story handouts](#) at the end of this document. (Note: Each handout features the opening paragraph of a gambling-related article, without the title.)
 - i. Story 1 (Confessions of a Video Game Addict by Cam Adair)
 - ii. Story 2 (House of Cards: A daughter's perspective on gambling by Heidi Morgan)
 - b. Invite students to use their imagination and draw from their knowledge and life experiences to continue the story (orally or in writing).
 - c. Have students share their stories with others. For example, you could match up a Story 1 student with a Story 2 student. Or you could have volunteers read or tell their stories aloud to the class.
 - d. Have a class discussion about the story-telling/writing experience:
 - i. What made you choose the path of your story?
 - ii. Reflect on your story and think about where your ideas about gambling/gamblers might have come from. Which ones, if any, might have been based on assumptions and/or biases? Where might those assumptions/biases have originated?



2. Predict, compare and reflect on gambling stories.

- a. Read aloud the full articles from *Visions*, stopping in key places to invite students to predict what they think happens next: [Visions: BC's Mental Health and Substance Use Journal](#).

- i. Story 1 (starts on page 11): Stop on page 13, after the quote: *"Just one game," he said.*

Note: On page 12, before the author talks about moving in the summer of 2009, he writes: *"Then I relapsed."* Omit this sentence when reading aloud so that students have a chance to guess whether he played "one more game" or not.

- ii. Story 2 (starts on page 14, continues on page 33): Stop on page 33, after the quote: *"I wanted to be loyal to my mom but I liked my father's new love interest."*

- b. After finishing reading the full stories, debrief with the class by asking students:

- i. What led you to make your predictions? To what degree were those predictions based on assumptions and biases about gambling? What about the influence of other aspects of life?
- ii. People get different messages about gambling from different sources. For example, our family members or social media might influence us. What other sources contribute to how we perceive gamblers/gambling? Who benefits most from these messages?
- iii. How do you feel about the real stories and the way they ended? Why?
- iv. What are some of the key themes that emerge from the stories? What do you think about these themes? Do they

resonate with themes in your own life? If so, explain how so.

- c. Have students compare stories. You might ask:
 - i. What do the two *Visions* stories have in common? What are the main differences? (Note: Encourage students to think beyond obvious answers, such as both stories involve families who were negatively affected by gambling. Invite them to think deeply about the complex nature of gambling and consider the role of trauma, mental health issues and socio-economic factors in a person's choices around gambling.)
 - ii. How would you describe the way each author feels about gambling? What makes you think/feel that way?
 - iii. If time permits, invite students to identify the similarities or differences between the story they created and the real story it was based on.
- d. Invite students to reflect on what, if anything, they have come to understand about gambling that they did not understand or fully appreciate before. Ask them to articulate their new perspective (orally or in writing).

Extension activity:

Revisit the passage below from Story 2, which invites us to question the role of reason/rationality in gambling (and other aspects of our lives). Then, with this idea in mind, host a class discussion:

My dad was a passionate man: boy, did he ever get animated at the track—whether he lost or won. If he won, he would shake those papers towards the heavens and yell with glee. It was



great to see him win. But if he lost, he would cast the folded program he held in his hand violently to the ground and scream blue murder. It was hard to see him lose. He took a hit to his selfworth every time—the house of cards he had built for himself was coming tumbling down.

My dad's gambling did result in some positive events once in a while. Once, he had a big win and surprised my brother and me at Christmas with brand-new bikes. I was so happy. I rode that bike from our house to the end of the street and back for hours! I always liked those sorts of surprises, few as they were. They were much better than the empty promises he made. There were a lot of those.

- i. What do you imagine the dad was thinking to himself when he won at the racetrack?
- ii. How could losing at the racetrack be “a hit to his selfworth”? Have you ever experienced a hit like that? If so, explain what happened and what you did (or are doing) to bounce back.
- iii. Have you ever had an experience that made you “yell with glee” or “scream blue murder”? If yes, explain what happened and what was going on in your mind at the time.

For more BC voices on gambling, check out these family-focused stories on the Choices and Chances website:

<https://choicesandchances.ca/read/bingo-great-escape>

<https://choicesandchances.ca/read/no-way-knowing-way>

<https://choicesandchances.ca/read/backgammon-gaming-gambling>

<https://choicesandchances.ca/read/rolling-through-rough-times>

Gambling Literacy

Big ideas

- ✓ As humans, both individually and as communities, we need to learn how to manage gambling in our midst
- ✓ We can learn how to control gambling by examining the different ways people have thought about it, engaging in critical self-reflection and listening to each other
- ✓ Gambling can be a fun recreational activity but can also lead to significant harm

Competencies

- ✓ Assess the ways in which material goods are distributed in society, how those goods are valued and how this is related to gambling policies and behaviours
- ✓ Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- ✓ Recognize binary constructs (e.g., win vs lose or success vs failure) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like gambling
- ✓ Consider dominant social discourses and assess their impact on the distribution of risk and benefit associated with gambling

For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, see: <http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/iminds/hs-gambling-curriculum.pdf>



Links to curriculum

First Peoples' principles of learning

- ✓ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ✓ Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- ✓ Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions
- ✓ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

Composition, Creative Writing, Spoken Language 10/11/12

Big ideas

- ✓ The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity
- ✓ Texts are socially, culturally, geographically and historically constructed
- ✓ Engagement with writing processes can support creativity and enhance clarity of expression
- ✓ Creative writers take risks and persevere
- ✓ Creative writers are observant of the world
- ✓ Voice is powerful and evocative

Competencies

- ✓ Apply appropriate strategies in a variety of contexts to comprehend written, oral, visual, and multimodal texts; guide inquiry; and extend thinking
- ✓ Access information for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources to inform writing
- ✓ Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world
- ✓ Respectfully exchange ideas and viewpoints from diverse perspectives to build shared understanding and extend thinking
- ✓ Respond to text in personal, creative and critical ways
- ✓ Demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a variety of formal and informal contexts for a range of purposes
- ✓ Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- ✓ Transform ideas and information to create original texts

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Story 1

Growing up, I was a fairly normal Canadian kid. I went to school, I played hockey, and then I would go home and play video games. I was happy, I felt smart, and I had friends. That all changed in Grade 8, when I began to experience intense bullying, both at school and on my hockey team. The less frequently I went to school and hockey practice, the more I played video games...



Story 2

My dad and I had a loving and complex relationship. Like it is for many little girls, in my eyes, my father could do no wrong. He had a giving heart and an amazing sense of humour. But he was also a gambler. Horses and poker were his favourite gambles. It wasn't just the thrill of the game or the adventure of the race. Something more than that drove him...