

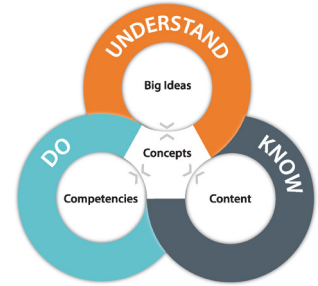
## Oh! The Places You'll Go

By Dr. Seuss

*Oh, the Places You'll Go!* (1990) is the last book published by children's author and illustrator [Dr. Seuss](#). Ranked #10 on BCTF's top 100 books list, *Places* takes readers on a ride through the ups and downs of life. It touches on the times we may feel fearless, excited and free and the times we may feel lonely or confused or bored in "The Waiting Place." It suggests that sometimes we will win in life and sometimes we will be behind.

Near the end of the story, the author tells us to "Step with care and great tact/and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act." Achieving and maintaining balance are important life skills. When we are off balance, we are more likely to engage in risky behaviours.

This lesson uses themes from the book and reflective questions to help students reflect on feelings related to gambling and other potentially risky behaviours. Students also get to participate in extension activities that involve art and other forms of creative expression, collaborative work and physical movement.



### Instructional strategies

Read the story aloud to the class (or have students help you). Alternatively, you may want to play the video version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6ZeZA6wF-k>

1. Draw attention to particular parts of the story and hold a class discussion using some or all of the themes, quotes and questions below.

#### Choices

*You're off to Great Places...You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go...You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care. About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there." And you may not find any you'll want to go down. In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town.*

- a. What do you think is a "great place" to go? Why?
- b. What kinds of things do you get to do on your own or decide for yourself? What does it feel like when you get to make your own decisions?
- c. What kinds of things do you prefer others to choose or decide for you? Explain.
- d. How do you know when you've made a good choice for yourself? What does it feel like?
- e. What happens in your mind and body when you make a poor choice?
- f. What's the best way forward when we realize we have made a poor choice? How can we avoid getting stuck in negative thoughts about ourselves?



### Balance

*Step with care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act. Just never forget to be dextrous and deft. And never mix up your right foot with your left.*

- a. What do you think the author means when he says life is a balancing act? What does it mean to be 'dextrous and deft'? What might happen if you mix your right foot with your left?
- b. What does balance mean to you? Have you ever been in a situation where you or someone else "lost balance" in some aspect of life (e.g., ate too much or not enough, over-reacted about something, tripped or fell off something, got sucked into a game for too long, etc.)? What happened? What did you do to get your balance back and go forward? Was there anyone else to help you get your balance back? Discuss.
- c. What things are so fun or enjoyable that you find it hard not to go overboard? What does it feel like when you have to stop doing them? Why?
- d. Sometimes people go overboard with games. Some games, such as playing poker or betting on sports, involve gambling, which means players can win and lose money or other valuable things. It's easy to get carried away when playing and betting. Why do you think it can be hard to stay balanced when it comes to playing games and gambling (with or without money)? What are some ways we can manage our game playing?

### Winning and losing

*Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done! There are points to be scored. There are games to be won. And the magical things you can do with that ball will make you the winning-est winner of all.*

- a. What fun things do you like to do? What makes an activity fun?

- b. What does it feel like to win at games or contests? How important, if at all, is winning? What, if anything, is more important than winning?
- c. Are there benefits to losing? Explain your answer.
- d. What does it feel like when others around you win at something? Why might it be important to be happy for other people when they are successful at something?

### Being alone and scared

*All alone! Whether you like it or not, Alone will be something you'll be quite a lot.*

- a. Have you ever felt like you were "all alone"? What were the circumstances? What did you do (or who did you talk to) to feel back in balance?
- b. What is the difference between being alone and being lonely?
- c. What does being alone feel like? What does lonely feel like?
- d. Can being alone be a good thing? Can being lonely be a good thing? Explain your answers.

### Facing challenges

*On and on you will hike. And I know you'll hike far and face up to your problems whatever they are.*

- a. What is the most difficult challenge you have had to face? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? How did it feel when it was over?
- b. How important is it to face our fears and problems? What happens if we don't?
- c. What do you do and who do you turn to when you have a fear or problem?



2. Choose one or more of the extension activities below:
  - a. Invite students to create artwork that reflects one of the themes in the book. For example, a student might draw the 'Balancing Act' of their life and things that help them stay steady. Or they may want to perform some aspect of the story in the form of a poem, song or dance.
  - b. Encourage students to think about the things they already know about the ups and downs of life. Invite them to prepare a presentation for the class with helpful suggestions about how to stay healthy. Or, you could have them create their own "kits" or backpack filled with ideas and items that help them get through times when they are troubled or bored. (Note: you may want to create your own kit to demonstrate your own collection of tools for dealing with uncomfortable emotions or challenging situations). Then have them share their ideas with other students.
  - c. Have students work together to create and decorate a "peace corner" in the classroom, where they can go to regain their inner balance. This calming corner can also be used when a student feels overwhelmed, stressed, angry, or otherwise out of control emotionally (i.e., after a family tragedy or other stressful event). The building of the corner promotes cooperation and the end product gives young people a chance to learn about and practise self-regulation.

- d. Play a game that reflects the ups and downs of life, such as Snakes and Ladders. Or have students make their own board games using poster paper and art supplies. Alternatively, set up a life-size Snakes and Ladders on the gym floor or field (with hoola-hoops, ropes, benches and other props serving as the game board). Encourage students to notice their feelings as they go up, down and through the game. Debrief afterward, using some of the questions from Activity 1, if desired.

## Gambling literacy

### Big ideas

- ✓ Gambling can be a fun recreational activity but can also lead to significant harm
- ✓ As humans, both individually and as communities, we need to learn how to manage gambling in our midst

### Competencies

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Develop personal and social skills to reflect on and manage personal behaviour and choices related to 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 recognizing the consequences of one's actions
- ✓ Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- ✓ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

### English Language Arts 2/3

#### Big ideas

- ✓ Language and story can be a source of creativity and joy
- ✓ Curiosity and wonder lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and the world

#### Competencies

- ✓ Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community and make meaning
- ✓ Explain (Grade 2) and demonstrate (Grade 3) the role that story plays in personal, family, and community identity
- ✓ Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and make meaning
- ✓ Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding
- ✓ Create stories to deepen awareness of self, family, and community
- ✓ Plan and create a variety of communication forms for different purposes and audiences

### Arts Education 2/3

#### Big ideas

- ✓ Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating

#### Competencies

- ✓ Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play
- ✓ Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences
- ✓ Interpret and communicate ideas using symbolism in the arts
- ✓ Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations and experiences in creative ways
- ✓ Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

### Physical and Health Education 2/3

#### Big ideas

- ✓ Adopting healthy personal practices and safety strategies protects ourselves and others
- ✓ Having good communication skills and managing our emotions enables us to develop and maintain healthy relationships
- ✓ Our physical, emotional, and mental health are interconnected



## Physical and Health Education 2/3

### Competencies

- ✓ Identify and apply strategies that promote mental well-being (Grade 2) and describe factors that influence mental well-being and self-identity (Grade 3)
- ✓ Develop and demonstrate safety, fair play, and leadership in physical activities
- ✓ Identify and explain factors that contribute to positive experiences in different physical activities
- ✓ Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining positive relationships
- ✓ Develop and demonstrate a variety of fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments

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