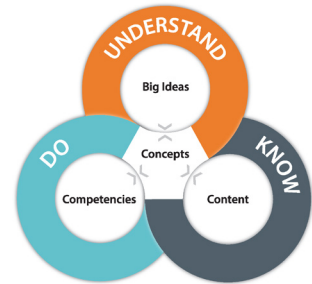


## Horse Racing

Horse racing has been around for thousands of years. It's one of the oldest forms of gambling. Today horse racing generates more than US \$100 billion world-wide every year.

This lesson offers students an opportunity to learn about the history of horse racing and its influence on gambling, past and present. Students also get a chance to share and explore different perspectives on horse racing and articulate their position on the ancient sport's place in today's world.



### Instructional strategies

1. Introduce horse racing by showing a [2-minute clip of the 2019 Kentucky Derby](#), followed by a brief discussion:
  - a. The Kentucky Derby has been around since 1875. Today it's called "The Most Exciting Two Minutes In Sports." Do you agree with this description? Why or why not?
  - b. Have you ever been to a race track and/or watched a horse race? If so, what was it like for you? What did you like/dislike most about it?
2. Invite students to explore the history of horse racing.
  - a. Distribute copies of [A Brief History of Horse Racing](#) handout (included at the end of this document) and/or invite them to conduct independent research with a focus on the era that fits your grade level.
  - b. Have a class discussion using the questions below:
    - i. Did anything interest or surprise you about the history of horse racing? If so, explain.
    - ii. Why do you think horse racing has been so attractive to so many people in so many places across the ages?
    - iii. Do you think horse racing in the past was different from horse racing today? If so, in what way(s)?
    - iv. How would you describe the role that class consciousness played on horse racing in the past? What about today?
    - v. The risk of injury and death to horses and drivers/riders seems to have been part of the sport since the beginning. Do you think horse racing is ethical? Explain your position.
3. Have students examine the influence of horse racing on gambling revenue in BC. Begin by providing students with some basic gambling revenue statistics. For example, you might explain that each year British Columbians spend close to \$3 billion dollars on lottery tickets, charity raffles, trips to the casino, and various other types



of gambling activities (excluding horse racing), and that the government takes a cut of around \$1.25 billion. You might also want to explain that the horse racing industry has been in decline for some time and is now subsidized by gambling revenue. The BC government spends around \$10 million a year in gambling revenue (25 percent of slot machine revenue from casinos located at race tracks) to support horse racing. In other words, many people play slots instead of betting, so the government uses some of its slot machine money to keep horses running around the track. Horse racing is the only form of gambling that is subsidized by the government.

- a. Divide class into small groups and give each student a [Where the Money Goes handout](#). Or have them go directly to the [BC government website](#).
  - b. Give students time to read and process the information. Then have them discuss these questions in their groups:
    - i. Why do you think the government subsidizes horse racing? What is the benefit? Who benefits most? Who benefits least?
    - ii. How do you feel about the subsidization of the horse racing industry? Is it a good way to spend gambling revenue? Why or why not?
4. Now that students have some background knowledge of horse racing as both a sport and industry, facilitate a class dialogue:
    - a. Divide class into pairs or small groups and invite each group to discuss horse racing from one of the perspectives below:
      - Historian
      - Horse owner
      - Horse
      - Jockey
      - Government
      - Animal Rights Activist
      - Gambler
      - Race track owner (or other industry member)
      - Race track employee
      - Other?
    - b. Then create new groups featuring at least one person from each perspective. Have each person share their angle on horse racing with the rest of the group. Encourage students to suspend judgment as they listen to and try to truly understand the various perspectives.
    - c. Follow up by bringing the class back together and asking them to share new insights.
  5. Ask students to write an essay on an aspect of horse racing that interests them most based on the themes that have emerged from the dialogue, such as:
    - Horse racing as a historical phenomenon
    - Horse racing in industry
    - Horse racing as a sport
    - Horse racing as a form of entertainment
    - Horseracing and ethics



## 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
- ✓ 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

### Competencies

- ✓ Assess the complex ways in which gambling is linked to human culture and impacts the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and societies
- ✓ Recognize binary constructs (e.g., win vs lose or success vs failure) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like gambling
- ✓ Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- ✓ 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 is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- ✓ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ✓ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

### Social Studies 7/8/9/10

#### Big ideas

- ✓ Religious and cultural practices that emerged during this period have endured and continue to influence people (Grade 7)
- ✓ Exploration, expansion, and colonization had varying consequences for different groups (Grade 8)
- ✓ Emerging ideas and ideologies profoundly influence societies and events (Grade 9)
- ✓ Collective identity is constructed and can change over time (Grade 9)
- ✓ Worldviews lead to different perspectives and ideas about developments in Canadian society (Grade 10)



### Competencies

- ✓ Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to: ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions (Grade 7/8/9/10)
- ✓ Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments (Grade 7) and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (Grade 8/9/10)
- ✓ Explain (Grade 7/8) and infer (Grade 9/10) different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events by considering/comparing prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places
- ✓ Make ethical judgments about past events, decisions, or actions, and assess the limitations of drawing direct lessons from the past (Grade 7/8)
- ✓ Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and determine appropriate ways to remember and respond (Grade 9/10)

### Key Sources

<https://www.horseracing.com/blog/ancient-horse-racing-golden-chariots>

<https://www.britannica.com/sports/horse-racing>

This resource was developed by the **Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research** with funding provided by the **BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program**. Any views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program or the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research.



## A Brief History of Horse Racing

Horse racing has been around for thousands of years. It's one of the oldest forms of gambling. Today horse racing generates more than US \$100 billion world-wide every year.

No one knows for sure when our fascination with horse racing began. But archeological records suggest horse racing played a role in ancient Greek, Babylonian, Syrian and Egyptian civilizations, among others. It was also featured in Norse mythology.

Chariot racing was one of the most popular forms of horse racing in ancient times. According to a Greek legend, it was a chariot race between King Oenomaus and his daughter's suitor, Pelops, that prompted the start of the Olympic Games in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. Chariot racing would later become a major industry of the Roman Empire. Special venues, such as Circus Maximus, were constructed to host the races. Thousands of spectators would attend, dressed in their finest clothing and jewelry, to watch slaves race chariots around the track. Many slaves were killed, flung from the chariots and dragged for long distances or trampled by hooves. Drivers and horses were often crushed by clashing chariots, especially at the end of the race when trying to stop.

In medieval times, horsemanship was highly prized in North Africa and many places in and around the Middle East. European Crusaders learned about and brought back Arabian, Turk and other new breeds of horses during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Century, much to the delight of royalty. The first recorded horse race for money, featuring knights as riders, took place during the reign of Richard the Lion Hearted (1189-1199).

During the early stages of the Age of Exploration, Europeans brought horses over to the New World for military and work purposes. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century, however, British King Charles II's enthusiasm for horse racing spread to North America. The first horse race in North America took place in Salisbury, New York, in 1665.

Horse racing was a well-established sport in Britain by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century with the formation of the Jockey Club in 1750, which set rules and regulations for the Newmarket Racecourse and influenced the 1780 establishment of the Epsom Derby in Surrey. Thoroughbred racing—the "Sport of Kings"—became increasingly popular among the aristocracy and royalty throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. But all classes contributed to the growth of the industry through wagers and work opportunities. Horse racing was a prestigious sport that required skilled jockeys, trainers, groomers and breeders, offering rural working-class and poor folks a way to rise in social and economic status.

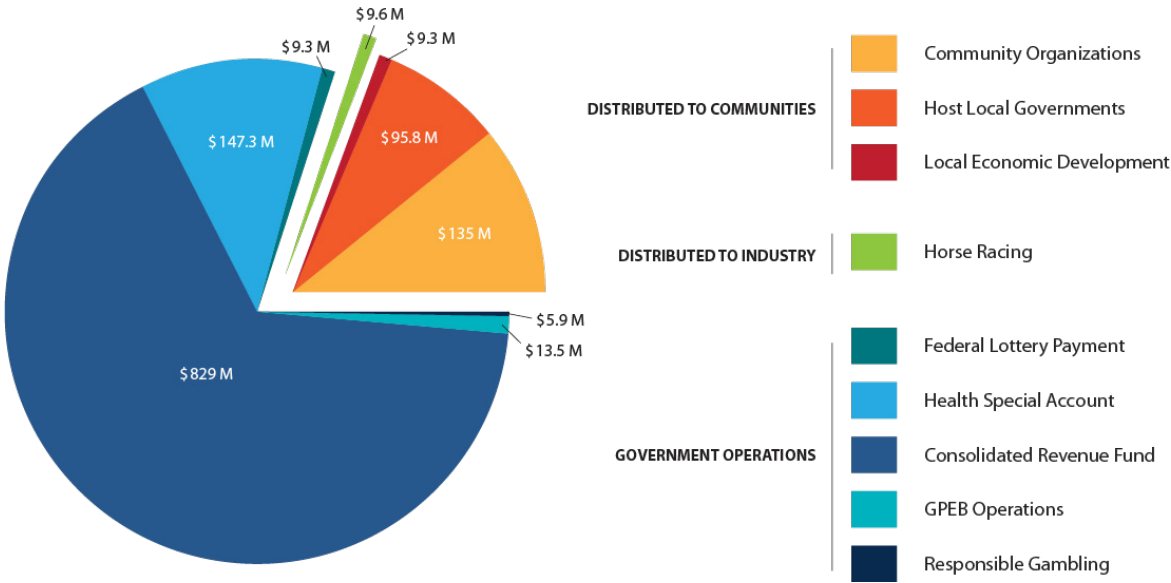


As in Britain, horse racing in North America continued to grow in prestige and popularity throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This was most evident in 1875 with the birth of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. Today, the mile-and-a-quarter race is known as “The Most Exciting Two Minutes In Sports.” In Canada, the first organized horse race took place in 1837 in Fort York. The Queen’s (/King’s) Plate, first run in 1860 and the nation’s signature horseracing event, is the oldest continuously run race in North America. Also popular since the 1920s are the nightly chuckwagon races run over the “half-mile of hell” track at the Calgary Stampede. Known as the Rangeland Derby and culminating in the “dash for cash” among the event’s top four contestants, these races generate millions of dollars each year but have come under scrutiny from activists because of incidents of injury and death to horses.

### Where the Money Goes <sup>1</sup>

Each year British Columbians spend close to \$3 billion dollars on lottery tickets, charity raffles, trips to the casino, and various other types of gambling activities (excluding horse racing). And each year the BC government gets a substantial cut of this cash—around \$1.25 billion. But what do they do with the money?

*Distribution of Gambling Revenue for Fiscal Year 2014/2015*



<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gambling-in-bc/where-money-goes#one>



*Distribution of Gambling Revenue for Fiscal Year 2014/2015 (Cont.)*

<b>Gambling Revenue Distributed in Fiscal Year 2014/15 to</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Non-profit community organizations	B.C. communities	\$134.8 million
Local governments that host casinos and community gambling centres	B.C. communities	\$95.8 million
Local economic development projects	B.C. communities	\$9.3 million
Horse racing	B.C. industry	\$9.6 million
Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) core operations, including salaries and business expenses	B.C. government	\$13.5 million
Responsible gambling education and problem gambling services	B.C. government	\$5.9 million
Health Special Account, to support health care services and research	B.C. government	\$147.3 million
Consolidated revenue fund, to support other government programs, primarily health care and education	B.C. government	\$829.0 million
<b>Subtotal (the Province's share)</b>		<b>\$1,245.2 million</b>
Government of Canada transfer under a federal/provincial lottery agreement	Government of Canada	\$9.3 million
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,254.5 million</b>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gambling-in-bc/where-money-goes#one>