



Material Wealth and Gambling

Gambling behaviours and patterns can be impacted by many different factors, including our socio-economic background. Our relationship to material wealth, our place on the economic ladder, as well as how we perceive ourselves in comparison to others can all play a role in decisions we make, including decisions about gambling. The following instructional strategies aim to encourage students to critically think about issues such as wealth inequality and our relationship to material goods, and social values and how these may impact gambling behaviour.

Instructional strategies

1. Watch the [Wealth Inequality in Canada](#) video and encourage students to think critically about the issues presented in the clip. Facilitate a class discussion with questions like:
 - a. What are your thoughts on this video?
 - b. What is wealth? Is it important? Why or why not?
 - c. What do you think are some of the impacts of wealth inequality on individuals, communities and society?

Then divide the class into small groups and give each group 25 sticky notes. Invite the students to draw the ideal wealth distribution for their community (similar to that shown in the video for Canada). On a sheet of paper or section of a white board, they should identify five columns to divide the community into five groups from the lowest 20% to the highest 20% in terms of wealth. Encourage the students to think critically about the distribution of the 25 sticky notes (each sticky note represents 4% of the wealth in their community). Then have groups compare their distributions and discuss the issue. Close this section of the lesson with the following questions:

- d. What do you think creates or contributes to the high level of wealth inequality in Canada?
 - e. How do you think wealth inequality could be reduced? Discuss different strategies.
2. The lottery and other forms of gambling are sometimes viewed as a “regressive tax on the poor” because people in the lower economic classes of society spend more money (proportionally to their income) on gambling than their more affluent counterparts. One research study found that, “Those who lack autonomy and express feelings of futility about their everyday routines spend significantly more money on lottery tickets” (Beckert & Lutter, 2012). Based on this information, facilitate a class discussion with questions such as:
 - a. Why do you think low-income people spend more money on lottery tickets (proportional to their income) than higher-income people?
 - b. Do you think it is related to feelings of powerlessness and futility as suggested by Beckert and Lutter? Why or why not? If so, what impact might this have on low-income people who gamble?
 - c. How are low-income people and low-income communities affected by gambling and gambling policies? Are they affected differently than people who have more money or who live in wealthier communities? How so?

Cited

Beckert, J., & Lutter, M. (2012). Why the Poor Play the Lottery: Sociological Approaches to Explaining Class-based Lottery Play. *Sociology*, 47(6), 1152–1170. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512457854>

3. Display the following chart (also available [here](#)). Have students reflect on the chart and then facilitate a discussion using questions like those below. You can also view a [list](#) of all the community grants for 2014/15. Students might want to check out how much came to their community and how it was used.



- a. What are your thoughts on the way gambling revenues are distributed? Does the distribution justify thinking of gambling as a tax? Why or why not?
- b. Do you think the distribution is in any way targeted to benefit those who pay the most (i.e., low-income people and low-income communities)? Here it might be helpful to analyse the [list](#) cited above.
- c. If you could decide how revenues from gambling were distributed, where would you allocate them? Why?

Gambling competencies

Big idea

- As humans, both individually and as communities, we need to learn how to manage gambling in our midst

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
- 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

For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Centre for Addictions Research of BC, see: www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/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 reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)

Social studies 10

Big idea

- Worldviews lead to different perspectives and ideas about developments in Canadian society

Competencies

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to: ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Assess the significance of people, places, events and developments, and compare varying perspectives on their historical significance at particular times and places, and from group to group
- Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups during this time period

Social Studies – Political Studies 11

Big ideas

- Understanding how political decisions are made is critical to being an informed and engaged citizen
- Decision making in a democratic system of government is shaped by the unequal distribution of political and social power

Competencies

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze data; and communicate findings and decisions
- Evaluate how factors, forces, events, or people influence developments, outcomes, or decisions (significance, relevance, and pertinence)
- Explain how different ideologies and worldviews shape perspectives on the same political issue and information (political perspectives)
- Analyze interrelationships between objectives and intended or unintended results (interrelationships, objectives, and results)

Social Studies – Social Justice 12

Big ideas

- Social justice issues are interconnected
- The causes of social injustice are complex and have lasting impacts on society

Competencies

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups and individuals at different times and places (continuity and change)
- Determine and assess the long- and short-term causes and consequences, and the intended and unintended consequences, of an event, legislative and judicial decision, development, policy, and movement (cause and consequence)
- Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial actions in the past or present after considering the context and standards of right and wrong (ethical judgment)