



Big Ideas (about gambling)¹

Every human society appears to have accepted gambling, legal or otherwise, in some form or another.

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.

Learning Standards (competencies and content)

Students need to learn to ...

- 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

By exploring content such as ...

- the role of gambling in different cultures
- the changing ways cultures have interacted with gambling over time
- the various constructs (e.g., social pastime, criminal behaviour, disease, occupation) used to characterize gambling
- the social, political and health impacts of various types of gambling
- the relationship between political and social concepts (e.g., capitalism, socialism, consumerism) and gambling
- the relationship of equity/inequity of material wealth to patterns of gambling
- the role of political priorities in shaping gambling patterns and outcomes

¹ Gambling, for the purposes of this curriculum, should be seen as encompassing a broad range of gaming activities, such as lotteries, scratch cards, sports betting, casino games, bingo, slot machines, Internet poker and video gaming. These activities seem to impact our brains in ways similar to drug use and can influence the way we think, feel or behave.

Students need to learn to ...

- 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
- explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- develop personal and social skills to reflect on and manage personal behaviour and choices related to gambling

By exploring content such as ...

- the interconnected relationship of types of gambling, personal factors and community context in understanding risk and harm related to gambling
- the use of non-binary models (e.g., Venn diagrams or quadrant models) in exploring gambling-related issues
- media awareness and critical thinking
- deconstructing messages to determine whose interests are being served
- self-examination and the exploration of ideas without immediately passing judgement
- concepts like probability, chance, and randomness and the common fallacies in handling these concepts
- ways of calculating consequences and weighing costs and benefits
- the emotional and social appeal of gambling and potential cognitive distortions
- the design of gambling mechanisms and settings
- ways to assess personal risk and distinguish between entertainment and problematic behaviour
- decision-making skills that incorporate rational processing and emotional regulation
- support and leadership skills within peer group, family and community

The [Centre for Addictions Research of BC](#) at the University of Victoria, in collaboration with the BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program, has been developing a variety of instructional examples and professional learning resources to help teachers apply this gambling literacy curriculum. The centre will continue to develop instructional examples under the [iMinds](#) brand and is willing to consult with schools and districts about their particular needs. These instructional examples all contribute not only to building the gambling literacy competencies outlined above but also support relevant big ideas, curricular competencies and core competencies (below) outlined in [British Columbia's redesigned curriculum](#).

