# Sports betting and advertising

This is one activity in a sequence designed to challenge students to develop a stronger understanding of gambling and the ways in which it presents risks for young people across all socio-cultural groups. This activity aims to deconstruct advertising, recognise the proliferation of sports advertising and support students to develop plan for personal safety. These resources were developed in collaboration with [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) and [Liquor and Gaming NSW](https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/). The activity sequence includes three lessons.

1. Some truths about gambling
2. Sports betting and advertising
3. Online gambling
4. Gambling – seeking help

Duration: 65 minutes

## Focus of the learning

* Consider the influence of gambling advertisements, particularly for sports betting and online gambling games.
* Critically analyse the mixed messages presented through advertising, media and online sources.
* Consider the ways in which personal values may be shaped by advertising and challenge misconceptions.
* Demonstrate an understanding of taking responsibility for their own actions in relation to gambling and sports betting.
* Challenge misconceptions that people need to be engaging in gambling and betting to enjoy sport.
* Recognise that gambling advertising, particularly associated with sporting, is widespread and can often create mixed messages and influence our decisions.
* Critique the advertising of gambling and challenge advertising techniques that promote excitement, glamour and skill and promise easy financial and social rewards.

## Suggested course outcomes and content

### Outcomes

3.1 Evaluate how contextual factors influence attitudes, values and behaviours.

3.2 Analyse the positive and negative implications of technology and digital media on self-concept, independence, relationships and health behaviours.

5.1 Critically analyse situations, attitudes and behaviours that influence independence, health, safety and wellbeing in different contexts.

5.2 Recognise and respond appropriately to situations which may be limiting or harmful to self and others.

### Content

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Learning context | Content |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | **Personal values and beliefs**   * influences on values and beliefs, e.g. technology, social and cultural norms, media, family, relationships * influence of values, attitudes and beliefs on decisions and actions in various contexts   **Digital competencies**   * online safety, e.g. digital footprint, scams, security, bullying and harassment * positive and negative influences of technology, e.g. online communities, connecting with others, gaming, body image |
| Drugs and alcohol  Focus: Making safe and responsible choices | Responsible behaviour   * gambling safely |

## Teaching notes

### Sports betting and advertisements

Participation in most forms of gambling in NSW is declining, but online betting is increasing. This rise has been attributed to how easy it is to place bets on sport and racing online. Sports betting is big business with over $270 million spent on advertising in 2018.

The proliferation of online and mobile gambling channels and the normalisation of gambling through advertising within sport have changed the way young people are exposed to and impacted by gambling. For young people who follow sport, gambling promotion is a normal part of the experience. Ground signage, team uniforms, sponsorship deals and advertising all add to the ubiquity of the message on television, radio and social media There are now strict rules about gambling ads that appear on TV, radio and online.

These are managed by the [Australian Communications and Media Authority.](https://www.acma.gov.au/rules-gambling-ads) The rules state that:

* no gambling advertising or promotion of odds is allowed during play
* no promotion of odds is allowed during breaks in play (such as half time)
* no promotion of betting odds by commentators and representatives of gambling services (that are, or appear to be, at the venue) are allowed from 30 minutes before play until 30 minutes after play.

Broadcasters are not allowed to promote gambling content that is socially irresponsible. For example, the content must not:

* target children or suggest they are participating in betting and gambling
* exaggerate how likely someone is to be successful
* make a connection between betting or gambling and alcohol

Additional rules also apply from 5.00am to 8.30pm to protect children who may be watching or listening. The public are encouraged to make a complaint against a broadcaster if they feel the rules have been broken, as happened to [Foxtel at Easter 2021](https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/disappointing-foxtel-breaches-broadcasting-rules-over-gambling-ad-20210914-p58rfn.html).

The [NSW Youth Gambling Study of 2020](https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/research2/research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) found that young people noticed gambling advertising at least once a week on television, online or in social media. Nearly one-third of young people thought gambling was normal when it came to sport, and some believed that knowing the odds is part of sport and makes it more exciting.

### Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready)

### Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio-visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

### Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

## Learning experiences

### Activity one – Gambling advertisements (25 minutes)

As a whole group, students discuss their favourite sporting activities or events – live and televised or streamed through media. Use the following questions to guide the discussion.

* Using a show of hands, how many students have seen advertising for sports betting through the media?
* What does this advertising look like – what form does it take? For example, ground signage, sponsorship of team uniforms, and advertising.
* Who is the audience for gambling advertising? Provide reasons for the answer.
* Consider the advertising associated with the following sports or activities and identify differences in prevalence and type of advertising and reasons for differences, for example, surfing vs Rugby League, netball vs basketball, lawn bowls (ABC) vs tennis, Women’s W League soccer vs Men’s A League soccer, cricket vs iron man.
* What influences the amount and type of advertising and gambling promotion associated with a sport or physical activity? For example, gender of participants, gender of viewers or target audience, how the activity is streamed or viewed (TV, live, catch up TV, YouTube, social media), target audience, location, prime time streaming and viewing, social acceptance and popularity of activities and participants, funding and sponsorship.

Students access examples of sports betting advertisements and critique the messages and methods used to send messages. Consider what is most appropriate the students you teach. For example:

* Sportsbet mobile app — [Bet with Mates](https://youtu.be/EjxP0dak1I4)
* Ladbrokes — [Ladbroke It](https://youtu.be/DtEjBRw-CyU)
* William Hill — [Let the good times roll](https://youtu.be/jpGSVpEpZHo)
* TAB — [Long may we play](https://youtu.be/mEDdRTO7bjU)

Use the following questions to critique the above advertisements:

* What key messages are the advertisements sending? How do they send these messages?
* Who are the target audience for these advertisements? Do the messages and methods used vary based on the audience?
* How do the advertisements encourage people to bet or gamble?
* How have betting agencies made gambling more accessible and easier for individuals? How may this influence betting behaviour across communities?
* To what extent have betting agencies made themselves a core part of sport?
* If you were to set some laws to manage gambling advertising during live play, what would they be?
* In 2019 new laws were brought in by the [Australian Communications and Media Authority](https://www.acma.gov.au/) to carefully manage [gambling advertising](https://www.acma.gov.au/gambling-ads-during-live-sport-streamed-over-internet) during live play. What do you think prompted these new rules? Consider how the timing of advertisements could influence people’s gambling behaviour.
* In which ways are the advertisements sending mixed messages or promoting myths about gambling?

Choose another product or service and explain in what ways gambling advertisements are similar and/or different to advertising for other products and services. Are messages and methods of advertising more subtle or obvious?

* In pairs or small groups, students discuss the messages and methods used by advertisers to promote gambling as exciting, glamorous and skilful and promising easy financial and social rewards. Which parts of the advertisements viewed represent reality? Is the reality ever presented in advertisements?
* Students reflect on other influences on people’s gambling behaviours such as family, past experience and winnings, access to gambling apps.
* Discuss what may increase people’s susceptibility or influence from betting advertisements?
* In the group discussion, consider the impact of family experience and values, gender, cultural values and beliefs, socioeconomic status, location, religion and peers as well as any others suggested by students or relevant to the school context.

### Activity two – Reclaim the Game (20 minutes)

Introduce students to the [Reclaim the Game](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/awareness-campaigns/reclaim-the-game) campaign and associated advertisements on [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/).

* Invite students to share their impressions of the campaign and their own understandings of sports gambling with a partner.
* As a whole group, discuss:
  + what is the main message behind the advertisements?
  + how effectively does it use the traditional feel of a sports betting ad to get the message across?
  + to what extent are children exposed to gambling and gambling messages? Do children have a strong understanding of the risks and outcomes associated with gambling?
  + to what extent do you believe gambling has become a social norm within Australian society?

View the clip “[The effect of gambling advertising on our kids](https://youtu.be/POa6UB1Xqi4).” (1min 48 sec).

* Predict the long-term impact of regular exposure of children to sports betting advertisements?
* How could you advocate for or make a difference to a child’s exposure to sports betting and gambling behaviours?

Students work in small groups to review the facts and data presented from the [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/learn-about-gambling/gambling-and-young-people/what-influences-young-people-to-gamble) and the four snapshots from the report. As a small group, students discuss the data and facts using the following questions:

* Is there anything in the data that surprises you?
* To what extent do you believe the data is accurate? Explain your reasons.
* What are the implications of this data for young people in your community today?

### Activity three – Rights and responsibilities (20 minutes)

This activity encourages students to recognise the rights and responsibilities associated with gambling and sports betting.

Create six equal groups of students. Each group is to brainstorm and create a list of rights and responsibilities in relation to sports betting and gambling for their assigned group:

* individuals
* groups or families
* venues, communities
* governments
* organisations
* media.

Share responses as a class and discuss the similarities and differences between rights and responsibilities across the six groups.

An example of individual rights and responsibilities for young people might include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rights – a young person has the right to: | Responsibilities |
| * Make their own decisions about where they spend their money. * Receive their own salary/ income from any workplace or business. * Engage in betting or gambling when they are over the age of 18. * Engage in betting or gambling with friends in informal settings. | * Think about the impact their gambling may have on others. * Contribute to household and living expenses as appropriate for their age, situation and income. * Not to cause others to have excessive debts because of their actions — for instance parents or caregivers. * To seek help if things get out of control. |

The next activity focuses on the impact of gambling on the individual and others.

Individually, students record their own name in the centre of a page (paper or online).

* Reflecting on the rights and responsibilities discussed, students record the names or relationship of people who could be affected if they were to gamble outside their means or gamble in a way which was not responsible or demonstrated control.
* Record the impact this gambling may have on the individuals, groups, relationships or other aspects of their life, e.g. financial stress may cause conflict or break up relationships.
* Students review the people they have recorded and reflect on the following:
  + How could these people or relationships provide support and help to avoid habits or behaviours associated with gambling?
  + How could these people or relationships provide a level of accountability or support for you in aspects of personal life? How could this accountability and support be mutually supportive?
  + In your opinion, at what point does gambling become harmful?
  + What could you do to keep other people accountable, provide support and seek help if they were to show signs of harm from gambling?

## Teacher notes – Gambling

Many people in NSW and across Australia gamble by playing poker machines, betting on sporting events, buying lottery tickets or playing casino games. For most people gambling is an occasional social activity that causes no harm. For some gambling can cause serious harm and have a negative impact on their social, emotional, mental and financial health.

Gambling is defined as the risking of something of value on a chance outcome in the hope of winning a more valuable prize than the original stake. Monetary gambling refers to spending real money on poker machines, race betting, sports betting, scratchies/lotteries, keno, bingo, poker, other casino games, esports betting, fantasy sports betting, and informal private betting. Simulated gambling is defined as games which imitate many core characteristics of gambling (e.g., the look, sound and actions) but which do not provide an opportunity for a cash payout. Examples of simulated gambling include video games with ‘mini’ gambling components, gambling-themed apps from an app store, free demo or practice games on real gambling websites or apps, and games with gambling components on social networking websites, as well as purchasing loot boxes and betting with in-game items.

According to the [NSW Gambling Survey 2019](https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/research2/nsw-gambling-survey-2019), most forms of gambling have declined in the last decade. In 2019, 53% of people in NSW engaged in some form of gambling in the previous 12 months. In 2016-17 they spent $9.53 billion, with lottery tickets and race betting most popular with people aged 45 – 64. Gamblers aged 18 – 24 years were most likely to bet on sports and use gaming machines. This age group are also more likely to experience harm from gambling. Some people who engage in risky gambling behaviours put themselves and others at risk of depression, distress, job loss, relationship breakdown, bankruptcy and illegal behaviour to fund debts.

The [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Gambling in Australia snapshot (2021)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/gambling) estimates that 1.33 million people in Australia were classified as being at some risk of gambling-related harm in 2018 with males more likely to suffer gambling related harm than females. It was found that risky gambling behaviours increased for young people aged 18-34 years and decreased for older people aged 35 -54 years. Less than one percent of people who gambled in NSW sought help for problems relating to their gambling in the past 12 months and it is estimated that the actions of one problem gambler can affect up to six other people around them.

As young people are particularly vulnerable to the normalisation of gambling through exposure to gambling advertising, gambling products, gambling in the home and the increase in the availability and accessibility of gambling through various online platforms, education is an important part of awareness raising.

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to gamble, including Lotto, Scratchies and online gambling.

### Young people and gambling

How young people are engaging with gambling is changing. This change is being driven by rapid technological changes, the high-level of engagement of young people with mobile technology and gaming, the increase in traditional and online gambling advertising and the expanding variety of games with gambling-like components and monetary gambling opportunities.

GambleAware NSW commissioned the [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) to investigate gambling and simulated gambling behaviours amongst young people aged 12 – 17 years in NSW. The study aimed to increase understanding of gambling engaged in by young people in NSW in order to prevent and reduce gambling-related harm. GambleAware NSW is acting on the findings of the report with a program of work focused on the education and raising of awareness of parents, young people, and the community, through schools, sport and online and social media.

For young people gambling is often presumed to be a small risk due to low access to licensed venues in which gambling takes place. However, this belief does not consider the ways in which gambling has changed over the last decade and fails to recognise the influence of gambling advertisement on young people. Recent findings from the CQUniversity study [Exploring the changing landscape of gambling in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/grant-funded-research) suggest that simulated gambling on social media, video games, smartphone applications and online betting are key issues for young people under 18. [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) further suggest that the proliferation of online and mobile channels and the normalisation of gambling through advertising within sport have changed the way young people are exposed to and impacted by gambling.

The [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) found that 70% of young people between the ages of 12-17 years had engaged in monetary gambling or played games with gambling components in the past year. This indicates a far higher proportion of young people engaging in gambling than many other forms of risk-taking including alcohol use, smoking and illegal drug use. On average, young people started gambling at around 11 – 12 years of age. This is also lower than the average starting age of 16 years for tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption ([Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/younger-people)).

According to the [Loot Boxes: Are they grooming youth for gambling](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/grant-funded-research) report by CQUniversity, more young people engaged in simulated gambling and purchased loot boxes in the past year than engaged in traditional forms of gambling. A loot box (also called a loot/prize crate) is a consumable item that can be redeemed to receive a randomised selection of other virtual items, or loot. This loot is tied to improving the gaming experience for players, and can range from cosmetic customisation options for a player's character, to game-changing equipment which increases a player’s chances of winning, to additional in-game currency. Loot boxes resemble gambling slot machines because no player skill is involved, and the outcome (prize) is randomly determined.

Experts have designed Ioot boxes to replicate many of the addictive elements of gambling (see below); they foster the impression of near-misses to encourage the purchases of more chances. They dole out rewards on just enough of a reinforcement schedule to keep players engaging with them, and they perpetually promise the chance of acquiring extraordinary rewards (jackpots). Many of these rewards are often available for direct purchase in the game’s store, but for high prices, causing players to believe taking a risk on the chance of the loot box is better than spending the money directly, even though the odds are in the favour of the game.

Loot boxes are common in the best-selling video games and are a growing concern due to the risk and reward properties that closely align them with traditional gambling, the potential for encouraging greater gambling involvement, and the potential for associated gambling harm. Both adolescents and young adults who had either opened, bought or sold loot boxes within the last 12 months were also more likely to have gambled in the last 12 months, gambled more frequently and spent more money, suffered more gambling problems and related harm and have a more positive attitude towards gambling in general.

The proliferation of online and mobile gambling channels and the normalisation of gambling through advertising within sport have changed the way young people are exposed to and impacted by gambling. For young people who follow sport, gambling promotion is a normal part of the lived experience. Ground signage, team uniforms, information relating to gambling odds and scheduled advertising all add to the ubiquity of the message on both television and radio. Young people surveyed for the [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) reported frequent exposure to gambling advertising. This was most commonly noticed as advertising on television, online and on social media. Frequent exposure to gambling advertising appears to normalise the behaviour amongst young people. Access to online devices also influenced gambling participation. Focus group participants said that how often and how long they participated in simulated gambling was directly linked to how accessible their device was and the degree of parental monitoring.

The [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) revealed that most under-age gamblers are introduced to gambling by a family member, and that having a parent who gambles or friends who are involved in gambling may further increase the chance of risky gambling behaviours among young people. Furthermore, the study acknowledged that some young people have gambling problems, with 1.5% of respondents classified as problem gamblers and a further 2.2% as at-risk gamblers. Young people were more likely to be a problem or at-risk gambler if they had lower levels of wellbeing, were more impulsive or started gambling at a younger age

Research shows discussing gambling harm in schools is a powerful tool

Young people are likely to benefit from school-based intervention and prevention programs that are aimed at changing attitudes and beliefs related to gambling behaviours. It is also important to involve parents, carers, community leaders and educators so that they also understand the current gambling environment to enable them to minimise young people’s exposure to harm. in 2020 a literature review and teacher survey looked at how gambling harm prevention could be implemented. From the report it was concluded that:

* teachers are important for any school-based prevention program
* school programs which include a parent element are more likely to be successful
* school-based programs are more likely to lead to knowledge, awareness and attitude change than behaviour change
* any program should look at the convergence of gaming and gambling.

## References

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