

6

Discussing gaming

December 2022

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Activity introduction

Quick summary

This lesson is designed to follow on from the lesson 'Gambling, Gaming and the Brain.' In the previous lesson, students view short videos exploring the brain's response to gambling and the similarities of some gaming features to gambling. They consider various viewpoints on whether these features should be allowed in games for those under 18. In this lesson, students refine their ideas and create a discussion essay focused on the issue of loot boxes in video games.

Learning intention

To write a discussion essay.

NSW Syllabus outcomes

- **EN4-1A** responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure
- **EN4-3B** uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
- **EN4-4B** makes effective language choices to creatively shape meaning with accuracy, clarity and coherence
- **EN4-5C** thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts

General capabilities

Critical and creative thinking

Literacy

Ethical understanding

Personal and social capability

Relevant parts of Year 7 and 8 achievement standards

NSW Stage 4 English Syllabus Statement

By the end of Stage 4 students respond to a variety of texts critically, imaginatively and interpretively and compose accurate, clear and coherent texts. They use English in personal, social and learning contexts with increasing control and understanding of the form and features of language and structures of texts, and with increasing awareness of purpose, audience and context.

In speaking, writing and representing, students shape meaning through the thoughtful selection and ordering of appropriate content and by drawing on a widening repertoire of language choices. They can express a personal point of view, give words and images to their imaginings and compose logical argument. They experiment with form and language in different modes and technologies to produce various types of texts for specific purposes. As appropriate, they plan, draft and edit to produce polished texts.

Activity introduction

Students apply their knowledge of textual features and conventions to their texts. They constructively analyse and evaluate their own and others' compositions and they articulate their response to texts and to the process and experience of composing. Students reflect on their learning, becoming aware of how they learn and identifying what they have learned, effective ways to learn and what they need to learn next.

Australian Curriculum Year 7 Level Description

Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts, for example narratives, procedures, performances, reports and discussions, and are beginning to create literary analyses and transformations of texts.

Australian Curriculum Year 8 Level Description

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view, interpret, evaluate and perform a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts including newspapers, magazines and digital texts, early adolescent novels, non-fiction, poetry and dramatic performances. Students develop their understanding of how texts, including media texts, are influenced by context, purpose and audience.

Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts, for example narratives, procedures, performances, reports and discussions, and continue to create literary analyses and transformations of texts.

Topic

Discussion

Unit of work

Stage 4 English

Time required

80 minutes

Level of teacher scaffolding

The level of teacher scaffolding in this lesson will vary depending of the level of confidence your students have in essay writing. Independent writers will require little support, while others may need assistance to organise their ideas and form well structured paragraphs.

Resources required

- Learning intentions display (optional)
- [Inside the brain of a gambling addict - BBC News](#)
- [What are video game loot boxes and do they encourage gambling?](#)
- 'Discussion essay - Example'
- 'Discussion essay - Task outline'
- 'PIP Peer feedback observation sheet'

Keywords

Discussion, view, viewpoint, argument, perspective, impact, objective, unbiased, conditional language.

Teacher worksheet

Teacher preparation

This is the second lesson in a pair focused on developing a discussion essay based upon the connection between gambling and gaming. The first lesson focuses on engaging students in a verbal discussion about the brain's response to gambling and the connection between gambling and gaming, considering whether games targeted at our youth develop gambling habits. In this lesson students write a discussion essay, drawing upon their previous explorations.

Given that gambling can be a high-risk activity and is a priority concern for young people it is recommended that teachers and parents read the Facilitator pack before implementing the lesson. The pack provides teachers and parents with essential information about gambling harm amongst young people and clarifies the nature of gambling-related behaviours as well as how to approach sensitive topics.

It is important that students are aware of the importance of conducting critical and analytical conversations in a respectful manner. Your school may have a specific approach to scaffolding this form of conversation, in which case there is an opportunity in this lesson to reinforce expectations before engaging in discussion. If this is something less explicit within your school, a resource sheet 'Respectful Discussions' has been included to share with your class. You can also become more familiar with approaches by exploring the information on [Peer discussion and conferencing](#) available through the NSW Department of Education. The resource list on this page includes links to information on Accountable Talk, which the prompts and examples in this lesson relate to.

Learning intention

Students can write a discussion essay.

Success criteria

Students can:

- include an introduction, series of arguments and conclusion.
- include arguments for and against.
- use TEEL structure for individual paragraphs.
- include suitable language features such as third person, unbiased perspective and conditional language.

Teaching sequence

5 minutes - Lesson introduction

25 minutes - Part A: Features of a discussion text

45 minutes - Part B: Discussion essay

10 minutes - Reflection

Lesson introduction

Display the learning intention and success criteria for the lesson. This can be written onto the board, or the included resource can be displayed. Invite students to read and discuss the learning intention and success criteria to ensure understanding before beginning the lesson.

Part A:

Features of a discussion text

Note: It is recommended that this lesson is implemented in succession to the lesson 'Gambling, Gaming and the Brain'. This previous lesson provides the opportunity for students to explore the topic and consider various arguments and viewpoints before developing a discussion essay. If the previous lesson has not been conducted, it is important to ensure that students have viewed and discussed the following two videos before continuing on.

[Inside the brain of a gambling addict – BBC News](#)

[What are video game loot boxes and do they encourage gambling?](#)

Step 1

Begin the lesson by inviting students to share their responses to the reflection questions from the previous sessions:

- Why is it important to be able to identify all of the points for and against a particular issue?
- Who would use this information and when?

If you have not conducted the previous session, open a class discussion focused around these questions.

Allow time for students to share a variety of responses and insights. Guide them towards the understanding that people in charge of decision making for others need to be able to consider all perspectives and arguments before deciding upon an action or proposing changes relating to important issues.

Step 2

Explain to students that this lesson they will write a discussion text focused around the issues of loot boxes in video games. Provide them with 'Discussion essay example' and read it as a class. Invite students to explain what a discussion is and how it differs from other essays.

Step 3

Allow time for students to consider the second page of the handout, highlighting features of a discussion essay. After they have had adequate time to consider the features, invite students back to a shared conversation, posing the questions:

- How is the text structured?
- How is each paragraph structured?
- What tense is the piece written in?
- What types of words and phrases do are being used?
- What other features did you notice?

Part B:

Discussion essay

Step 1

Provide students with the 'Discussion essay – Task outline' and explain the expectations of the essay, making reference to the example and the previous class discussion.

Step 2

Provide time for students to write their discussion texts.

As they write, roam around the room answering questions and checking in with how students are progressing.

Step 3

With around 15 minutes left, prompt students to stop writing and share their work with a classmate. Have them provide feedback to each other 'PIP Peer feedback observation sheet.

Step 4

Provide students with time to make changes to their work and finalise their writing.

Reflection

Display the following questions for students and allow time for them to write individual responses to them.

- 1. How has developing this discussion text changed your understanding of gambling and gaming?*
- 2. What impact would reading your discussion have on someone else who is not familiar with the issue?*

- 3. Are there any members of our community that would benefit from reading these essays?*

Differentiation

This lesson provides the opportunity for students to develop a discussion essay. Each student will create a piece of writing of a different level of complexity, which reflects their knowledge, skills and capability. The nature of the feedback provided should suit their zone of proximal development and guide them to take the next steps in their learning.

Extension - During the peer feedback stage of the lesson, pair advanced writers with others working at a similar level to them. This will allow students to give each other specific and targeted feedback and also view other pieces of writing that may model text features and language use that they could consider adding to their own work.

Provision for Learning Support - Some students may find it challenging to develop and organise ideas. For students in this situation, it is important to conference with them early in the writing stage of the lesson and plan ideas collaboratively. This will then act as a scaffold to independent writing. Alternatively, if there are a number of students facing this challenge, they can work together in a small group with the teacher to complete the task collaboratively.

Discussion essay example

The purpose of a discussion text is to present both sides of an argument for consideration. Discussion texts are helpful to those in positions where they need to make an objective proposal or decision based on the needs of their community, such as their family, workplace, club or association, council or country.

Below is an example discussion text.

Should drivers have to pay tolls?

Taxes. Hard earned money that comes straight out of our pockets and into the hands of our government bodies. The intended purpose of our taxes is to enable our governments to create stable environments for us to live in. To allow access to health services, education and community spaces for all citizens. One of the most significant areas our taxes contribute to is transport. The public transport system and the development and maintenance of roadways. Why is it, then, that we are paying to drive on tollways around the country? Is this poor government planning and misallocation of taxpayer money, or does this enable us to advance our infrastructure at a heightened rate?

Traffic is a problem that most drivers have experienced. For some drivers, it is occasional, for others it is part of the daily routine. While taxpayer money does contribute to the development and maintenance of roads around the country, there are also additional opportunities to improve major roadways, creating better driving experiences for all. The contracting of private sector companies to create these roadways, with revenue made back through tolls is one way to be able to do this. With the public sector money being consumed by essential maintenance of existing roads, the development of tollways provides an opportunity to further build upon our infrastructure. The inclusion of tollways therefore allows for significant development of our roadways that would otherwise be unachievable.

The use of tollways can also be argued to be a more fair use of funds, as it is only those who use the roadways that pay for them and alternative routes are available to anyone who does not wish to drive on them. Attempting to publicly fund these types of major projects would require additional money to be directed from other budget areas to transport and roadways. Given that the cost of this kind of project reaches close to \$20 billion dollars, this would require great sacrifice to areas such as healthcare or education. Keeping the budget balanced and adequate funding to these other essential services is vital. The tollways allow these roads to be built without crippling other public services.

The continuation of tolls long term is also a point of contention. Once the construction of a particular road has been paid for, should tolls continue on that roadway? This has been a point of discussion across the country as tolls have continued on roads such as Melbourne's Citylink in order to fund subsequent projects. Some argue that this is reasonable, as it allows for smooth transition into the next project, others argue that this is just generating increased profits for private companies and the tolls should end as soon as that particular project has been paid for. Again, opinions on this topic can be impacted significantly by individual need and circumstance.

It can also be argued that roadways are not the only solution. Investing in tollways does allow easier commutes, but it promotes driving over other options that could be considered more suitable. Making driving a smoother experience encourages this as the primary option for transport and leads to an increased number of cars on the road. Another viable option would be investing more in the public

Part B: Discussion essay

transport system. By creating an efficient and reliable train network reaching more areas across the country, we could not only ensure smooth transport for Australians in a broader range of areas, but also contribute more significantly to environmental issues. Having more people on trains, trams and buses and less independent vehicles on the road would significantly reduce carbon emissions and allow Australia to better meet climate targets.

So what is the ultimate solution? Does the Australian government stop developing tollways and stagnate the improvement of roadways? Does there need to be a clause that ensures the removal of tolls once the roadway has been paid for? Do we, as individual citizens, need to remember that without the tolls these roads would not exist and we are free to use the routes that are otherwise available if we do not wish to pay to drive on them? This is an issue that needs to be viewed in light of the broader considerations and implications? What are the actual alternatives? Are they viable? And does the development of the tollways really have any significant impact on individual citizens who do not wish to use them?

Discussion essay features

Structure of discussion text

Introductory paragraph introduces issue and gives a preview of perspectives.

Series of paragraphs explaining reasons 'for' the issue.

Series of paragraphs explaining reasons 'against' the issue.

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Traffic is a problem that most drivers have experienced. For some drivers, it is occasional, for others it is part of the daily routine. While taxpayer money does contribute to the development and maintenance of roads around the country, there are also additional opportunities to improve major roadways, creating better driving experiences for all. The contracting of private sector companies to create these roadways, with revenue made back through tolls is one way to be able to do this. With the public sector money being consumed by essential maintenance of existing roads, the development of tollways provides an opportunity to further build upon our infrastructure. The inclusion of tollways therefore allows for significant development of our roadways that would otherwise be unachievable.

The use of tollways can also be argued to be a more fair use of funds, as it is only those who use the roadways that pay for them and alternative routes are available to anyone who does not wish to drive on them. Attempting to publicly fund these types of major projects would require additional money to be directed from other budget areas to transport and roadways. Given that the cost of this kind of project reaches close to \$20 billion dollars, this would require great sacrifice to areas such as healthcare or education. Keeping the budget balanced and adequate funding to these other essential services is vital. The tollways allow these roads to be built without crippling other public services.

The continuation of tolls long term is also a point of contention. Once the construction of a particular road has been paid for, should tolls continue on that roadway? This has been a point of discussion across the country as tolls have continued on roads such as Melbourne's Citylink in order to fund subsequent projects. Some argue that this is reasonable, as it allows for smooth transition into the next project, others argue that this is just generating increased profits for private companies and the tolls should end as soon as that particular project has been paid for. Again, opinions on this topic can be impacted significantly by individual need and circumstance.

Text features

Present tense

Third person

Connectives

TEEL structure for each paragraph:

Topic Sentence

Elaborate/ Explain

Evidence/ Examples

Linking Sentence

Discussion conventions

Conditional language

Balanced perspective

Unbiased, objective perspective

Part B: Discussion essay

Series of paragraphs explaining reasons 'against' the issue.

It can also be argued that roadways are not the only solution, investing in tollways does allow easier commutes, but it promotes driving over other options that could be considered more suitable. Making driving a smoother experience encourages this as the primary option for transport and leads to an increased number of cars on the road. Another viable option would be investing more in the public transport system. By creating an efficient and reliable train network reaching more areas across the country, we could not only ensure smooth transport for Australians in a broader range of areas, but also contribute more significantly to environmental issues. Having more people on trains, trams and buses and less independent vehicles on the road would significantly reduce carbon emissions and allow Australia to better meet climate targets.

Conclusion or recommendation, giving an objective overview of the issue or a suggestion for progress or improvement.

So what is the ultimate solution? Does the Australian government stop developing tollways and stagnate the improvement of roadways? Does there need to be a clause that ensures the removal of tolls once the roadway has been paid for? Do we, as individual citizens, need to remember that without the tolls these roads would not exist and we are free to use the routes that are otherwise available if we do not wish to pay to drive on them? This is an issue that needs to be viewed in light of the broader considerations and implications? What are the actual alternatives? Are they viable? And does the development of the tollways really have any significant impact on individual citizens who do not wish to use them?

Discussion essay – Task outline

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Task outline:

For this task you are to work on your own to write a discussion essay focused on the topic:

Should governments ban loot boxes in video games for those under 18?

Task expectations

Text structure and features

The key focus of this lesson is writing a well structured, impactful discussion essay. Refer to the example essay when developing your writing, and ensure that you:

- Structure your text to include an introduction, paragraphs explaining different arguments and perspectives and a conclusion.
- Develop each paragraph using the TEEL structure.
- Write in present tense with a third person perspective.
- Write using conditional language and an unbiased/objective point of view.

Content – accuracy of information

The arguments in your essay should be based upon factual information explored in the previous two lessons. Ensure that the perspectives shared in your essay are accurately described and all facts are correct. Refer back to the for and against arguments recorded in the previous lesson to help you include a range of perspectives. Additional research can be done while writing, to enhance arguments or add detail.

PIP Peer feedback observation sheet

Students work:

Students providing feedback:

Task Expectation	Positive	Improvement idea	Positive
Structure of text			
Language features			

PIP Peer feedback observation sheet

Students work:

Students providing feedback:

Task Expectation	Positive	Improvement idea	Positive
Structure of text			
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