

# 6

Gambling – good for society,  
or needs to be outlawed?

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# Activity introduction

## Quick summary

Students will explore two opposing perspectives on poker machines in this lesson, developing ideas and reasons about why gambling might be good for society, and also why it needs to be outlawed. From this understanding, they will read and analyse a package of articles in order to delve into the function and impact of poker machines.

Students will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of gambling, particularly the benefits and disadvantages of poker machines, and write a letter to the editor outlining their own point of view. Students will craft their contention and reflective commentary explaining their authorial decisions. This assessment task can be completed in isolation, or work as a complementary task.

If you chose to complete the additional task as an assessment task please see Assessment Task One: Letter to the editor and follow the instructions as outlined.

## Learning intentions

Students will:

- Consider how advertising companies approach their target audience and a pitch.
- Read a range of articles exploring the impact of poker machines on society.
- Analyse and reflect on the way writers use rhetoric to persuade.

## 21st-century skills

Communicating  
Community engagement  
Creative thinking  
Critical thinking  
Empathy  
Initiative  
Leadership  
Personal and social skills

## NSW Syllabus outcomes

- **EN11-2** uses and evaluates processes, skills and knowledge required to effectively respond to and compose texts in different modes, media and technologies
- **EN11-3** analyses and uses language forms, features and structures of texts, considers appropriateness for purpose, audience and context and explains effects on meaning
- **EN11-5** thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and analytically to respond to and compose texts that include considered and detailed information, ideas and arguments

## Activity introduction

### General capabilities

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

### Stage 6 Syllabus objectives

#### Objective A

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- communicate through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

#### Objective B

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- use language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context.

#### Objective C

Through responding to and composing a wide range of texts and through the close study of texts, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in order to:

- think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical.

#### Topic

Gambling – good for society, or needs to be outlawed?

#### Unit of work

Stage 6 English

#### Time required

120 minutes

#### Level of teacher scaffolding

Low to Medium – students will be relatively self-directed in exploring the different articles and identifying the key information within them. Teachers will need to facilitate some class discussion and some collaboration between students.

#### Resources required

- Appendix A: Student worksheet
- Appendix B: Student worksheet
- Appendix C: Assessment rubric
- Appendix D: Assessment rubric
- A device capable of presenting a video to the class
- A device (per student or group) to access the three different articles online

#### Keywords

Poker machines, gambling ban, gambling harm, rhetoric, persuasive writing, letter to the editor, assessment task, risky activity, pitching ideas, pitching advertising, article analysis, benefits of gambling for society, positive aspects of gambling, outlawing gambling, target audience.

# Teacher worksheet

## Teacher preparation

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

## Learning intention

Students will:

- consider how advertising companies approach a target audience and a pitch.
- read a range of articles exploring the impact of poker machines on society.
- analyse and reflect on the way writers use rhetoric to persuade.

## Success criteria

Students can:

- make detailed notes including summary and commentary on extended pieces of writing.
- evaluate information to determine what is most persuasive.
- write a letter to the editor presenting a point of view.
- reflect on their own writing and how it achieved the outcome intended.

## Teaching sequence

- 15 minutes - Part A: The Pitch  
– convince me ...
- 60 minutes - Part B: The impact of  
poker machines
- 40 minutes plus - Part C: Letter to  
the editor
- 5 minutes - Reflection

## Lesson introduction

Work through this resource material in the following sequence:

# Part A:

## The Pitch – Convince me ...

### Step 1

Present students with the following two positions:

- That gambling should be outlawed
- That gambling is good for society.

Ask students to get into small groups and come up with as many arguments as they can for each topic in 5 minutes. Students should write down all their ideas without evaluation, and then when the time is up, share their favourites with the class.

### Step 2

Show students the following clip: Gruen, an Australian television show focused on debunking advertising myths, where two advertising companies are given a brief to create an advertisement for an “unsellable” product.

**The Pitch:** Convince us to outlaw gambling vs gambling is good for society.

**Link:** [youtube.com/watch?v=qQUL2jcEQ0o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQUL2jcEQ0o)

Ask students to highlight any arguments or ideas used in this video that they came up with and recorded in their list. Add any new ideas to their lists. Encourage and give students time to go back and write down their peer’s notes and opinions.

### Step 3

Facilitate a discussion about which pitch students think was the winner. Do they agree or disagree with the votes from the panel? Ask students to justify their position with evidence from the clip.

# Part B:

## The impact of poker machines

### Step 1

Explain to students that they are going to be reading and analysing three articles that make up a special package on poker machines, published by *The Conversation* in 2015. Based on their analysis of these three readings, students will be writing a letter to the editor arguing their perspective on the issue of poker machines.

### Step 2

- Direct students to the first article: [Bright lights, big losses: how poker machines create addicts and rob them blind.](#)

**Link:** [theconversation.com/bright-lights-big-losses-how-poker-machines-create-addicts-and-rob-them-blind-49143](http://theconversation.com/bright-lights-big-losses-how-poker-machines-create-addicts-and-rob-them-blind-49143)

- Students should read the article and complete a double-entry journal (Appendix A) to track the key arguments and their thoughts, comments, questions, connections and analysis. Students are to take particular note of how the writer uses rhetoric and stylistic elements to position an audience to agree with their point of view.
- When students have completed their double entry journal, ask them to swap their page with a classmate, and look to add an idea. When they receive their double entry journal back, ask students to reflect on what new ideas were added.

### Step 3

Ask students to read through the article: [15 things you should know about Australia's love affair with pokies](#) and take notes on each of the following points:

1. *What do you think is the most important point that is made in the article?*
2. *What are you finding challenging, puzzling or difficult to understand?*
3. *What question would you most like to discuss?*
4. *What is something you found interesting?*

**Link:** [theconversation.com/15-things-you-should-know-about-australias-love-affair-with-pokies-49230](http://theconversation.com/15-things-you-should-know-about-australias-love-affair-with-pokies-49230)

Facilitate a discussion with students, asking them to share their ideas and responses to the points in the article. Students will likely comment on the use of dot points and heavy reliance on statistics to present a point of view – the use of logic – based rhetoric is a key concept for students to appreciate and emulate in their own writing.

**Tip:** See <https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Take%20Note.pdf> for more detail on this particular way of taking notes.

## Part B: The impact of poker machines

### Step 4

Ask students to read through the article:  
How real are claims of poker machine community benefits?

**Link:** [theconversation.com/how-real-are-claims-of-poker-machine-community-benefits-49136](http://theconversation.com/how-real-are-claims-of-poker-machine-community-benefits-49136)

Clubs with poker machines in Australia say they provide significant financial support to local communities. Usually, this is signified by the support clubs provide to causes such as junior football clubs or charities.

Students should consider HOW this argument is made throughout the article. As they read, they should note down the evidence provided by the writer to support their point of view.

### Step 5

The final reading: Pokies add \$8.32b in value to Australian economy, manufacturers say.

**Link:** [smh.com.au/business/companies/pokies-add-8-32b-in-value-to-australian-economy-manufacturers-say-20180819-p4zycu.html](http://smh.com.au/business/companies/pokies-add-8-32b-in-value-to-australian-economy-manufacturers-say-20180819-p4zycu.html)

This article discusses how the yearly taxes derived from poker machines exceeded \$5.5 billion across the nation, which helps to bankroll significant public infrastructure and services, according to Gaming Technologies Australia (a group representing gaming manufacturers such as Aristocrat Leisure and Ainsworth Game Technology). The article explores various viewpoints on poker machines and challenges the audience to consider how and why poker machines may never be banned in Australia.

Students are asked to consider the state governments' budget increases due to revenue from poker machines and are encouraged to critically develop their opinions on the writer's intention and language features used in the article.

### Step 6

After reading the article students are encouraged to reflect on the following questions to develop an opinion and justification for their beliefs.

1. *What are the main points of this article?*
2. *What language techniques/features and persuasive techniques has the writer used in the article?*
3. *After reading this article, what are your views on poker machines and the government?*
4. *How effective are the language techniques/features?*



# Part C:

## Letter to the editor

### Step 1

Distribute Appendix B to students and take them through the task outline.

### Step 2

Students should write their letter to the editor and reflective commentary.

### Reflection

Ask students to complete the following sentences to reflect on their learning today: *I used to think ... But now I think ...* Students can share their reflections on their learning in pairs or small groups, or with the class.

### Differentiation

- The assessment task could be reimagined as a speech if more appropriate.
- Students may require a list of language features and/or persuasive techniques as required.

- Students may require assistance with reading and comprehending the contents of the articles.

### Extension

- Students could do some of their own research into poker machines to build their understanding of the issue, and to supplement their own writing.
- Students could write their own article voicing their opinion on whether poker machines are a positive or a negative influence on society.
- Students could use [canva](#) to produce a series of for and against social media posts for distribution into society.

### Provisions for learning support

Students may need support to identify the most crucial elements of the three readings. Students could be given a reduced number of readings –focusing on “15 things you should know about Australia’s love affair with pokies” would still give them enough content to write a persuasive response.

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## Teacher reflection

### Take this opportunity to reflect on your own teaching:

What did you learn about your teaching today?

What worked well?

What didn’t work so well?

What would you share?

Where to next?

How are you going to get there?

# Appendix A

## Double entry journal

Article: [Bright lights, big losses: how poker machines create addicts and rob them blind.](#)

**Link:** [theconversation.com/bright-lights-big-losses-how-poker-machines-create-addicts-and-rob-them-blind-49143](http://theconversation.com/bright-lights-big-losses-how-poker-machines-create-addicts-and-rob-them-blind-49143)

Quotation or key point from the article	Thoughts, comments, questions, connections How is rhetoric employed? What stylistic elements do you notice?

# Appendix B

## Letter to the editor

A letter to the editor is a presentation of a point of view on an issue currently being debated in a newspaper. Such letters are usually written by members of the public in response to a topical matter.

### Your task is to:

1. Construct a 500-word letter to the editor, presenting an argument based on how powerful poker machines are, using the ideas explored and information provided in the three articles published by *The Conversation*:
  - a. “Bright lights, big losses: how poker machines create addicts and rob them blind.”
  - b. “15 things you should know about Australia’s love affair with poker machines.”
  - c. “How real are claims of poker machine community benefits?”
2. Explain in 300 words how effectively your letter communicated the power of poker machines, making close reference to your use of rhetorical and stylistic devices.

Aim to achieve each of the following components in your letter:

- Open with a greeting, for example, ‘To the editor’.
- Aim for your opening sentence to spark the reader’s attention. Your goal is to immediately declare your position, and also encourage them to keep reading. If you want to directly reference the previously published articles from *The Conversation*, cite the date and title in brackets in your opening sentence.
- Present a persuasive overview as to why the power of poker machines is an important issue.
- Support your claims with reputable evidence - this can all be found in *The Conversation* articles, but you are welcome to do your own research.
- Present your opinion as to the solution to this issue.
- Sign off with your name.

# Appendix C

## Assessment rubric

### Assessment rubric part 1 – Letter to the editor (12 marks)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effectively composes a letter to the editor which thoroughly explores their viewpoint on the power of poker machines.</li><li>Effectively crafts a range of language devices or stylistic features to create an engaging and persuasive piece of writing.</li><li>Demonstrates effective control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.</li></ul>	10-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Competently composes a letter to the editor which explores their viewpoint on the power of poker machines.</li><li>Competently crafts a range of language devices or stylistic devices to create an engaging and persuasive piece of writing.</li><li>Demonstrates competent control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.</li></ul>	7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Composes a letter to the editor which somewhat explores their viewpoint on the power of poker machines.</li><li>Uses some language devices or stylistic devices to create a piece of writing.</li><li>Demonstrates some control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and form.</li></ul>	4-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attempts to compose a letter to the editor which has some relevance to their viewpoint on the power of poker machines.</li><li>Attempts to use some language devices or stylistic devices to create a piece of writing.</li><li>Demonstrates limited control of language.</li></ul>	1-3

# Appendix D

## Assessment rubric

### Assessment rubric part 2 – Reflective commentary (8 marks)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explains in a detailed and confident manner how the analysis of <i>The Conversation</i> articles enabled the creation of a piece of persuasive writing.</li><li>• Explains in a detailed and relevant manner how language has been used to create an engaging response in Part 1.</li><li>• Demonstrates effective control of language.</li></ul>	7-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explains how the analysis of <i>The Conversation</i> articles has enabled the creation of a piece of persuasive writing.</li><li>• Explains how language has been used to create an engaging response in Part 1.</li><li>• Demonstrates competent control of language.</li></ul>	5-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describes some aspects of the analysis of <i>The Conversation</i> articles.</li><li>• Makes some reference to the piece of writing in Part 1.</li><li>• Demonstrates some control of language.</li></ul>	3-4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides some relevant information about the piece of writing in Part 1 and/or their study of <i>The Conversation</i> articles.</li></ul>	1-2