

Gambling & the Brain

Activity Guide Grade 6-12



Know Your *Neuro*

Video Quiz Questions

- 1) What is high-risk gambling?
 - A. Betting that causes harm
 - B. Gambling that grows into an addiction
 - C. Gambling that causes problems or distress
 - D. All of the above
- 2) What happened in 2018 that changed gambling?
 - A. A federal law banning sports betting changed
 - B. Now, states can make their own laws about gambling
 - C. Nothing much, it was a normal year for gambling
 - D. Both A and B
- 3) What group is at higher risk of problem gambling?
 - A. Really old folks who go to the casino
 - B. Adolescents whose frontal lobe is still developing
 - C. Adults who do not like to take risks
 - D. Adults who gamble
- 4) Youth who have higher frontal lobe skills are:
 - A. At higher risk for problem gambling
 - B. At the same risk for problem gambling
 - C. At lower risk for problem gambling
 - D. Don't have any risk at all for problem gambling
- 5) What is an **estimation error**?
 - A. Accurately assessing the risks of making a bet
 - B. Overestimating how amazing you are at math
 - C. Believing you will never win anything, why try?
 - D. Underestimating the risk and possible harmful consequences and, overestimating your skill and the positive results of a bet
- 6) Who is the House, and why do they always win?
 - A. Your parents because they are always in control
 - B. The organization that runs the gambling games
 - C. A small amount of money charged for every bet
 - D. Both B and C

Classroom Activities

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

In a small groups or share pairs, ask students to brainstorm how they would handle the following scenarios:

- A billboard advertises sports betting as 'exciting' and shows a group of young people having fun doing it. What can you do if it influences you to want to try it?
- You buy a lootbox in your video game but don't get the tool you want? What do you do? What are the odds of getting the tool?
- Two of your best friends have downloaded a sports betting app. They want you to join and tell you that the app will give you money to begin. What do you do?
- A free casino game asks you for money once you run out of the 'free play money'. You are tempted to use your parents' credit card. What should you do? Why?
- A friend encourages you to go on a website that doesn't check age limits so that you can make real money bets. Do you?

Estimation Errors

Estimation Error: Overestimating one's skill level and the chance for positive results; underestimating harmful outcomes; exaggerated optimism or expectation of positive or immediate results.

Ask students to first guess what the odds are for the events listed below. Then, use **DiscoverTheOdds.com** to find the answer.

1. Winning the mega millions lottery?
2. Being hit by lightning?
3. Winning a bet with a friend on a high school basketball game?
4. Being bitten by a shark?
5. Getting a royal flush in a poker game?
6. Picking the winning horse at a race track?
7. Hitting the jackpot on a slot machine?
8. Picking the winning class president?

Discussion question: Have you ever overestimated the odds of winning something or underestimated the harmful outcomes of your actions? Please describe.

Warning Signs

Review the warning signs of problem gambling below. Do you or someone you know show any of these signs?

- **Chasing losses:** Going back to gamble more often or with higher stakes to win back money you already lost.
- **Failed attempts to stop:** Trying to cut back or quit multiple times without success.
- **Preoccupation:** Constantly thinking about past bets, future games, or ways to get money to gamble.
- **Escalating stakes:** Needing to bet larger amounts of money to feel the same excitement.
- **Gambling to escape:** Using bets to cope with stress, sadness, guilt, or boredom.
- **Damaged relationships:** Jeopardizing or losing a job, school progress, or close personal relationships because of the habit.
- **Stealing:** Stealing money to gamble.