



Life fluent

PSYCHOLOGY OF GAMBLING ACTIVITY

Step-by-Step Teacher Instructions

Every student starts with 5 points, have them write it on a sticky note or scrap of paper.

Announce, "We're going to play a quick game. You can choose to play or sit out each round. No wrong answer. Everyone starts with 5 points."

ROUND 1: THE HOOK

Teacher Script:

"I'm going to flip this coin. If it lands heads, you DOUBLE your points, so your 5 becomes 10. If it lands tails, you lose 2 points. Remember, you can sit out if you want."

Flip the coin.

The odds feel great. Most kids will play. Most will win. This is intentional. The stakes are in favor of the player, and the risk is quite low. This is exactly how gambling apps hook their users. Is it "beginner's luck" — or is it just a confidence boost designed to keep you coming back?

ROUND 2: ESCALATION

Teacher Script:

"Do you want to continue? If so, decide how many points you want to risk and if you want to bet heads or tails. Write it down. If you win, you gain that many. If you lose, you lose that many. Remember, you can sit out if you want."

Flip the coin.

"I want you to notice how you're feeling RIGHT NOW. If you won, are you feeling confident? If you lost, are you feeling like you want to win it back? Whatever the feeling, just notice."

In Round 2, students get to choose how much they bet, and what they are betting on. That feeling of choice makes the game feel more like skill than luck.

Students who won Round 1 tend to bet bigger because winning feels like a streak, not a coincidence. Students who lost want to bet big too, not because the odds changed, but because they want their points back.

ROUND 3: THE COMEBACK

Teacher Script:

"If you currently have FEWER points than you started with, meaning less than 5, you get a special comeback chance. You can bet up to DOUBLE what you currently have.

So if you have 3 points, normally you could only bet up to 3, but this round you can bet up to 6. Everyone else above 5 points, continue betting as you did in round 2. Remember, you can sit out if you want."

Flip the coin.

In Round 3, That 'special comeback chance'? Gambling apps do that too. They're called bonuses, free bets, and second chance offers.

They feel like the app is being generous, but what did it actually do? It got you to bet MORE.



ROUND 4: ALL IN

Teacher Script:

Here's the deal, this final round, losing means you go to ZERO. No matter how many points you have. But winning means you TRIPLE your points. Take a look at your points.

Do you want to play? Remember, you can sit it out if you want. Write down yes or no. If yes, what's your bet? Heads or tails?

Flip the coin.

Round 4 works because by this point students are emotionally invested in their points, even though they're just numbers on a piece of paper.

The all-or-nothing stakes trigger what psychologists call "loss aversion" the brain is so desperate to avoid ending on zero that it will take an irrational risk just to stay in the game.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

-Show of hands, how many of you felt something during that game? Excitement, anxiety, frustration, hope? Why? Was there anything at stake in this game?

-What were you telling yourself in those 20 seconds before you decided to play or not?

-Think back to Round 3. If you were losing, did that special comeback offer feel generous — or looking back now, does it feel more like it was designed to manipulate you into risking more?

-Did anyone choose not to play at all, or stop playing midway through? Why? And be honest, how did it feel watching everyone else play and potentially win?

-How many of you are happy with where you ended up? And here's the real question, does that result change how likely you are to want to play again? Does winning make you feel like you're on a roll, or does losing make you feel like your luck is about to turn?... And be honest, after this game, do you see yourself as a lucky person or an unlucky person?

Because here's what's wild, that feeling, whatever it is, is exactly what gambling is designed to create. And it's designed to keep you at the table either way.

BRIDGE TO LEARNING OBJECTIVES

"Everything you felt in that game, the excitement, the frustration, the urge to chase your points back, that was all for absolutely nothing. No money, no prize, no real stakes. Now imagine an app, designed by a room full of psychologists and engineers, putting that exact feeling in your pocket. Available 24/7. And this time it's not points. It's real money."

THE REST OF THE LESSON SHOULD HELP TEENS..

Describe how the psychological design of gambling apps influences decision-making and the risks it leads to

Analyze internal and external influences that make teens more vulnerable to online gambling

Demonstrate the ability to use refusal skills when facing peer pressure around gambling



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