



STUDY GUIDE



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Green Thumb
Theatre for Young People



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

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Where quality is more than a claim



Chasing the Money and the BC Curriculum

This Study Guide will help you decide how to prepare your students to see the play. There are also suggestions for how to work the presentation into your curriculum and how to find out more about the issue of youth problem gambling.

The BC Ministry of Education has outlined standards and expectations for student achievement in five key areas:

Reading
Writing
Numeracy
*Information and Communications
Technology*
Social Responsibility

(Reference BC Performance Standards, Ministry of Education)

The presentation of *Chasing the Money* in your school and the suggestions within this Study Guide directly relate to student development in the areas of Writing and Social Responsibility.

The following suggestions will help you to identify the areas of the curriculum that could be linked to the presentation of *Chasing the Money*.



Synopsis

Dennis Foon's novel *Double or Nothing* is based on this play. Have your students read the book too!

Kip, a teenager in his last year of High School, has a lot going for him. He's smart; his mother, his uncle, and his teachers all think he's wonderful; college is just around the corner, but...he's bored. Except when he has a bet going. Whether it's lunchtime poker or whether or not the English teacher will belch within twenty seconds, betting gives him "the buzz" that makes life worth living. And he usually seems to win.

Then he meets a wonderful girl whose father, King Hewitt, is a stage magician, an illusionist...and a big-time gambler. He introduces Kip to "real" gambling at the track and the casino where Kip quickly learns to be a big-time loser.

The disappearance of Hewitt's luck, resulting in his mysterious suicide, only fuels Kip's resolve to chase the big win until he loses his college fund, his friends and his job. In the end, he's left at the bottom of that slippery slope. Facing one last flip of the coin, Kip's future is in the balance.

CHARACTERS

<i>KIP</i>	<i>A High School student.</i>
<i>BONGO</i>	<i>Kip's friend and classmate.</i>
<i>MS. CHEESE</i>	<i>Kip and Bongo's English teacher.</i>
<i>UNCLE RALPH</i>	<i>Kip's Uncle and employer.</i>
<i>GEMMA</i>	<i>Kip's Mother.</i>
<i>JOEY</i>	<i>Kip's girlfriend and amateur magician.</i>
<i>KING HEWITT</i>	<i>Joey's Father, a master illusionist and addicted gambler.</i>

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Before the presentation, please remind students that:

It is rude and disruptive to talk, eat, or drink during the play.

Photos or recordings are not allowed.

Excessive movement can be distracting to others watching the play.



After the Play

After the play you may wish to use some of the following to initiate a class discussion or to focus journal writing.

Discussion & Journal Writing

PERSONAL CONNECTION

What were the most memorable moments of the play for you?

Describe how and why those moments were so effective.

How did *Chasing the Money* make you feel?

What in the play contributed to that feeling?

How did the play end?

Were you left with any questions?

What thoughts and feelings were you left with at the end of the play?

Did the situation remind you of people and situations you are familiar with?

Have you ever dealt with something like the issues in *Chasing the Money*? How did you handle it?

If you were friends with Kip, Bongo, or Joey what advice would you give them?

Do you believe gambling is a problem in your community? Your school?

WRITING, DESIGN, PRESENTATION

What do you think is (Dennis Foon) the playwright's point of view on gambling?

What do you think was Dennis Foon's intention in writing this play?

Did he achieve this intention?

Was the play well written?

What makes a play well written? What do you look for?



After the Play

Discussion & Journal Writing

WRITING, DESIGN, PRESENTATION

Were the characters believable and interesting?

Were the characterizations well written? Well performed?

Was the play well directed?

What moments in the play illustrate this?

How did the designer of the set help create the environment and tell the story?

What about the sound, lighting and costumes?

What was realistic about the design? What was unusual or fantastical?

How did the design choices enhance the presentation?

Was the ending of *Chasing the Money* powerful?

How did the playwright, actors, designer and director create this moment?

DECISION MAKING & ETHICS

Did Kip make wise decisions during *Chasing the Money*?

What factors influenced his decision making?

What pressures did Kip, Bongo and Joey face during the play?

What support did they each have?

Did Kip behave ethically? Why or why not?

What about King Hewitt? Joey? Kip's Uncle?

Is it ethical for gambling to be legal? Why or why not?

Are there limits or restrictions that make it ethical?

What about internet gambling?



After the Play

Discussion & Journal Writing

GAMBLING

Did you learn anything about gambling by watching the play?

Was there any new information regarding youth gambling, or problem gambling?

Do you think Kip has a problem with gambling? Why or why not?

What about King Hewitt?

Why does Joey have such a negative reaction to Kip's gambling?

Did Kip's mother and uncle make any mistakes regarding Kip?

Which characters in *Chasing the Money* need outside help? Is there help available for people in their situation?



Grades 8 to 10

Specific areas of the Career and Personal Planning curriculum can be linked to aspects of the play. Suggested connections follow.

**Grade
8 - 10**

Career & Personal Planning ACTIVITIES

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Chasing the Money is a wonderful catalyst to explore issues of decision making, personal values, self esteem and personal well being.

What choices did Kip make?

What was he valuing by making those choices?

What choices did other characters make?

What were they valuing?

What do you think Kip does at the end of the play? Why?

web reference

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/capp/8plapro.htm>

Information on the planning process

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - *Healthy Living, Mental Well Being*

Chasing the Money can be a great catalyst for discussions on the impact of problem gambling on self esteem, emotional, physical and mental well being as well as the characters' personal values, decision making and future goals. What choices did Kip make?

Did the characters in *Chasing the Money* have high self esteem? How could you tell?

Did gambling change their self esteem? Was this a temporary or long lasting change?

How did gambling affect the characters physical, emotional and mental well being?

How did gambling affect their decision making and ability to reach their goals?



Grades 8 to 10

Career & Personal Planning ACTIVITIES

**Grade
8 - 10**

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - *Healthy Living, Mental Well Being*

At what point did gambling stop being entertainment and become addiction for Kip?

Which characters were able to identify gambling as a problem? Why were they able to see it and Kip was not?

What personal values did Kip and Joey demonstrate? How did their values come into conflict?

Why did the characters make the decisions they made?
What future goals were they aiming for?

What decision do you think Kip will make at the end of the play? What factors influence his decision making?

web reference

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/capp/8perhea.htm>
Information on healthy living

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/capp/8permen.htm>
Information on mental well-being

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - *Substance Abuse Prevention*

What attitudes and actions demonstrated that Kip had become a problem gambler?

What impact did that have on those around him?

How did his personality and the choices he made change as he became addicted?

web reference

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/capp/8persub.htm>
Information on substance abuse



Grades 8 to 10

Fine Arts DRAMA

GET IDEAS!

Drama Games and Role-Play ideas on Green Thumb's website
www.greenthumb.bc.ca

WANT MORE DEPTH?

See *After the Play* discussion questions on pages 5 to 7.

Math STATISTICS

SCENES

Have students work in small groups to select a scene from *Chasing the Money*. Encourage them to recall the key aspects of that scene - characters, conflict, opening and closing moments. Students can then improvise the scene, allowing new possibilities to emerge within the improvisation.

How did it feel to play that character?

Did you learn anything about the character from playing this role?

Did you learn anything about the situation?

How was your portrayal similar to, or different from, the one in *Chasing the Money*?

Did your scene go in a different direction than the one Dennis Foon (the playwright) created? Why did this happen?

What do you think was Dennis Foon's intention in writing *Chasing the Money*?

Did your scene meet his intention?

Although many gamblers feel that gambling is all about luck, or skill, it is really all about probability. Legal gambling is random and has no pattern that can be predicted or learned. It is possible, however, to use mathematics to determine the likelihood of winning or losing a game.

What types of gambling have the best "odds"?

What types have the worst?

What is it about how the games work that determines the probability?

web reference

<http://www.bcreponsiblegaming.ca/other/odds.html>
Information on the odds of winning in various forms of gambling

Grade
8 - 10



Grades 11 to 12

Social Studies 11 DISCUSSION & RESEARCH

SOCIAL, LEGAL & ECONOMIC ISSUES

Gambling is a legal entertainment that provides considerable income to business and government. Like drinking alcohol, it leads to certain negative social consequences.

What is the role of the individual, advocacy groups and the government in monitoring and regulating legal entertainment like gambling and drinking alcohol?

Grade
11-12

web reference

BC's Partnership for Responsible Gambling
Information on the impact on youth of problem gambling:

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/youth.html>

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/youth2.html>

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/youth3.html>

Civic Studies 11 DISCUSSION & RESEARCH

Youth Problem Gambling is a topic that could be used to meet learning outcomes in:

Critical thinking skills.

Research skills and media literacy

Communication and presentation skills.

For research use the sites listed in this Guide under *I need more information* on page 15.



Grades 11 to 12

Law 12 DISCUSSION & RESEARCH

Students can research and discuss the following Law related aspects of *Chasing the Money*.

What laws regulate gambling in Canada?

What laws affect youth gambling?

What laws affect internet gambling?

Are the laws in place just and effective in dealing with the issues raised in *Chasing the Money*?

Grade
11-12



Grades 11 to 12

English & Fine Arts

THEATRE PRODUCTION 11-12

GET IDEAS!

Drama Games and Role-Play ideas on Green Thumb's website
www.greenthumb.bc.ca

WANT MORE DEPTH?

See *After the Play* discussion questions on pages 5 to 7.

Dennis Foon is a well respected Canadian playwright. *Chasing the Money* is an opportunity to see a contemporary Canadian play performed by professional actors. Discussion can focus on:

Comparing the issues and themes in *Chasing the Money* to Canadian plays of other eras.

The design and direction challenges of creating a play for touring and presentation in high school gymnasiums.

Comparing *Chasing the Money* to other work by Dennis Foon.

Grade
11-12

Students can be asked to respond to the production through:

Writing - a review, the scene that follows Kip's decision at the end of the play.

Drama - role-play or improvisation to explore themes or moments of particular interest; improvisation to explore what happens after Kip's final decision.



The Facts - Youth Gambling

"Today, children and adolescents are informed via the school system about the dangers inherent in smoking, alcohol, and drug consumption. Few, however, are informed as to the addictive qualities potentially inherent in gambling activities. Adolescents only become cognizant of this after either they or their friends develop problematic gambling behaviours. It is believed that this lack of public awareness is contributing to the increasing number of children and adolescents who are currently struggling with gambling problems."

From:

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours

Faculty of Education, McGill University

<http://www.youthgambling.com>

How Big a Problem Is it?

The number of young people who are gambling is increasing at a significant rate. It is now more common than smoking or drug use. A study in Montreal shows 30% of Grade 7 students gamble at least once a week.

Young people are two to four times more likely to become problem gamblers than are adults.

Gambling is often not perceived as dangerous, simply as entertainment. It's seen as a way to "spice up" familiar or tedious tasks.

Many gambling activities are very similar to gaming activities - it is easy for a young person to cross from one to the other, without a significant behaviour change.

Gambling is easily accessible. Young people find opportunities to gamble online, at corner stores and at school and social events.

Youth problem gambling can contribute to loss of self-esteem and motivation, a deterioration in family and peer relationships, poor results at school and work, social isolation, addiction to other substances and illegal activity to fund the gambling.



The Facts - Youth Gambling

I Need More Information

web reference

There are many web sites that are designed to encourage internet gambling. The sites listed below are different. They are good resources for information about gambling, how it works and how to tell when it becomes a problem.

<http://www.youthgambling.com/>

Information on youth gambling from McGill University

luckyday.ca

Information on youth gambling

www.zoot2.com

Site for teens on alcohol, drugs, gambling and tobacco

www.aadac4kids.com

Check out My Room for Kids

www.youthbet.net

Youth gambling, games and surprising gambling statistics

www.teengambler.com

U.S. site discussing teen gambling issues

Research, support and more information:

<http://www.b cresponsiblegambling.ca/problem/youth.html>

<http://responsiblegambling.org/>

<http://sano.camh.net/resource/pgam.htm>

<http://www.youthgambling.org/>

<http://www.ncpgambling.org/>



The Facts - Youth Gambling

No Talent Needed...

With a sport or any other skill based competition or game, some people have natural talent and/or they practice to improve their technique and improve their chances of winning. Gambling isn't really a game, though. Gambling is completely random, not based on skill, experience, or talent. The fact is, so-called "systems" can't improve a gambler's chances because no system can predict or overcome the randomness of chance. You can't get better at it, no matter how much you play, or how smart you are.

Paying for Fun...

Gambling is meant to be entertainment. Like going to a movie it will cost you money.

Lucky or Not...

You can feel lucky, wear your lucky shirt and play your lucky machine – the odds are still against you winning. Gaming makes money for the operators of the machines or casinos because people lose more than they win. Legal gambling is designed to ensure that in the long run the "house" (operators of the casino, or lottery) is guaranteed to win.

Winning & Losing...

Although the odds are against it, once in a very long while someone wins. You are more likely to be struck by lightning than to win big! Over the long run, most people will lose more than they win because the odds are not in their favour. There is no reason to believe that a losing streak will be replaced by a winning streak.



Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling is just as serious as any other out of control habit - it can destroy many things you care about in your life. Pretending it's not serious won't change that.

You Might Have a Problem If...

You think about gambling all the time - especially if you're thinking about playing when you're supposed to be doing something else.

Gambling takes up most of your spare time. It's the main source of entertainment in your life.

Someone else is worried about your gambling. You feel annoyed by others' criticism of your gambling.

You decided to stop gambling, maybe even promised someone you'd stop...but you're still doing it.

You've stopped hanging out with your old friends. All your new friends are gambling buddies.

You have to borrow money - either to hide your losses...or to keep playing.

You gamble more than you plan to; then try to win back your losses.

You purposefully try to hide your gambling.

You only really feel good when you're gambling.

You've told people you're winning when you're not.

What To Do If You Think You Have a Problem...

If the rush you get from gambling has become the centre of your life, gambling and chasing that good "winning" feeling begin to matter more than anything or anyone else, you have become a problem gambler.

But don't give up! You can change this and get your life back!



Problem Gambling?

What To Do If You Think You Have a Problem...

Problem gambling is a lot like any other addiction. The first step in recovery is admitting you have a problem! The next step is getting the help you need to change. Here are some resources you might consider:

Problem Gambling Help Line - 1-888-795-6111 (In B.C.)

Counseling information and referral

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/treatment.html>

Treatment information

www.gamblersanonymous.org

Gamblers Anonymous

www.gam-anon.org

Gam-Anon

<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/mtgdirCAN.html#CANbc>

For meetings in your region

www.teengambler.com

U.S. site discussing teen gambling issues

If Someone You Know Has a Problem...

GET INFORMATION!

Discussions, Brainstorming, Working with Controversial Issues & Drama Games on Green

Thumb's website

www.greenthumb.bc.ca

Get help for yourself.

Gam-Anon provides assistance and support to families living with someone who has a gambling problem. (See box above)

Remember you can't make someone stop gambling.

Encourage them to get professional help. Don't try to counsel them yourself.

Let the person know you care about them, that you're concerned about their gambling. Remember it's the behaviour that's the problem, not the person.

Tell the person how their actions are affecting others. Be specific.

Provide information, not advice.

Try not to sound judgemental. Remember to be supportive.

Check out the resources and information listed in this Guide.



Founded in 1975 to develop and produce original Canadian plays for young audiences Green Thumb Theatre has emerged as a leader in theatre for young people.

Green Thumb Theatre believes that youth face the same scope of issues, problems, concerns and interests that adults do. We invite audiences to re-examine their feelings, prejudices, beliefs and aspirations by producing plays that encourage discussion, debate and critical thinking skills in youth.

As society diversifies, it is more important than ever that people respect each other and each other's differences. Our mission is to enlighten and empower young people by providing accessible,

Study Guide
Theresa Goode

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Ereca Hassell

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Green Thumb Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and uses actors who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

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