

Thinking Beyond the Box



COACHES' HANDBOOK

Odyssey of the Mind Pledge

"Odyssey of the Mind is in the air
In my heart and everywhere.
My team and I will reach together
To find solutions now and forever.
We are Odyssey of the Mind!"





Greetings and welcome to Georgia Odyssey of the Mind,

Creativity is alive and well in Georgia and Odyssey of the Mind plays a large role. Each year we welcome students from all parts of our state in grades K-college to showcase their creative problem-solving skills at our regional tournaments and state finals competition. As a career educator I can assure you that Odyssey of the Mind provides sound support for many educational initiatives including Georgia Standards of Excellence, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math...we like to add the A for arts making it STEAM), and 21st Century Skills just to name a few and Odyssey of the Mind is fun!

Your role as a coach forms the very foundation of the program. Without you this program would not be possible. You make a difference! I am often asked why I am so dedicated to Odyssey of the Mind and why I have been involved for so long. The answer is simple, it's for the kids and it matters. When I look around at many of the problems in our world today, I become more focused on our efforts. This world needs problem solvers. Your effort will give kids the opportunity to flex their problem-solving muscles and the results can have a lifelong impact. Thank you for stepping up and stepping out. I hope you have a wonderful year.

This "book" is designed as a reference. Please refer to your problem, the Program Guide, our Georgia website <http://www.georgiaodyssey.org>, the main website <http://odysseyofthemind.com>, and the clarifications as your main sources of information.

On behalf of the Georgia Odyssey of the Mind Board of Directors, the Georgia State Captains, the Georgia State Assistant Problems Captains, and a host of dedicated volunteers, I would like to welcome you to the Georgia Odyssey of the Mind family. Have a wonderful year helping kids to THINK BEYOND THE BOX.

Creatively yours,

Dr. Lisa Hackney
Georgia Odyssey of the Mind
Association Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO GEORGIA ODYSSEY OF THE MIND	
ASSOCIATION LETTER	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
STEPS TO GREAT PROBLEM SOLVING	5
GEORGIA'S PHILOSOPHY & HISTORY	6
COMPONENTS OF ODYSSEY OF THE MIND	7
LEVELS OF COMPETITION	8
TEAM JUDGE & VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS	9
COACHING BASICS	
ROLES OF A COACH.....	11
GENERAL COACHING TIPS	12
COACHES' ORGANIZATIONAL CHECKLIST	16
THE INGREDIENTS FOR A GOOD TEAM	18
A GUIDE TO PLANNING ODYSSEY MEETINGS.....	19
FIRST FIVE MEETINGS.....	20
PRIMARY.....	21
CREATIVITY.....	22
CONFLICTS.....	23
TEAM BUILDING	
EXERCISES	26
LONG -TERM	
CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS	28
HOW TO READ AN ODYSSEY PROBLEM.....	29
CLARIFICATIONS	30
BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUES:	
DIAMOND BRAINSTORMING METHOD.....	31
DESIGN PROCESS.....	32
BRAINWRITING	33
CONVERGENT & DIVERGENT THINKING.....	34
SCAMPER TECHNIQUE	36
TEAM SOLUTION TIMELINE.....	37
SCRIPT WRITING.....	38
PERFORMANCE SKILLS.....	41
MATERIALS & SUPPLIES GUIDE.....	42
COPYRIGHT & TRADEMARKS	43

TABLE OF CONTENTS...CONTINUED

STYLE	44
STYLE OVERVIEW	45
STYLE ELEMENTS.....	46
STYLE QUESTIONS	47
FILLING OUT THE STYLE FORM.....	48
SPONTANEOUS.....	49
COACHING SPONTANEOUS.....	50
DEVELOPING VERSATILE THINKING.....	52
SPONTANEOUS TOP 10.....	53
ITEMS FOR SPONTANEOUS TEAM CHALLENGES.....	54
TEAMWORK EXERCISE – GIFT WRAPPING CHALLENGE	55
SAMPLE VERBAL PROBLEM	56
SPONTANEOUS BRAINSTORMING	57
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE	60
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE.....	61
GENERAL CONCEPT.....	62
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FOR PARENTS	63
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE Q&A	64
GOING TO COMPETITION	66
BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT.....	67
WHAT HAPPENS AT A TOURNAMENT?.....	69
TOURNAMENT DAY	70
TEAM ITINERARY SAMPLE	71
TOURNAMENT DAY: A PRIMER FOR PARENTS	72
LONG-TERM PROCEDURES	73
SPONTANEOUS PROCEDURES	74
SCORING.....	75
SCORING ODYSSEY PROBLEMS	76
COMMON PENALTIES.....	77
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE PENALTIES.....	78
FORMS	79
TEAM PARENT MEETING AGENDA.....	80
EXPECTATIONS	81
STUDENT CONTRACT	82
PARENT CONTRACT	83
SAMPLE FORMS	84



Odyssey of the Mind®

G.P.S. to Great Problem-Solving



Become a Member

Memberships are explained in more detail and can be purchased on our website at: www.odysseyofthemind.com/join.



Log-in to Members Area

After you have purchased a Membership and received the confirmation email with your Membership Number, log into Members Area at: www.odysseyofthemind.com/member-area/



Form a Team or Many Teams

A Membership can support one team per problem per division.



Read the Program Guide

Familiarize yourself with the Program Guide. The Program Guide was created to help you on your Odyssey. Program rules, suggestions, forms and many other great pieces of information can be found in the Program Guide.

To download your copy, visit: www.odysseyofthemind.com/program-guide



Register With Your Association

Looking to compete with other teams in your region, state, and the world? Register with your Association! Find your Association contacts in the **Member Area!**



Most Importantly: Have Fun and Be Creative!

Odyssey Essentials

Generate Interest

- Hand out copies of the long-term synopses to see if there is interest.
- Advertise as an Extra-Curricular activity at club fairs.

Form Teams

- Recruit as many participants as possible.
- Allow recruits to form their own team.

Meet the Parents

- Help parents understand the program. They may bring light to any hidden skills and teach a few, too!

Make a Schedule

- Discuss time constraints, then create a schedule for teams to meet virtually and/or in-person.

Train Your Team

- Train your team to work cooperatively.
- Inspire them to be creative.
- Teach your team to brainstorm.
- Encourage your team to support each other. This will help team members to be confident in their ideas.

GEORGIA'S PHILOSOPHY

Georgia Odyssey of the Mind provides opportunities for children to work together to solve unusual and stimulating problems. We believe that creativity, persistence, and cooperation needed to complete the Odyssey of the Mind problems will empower students to be more successful problem-solvers in their own lives, and in future problem-solving situations.

We are committed to the idea that all students who participate in Odyssey of the Mind are winners. We strive to make the training, problem-solving and tournaments as child centered as possible. Sportsmanship, team cooperation, and risk-taking will be valued as part of the problem-solving experience.

Georgia Odyssey of the Mind supports the ideas of minimal adult intervention and **no** outside assistance. We will adhere to the coaching ethics outlined by the national Odyssey of the Mind Program.

GEORGIA'S ODYSSEY OF THE MIND HISTORY

Georgia began to participate in Odyssey of the Mind in 1983. Lilburn Middle School hosted our first state competition with seventeen schools and 230 students. In 1987, a regional level of competition was begun to allow all those who wanted to participate in Odyssey of the Mind to do so. Outstanding teams from both the Northern and Southern Regionals went on to the State Finals which was held at Morrow Junior High School in 1988. In 1990, this competition format was expanded to include four regions. In our twentieth anniversary, 2003, Georgia Odyssey of the Mind had nearly 2,000 students participating!

Each year, Georgia teams from Divisions I, II, and III have gone on to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. Beginning in 1992, Georgia has been represented by Division IV teams as well. The thrill of being part of an international group of award-winning problem solvers has been a remarkable experience for Georgia's creative stars. In that period, we have come home with many trophies; we have also earned several coveted Ranatra Fusca prizes for Outstanding Creativity.

While teams are responsible for their own fund-raising for World Finals expenses, it will remain the goal of Georgia Odyssey of the Mind to raise funds to contribute to this effort. From 1988-1992, IBM in Atlanta donated their services in the form of a grant for our Creativity Calendar and publicity for all our competitions. In the spring of 1990, the Harland Charitable Foundation gave a generous contribution to our expansion program. In 1995, Georgia Power provided support for the State Finals at the Agricultural Center in Perry, Georgia. In 1995, AT&T provided their support to our famous "pin sales" by helping design two new pins with their logo. Georgia College & State University was our Educational Sponsor from 2000 through 2005. Columbus State University has been our Educational Sponsor and has hosted our State Finals in April since 2006. Georgia Odyssey of the Mind contributes funds, shirts, and pins to each of the Georgia teams going to World Finals.

Much of the success and growth of Georgia Odyssey of the Mind is due to the commitment of parents and teachers who volunteer hundreds of hours to coach and to the Georgia Odyssey of the Mind Board of Directors who oversee the program. Small stipends, materials, transportation, and membership dues are often provided by the schools, but overwhelmingly the coaches contribute their time and energy because of their dedication to young people and their enthusiasm for creative problem solving.

The Long-Term Problem (200 Points)

Every year, the Odyssey of the Mind organization publishes five competitive Long-Term problems and one non-competitive Primary problem. The Long-Term problems are prepared by the team in advance of the tournament. It can take anywhere from 4-6 months to develop these solutions.

The Long-Term problem requires a set of defined tasks to be completed during the performance {8-minute skit}.

- Problem 1: Vehicle – building moving vehicles, large or small that accomplish certain defined tasks.
 - Problem 2: Technical – some technical component included within the performance.
 - Problem 3: Classics – based on some traditional tale.
 - Problem 4: Structure – build a weight-bearing structure made of balsa wood and glue.
 - Problem 5: Humor – finding humor in everyday life.
 - Problem 6: Primary – for grades K-2
-
- All problems are open-ended, that an unlimited number of interpretations are possible.
 - Carefully review each problem to understand the criteria for the required scoring elements.

Style (50 Points)

Odyssey of the Mind Long-Term problem solutions require creative problem solving. The program rewards teams for elaborating their Long-Term problem solutions since elaboration requires additional creativity. OotM calls this elaboration *Style*.

Exactly what is *Style*? Think of it like the icing on the cake. If the Long-Term problem is the cake, then *Style* is the way the cake is decorated. Teams will decorate their cake in unique ways. Great style takes the simple to the WOW – not just in execution, but also in creativity. (example: Using recycled materials of many types/colors in unusual ways).

Spontaneous Problem (100 Points)

Each team entering a tournament must also solve a Spontaneous problem. Team members will not know the content of the Spontaneous problem until the judge presents the problem to them. One of the purposes of spontaneous competition is to see how well the team members react to new situations; in addition to the solution itself, teamwork and creativity are generally included as scored elements in Spontaneous. Teams competing against each other are required to solve the same Spontaneous problem. Team members are not allowed to discuss the problem they were given until the end of the tournament season.

Spontaneous problem-solving is a learned skill – it takes both practice and the learning of specific spontaneous skills that facilitate the team’s capability to think creatively under time pressure.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Regional Tournament

1. Each membership may enter **one** team, **per** problem, **per** division in a regional tournament.
2. If a membership wants to send more teams in the same problem/division, it may purchase additional memberships.
3. Primary teams demonstrate their problem solutions in a non-competitive performance.
4. Advancement Formula – To allow for fair advancement of teams from regional to state competition, the formula refers to competing teams. If a team listed on the tournament program fails to compete, it is not considered a competing team, nor is it considered in determining the formula. The advancement formula determines the number of teams to advance, not the places of teams to advance. However, tied teams will not be “split.”
 - Divisions with 1-4 teams two teams advance
 - Divisions with 5-8 teams three teams advance
 - Divisions with 9-12 teams four teams advance
 - 13 teams or greater five teams advance

State Finals

1. Teams who place first, second or receive a Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award at the State Finals are eligible to compete at World Finals.

World Finals

1. Teams come from almost every state in the U.S. and about 20 other countries, including Belarus, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, India, Singapore, Poland and more.
2. Teams are awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, some receive Ranatra Fusca Awards or Omer Awards. Honorable mention goes to 4th, 5th and 6th place.

TEAM JUDGES & VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

The quality of the Georgia Odyssey of the Mind program is dependent on volunteer participation. Without volunteer judges and tournament workers our Odyssey program would not be possible. Each Georgia Odyssey of the Mind competition uses approximately 100 judges & 100 volunteers to ensure a smooth, exciting tournament for all.

To compete at Regional Competition

EVERY TEAM must provide 1 trained Judge (must attend mandatory full-day training in January or February).

- Judges must be 18 years or older and high school graduates.
- Your judge will not be assigned to judge the problem/division in which your team is competing.
- Judge is scheduled to work the problem/division assigned for the entire day and **will not** be able to watch your team compete.
- Responsibilities: Learn how to judge creativity, rules/restrictions, how to score teams, give feedback for long-term or creativity for spontaneous problem solving.
- Please note that failure to volunteer at the tournament will result in the team being assessed a \$150 fee.

Types of Judges:

- Head Judge
- Style Judge
- Timekeeper/Announcer
- Problem Judge
- Staging Judge
- Score Checker

EVERY TEAM must provide 1 volunteer for tournament (1 ½ to 2 hours). Volunteer shifts may not be split.

- Volunteers must be 18 years or older and high school graduates.
- It is strongly suggested that volunteers should not be coaches! Parents make great volunteers.
- Volunteers will not be scheduled to work during your team's performance.
- Coaches will receive an email 2 weeks before the tournament to forward to the volunteer for online registration.

To compete at State Finals (when team advances)

EVERY TEAM must provide the same trained Judge who has attended training AND worked at a regional tournament.

EVERY TEAM must provide 1 volunteer for tournament (2-3 hour)

Spontaneous Blast-Off (when team advances to World Finals)

EVERY TEAM must provide 1 volunteer to help with Spontaneous Problems. This is **in addition to** the coach which will be following the team.



Thank You!

THANK YOU for your support, for your child, for his or her coach, and for the state volunteers!! We wish you creativity in your own life, and fun watching these wonderful problem solvers at work!!

Coaching Basics



ROLES OF A COACH

Coaching OM is unlike any other coaching role...you cannot tell the team what to do or how to do it, and you are not required to be an OM expert to be a great coach! Instead, you need to be someone who enjoys kids and is well organized, patient, tolerant to sometimes frustrating learning processes, and open-minded to crazy, creative, out of the box ideas. Volunteering to coach an Odyssey team is an adventure. A journey that will stay with you forever.

- Facilitate a team with doing the work for the team. Stand back and watch while the team members make all the decisions regarding the problem solution.
- Interact with the team to improve the way the team identifies and solves problems.
- Make sure all team members are involved in the process: generating ideas, solution-finding and presentation. Shy members often have the best ideas.
- Provide the motivation for the team to develop strategies, generate ideas, evaluate options, or reach a decision in the brainstorming process. Brainstorming is one of the basics of the OM problem solving process.
- Team Building – keeps them motivated and supportive of each other.
- Encourage all the team members to produce fresh ideas, to think “out-of-the-box” to work cooperatively together, and to better communicate amongst themselves.
- Set ground rules for good sportsmanship and constructive criticism of team members.
- Stay well informed of all problem rules and program guidelines and pass the information on to the team.
- Develop a timeline working backwards from the competition date, including holidays and school breaks. Keep the team on track – set goals, help them get organized, post to-do lists, encourage them to estimate how long things will take and divide & conquer.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tips for selecting a team

- Get recommendations from teachers.
- Seek out kids with special skills and interests: building, singing, acting, and so on.
- Conduct auditions/tryouts using spontaneous problems.

What should be taken into consideration when putting teams together?

A well-balanced team has organizers, writers, researchers, artists, performers, builders, idea people, leaders, and workers – a mix of kids who are willing to work together to solve problems. Having parents who will support team members in meeting their commitments will help create a strong, positive team. Teams may choose to have the same members from year to year. You must decide what you think will work best for your team and school.

How can we replace team members who leave?

Odyssey of the Mind teams are composed of 5 to 7 team members. If a team has a full complement of seven members **and has started working on the problem, no team member can be replaced except under penalty for outside assistance** (refer to the “Outside Assistance” section of the program guide or speak to the Association Director for more information). However, if a team starts out with less than seven members, it may add members until it reaches a full complement of seven. Once a team submits a roster for a competition **or begins work on the Long-Term problem**, it may not change the roster for a competition unless approved by the Association Director. Any team member may compete in more than one problem; however, a team member may not enter competition in the same problem for more than one team.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

Retain Perspective

- Before anything else, remember this is about the process and having fun. This can be a motivator, but you must remind yourself frequently that this is about kids “competing” with themselves to be creative, learn how to be a team, and do stuff themselves. Your Number One job as a coach is to – help the team to understand that winning is not the goal. The process of getting there is the important thing-not the competition. Have the team set goals & place them in clear view.

In the beginning...

- Invest in a flipchart/easel/whiteboard: Use this every meeting for generating ideas. This is the single most useful item teams have used. Let them take the lead and use it whenever possible.
- Establish skills: Go around the room like a spontaneous problem and have kids list their OWN strengths and weaknesses, likes, dislikes (technical ability, artistic, good writer, dislikes singing, etc.).
- Establish rules: Have the team identify THEIR rules and YOUR rules. Ask them to figure out what YOUR rules might be. Write it down and post it. They will have buy-in if they develop their own rules, and you can refer to it throughout the year – as something THEY decided.
- Discuss excellence: What makes events memorable? What have the kids witnessed that sticks with them, and why? Encourage them to remember that the difference between good solutions and excellent ones is in the details and embellishments, and in the way everything hangs together. The WOW factor!
- Discuss teams: What is a team? What are their experiences with teams? What makes teamwork good, or bad? What tools have they used so far? What others are available. What are the characteristics they would like in their own team?
- Discuss commitment: What does it mean? Why do we want it? Who is involved? (Parents, coaches, kids).
- Plan on disappointments and disagreements: Decide early how you and the team will handle them.

Use spontaneous problems (brainstorming) to solve challenges and generate ideas.

- Questioning techniques can help teams’ past blockades. Ask open-ended and broad questions.
- Spontaneous problems are a good tool. Remember, there is no such thing as outside assistance with spontaneous problems! (Unless you relate it directly to their long-term problem.) The idea is to get them thinking about ways to overcome obstacles, such as using general supplies/ideas, without the hindrance of having to relate them to the problem at hand. Go as fast as you can around the room for these. Revisit as needed.

Examples:

- List things that can be used to connect one thing to another. (Duct tape now becomes only one of the options!)
- List places you can get information about vehicles/structures/costumes/props, etc. (library, stores, internet, books around the house, teachers, drama teacher, going to a play, etc.)
- List all the ways you can build (something they want to make but cannot figure out how). What materials would you need?
- List ways you can propel an object weighing less than 50 pounds; more than 50 pounds.
- What treasures do you have at home that could be used? (They should list costumes, props, etc.)
- List ways to use stuff to make things (especially useful when the team is stuck):
 - Legos/Knex - make a vehicle that can be rolled three feet. (Teaches mechanics of creating vehicles).
 - Using this (bunch of stuff), make a hat.
 - Figure out how many things you can make with this paper, and what you can use it for. (Supply with a ream of scrap paper. Let them rip into it and make things from rope to stairs to towers to Origami boxes).
 - What can you do with this large cardboard box/chair/pvc pipe/etc.?

GENERAL COACHING TIPS – CONTINUED

Consensus vs. majority rule.

- Learning how to reach consensus when majority rule is not desired is one of the most common challenges teams and coaches face. In fact, voting rarely works well.
- *Example: Team cannot choose a long-term problem by consensus.* This is a classic case of a team-building exercise! (All these techniques work with any dispute – whose script is “better,” who should play what role, etc.)
 - Get the team to use listening skills. Ask: What is the outcome desired? Take turns (having fun, working together to solve a problem, presenting something everyone can be involved in, doing a drama, building stuff). The desires are discussed, apart from the problems themselves, and are ranked in order of importance to each kid or the team or both. Now there is a basis for negotiation.
 - Have a mini long-term or related spontaneous where the kids take one aspect of one problem and present it with 15 minute’s prep time (a mini-long-term), and then do the same with the other. Again, this disconnects the kids from taking sides since all are working together. Have kids brainstorm as many possible ways to present one aspect of one problem, and then one aspect of another. They can realize their creativity is leading them all in one direction.
 - They can use both technical and dramatic content. Engineers and thespians will, in fact, find a home in each of them.

Pushy vs. quiet kids (and unproductive vs. do-it-all-myself).

- All personalities have great ideas. One set has a brain directly connected to the mouth, the other takes an indirect route. Unfortunately, verbal communication is our main mode as humans, so kids must be encouraged to talk/listen when they want to not or talk/jabber.
- In spontaneous problems, have verbal/pushy kids be judges and then make observations about teamwork. Have quiet kids be the “talkers” in problems that require talkers and doers. i.e., move kids out of comfort zones where you are not guiding, but “the rules” are. Make up problems that get these groups using other skills.
- Have talkers write ideas – not allowed to talk, only ask questions.
- Split group into talkers/quiet ones to generate solutions. Quiet group will come up with just as many ideas.
- Leave the room if the kids are old enough. This can be a powerful way to empower them. Often, a natural leader among kids will emerge when adults are not there.
- If there is a kid who is unproductive, have the team find something he/she likes to do and be prepared to have that kid complete only that task.

Staying focused and managing time.

- As a coach, make managing time a priority. Learn to say no when you must. Make teams and parents stick to schedules. Some coaches get discouraged because expectations do not match reality.
- Get help. Spontaneous problems take time and thought to put together, so outsource this task! One coach for long-term + another for spontaneous. This is one of the most beneficial leadership reliefs.
- Have teams divide tasks into “must do” and “maybe do.” This helps them with priorities.
- Have an “endless” meeting. This can be very productive. It might be an overnight after a long day, a long weekend, holiday afternoon, a snow day, or several.
- Change it up. Meet somewhere else now and then for a new vision. Maybe a parent has a garage with lots of tools, or a big space for practicing theatrical skills. Let kids separate into teams and work at different times and locations to do things like write scripts and build props. This notion should come from them, but you can have them reach this conclusion by asking them for ways to get teamwork done faster.
- Make use of time home. Encourage the kids to divide up tasks so some are done at home, individually or with others.
- Recognize burnout – in you and in the kids. If they are still on your clock, end the activity and do something else. If you are burning out, you are probably not delegating – so get parents to help with things like supervision and administration. Leave the room and give yourself a time out. Shorten the next meeting or cancel it if you need a break.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS - CONTINUED

- Make sure the kids and especially parents understand the time commitment, especially toward the end. Have a meeting early in the season and again in late February with the parents to gain their support, make sure they provide no outside assistance, make this a priority the week or two before the tournament. You will probably be flexible all the months leading up to this – kids cannot make meetings because of lessons and sports and family activities. But the two weeks before the tournament should be for OotM first and foremost.
- Cleanup is part of the meeting. Ownership of this is part of the problem solution. Make it fun by having a “cleanup” music – maybe not Barney. Kids need to learn that the not-so-fun stuff is part of life’s responsibilities.
- Be ok with not being Martha Stewart. Your house will NOT be featured in *Architectural Digest*, and you will NOT let yourself be judged for it. Remind yourself frequently that it is far better to have a houseful of engaged, messy kids than lonesome orphans holding their breath in a dust-free vacuum.
- Chaos is ok sometimes. Enormous creativity may emerge from what seems like randomness.

Miscellaneous

- Have the kids continually verify that they are following the requirements in the problem, remembering the importance of style, and meeting the spirit of the problem.
- Practice mistakes. Teach contingency planning. Encourage the team to think about backup materials, tool kits, and how to recover from unexpected problems.
- Get parents and kids doing spontaneous problems at home. Have them do spontaneous problems during the first parent meeting, with the parents. Use spontaneous practice to break up meetings. Keep a boxful of “spontaneous stuff” like deck of cards, timer, paper, pencils, straws, clay, toothpicks, scissors, tape, marshmallows, coins, paper cups, string – you get the picture!
- Teams function best when they bond during unpressurized time. Create opportunities, such as going to a local play, having pizza, having an overnight, playing a game (that helps with creativity maybe), making snacks together, writing wacky scripts for a skit to be delivered at the end of the meeting. This can make actual work go faster. Take breaks during meetings for totally unrelated fun.
- Simulate every aspect of competition, and practice this frequently. Get the kids to figure out that they should play to the audience, not the judges. Decide what to do if space is smaller or larger than where they practiced, or if the entrance is on the left, right, or behind the stage.
- Have the kids go to local or school plays and write down what they observe in props, costumes, scene changes, scripts, etc. Have them read short scripts to see how it has done and how scenes work.
- Create a “junk” box in the garage or basement to throw miscellaneous stuff kids find at home. Let kids drop stuff off between meetings.
- Once ideas for the long-term are jelling, plan a field trip to wander around hardware stores, craft stores, thrift stores, fabric stores.
- Engage parents so they are not tempted to provide “outside assistance.” Parents are harder to manage than kids. They can provide food, transportation, skill-training, etc. Outsource parents for snacks, lunch, manage t-shirts, parties, overnights, pizza, dinners, carpools, etc.
- Do not have parents stay during meetings, even with young children. They can be distracting, and the kids respond very differently (often unproductively) when parents are around, and you will often end up coaching both kids and parents. One of the purposes of OotM is to teach independence – and that includes from parents.
- Skill training is invaluable. Have the kids make use of team parents or other adults for skill-teaching!! Kids as young as eight can use sewing machines and power tools safely. Really! Parents/adults who have skills in engineering, woodworking, sewing, building, writing, oral presentations, dancing, musicianship, etc., can help with “workshops.” BE SURE these are presented outside the scope of the long-term problem, so the kids learn the skill, then apply it themselves to their problem. This is not outside assistance.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate. With parents and kids. Let them know clearly that you will be communicating to THEM directly via email or texting.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS - CONTINUED

- Don't ask yourself: "What if I know the idea won't work? What if I know a better way?" It does not matter because it is their problem. "That won't work." Just because you cannot do a problem, does not mean they cannot do it. You will be surprised what they come up with when you let go. When in doubt, do nothing.

Know when good enough is good enough.

- One of the most basic requirements of any person in real life is making good decisions with too little information. We ALWAYS have too little information. Knowing when it's decision time is a key skill. This is something you will be teaching your teams.
- A sense of humor will keep you and the team happy. But if you do not want your rug or the dog painted blue, lay down expectations, and if you must, lay down the law.
- As the coach, you have the right to be respected by parents and kids alike. Use your authority kindly but firmly. Parents and kids count on it.
- Relax! This is not your problem to solve. If the kids are working and having fun, you are doing fine.
- Friday Night Sleepovers Meetings – an "endless" team meeting can be very productive.
- Teach contingency planning. Encourage your team to think about backup materials, tool kits, and how to recover from unexpected problems. Have the team make checklist for loading, staging, tasks, etc. The *team* creates its own solution and if something goes wrong, it is the *team's* responsibility. Remember Murphy's Law: "If something can go wrong, it will go wrong." The team should have a crisis management plan in place, in case when something breaks down.
- Have fun with the team members – help the team laugh when things go wrong. Help them develop an "Oh, well, back to the drawing board" attitude. Keep them on task, but do not chide them for failures. Every failure means they learned a way it will not work. This is part of the learning process.
- Practice Spontaneous as much as you work on long-term and style. Remember, "Think Time" in spontaneous is generally 33% of the problem. Encourage the team to use time wisely.
- Answer a question with a question rather than giving an answer. For example, "Which hat do you like better" the coach should say something like, "Which one do you think goes best with the theme of the solution?" This encourages the team members to think independently.
- Coaches should try to serve as role models for the team members. It is important that they remain optimistic and maintain their patience. Henry Ford said, "that there are no failures, just opportunities". Coaches need to be enthusiastic and open-minded to suggestions. Do not complain about other teams, coaches, or judges. Coaches should strive to make learning fun!
- Team members must work well with each other, this builds trust and friendships. Help your team build that trust.
 - Sometimes when friends work together, they have difficulty staying on task.
 - Switch pairs of team members as they work on different tasks.
 - Limit whole group work – individuals, twosomes and triads are usually more productive.
- There is a time limit of 8-minutes for the Long-Term problem. This includes the set-up time, as well as the team's solution presentation. The 8-minutes does NOT include the take down and clean-up time after the problem is presented. In technical problems, the team will be stopped at the end of the competition time-period. If a technical breakdown occurs, the team should know which team member will be responsible for trying to fix it as time continues. In performance problems, there is an overtime penalty. In this case, the team may finish its presentation and if it exceeds 8-minutes a penalty will be assessed. There is nothing worse, when the entire solution is in the form of a performance, than stopping the team's performance before it is finished. Encourage the team to end in 7 ½ minutes or less.
- Go over the score results with the team after a competition and discuss how they can make improvements for the future. Praise the team members – when the team members have done their best, no matter how they placed at the tournament. Tell them how proud you are of them. Sometimes tears of defeat can turn into smiles just by knowing that you, someone who has become one of the most important people in their lives, think that they are great. That is what it is all about anyway.
- Do not dispute a judge's ruling without explaining why to the team. Always be sure your dispute is valid, and the team wishes to carry it further.

COACHES' ORGANIZATIONAL CHECKLIST

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING ARE GENERAL GUIDELINES DESIGNED TO HELP COACHES STAY ON TRACK. EACH TEAM IS DIFFERENT, AND SITUATIONS MAY VARY.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- Host an orientation meeting with parents – go over:
 - Outside Assistance / Coaches role is to help team develop creative problem-solving skills, not help solve the problem.
- Confirm that your school/group has paid *both* National and Georgia Odyssey registration fees
- Register your Judge - requirement for each team. Inform parent judges that they will NOT see their child's performance on competition day and if team advances, they MUST judge at State Finals
- Create a team meeting schedule - established by coach(es) and team (how often team meets)
- Assist team in developing a timeline (working backwards from tournament date, include holidays/school breaks) help the team stay organized and on task. Know the "halfway mark" to the regional tournament so the team can assess their programs and adjust if necessary to be ready for tournament day.
- Snack/Meal Organizer (parents sign-up to provide snacks/meals)
- Parents can be your best resources/allies or worst nightmare. Communicating expectations up front will help minimize the negative and maximize the positive
- Program Guide – all must read to understand the general rules – download @ www.odysseyofthemind.com
- Read and help the team understand the *Long-Term Problem* (Limitations, scoring, etc.)
- Conduct brainstorming sessions for Long-Term solution and themes
- Register your team for a Spontaneous Workshop - these are invaluable to you and your team
- Go-fer – take team to the store for supplies or help obtain items needed to solve the Long-Term solution (ensure that your team's budget-keeper holds onto the receipts)
- Maintain a stock of supplies for spontaneous/long-term (bottle caps, pop tabs, cardboard, duct tape, etc.)
- Schedule learning sessions – teach or bring in "experts" to discuss and teach basic skills needed to solve Long-Term solution (artists, engineers, woodworking, speakers, trips, etc.)
- Check + Submit Problem Clarifications @ www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications
- Plan a team activity

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER/JANUARY

- Attend the New Coaches' Workshop
- Attend the Online In-Depth Problem Workshop for coaches
- Continue Meetings & Practice Spontaneous
- Check + Submit Problem Clarifications @ www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications
- Plan a team activity that is fun and outside of the Long-Term problem thinking. (Team building activity)
- Register Team & Judge {requirement for each team}
- Please note that failure to register judge before the listed deadline will result in the team being assessed a fee.
- Design and order team shirts - have team, parents and/or family wear the team shirt to show support

COACHES' ORGANIZATIONAL CHECKLIST - CONTINUED

FEBRUARY/MARCH

- Continue Meetings & Practice Spontaneous
- Mid February - Deadline to submit Problem Clarifications @ www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications
- Plan a team activity that is fun and outside of the Long-Term problem thinking. {Team building activity}
- Rehearse performance – finishing under 8 mins. / starting from different sides of the room / worse case scenarios
- Remind team about required paperwork needed for regional competition {make extra copies}
 - Style Form {4 copies}
 - Outside Assistance form {1 copy}
 - Team Required Form {4 copies}
 - Team Specific Problem Clarifications
 - Cost Form {1 copy}
 - Media Release Form {morning check-in}
- Arrange for a full-dress rehearsal (video performance & have team critic themselves)
- Two weeks prior to tournament – You will receive email with Coaches Notes and Sign-up link for tournament volunteer {2-3 hrs. shift}. Competition Schedule will be posted on Georgia Odyssey website

GET YOUR PARENTS READY FOR TOURNAMENT DAY

- It is important to communicate with parents - Provide them an itinerary of the day's events, what time to arrive, where the team will meet, time of opening ceremony, volunteer assignments, performance time, lunch, and closing ceremony
- Make sure parents know their responsibilities and if there are any jobs which you are asking them to take on at the tournament, such as they may be needed to sit with team props, pick up meals or video tape performance {it's a nice remembrance and a great learning tool}
- Remind parents to arrive early for the performance. Once the team's performance has begun, they will not be allowed to enter the performance area and watch them perform. There are no exceptions to this rule!!!
- Make sure you have cell numbers for parents, and team members, just in case you need to contact them
- Parents do not need to tag along with the team for the entire day. Feel free to discuss with them to go and watch other teams from your school or other team competing in your teams' problem
- **Remind parents of the rules of outside assistance.** The team has been working for several months to prepare for the competition and it is their time to present their solution to the judges. They must refrain from making any suggestions i.e.: why do not you... helping kids do hair, makeup or repairing props. This could cost your team outside assistance penalty(s)
- Thank the parents!

*** See page 37 for a sample Team Solution Timeline.

INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TEAM

At the beginning of every Odyssey of the Mind year over 75,000 teams prepare solutions for competition. Only 15 of those will eventually be tabbed as 1st place in the World. If the odds are so low, why do so many students, coaches, parents, and schools put many hours into this program? If you ask team members why they do it, they will tell you, because it is “our” solution. They have a sense of pride in their solution and the accomplishments that they made along the way in solving the problem. How do you, maximize the efforts of your team so that they can feel the satisfaction of knowing that they have done their absolute best?

Successful teams...

- **Like each other** – teams with chemistry work better together and that shows in their performance. Make team building a priority.
- **Go the extra mile** – teams that advance because of a few points - look for those extra points and make those last few tweaks that make the difference. Teach your team to pay attention to details, details, details!
- **Read the Problem** – often teams work hard on their performance and lose sight of what the judges will be scoring. It’s true that the overall effect of the performance will impact the judges. However, judges will score the required elements. Adapt your effort accordingly – focus on scored items.
- **Spontaneous** – OM veterans know that the random element of Spontaneous is the deciding factor at tournaments. You don’t know what the problem or type it will be – but you want to know that your team is prepared.
- **Outside the box** – judges sit all day watching teams and they are looking for creativity. To get them to sit up and take notice, the best teams take risks and push the envelope – it is that WOW factor and forces them to notice. This can be done with the inventiveness of the skit, use of recycled or unusual materials, humor, over-the-top acting, clever dialogue, or any number of ideas.
- **Literal vs. Figuratively** – teams learn over time to look at what the problem does not say, reinterpret what it does say and find ways to make the judges stop and think about what they just witnessed. Judges will become engaged and energized about your team. Great solutions are often on the edge of the rules – use clarifications to make sure your team does not fall off the cliff.
- **Capture** – the use music, art, or an amazing character to capture attention. Great OM performances can be describing in a sentence – “That team with the _____ was amazing!”

Examples of creative teams...

- Team that performed their entire skit as a silent movie – no dialogue at all - they became World Champions.
- Team that was required to build a vehicle that *included wheels*. Built a vehicle that moved on rotating rails and was powered by rowing. It used *wheels* as decoration, so it did *include* wheels – Won a Ranatra Fusca.
- Team that was required to build a *human powered* vehicle – the team built a bicycle style vehicle that ran on batteries that the team built. A *human* team member peddled the bike to charge the batteries before the performance. Note: a clarification was critical for this out of the box solution – Finished 2nd at Worlds.
- Team that builds a backdrop as a box that could be rotated, opened, and closed to present multiple different sets. One side was a restaurant with two team members inside taking order through the window! – That team won a Ranatra Fusca award for creativity and finished 2nd at Worlds.
- Team that...*put your team here!*

GUIDE TO PLANNING ODYSSEY MEETINGS

Primary Teams (kindergarten through grade 2)

Young children have little attention spans. Plan meetings from the moment they begin, with fun activities, little or no “down” time.

- Allow 10-15 minutes per activity. Remember that attention span.
- Start with Brainstorming and wait until they are warmed up before you work on the Long-Term problem.
- Keep the meetings short, especially at the beginning.
- Try to end each meeting with a silly, just-for-fun activity, such as a fun spontaneous problem.

Division I Teams (grades 3-5)

The difference between Primary Teams and Division I Teams is the “Competition Factor.” Competition + Deadlines + Judges = BIG TIME STRESS for some kids. The key is Perspective. Help them keep their perspective. After all, this is supposed to be FUN. If you have ever worked with perfectionists (and there are a lot of them in Odyssey), you know that they are never satisfied with their creations. Your job is to help them maintain the playfulness and fun that is so important in Odyssey.

- Keep meetings short in the beginning and tightly structured so that time is not wasted.
- Work on teambuilding: go on field trips, movies, etc.
- Safety is important – some of these kids have never used tools before. Teach safety, establish rules, and recruit parents who know how to use tools.
- Communicate with the parents and tell them what you need.
- Make a special effort to draw out the strengths of the quiet kids & insist that all are involved/mutually respected.
- End the meeting with a just-for-fun activity
- Plan breaks (snack/lunch/dinner) to break up longer meetings
- The last two weeks before the Regional tournament can be very intense. Help them relax by holding a dress rehearsal for their parents. Tell them they are wonderful. Let the inconsequential stuff go – it is not important.
- Above all – Never let them see you sweat!

Division II Teams (grades 6-8)

Take all the above, add a liberal dose of hormones, a couple of broken hearts, and you have Division II in a nutshell. The key term to keep in mind that applies to nearly all Division II teams is **lack of focus**. These kids tend to “take the long way” to the tournament, but they do get there eventually. No matter how well you plan your meetings, they probably will not accomplish anywhere near what you have planned. That is OK, because what *they* can do that the younger teams cannot is *punt*. When the clock on the scoreboard is about to run out of time, they come to life and put together truly astonishing things. The most important thing for you to do as coach is relax, buy stock in a pizza company, and keep the aspirin handy.

- To keep conflicts to a minimum, consider dividing the team into specialized work groups for some meetings. These “sub-groups” meet to work on one specific thing, such as costumes or script development.
- Teambuilding is a must, get away from the usual meeting place occasionally and go somewhere different.
- For longer meetings (Saturdays or weekends as you get closer to tournament) consider giving the team a 10-15 min “go walk around the block” break.
- Have the team do a quick spontaneous problem in the middle of the meeting.

Division III Teams (grades 9-12)

In Odyssey, there is a sort of unofficial motto: “We Can Do It All Ourselves.” The “We” refers, to the teens. When dealing with Division III teams, the coach’s role is far less evident than with younger teams. By the time they are in high school, we truly do want the kids doing every facet of the problem, *as well as the organizational tasks*, themselves. The more they accept ownership of the problem, the better. At this age, they are certainly capable of problem solving themselves, but organizing the team into a cohesive unit is another matter. Learning when to lead, follow, delegate, and accept the authority of a peer is difficult work – adult work. This is where you, the coach, come in. Your job is to facilitate the team’s efforts. The idea is to intervene in the process as little as feasible, leaving every possible decision up to the team.

- Remember how quite different a ninth grader is from a twelfth grader. Do not expect the same level of ability and commitment from all members of the team. It is called “diversity” and it really does make the team more interesting. These kids simply do not have the same amount of time to devote to Odyssey that they did when they were younger.
- Things that are important in a job – like being on time, being prepared, etc. – are things you should gently emphasize. Odyssey is helping to prepare them for the real world, let us get them used to the real world’s expectations.
- Be a good role model. There are far too few of these around. Any adult who is willing to spend this much time working with kids sets a wonderful example.
- Have them set their own agenda for meeting deadlines and delegating tasks. Just sit back and see how they handle it. Avoid the temptation to make their problems your problems.
- Marvel at their intelligence, wit, maturity, and unlimited potential.

FIRST FIVE MEETINGS

(Adjust to Age and Experience Level of Students)

First Meeting

- Meet with parents and students to fully explain Odyssey of the Mind, the program’s philosophy, and goals.
- Describe the Odyssey of the Mind process; give dates of Regional, State Tournaments & World Finals.
- Discuss the time commitment and the responsibility of every team member to ensure a team effort.
- Stress importance of regular attendance at meetings.
- Explain outside assistance. Usually team members will want the problem solution to be THEIRS. They are the best ones to reprimand parents, coaches, and others for assisting.
- Review behavioral expectations.
- Talk about the difference between “winning” and “succeeding”.
- Discuss parental responsibilities & restrictions. Enlist parental assistance for a variety of team activities.
- Hold a **parent meeting** – beginning of the season.
 1. Ask parents to list team members scheduled commitments. Make a calendar. To avoid possible conflicts like vacations, holidays and consult the school calendar of events before drafting your practice schedules. Include Odyssey of the Mind tournament dates.
 2. Explain the importance of attendance by pointing out that for a student to gain the full benefits from the program, he or she must be a continuous part of the team’s solution.
 3. Explain the Odyssey of the Mind philosophy.
 4. Enlist the parents’ assistance in providing food, snacks, acting as chauffeurs, serving as judges, providing an extra pair of hands, watching props and volunteering at regional competition.
 5. Get a commitment from the team members and their parents – include a review of what you expect from them. (Examples: Handouts Section - Expectations, Student & Parent Contracts)
 6. **Explain and stress outside assistance.** Help parents understand outside assistance. Like the coach, they can’t volunteer solutions.

Second Meeting

- Incorporate team building activity.
- Explain how all ideas must be considered and not judged.
- Explain spontaneous problems and plan on practicing several at every meeting.
- Read and discuss the long-term problems. Remind team members that all Odyssey of the Mind problems offer opportunities for construction, performance, music, special effects, etc.
- List skills to discuss what problems this team is best suited, and most interested in. This is a BIG DECISION!

Third Meeting

- Incorporate team building activity and practice spontaneous problems.
- Have team decide on a long-term problem. Brainstorm ideas and skills needed to solve the problem.

Fourth Meeting

- Incorporate team building activity and practice spontaneous problems.
- Brainstorm long-term problem solutions and theme ideas. Allow plenty of time for this; never settle for the first idea, easiest idea, etc. This process should extend over several meetings.
- Discuss questioning techniques. “Nothing new is learned until a question is asked.” Refine this art over the course of the year.

Fifth Meeting

- Continue team building & spontaneous practices.
- Brainstorm list of tasks to accomplish. Assign tasks.
- Make the team generate a timeline. Discuss team member responsibility for going to do and when.

PRIMARY

- The Primary teams present their solutions at a regional tournament in a non-competitive performance where they interact with judges who provide feedback. Primary problems are designed to provide younger Omers with a comprehensive, fun, and instructional experience that helps introduce them to Odyssey of the Mind.
- Coaching Primary is like coaching any OM team – the difference is the kids! Younger kids have shorter attention spans, less understanding of OM components like rules and process, fewer experiences working in teams...and on and on. Joining a Primary team gives kids an opportunity to learn about things in a low stress environment. Keep it that way – adapt your coaching to match the purpose of Primary – great experiences!
- Key differences for Primary Coaches:
 - Problem is not scored at regional tournament
 - The tournament is considered an exhibition where teams show what they have accomplished. It is not a competition.
 - Feedback from judges comes in the form of Sticky Notes comments – judges are trained to be positive and encouraging.
- The purpose of Primary, beyond fun for the team members and coaches:
 - Learning about Odyssey and the process
 - Experience planning a solution and creatively solving problems
 - Experience understanding and following OM rules
 - Spontaneous practice is a great learning experience for kids – and it's fun, too!
- Tips for Coaching Primary:
 - Keep your meetings short and your expectations (and your parents') low
 - Involve parents more directly – it will help with small group projects
 - Focus on behavior – working in teams, speaking up, helping their team members, listening, sharing, being creative, etc. These are life lessons OM can build
 - Short, simple tasks of work will help. You have little attention spans at hand!
 - Provide lots of materials and options – the learning is how to use these materials to solve the problem
 - Despite their age – the work must be the kids' alone. Learning the premise of Outside Assistance (that the work/ideas must be the teams) will help them experiment and become willing to try new things. It is okay if its messy or the trees are pink! It is their work – not yours or their parents.
- Remember, in Odyssey snacks are the best part! Good Luck!!!

CREATIVITY

Brainstorming Ideas

- A clear, focused “objective statement” is KEY. If the team makes their “objective statement” too broad (i.e. how do we solve this challenge?) try to encourage the team to break it into bite-size chunks (i.e. have them look at each scored element – and even how that element might be broken into smaller parts, etc.)
- Identify the key measures – and key constraints – for the item getting brainstormed. For example, instead of having the objective of “how do we build a strong structure”, it would be more appropriate to have an objective of “how do we build an efficient structure” (since efficiency, not max weight is what is scored in that problem.)
- Write the issue to be brainstormed in big, bold print so everyone can see. Make it clear that the purpose of the next phase is to generate as MANY ideas as possible – without judging whether those ideas are “good,” “bad” or even “feasible.”
- Ask the team to generate ideas on “How will we evaluate which of these alternatives are the best.” The process of generating measures will often result in new ideas. Do not be shy about flip-flopping between idea generating and measurement generation at this point.
- Have the group “rank order” the measures – so they know which are most important.
- Have the following measures in the mix:
 - When do we need to have this element finished?
 - Will this solution be “cool” and give us a feeling of accomplishment?
 - Will the process of creating this solution be fun?
 - What is the risk that this approach will not work?
- Have the team generate some “quick and dirty” experiments they can conduct to test the viability of alternative approaches (i.e. build a “scale model” of cardboard or clay – or draw out an idea on paper). If a team can’t create an easy “scale model” out of inexpensive/recycled materials, they almost certainly will be unable to build the “real thing” that takes a great deal of time to work into the desired shape.
- What “checkpoints” do we want to create along the way to make sure this project is progressing along the direction we had hoped?
- Keep all ideas that are generated. If the team hits a “dead end” it is highly likely they will have forgotten all their previous ideas. In addition, it is a good idea to revisit the brainstorming process from time to time – because team members will have good ideas pop into their head hours or days after the formal brainstorming process is complete.

Research

- Sometimes the problem is not whether they know how to do the research but whether they feel the need to do it. Try asking them:
 - What kinds of things do we need to know about _____, _____ and _____, etc. and have them come up with a list of useful information?
 - Collect information on each _____

Team Notebook

- Start a notebook for those “great ideas” your team comes up during brainstorming sessions.
- Ideas/brainstorming/sketches (how we thought of this stuff)
- Research – any background information
- Budget – expense spreadsheet, receipts, notes, etc.
- Copy of the Problem and any clarifications

CONFLICTS

All teams experience conflicts, it is part of the normal process of team development. It can strengthen and mature a team. It can also tear a team apart. While it is reassuring to know that conflict is normal, it is also helpful to know what to do to help your team resolve the conflicts that arise. Some of the suggestions given here are textbook methods; many come from Odyssey of the Mind coaches who have shared their own solutions.

In the beginning...

Have the team members establish rules at one of the first meetings and make sure all agree to abide by them.

- When we brainstorm, all ideas are accepted **without** criticism.
- Everyone **helps** clean up.
- If someone cannot attend a meeting, notify coach **beforehand**.
- Each team member is **important** and has skills and talents that are important to the team.

Emphasize the importance of teamwork. There is no I in the word team. Odyssey of the Mind is a team activity. No matter how many perform on stage, the entire team earns the credit for what is done. It is the Team's solution, Team's presentation, Team's Style, Team's Spontaneous, and Team's creativity.

Help each member to feel his or her worth and value to the team. Stress the importance of the unique combination of abilities and skills the team has. No matter how talented one person is, that one person cannot successfully solve the problem alone. Every team member contributes to and is critical to the team's success.

When conflicts arise...

Send team members in conflict to a quiet spot to discuss their reasoning and to try to work out a solution on their own. Set a time limit appropriate to the conflict. Many times, they can resolve the problem on their own. Try reflective listening to make sure that you and the students involved understand what each person is thinking. Reflective listening involves paraphrasing what each student is saying to make sure that all involved are "on the same page." The conflict may be simply a misunderstanding. Examples:

- "In other words, _____."
- "So, you think it would be best to _____."
- "Do you mean that _____?"
- "It sounds like you feel _____ because _____."

Review all sides by allowing each to state his/her story without interruption and without "getting ugly." After all sides have been presented, the team brainstorms the problem to come up with a solution acceptable to all. No one is to criticize personalities or behavior, but to work for the best interests of the team.

When conflicts seem imminent...

Bossy Team Member – who is aggressive about their ideas being heard/used and often thinks that their ideas are the good ones. It's crucial that every team member is equally valuable to the overall effectiveness of the team.

- Remind that every team member's ideas are valid. No laughing or making negative comments at other ideas.
- Change seating arrangement, especially if two or more are sitting together and dominating the discussion.
- After completing a task, discuss what went well? What went wrong? How to improve?

Hesitant Team Member – more comfortable watching what others do, than sharing their ideas.

- Ask all members for their input, especially discussing how to improve.

Grabby Team Member – who starts touching and playing with supplies when they are set on the table.

- Discuss how grabbing/playing with materials interferes with solving the task or listening/understanding the problem.

Negativity – during a task or spontaneous problem, NO should NEVER be an answer.

- Yes, we can use that idea (this way) and then do it.

Team Building



TEAM BUILDING

The team is important. It's difficult to be creative "on schedule." Sometimes, just letting the team have some fun together will allow them to develop better communication and respect. This will lead to smoother progress when work resumes, and this downtime is often the most creative solutions come about.

The coach can help in managing "group dynamics"

- Help the team to work constructively with each other to create Team Rules – "team members can disagree with a proposed idea but cannot call each other derogatory names."

The process of creating these rules can be nice "team building" exercise. Here is an example of one team's rules with some comments from their coach on how he used the rule:

All team members will...

- *Contribute and share in the workload.* This will probably not be completely equal, but unequal efforts tend to lead to tension within the group.
- *Use their abilities, skills, and talents to help the team.* Kids are generally aware of their talents. Encourage them to try roles, skills, and activities they have not tried before.
- *Find a way to play a leadership role.* Leadership is not limited to being in charge...it can also mean being a role model for others.
- *Be supportive, and respectful toward, their team members and coaches.*
- *Help clean up at the end of meetings or before you leave.*

Kids will naturally develop roles. Leaders will emerge, someone will become the go-to person for technical issues, someone will be the joker who keeps everyone loose and someone else will fade into the background. By their nature roles can be perceived as either positive or negative – do not fight the roles but help the kids keep them in perspective.

Find ways to keep kids from becoming locked into one role alone:

- Ask the techie to teach
- Initiate a discussion about the leader's idea
- Assign the kid in the background a chance at an important task

Watch for cliques. It is natural that some friendships will be brought to the team and others will form. Both are good, however, cliques that create "outsiders" within the team, can be destructive. Keep in mind when working in groups.

- Suggest new groupings and find creative ways to re-focus the team on tasks rather than chitchat with their friends.
- "Pair" kids up during a working meeting. This allows you to control who works with whom thus giving all the kids to get to know one another.
- Try not to let kids vote on issues. This can cause divisions within the team based on who voted for what. If you feel you must have a vote, have a silent or written ballot. Only you get to see who voted for what.

Watch out for boy-girl dynamics – especially with younger teams ("Boys, you are not listening!") focus on individual's actions ("Jason & Will, you need to listen carefully to your teammate"). Focusing on the boy-girl dynamic can often lock in gender roles and harden gender-based cliques. Focus on mutual respect and good teamwork.

Have a plan – for overall progress towards competition, teaching skills, each meeting, dealing with obstacles, etc. The coach is the adult in the room and can play a valuable role in simply identifying what is needed and moving the team towards success. However, it should be the team's plan – not yours. Help them develop a plan that will increase their commitment and buy-in to each plan. They will own it and be more likely to follow it.

Determine how you can help the team remain organized...

- Take five minutes at the beginning of meeting to set goals for what they want to accomplish
- Set specific goals (e.g. complete the first draft of our skit by x date)
- Post To-Do Lists and check off when completed
- Break large tasks into specific, manageable tasks

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES

Monster Relay

The team should get from point A to B with only 4 legs and 4 arms touching the ground. This can be done in groups of three or more. Best if used as an outdoor activity.

Circle in a Circle

Place your arm through a rope loop or a hula hoop. Have everyone join hands. The team must move the hoop around the human circle. If hands are broken, the activity must start again. The team that gets the rope or hula hoop back to where it started, wins. To challenge the group, place two rope loops or hula hoops in the human circle with the second trying to catch the first.

Stretch

Choose two objects about 20 feet away from each other. Have the team make a solid line, holding hands between the objects. As a group, the team stretches out as far as possible trying to reach the other side. Keep challenging the group with further distances.

Caterpillar Relay

Each team forms a long line and each person must hold the waist of the person in front of them. They may stretch out as far as possible so long as they do not separate. When the whistle blows, the person at the back goes down on their hands and knees and must crawl through the legs of the whole group. When that person gets to the front, they jump up, their waist gets grabbed. The process begins again with the last person in line. You can keep going until the line gets to a designated finish line or once everyone has gone through once, the line turns around and the activity continues in reverse!

Standing Twister or Knots

Put each group in a huddle. Each person extends his right hand and grabs the hand of another person in the huddle. Each person then extends his left hand and grabs a different person's hand. No two people should be holding the same hand. The object is to have the group untangle themselves slowly without ever letting go of hands. Some people will have to step over other people, some will go under people, and some will get twisted and should untwist and turn to unravel themselves.

Write Three Things

Tell each kid to write down three things about themselves - two of them true and the third a lie. When they have finished writing, ask each of them to read whatever they have written, one by one. Ask the other kids to guess what they think is true and what is a lie. This game enables the children to get to know one another better.

Never Have I Ever

Have everyone sit in a circle. Have students hold their hands and all ten fingers out on the floor in front of them. As you go around the circle, each student will tell something that they have never done before. For example, they might say, "Never have I ever eaten strawberry ice cream." If the other players have done that event, they must remove a finger. Therefore, it is a good strategy for students to say things that most people have done but they haven't. This can be a fun and humorous game that will allow the children to learn about each other.

Tied in Knots

1. Have everyone stand in a circle.
2. Reach out with their left hand, and grasp someone's hand.
3. Reach out with the right hand and grasp someone else's hand. Each player must be holding hands with two different people.
4. Challenge them to undo themselves into a circle

Long Term



CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

Where do we start?

- Introduce the problems – discuss the types of problems and the types of skills + interests they have
- Deciding on the Long-Term problem – walk through each problem – how does it fit our team

What Does The Problem Say We Must Do?

- Give each team member a copy of the problem and have them dig up the facts.
- What specifics do we need to know?

What Facts Do We Know About The Problem?

- Have team members make up Who, What, Where, Why, When, How (questions that need to be answered.)
- If it does not say you cannot (Program Guide, problem limitations, clarifications) then you probably can.

What Else Do We Need To Know? Or Find Out About?

- If you are not sure about some aspect, submit a Problem Clarification (www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications) and follow the directions for submitting a question.
- Use reference books, field trips, and resource people. Resource people should never know the specifics of the problem: that way they will not accidentally offer outside assistance.

Review The Facts: State The Problem

- Select each piece of the problem and restate it in team's own words - write on paper or white board.

How Else Can You Say It? Consider All Possibilities

- Restate the problem using all possible aspects. (Brainstorm)
- Look at play on words: If it must move 10 feet, could this be ten one-foot rulers?

This Is What You Decided Your Problem Really Is

- Restate the team's interpretation and the problem they believe they must solve.

Look For Ideas That Might Solve The Problem

- This is the brainstorming stage. Record all brainstorming ideas.
- Encourage piggybacking ideas. Push for something more.
- Use forced association – take two objects and make them work together.

Which Two Or Three Ideas Might Be Really Great?

- Begin by narrowing and clarifying. Combine one or two ideas.
- Make sure ideas meet the spirit of the problem.

Test Some of The Solutions.

- What does the team want this solution to accomplish? What criteria is important?
- Does the solution meet specifications?
- Can the solutions be accomplished in the time given?
- Does someone on the team have the expertise to complete the solution?
- Does the team have the resources available?
- Is this creative, or will other teams also think along these same lines?

Do It With Flair!

- This is the elaboration of the basic solution – draw attention to your team
- Make it more beautiful, clearer, or more unique.

Fine Tuning

- This is the "What if?" time. Teach teams to handle the unexpected. Teach them that things may happen over which they have no control. They need to be prepared to problem solve on the spot.
- What if the power goes out? What if the prop falls/break? What if the vehicle does not break the plane?
- Develop an action plan so each team member knows their responsibility.

HOW TO READ AN ODYSSEY PROBLEM

How to best attack the problem! Here are a few suggestions:

- Analyze the **Problem Name**
- Read the **Summary** paragraph
- Read, analyze, and discuss the “**Spirit of the Problem**”
- **Discuss themes, plots** and **possible layering** based on the Spirit of the Problem, Problem Name and Problem Requirements
- Read the Problem at every meeting – Reflect on what the team has discovered – Remember: you cannot read the problem too many times!

SECTION A –THE PROBLEM

- What is the Creative Emphasis?
- What is the Spirit of the Problem?
- What is the main idea of the Problem?

SECTION B –LIMITATIONS

- **FOCUS:** Mandatory elements, time limits, cost limit, paperwork required, minimum door size.
- Look for keywords on what the team must do.

SECTION C –SITE, SETUP AND COMPETITION

- **FOCUS:** Dimensions of the performance area, layout of any special markings
- **EXAMPLES:** Some problems have lines, boxes, or boundaries. Prepare to perform in the minimum floor area that is stated on the problem.

SECTION D –SCORING

- Where are the available points?
- Objective or subjective points?
- How many points for creativity?
- Where do you want to spend your time?

SECTION E – PENALTIES

- **FOCUS:** Any penalties that are specific to this problem

SECTION F – STYLE

- What are the team’s two best style items we can choose for the “free choice” of the team?
- Which would earn us the most “style points”
- Overall Effect – Do the four items on our form really make our performance better?

SECTION G – TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

- **Focus:** 3-prong electrical outlet

SECTION H – TEAM WILL PROVIDE

- **Focus:** Forms, clean-up

SECTION I – PROBLEM GLOSSARY

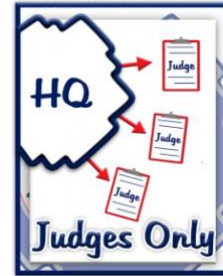
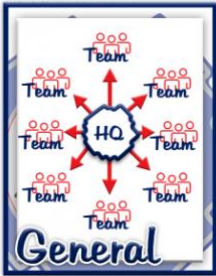
- **Focus:** The definitions of the words that are italicized in the problem

CLARIFICATIONS - MODIFY INTERPRETATION OR CORRECT THE RULES

- **Focus:** Check them frequently. Encourage team to submit their own if they are not sure about a rule

CLARIFICATIONS

Long-Term Problems are written to provide just enough guidance for teams to solve the problem without limiting creativity. Occasionally additional guidance is required from Odyssey of the Mind HQ or teams may have questions regarding their interpretations of the Long-Term Problem limitations and the rules, as stated in the [Program Guide](#). When this occurs, there are three categories of problem clarifications:



These are updates, amendments, or further explanations of Long-Term Problem limitations, written by Odyssey of the Mind HQ and made public for all members. General Clarifications take precedence over published problem details and the rules in the [Program Guide](#), so it's important that teams keep current on all general clarifications issued throughout the year by clicking "Read Clarifications"

When teams are unsure whether their solution is allowed within the limitations of their Long-Term Problem and the rules of the Program Guide, they may request feedback from Odyssey of the Mind HQ. The questions and answers remain **CONFIDENTIAL** and may be taken to tournaments, to affirm that a team's solution is valid. For full details, please consult the [Program Guide](#). To submit your request, click "Submit Clarifications" below.

In some cases, the answer to a team-specific clarification may be distributed to judges, sometimes with additional guidance from Odyssey HQ, to assure that judging of team solutions is consistent throughout the entire Odyssey of the Mind program. These clarifications are **ONLY** seen by Odyssey of the Mind association representatives.



Please take note:

The clarification system is not intended to replace reading the problem and program guide. Teams should read the problem and its limitations, all general clarifications, and the general rules listed in the [Program Guide](#) **BEFORE** requesting a clarification.

Please do not submit a clarification that asks:

- If an idea is creative or if one idea would receive more score than another. (No comment regarding subjective scoring will be provided.)
- Where the judges or audience will be positioned during the performance. (That is a question for your tournament director.)
- To confirm the wording of the problem.
- If something may be different from an aspect that is specifically required. (For example, if the problem requires 1/8" wood for a part you may not use 1/16" wood for that required part.)

DIAMOND BRAINSTORMING METHOD

The Diamond Brainstorming Method is a visual method that encourages many ideas as possible. Teams build one idea from another, and all ideas are listed as they "pop out" of their heads, no matter how "impossible" they seem. Also, by building up ideas one at a time and narrowing them down one at a time, the method encourages team members to relinquish ownership of ideas, so no one's feelings are hurt by rejection during later discussion. The visual quality of this appeals particularly to younger teams who can "see" their ideas taking shape.

MATERIALS: Newsprint, blackboard, or white board; markers or pens; & eager team members wanting to share ideas.

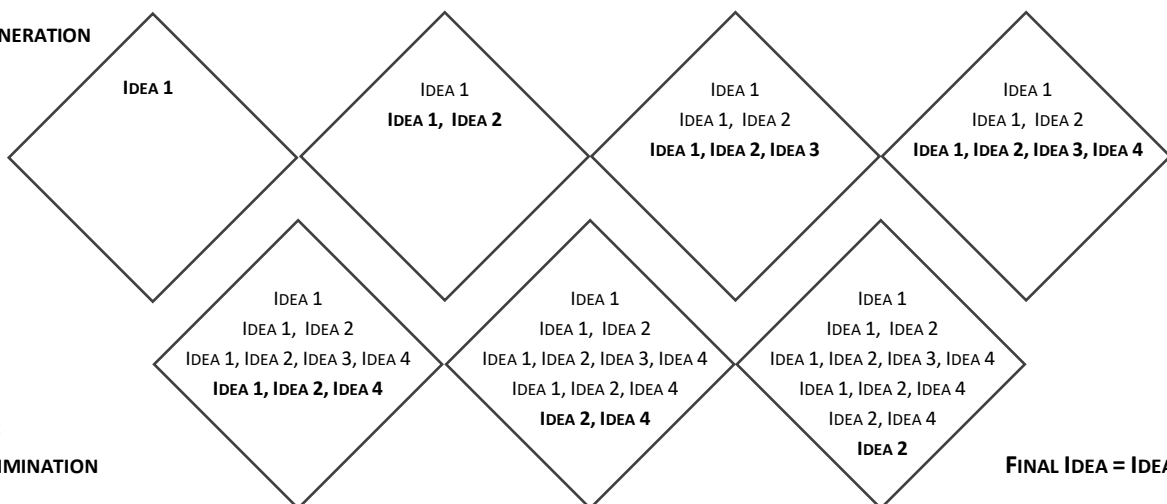
FORMAT: Team members sit in chairs or on the floor, with one person recording ideas. (The coach may record the ideas, but he/she must write down the teams' exact words.)

PROCEDURE:

1. Team members pose a question, such as, What would be the best way to do 'X', or, How can we make 'Y', or, What should 'Z' look like? Note: The team members must generate the questions themselves, and the questions should be general and open-ended. A coach may help the team determine exactly what it is they want to brainstorm by asking questions such as, What is the problem you are trying to figure out?
2. All the team members brainstorm. As someone suggests his/her idea, the recorder writes it down.
3. A second member gives an idea, and it is written down with the first one just below the first idea, so that the ideas begin to fill in the top half of the diamond shape (see Row A). Ideas are repeated on each line; the widest part of the diamond displays ALL the team's ideas.
4. After the team members come up with all possible ideas, then they begin, through discussion, to narrow down the possibilities by eliminating one at a time as shown in Row B. They could even combine two or more separate ideas to determine the final one. Hopefully, they will come to an agreement on their favorite idea without voting -- and without argument!

ROW A:

IDEA GENERATION

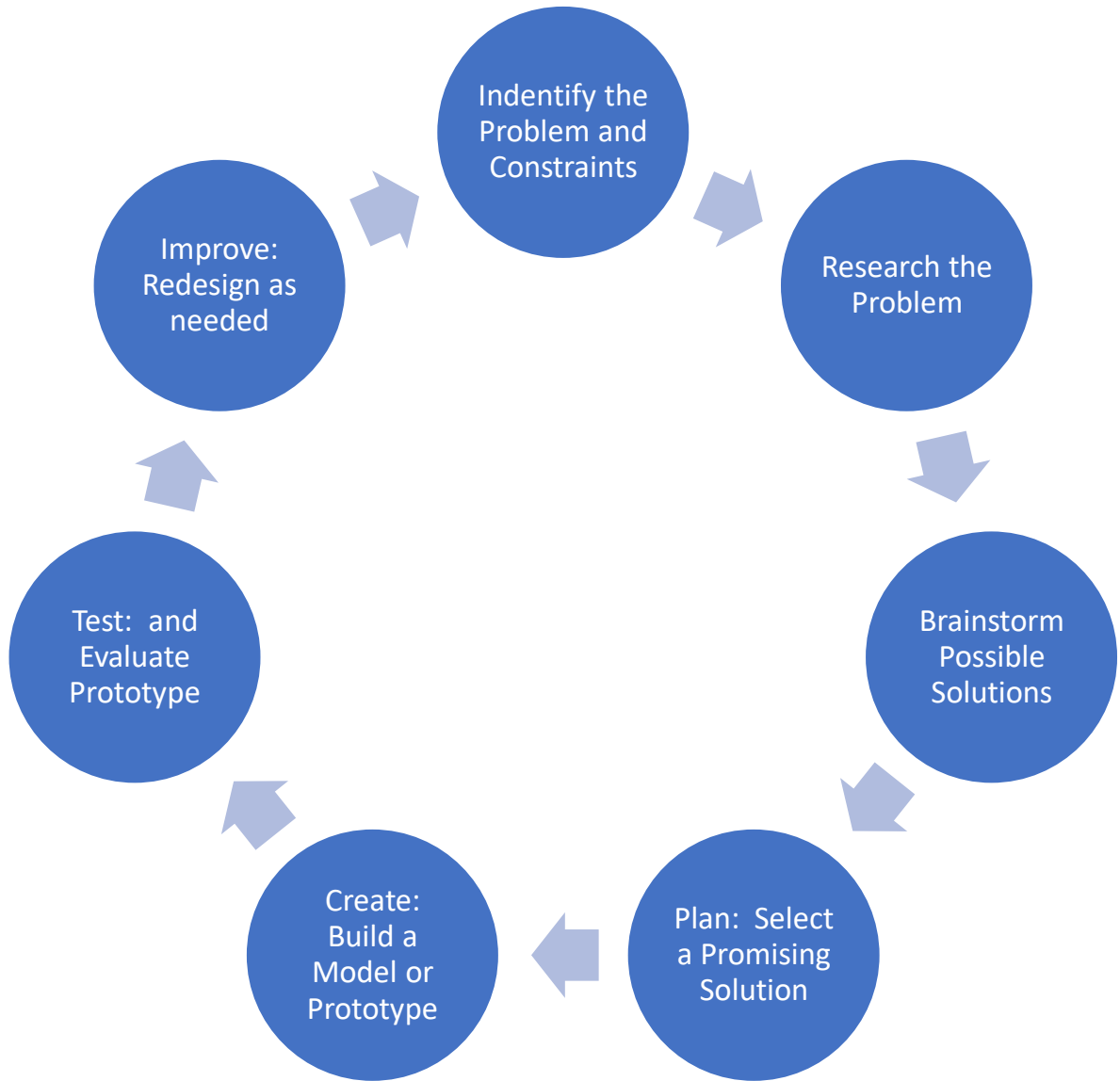


ROW B:

IDEA ELIMINATION

FINAL IDEA = IDEA 2

DESIGN PROCESS



BRAINWRITING

As in traditional brainstorming, in Brainwriting everyone sits at a table together to simultaneously tackle a problem. The difference is that in Brainwriting each participating thinks and records ideas individually, without any verbal interaction.

Here are steps in a typical Brainwriting session:

- Team sit around a table and each one gets a sheet of paper or sticky notes with the same problem statement written at the top.
- Each member has 3 minutes to write down 3 ideas on the sheet of paper or sticky notes.
- Each member passes the paper/sticky notes to the participant to the left.
- Each member reads the ideas that were previously written, and a new three-minute round starts. Each member must come up with three new ideas or use the ideas already on the sheet as triggers.
- Lather, rinse, repeat.
- After the idea-gather phase is completed, read the ideas, discuss, and consolidate ideas.

Accomplishments:

- The amount of ideas generated can be amazing. Since ideas are generated simultaneously, team members never get to block each other. With everyone generating 3 ideas every 3 minutes, a group of 5 people can produce 100 ideas in 20 minutes.
- Team members still get to cross-pollinate and build on each other's ideas. That is, they still get the benefits of brainstorming in a group, while avoiding its main shortcomings.
- Ideas are recorded the moment you get them: no ideas are lost while you wait for a chance to speak.
- No one gets overshadowed and everyone contributes equally, regardless of personality type or personal agenda.
- Ideas are completed in private. In less mature environments, there is no fear of being openly judged by other members. The ideas can be kept anonymous and members have freedom to be truly wild with their ideas.
- Everyone is given a clear task: to fulfill a specific idea quota in a specific time frame. The quota adds an element of healthy pressure that can help unlock your creativity, as it is a fun challenge.



CONVERGENT & DIVERGENT THINKING

CONVERGENT THINKING

- Right/wrong type of answers
- Requires moving from many possible answers to the single right one

DIVERGENT THINKING

- Requires looking for many possible answers – all of what give you a solution
- Then need to analyze which solutions are more workable.

1. QUANTITY MODEL

These types of questions ask for many responses, which help develop fluent thinking.

- What are the titles you can think of for a poem?
- How many ways can you measure a gallon?
- What are all the meanings you can think of for the work “belt”?
- What are all the ways in which people use music?
- Draw as many pictures as you can be using a circle as the basic shape.
- Name as many round things as possible.
- Write as many sentences as you can that contain words that begin with the letters M, G, H, S.
- Observe a cat for 5 minutes and list all its behaviors.
- What are all the things we can do to help the pollution problem?
- What can we do to make our community a better place to live?
- The answer is 55 mph. What are all the questions you can think of to get that answer?

2. VIEWPOINT MODEL

This type of question asks to look at characters, events, and objects from various points of view. Team members are asked to react like someone or something else. Examples below:

- How would adults look from a baby’s viewpoint?
- How would a turkey feel about Thanksgiving dinner?
- If Mona Lisa could talk, what would she say?
- How would the story of Cinderella sound from the viewpoint of one of the ugly stepsisters?
- What would “charge” mean to a consumer? A knight? An electrician? A teenager?
- What would a member of the Peace Corps do to help South American progress?
- Draw a picture of your school and schoolyard from the perspective of being in an airplane.
- What would “run” mean to a politician? A movie proprietor? A criminal? A businessman?
- What would pollution of Earth mean from the viewpoint of an oil company? Rose bush? An owl?
- Write about a tree from the perspective of a nesting bird; an artist; a land developer.
- What would a deaf person do at a concert?
- How would broccoli, your mother, your stomach feel about junk food?

3. INVOLVEMENT MODEL

Team members are asked to react personally to an unfamiliar situation or one they had no part in creating.

- If you were a bird, what would you see? Taste? Feel?
- List things that crumple in your hand.
- How would you feel if you were an object attracted by a magnet?
- Describe things that are made more beautiful by age.
- List things to do when you retire.
- How would you feel if you were lighter than a watch spring?
- Describe how it feels to sparkle under an evening sky.
- If you were in a department store, what would you smell? Feel? See?

CONVERGENT & DIVERGENT THINKING...CONTINUED

4. CONSCIOUS SELF-DECEIT MODEL

This type of question asks the student to imagine situations in an ideal world. It requires the removal of all blocks and barriers real or imagined in solving problems. This frees the mind to come up with more ideas, thus increasing the possibility of finding more workable solutions. These questions cause the student to consciously order and re-order his/her thinking without the “that’s not possible” mental set.

- If you could have anything you wanted to solve your long-term problem, what would you do?
- You can have all the _____ in the world. How could you use it to _____?
- You have been given the power to _____. How will you use it?
- How would you feel if you were a heartbeat? A piece of driftwood? An old pair of jogging shoes?
- How would you feel if you were a bird sitting in a tree watching a parade go by?

5. FORCED ASSOCIATION MODEL

This type of question asks the student to find similarities between things that appear to have few, if any, similarities. This forcing of relationships that are not clear encourages unique and original responses.

- How is a contour map like flying a kite?
- How is an eclipse of the sun like a chocolate covered peanut?
- What animal is like a loaf of bread? Like a parachute?
- How is a triangle like the force of a magnet?
- How are mammals like computing a problem?
- How is a beaver chewing on a log like a typewriter?
- How can a fire extinguisher give us ideas for solving this problem?
- What ideas can we get from biology to work on the problem of lunchroom disturbances?
- What is deeper, a hole or loneliness? Why?
- Which is quicker, a rare horse or gossip?
- Get ideas from _____ to improve _____.
- I only know about _____. Explain _____ to me.

6. REORGANIZATION MODEL

This type of question asks the student to describe the consequences of a strange or unusual condition. Through changing the facts, the questions ask that the world be viewed “as the world is not.” The emphasis is on the restructuring of reality by considering an unusual situation.

- What would happen if
 - The South won the Civil War
 - All the circles in the world were replaced by squares
 - You were one inch tall
 - Your eyeballs were on your finger
 - A native Ugandan woke up one morning to find mountains had replaced the jungle
 - Everyone looked alike
- What would happen if there were no...
 - Poverty?
 - Numbers?
 - Assembly lines?
 - Sunlight?
 - Colors?
 - Books?
 - Maps and globes?
- Suppose _____ happened. What would be the consequences?

SCAMPER TECHNIQUE

The SCAMPER technique was developed by Bob Eberle. SCAMPER is an acronym for idea-spurring verbs to improve objects or generate ideas.

Substitute:

What can you use instead of the ingredients, materials, objects, places, or methods now used? Vegetarian hot dogs and disposable diapers are examples of products which illustrate substitution.

Combine:

Which parts or ideas can you blend? Televisions with built-in VCRs and musical greeting cards are examples of combinations.

Adapt:

What else is like this, what can be copied or imitated? Air fresheners that resemble shells and children's beds that look like racecars illustrate adapting.

Modify:

Can you change an attribute such as color, sound, taste, odor, form, or shape or perhaps add a new twist? Parabolic skis and scented crayons illustrate modifying.

Magnify:

Can it be stronger, larger, higher, exaggerated, or more frequent? Extra-strength medicines as well as over-sized sports equipment and televisions are examples of products that have been magnified.

Minify:

Can it be smaller, lighter, less frequent or divided? Wrist-band televisions and 12-hour pain relievers are examples of minifying objects.

Put to Other Uses:

Can it be used in a way other than how it was intended to be used? Old tires used for fences, swings, and bird feeders, and the development of snowboards illustrate "put to other uses."

Eliminate:

What can you take away or remove? Sodium-free and fat-free foods and cordless telephones are examples of eliminating something.

Rearrange:

Can you interchange parts or change the pattern, layout, sequence, or schedule? The new surround sound (360-degree) stereo speakers and vertical paper staplers are examples of rearranging.

Reverse:

Can you turn parts backwards, inside out, upside down, or around? Reversible clothing is a classic example of reversing something.

After making children aware of these verbs and how they have been applied to existing objects and products, encourage them to use the SCAMPER verbs to identify new solutions to their problem. For example, a young child looking for a solution for keeping squirrels out of a bird feeder thought of eliminating the pole entirely by attaching the bird feeder to balloons filled with helium, which would enable the feeder to float approximately four feet off the ground.

TEAM SOLUTION TIMELINE

Note: This is a general guideline only. Every team is different, and situations may vary.

September - October - November

- Select Long-Term problem → Read the problem (know where the most points are) → Begin to brainstorm solutions & themes → Decide on theme & solution
- Make a timeline for tasks – {work backwards from tournament date}
- Schedule learning sessions: trips, speakers, research
- Begin building Long-Term solution, script, props, style items, etc.
- Rough outline of script
- Practice Spontaneous problems at every meeting
- Check/ask for clarifications at www.odysseyofthemind.com

December

- Begin costumes
- Continue building Long-Term solution, writing script, props, style items, etc.
- Refine Long-Term solution to scoring as defined in the problem
- Brainstorm & practice Spontaneous. Have team members identify individual strengths
- Check/ask for clarifications at <http://www.odysseyofthemind.com>

January

- Finish costumes
- Complete script - Including:
 - Team Chant – Timekeeper will ask “Team are you ready?” many teams come up with a clever response. (Boom...Bam...Odyssey Power!)
 - Signal – this lets the judges and audience know that the performance is over. (Time!)
- Choose parts for Long-Term performance
- Design membership sign – incorporate into performance
- Continue practice meetings, once or twice a week - Some teams will have sub-meetings like:
 - props and sign construction -- clothing/costume sewing
 - structure building -- script development
- Practice Spontaneous, Practice Spontaneous, Practice Spontaneous
- Polish Long-Term solution, skit, props, style items, membership sign and items needed for regional tournament
- Check/ask for clarifications at www.odysseyofthemind.com
- Identify weak areas and brainstorm improvements
- Coach & Team - understand all paperwork needed for the regional tournament

February - March

- Fine tune Long-Term solution, skit, props, style items, membership sign and items needed for regional tournament
- Practice Skit & Practice Spontaneous
- Finalize Long-Term solution and performance
- Dress rehearsal two weeks before regional competition for staff & parents
- Finalize tournament paperwork - make sure you have these completed before the tournament
 - Establish your “free choice” selections for your style categories
 - Complete paperwork for Tournament and make back-up copies
- Check tournament schedule for team competition time on state website
- Have fun at tournament day!

March or April (check state calendar)

- State Tournament

May

- World Finals

SCRIPT WRITING

Writing a script means answering the questions you learned in school – who, what, when, where, why and how!

The Who: Characters. Characters need to have personalities and physical descriptions developed for them to help them interact with each other and determine how the audience will respond to them. Think especially about your main character, an opposing character, and all the supporting players you will need in your cast.

Try this! Think about what you want your main character to be or do by using some of the **Character Creation** factors:

- Name, age, sex
- Cultural, ethnic, geographic background
- Physical description
- Dress
- Mannerisms, typical gestures, expressions
- Voice (inflection, tone, volume, etc.)
- Education/occupation
- Family
- History
- Strengths (moral, physical, intellectual)
- Weaknesses (moral, physical, intellectual)
- Values
- Motivation
- Likes
- Dislikes

The Where and When: Setting. The setting of a play is both the time and the place of the story. The setting may change depending upon the plot or, in *Odyssey of the Mind*, the requirements of the long-term problem.

Try this! Think about creating your place and time as well as any problems involving different set changes:

- Where - Place(s)
- When - Time (s)
- What research will you have to do to create an accurate Where & When?

The What: Situations/Conflict. Characters must have reasons to be brought together in certain settings (time & place) to interact. Some plays have characters struggling against each other or outside forces.

Try this! Brainstorm situations for your characters. Some examples are:

- a birthday party where pony rides are the entertainment
- a football game where a fight breaks out between rival fans
- an opportunity to read an older sister's private diary
- a Walmart store 3 days before Christmas
- a vacation beach house during a hurricane

The Why: Motivation. Characters must have an incentive, drive, or need that causes them to act in a certain way. Motivation is what makes us feel and act the way we do.

Universal motivators include love, hate, jealousy, trust, ambition, envy, and greed.

Try this! Go back and look at the characters you created earlier. Do their motivations line up with the strengths, weaknesses, values, likes, dislikes you gave them? Examples:

- the 90 lbs. weakling wants to get noticed by the girls like the muscular dude
- the greedy king wants to turn everything he owns into gold
- the plain, overworked girl wants a chance to go to the prince's ball

The How: Plot. The plot of the play is the sequence of events – what happens, first, second, third, etc. – and involves the characters, situation(s), setting, and conflict or cause & effect.

SCRIPT WRITING – CONTINUED

Try this! Develop a plot for a script from one of the examples below. Remember to include the setting, characters, basic situations, conflict or cause & effect, and a resolution. Examples:

- A meets B at C's birthday party.
- A discovers that B is also interviewing for a job that A desperately wants.
- A finds an injured alien from Mars who has escaped from B's laboratory.
- A wants to visit Disney World. B wants to go camping in the desert.

Now that the basic elements of the story have been created – characters, setting, situations/conflict, and plot, it is time to write a script! The story's action will take place through a series of scenes and acts. Since the audience cannot see into the mind of the characters, the characters must make their thoughts and feelings visible through spoken dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, and physical movements. Therefore, you will need to write stage directions and dialogue for your characters.

Dialogue: A play is developed mainly through dialogue, the speech of the characters. Dialogue must add something to the skit by developing the audience's understanding of the characters and their relationships, revealing conflicts, or moving the plot along.

Stage Directions: Instructions on how the character should behave through expression, attitude, voice, gesture, and movement. Directions not only tell performers what to do and how to act, they also give details about the set and props (movable objects). When writing directions, be as short and clear as possible. Sometimes even one word will work.

Example: Jason (opening the door, laughing): Oh, I doubt that will happen...

Quentin (breaking in and shouting): Watch out for the first step, it's a big one! Jason (yell): AAAAhhhhhh!

Try this! Take the following Aesop's fable and turn it into a short scene with dialogue and directions.

The Farmer's Quarrelsome Sons

A farmer's sons were quarrelsome. When he was unable, after much talk, to persuade them by what he said to change their ways, he decided that he would have to do it by action and told them to bring him a bundle of sticks. When they had done as he told them, he gave them the sticks all together and told them to break them in two. When they could not do it, although they tried with all their might, he undid the bundle and gave them each a single stick. They broke the sticks easily, and their father said, "Well now, boys, it's just the same with you; if you stick together, your enemies won't be able to get you in their clutches, but if you quarrel, you'll be easy to catch."

Good Luck! Just for fun – here are some good luck, bad luck superstitions of actors and actresses. Be sure to include or **not** include them in your script!

Good Luck Signs:

- An actor's shoes squeaking on first entrance on stage
- A part calling for wearing a wig
- Discarded shoes landing flat and right side up

Bad Luck Signs(there are lots more of these since actors and actresses are very superstitious!)

- Costumes in blue or yellow are supposed to make actors forget their lines
- no real jewelry, drinks, or flowers on stage
- Never look in another actor's mirror while he/she is putting on makeup

SAMPLE SCRIPT FORMAT

Cleo's Dream

Characters:

Cleo, a student at Alpine School

Mrs. Dewey, the librarian at the school John, the class brain

Michelle, the class athlete Jackson, the class clown

Mrs. Caesar, Cleo's mother and an astronomy professor at the local college Mr. Bainbridge, a local businessman obsessed about UFO sightings

Scene 1

Time: Wednesday after school is out. Present time.

Scene: The school library. Mrs. Dewey is busy at the check-out desk Cleo opens the door, hauls her book bag in behind her, and crosses to where her friends are sitting.

Cleo (groaning): Why does the teacher always give us more homework on Wednesday?

Michelle (lifting the book bag easily): I think you need to lift some weights if you're going to do this much work!

John (looking up, worried, from his laptop screen): Homework may not matter if Mr. Bainbridge's latest UFO sighting is real. He claims 6 alien spacecraft landed last night near the abandoned silver mine outside of town.

Jackson (laughing and punching John on the arm): I thought I was the nut, not you. Do you really believe in UFOs?

Cleo (frowning and standing up): I'll call my Mom and see if she knows anything. Jackson (smirking): Yeah, ask her if the little green men have showed up yet!

Scene 2

Scene: The astronomy observatory. Mrs. Caesar is looking through a telescope eyepiece and reciting coordinates to her assistant recording them on a laptop.

Mrs. Caesar (excited): The last set of numbers is 74.356W 45.007N! (She pulls a ringing cell phone out of her pocket and hands it to her assistant) Whoever this is, take a message. I'm too busy to talk. This is the greatest discovery since...

PERFORMANCE SKILLS

- **Face the audience whenever you are talking.** Does not matter if in the script you are supposedly talking to someone behind you, never face more than 45 degrees away from the audience when speaking.
- **Hold your head up.** Even if you are bowing to royalty or afraid of someone, you need to point your mouth at the audience to be understood - or at least to give them a chance to lipread.
- **Slow down and speak clearly.** This is true for everyone, but particularly true if you have a strong accent. You may well be excited and nervous and shy, but you still need to try to speak clearly.
- **Speak loudly enough that the people in the back row can hear you.** Practice talking to people right in front of you, five feet away, and ten feet away. How do you need to change your voice? Can you get louder without yelling? What is a stage whisper? - Intended to be heard by the audience but supposedly unheard by other characters.
- **Think about your voice and your tone.** While still being loud enough to be heard, you can vary the way your voice sounds and the emotions you project. The same line can be said many ways.
- **Do not forget non-verbal communication.** Express through gestures/facial expressions/feelings/emotions/eye contact (or lack thereof), body language, posture and other ways people can communicate without using language. Practice balance and body awareness; actions enhance language - 90% of communication is non-verbal.
- **Movement on stage.** Yes, you are always facing the audience (judges) while talking, but you still need to make the onstage movement interesting.
- **Characterization and character motivation.** Develop your character and think about what motivates them throughout the skit.
- **You might want to sing.** Original compositions/parodies can greatly enhance performance. Be aware of time and copyright issues. Think about abilities, accompaniment, and balance.
- **What happens when things go wrong?** How to feed someone a line. Always react in character - or do not react at all. Just keep going...the show must go on!
- **Consider warm-up exercises.** You may not want to do warm-ups every time your group gets together, but in final rehearsals or preparing to perform, body and voice warm-ups can help set the mood and relieve tense nerves.
- **Memorize your lines by repeating the lines out loud.** As soon as you have a script, work on memorizing what you're supposed to say. Say lines to your brother, Mom, dog, mirror, etc.
- **Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!** Just learning your lines is not the same as practicing your interactions. The more times you go over it the more you will be able to develop characters.
- **Use space safely and appropriately.** Review guidelines if you have questions.

Break a Leg! by Lisa Friedman, source for exercise

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES GUIDE

ALUMINUM makes a strong material that is relatively light and easy to work with. Look in salvage yards, look for old exterior storm doors, at fabricators and finally at lumber yards.

CARDBOARD: Cardboard is probably the easiest material to find. Appliance and furniture stores have large pieces of cardboard of various thicknesses. Folded cardboard can be almost as strong as wood.

CLOTH: Cloth can be used to make backdrops as well as costumes. They are easy to transport and very light weight. Last year's cloth is better than new since it has already been painted once.

ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES: Check team member's garages and basements. Ask an electrician for scraps. Switches and wires can be found at home Improvement and technology stores. Take apart existing appliances and reuse motors, wires, and gears.

FOAM BOARD is wonderful to use if your budget allows it. It provides a smooth finished surface that result in a professional look. It is available in large sheets at many hardware stores and art & craft stores in smaller sizes.

LUMBER & PLYWOOD: Lumber of some sort is the one universal material that is used in some form in almost every solution. It can be found as scraps on construction jobs (always ask if you can have it before taking it) and home improvements stores.

GLUES & FASTENERS: Different types of glue and fasteners work better for some products and types of materials you are trying to fasten together. The easiest, and most universal is the ever-trusty Duct Tape. Duct Tape comes in various colors, is easy to paint over and works not only as an adhesive, but as hinges.

LUBRICANTS: Vaseline, Graphite, soap, talc, mineral or motor oil all make great lubricating solutions at little or no cost.

PAINT: There are many types: Latex is easy to work with and can be mixed to make almost any color. Check out paint stores for "oops" paint that had been improperly mixed and many times it can be secured for almost nothing. FYI... spray paint is more expensive than "brush on" paint.

1. Remember if you buy paint, buy the cheapest paint possible.
2. Undercoat all cloth and plywood before trying to draw or paint on it...more even look.
3. Seal paints in airtight containers, so they do not dry up.

STYROFOAM (Polystyrene): Styrofoam is a quite easy material to work with and can be used for many things. It is light and easily to move and transport to and from competition sites. Styrofoam can be sanded, filed, glued, screwed, and nailed. It can be painted with latex paint and can be coated with plaster, plastic wood and sawdust and glue. Duct tape adheres very easily. Find new Styrofoam at home improvement stores and used packaging materials at furniture & appliance stores.

WHEELS AND AXLES: These two items are great excuses for a field trip to your local home improvement/hardware stores or flea markets. Axles include dowel rods, threaded rods, old broomsticks, bolts, pipe, etc.

Worth consideration are pizza boxes, pipe, pie tins (after eating the contents), old toys, water bottles, jar lids....

- Always ask first before taking. If you explain why you need it, people will give the items for little or no cost.
- Do not dismantle internally or factory sealed parts of an appliance
- Ask parents before using something from home
- Be careful around new construction. There are always nails, broken glass and other sharp objects lying around.
- Be careful with super glue. You can become "stuck up" in a hurry. Use plastic gloves.
- Be careful of hidden sharp edges
- Never let young children use power tools without supervision
- Wear safety glasses or goggle when appropriate
- Do not touch both terminals of a 9-volt battery to your tongue
- Learn to solder if working with electricity and solder everything
- Never cut open batteries!
- Be careful when mixing items together.
- Do not try Hot Glue on Styrofoam – the foam melts
- Remember, your only cost is the portion of the materials that you are using in your final solution. If you buy a sheet of plywood for \$20.00 and only use a 10th of the sheet in your final presentation you only should count the cost of the 10th of the sheet of plywood (\$2.00).

COPYRIGHT & TRADEMARKS

Copyrights

Members may use current long-term problem titles and icons and may photocopy Odyssey of the Mind materials for distribution within the membership during the program year, but these materials are copyrighted and may not be distributed beyond the membership and without permission for future use. In all areas — music, visuals, written word, characters — it is the team’s responsibility to avoid copyright violations. It is illegal to use and reproduce copyrighted material without the owner’s permission. The team should find out if a work is copyrighted and obtain permission to use the work. Judges will not require teams to produce a letter of permission to use a copyrighted work, since they cannot ascertain who holds the copyright. Therefore, they will not penalize a team for not producing a letter of permission. However, teams must be aware that, in some cases, they could be prosecuted by copyright holders if they use copyrighted material without obtaining permission. It is up to the team to determine what, if any; copyright laws apply to any non-team originated material it wishes to use. Neither CCI nor its affiliates can assist teams seeking such information or permission.

Trademarks

Current Odyssey of the Mind members can use the following copyrights and trademarks, which are federally registered to Creative Competitions, Inc., in their solution, for advertising or fund-raising purposes within their membership area, and for program awareness. Teams may produce tee-shirts and similar items bearing any of these marks for their own use. However, if they intend to offer any items for sale that bear the marks, they must first secure permission from their Association Director or CCI.

- Odyssey of the Mind ®



- OotM™

- Creative Competitions®



- OMER®

- Current Long-Term Problem Icons



- OMER’s friends

- Current Long-Term Problem cover art

The team must assume responsibility for using any other registered trademarks such as the NIKE swoosh, McDonald’s golden arches, etc. Teams must be aware that they could be prosecuted by trademark holders if they use registered marks without obtaining permission from the owner. **No team can use *World Finals* or the *WF* logo. Teams and/or any other group must obtain permission from its local association or CCI for the use of any other OotM trademark or copyright to be used at World Finals. This includes, but is not limited to, pins.**

Style



STYLE OVERVIEW

STYLE IS...

- Tells the story...like the exclamation point at the end of the sentence
- A process to help “sell” the team’s long-term solution - The pizzazz/Embellishment/Wow Factor
- Not talent, but how the team uses its talents
- A reflection of creativity and an expression of originality
- A degree of “above-&-beyond” to props, costumes, music, & any other component of the long-term solution
- That “je ne sais quoi” that makes the performance enjoyable and entertaining

SO WHY IS IT SCORED?

- It is a team’s **STYLE** that makes its problem solution unique
- It is a team’s **STYLE** that demonstrates its creative thinking outside the problem constraints
- It is a team’s **STYLE** that ties all the elements of a problem solution together

WHAT, EXACTLY IS SCORED?

- Long-Term problem has 1- 2 mandatory and 2-3 “free choice of team” elements
- Style has an “overall effect”– how well the 4 elements fit together and enhance the Long-Term solution
- Each category is valued at 10 points, for a possible “perfect score” of 50 Style Points
- Each team is scaled relative to the top team, whose raw score is scaled to 50

WHAT IS NOT SCORED?

- Nothing scored in the Long-Term problem (under “Scoring”) may be chosen for Style score.

HOW DOES A TEAM SELECT STYLE ELEMENTS?

- Some teams choose the elements at the very beginning of their journey and plan them carefully
- Some teams identify and choose the elements in the middle, after they have begun working
- Some teams identify the elements – especially “free choice” – when done constructing to pick best items

Successful STYLE will

- Be interesting to watch and understand and provide a clear opening and closing
- Capture the judge’s attention – memorable – will people walk away talking about it?
- Show “elaboration” and quality on basic ideas, set construction, costumes, props, etc.
- Integrate all team members into the performance
- Be innovative and unpredictable
- Make the judges think, laugh, cry, get the point, etc.
- Have a unity that is woven throughout the presentation

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

- Confidence / Polish / Unity / Continuity / Originality / WOW Factor
- Cohesiveness of all elements
- Style connected to Long-Term solution

Coaching Tips for Successful STYLE

- Use what you have! Have the team list their talents before beginning to design.
- Utilize common sense on language and outfit appropriateness.
- Videotape the performance, so team can critique themselves.
- Make contingency plan in case long-term solution does not. Murphy’s Law does exist in Odyssey.
- Practice at least once in the smallest possible performance area, and in a large performance area.
- Encourage loud, slow, clear speech!
- Practice the timing of the solution. Try to leave a minute or so of spare time for the unexpected.
- If the team is having **FUN**, Style is enhanced.

STYLE ELEMENTS

- Creative
- Unique
- Surprise
- Intellect
- Emotion
- Humor
- Integrated theme or story
- Story has beginning, middle & end
- Attention to detail
- Enhances solution creatively
- Sound Effects, Music
- Narration
- Poems, Chants, Rhyme, Foreign Accents
- Puppets Make-up/Disguises
- Lighting
- Dance, Coordination between people
- Engineering
- ANYTHING

COSTUMES

- Keyed to a time-period or style?
- Creative everyday materials used in different ways?
- Integrated with total effect?
- Show innovation and imagination in design?

COMMON STYLE

- Street Clothes – Not altered
- Rented or bought costumes

CREATIVE STYLE

- Unusual materials / Made by the team
- Colorful / Elaborate

MUSIC

- Integrated into solution?
- Are lyrics creative and imaginative?
- Clear and easily understood?

COMMON STYLE

CREATIVE STYLE

- None or very plain
- Lacking in color
- Plain cardboard
- Few props
- Basic items – nothing creative
- Where appropriate or throughout the performance
- Songs – original or parodies
- Synchronization – The words of the performance and the beat of the music go together

SCENERY & PROPS

- Coordinated with theme?
- Are elements well-constructed?
- Smooth scene changes

COMMON STYLE

CREATIVE STYLE

- None or very plain
- Lacking in color
- Plain cardboard
- Few props
- Basic items – nothing creative
- Colorful
- Integrated into theme
- 3-Dimensional / Pop-out props / Movement
- Unusual materials or use of materials
- Exaggerated Theme
- Be neat! – Quality is important

MEMBERSHIP SIGN

SPECIAL EFFECTS

- 3D
- Visible
- Fits with theme
- Has a function
- Music, Sound
- Visual
- Integrated into theme
- Enhances, not distracts

STYLE QUESTIONS

- Is your introduction & set-up done quickly and efficiently?
- Have the talents of the team been fully used?
- How or where could elaboration be added?
- Is it within the rules?
- Is it appropriate?
- Have you included variety in you script?
- How is this related to the long-term problem?
- Does this really deserve to be a scored item?
- Did we take a short cut with this? Could it be better?
- It is amazing and clever or just routine or simple?
- Does it benefit the solution?
- Can each team member’s voice be heard?
- Does the membership sign tie into the theme?
- Can the sound effects, music, etc. be heard?
- Is the presentation smooth with good transitions?
- Does everything flow?
- Are the props well-constructed and versatile?
- Will everything fit through the size of the door specified in the Program Guide?
- Have you used unique materials for the costumes, props, etc.?
- Will the judges understand it?
- Are there any visual distractions which might detract?
- Has the team taken care of all the “Details”?
- Do you have a unique/obvious way to end your presentation?
- Have you talked about how to answer the judges’ questions at the end of the performance?
- Is the Style Form completed?
- Can you use the long-term solution to draw attention to your style?
- What do you mean by ...?
- How does this improve your solution?
- Are there other possible ways to do this?
- How could you accomplish this?
- What existing materials/items do you have that can be used in a new way?
- What new materials could you use?
- Can you explain how this idea will work?
- Can several people’s ideas be combined in a useful way?

GO AWAY IN STYLE!

FILLING OUT THE STYLE FORM

1 & 2 - Defined in the Problem

- Read the Problem
- Be specific and descriptive. Have the team describe exactly the part of the solution that they want the judges to focus on. Vague descriptions get vague scores.

Free Choice 3 & 4

- Encourage the team to pick the aspect of their solution that they are most proud of
- Cannot be scored in Long-Term problem
- Choose areas that will have maximum impact when compared to other teams
- Be specific. Have the team describe exactly the part of the solution that they want the judges to focus on. Vague descriptions get vague scores
- Choose areas that clearly stand out
 - Easily identifiable
 - Strong points of presentation
 - Maximum impact
- Style is not talent or ability, but rather how those talents and abilities are used
- A judge can only score on what is specified

If your team is most proud of the cat's costume, is it the ENTIRE costume? Or just the face? Or just the makeup on the face? The team should focus in on EXACTLY what they think is most creative and stylish. (If it is the overall impersonation of a cat, that's fine too – but it's the team's choice!)

Overall Effect

This is a brief description to of how the style elements relates (“Tells the Story”) to the Long-Term performance

- The general impression the team leaves on the judges
- How the four specific style elements of the solution fit together and complement each other
- How well the judges understood what the team was doing
- Make sure your concepts are clearly described
- Emphasize your free choice areas in the description

Elements a Style Judge looks for

- Opening and closing, is there a clear beginning and ending to the presentation?
- Integration of team members, does one dominate?
- Do team members present themselves with confidence?
- Originality, is it innovative and unpredictable?
- Are style elements smoothly integrated throughout?
- Is style interesting and cohesive? Or are bits of action just strung together?
- Are concepts and points clearly emphasized?
- The smoothness and ‘polish’ of the presentation – it takes practice!
- How thoroughly is style connected to the long-term problem solution?
- What is the quality of design, construction and workmanship of costumes and props?
- Does the judge “get the point”?

Spontaneous



COACHING SPONTANEOUS

Although many teams work for months to prepare a solution to their long-term problem, **it is the spontaneous problem that most often determines the most creative teams** and advances them to the next level of competition. Spontaneous is the part of OM that truly demands creative thinking in the moment. Your team alone in room with the judges – no Coach, no parents, only their teammates. It is a test of both skill and teamwork. A successful team must be prepared and trusting of each other.

Preparing a team for spontaneous takes three things – practice, **practice** and **practice!** Make sure your team practices spontaneous consistently throughout the year. Try to have your team solve at least one Verbal and one Hands-on problem per meeting.

KEYS TO BECOMING GREAT AT SPONTANEOUS

Coach must learn their teams' strengths and weaknesses - Observe your team in practice

- Who takes the lead? Are they effective? Who really listens to the problem?
- Who stays aware of the situation – time left, points to be earned, etc.
- Who stands out at Verbal? Hands-on?
- Who gets left behind or ignored? Teach them to speak up.

Based on your observations, work with the team to develop defined roles for each team member. Some teams designate roles for each team member when they are solving problems.

- *Leader* – responsible for make sure that everyone on the team has a chance to share his/her idea. Keeps team focused and on point.
- *Timekeeper* – makes sure the team is efficient and cognizant of the time constraints listed in the problem. Ask the judges how much time is left and alerts team when time is running out.
- *Reader* – Teams are given two copies of the problem to read along with the judge. This is someone who has good reading comprehension and who can alert the team when they misunderstood the problem.
- *Materials Manager* – hands-on problems have supplies. Its important to know all the materials so that no important items are missed.
- *Points Manager* – hands-on or combo problems have various ways for the team to earn points. This team member can help come up with a game plan about which points to focus on.

TEACHING SKILLS

There are three types of spontaneous problems: **verbal**, **hands-on**, and **a combination or verbal—hands-on**. Spontaneous problem solving requires teams to think on their feet, the problem writers feel that “anything goes”. Teach your team to present the judges with a positive view while effectively solving the problem:

- Remain calm – will result in a more thoughtful process
- Listen to each other – best ideas can be lost if team members do not listen to each other
- Function as a team – include all team members in the process
- Be quick, but do not hurry – Long answers take lots of time that could be used by another member
- Use all senses to understand the problem – the judge reads the problem, but a written copy is provided. Some learn more effectively by reading than listening
- Focus on the goal – teams often get focused on the process (e.g. build a bridge) rather than the scoring (e.g. points based on how wide and high the bridge stands). It can be a subtle but important difference
- Praise each other for good ideas – no negativity towards one another
- Learn to listen carefully when the problem is being read. Ask questions during your thinking time
- Speak loudly and clearly. ➔ Learn to enunciate! ➔ Give your answers with confidence
- Make sure team members are standing during spontaneous - this tends to give them more energy

- Use accents, gestures, or characters when giving an answer. Breaking into a British accent can make a marginal answer seem creative and help your answer come alive. Judges like to be entertained!
- In verbal problems that are timed, any answer is better than freezing and taking up time. Respond so that the next team member can answer and use the time before it's your turn again to think of an answer or two
- Don't wait for your turn to begin thinking. Listen to the team's responses as you think of your next answer
- Explain the difference between **common** and **creative** responses. These are scored subjectively. Judges are trained and prepared; it is a good idea for the teams to keep in mind the judges' knowledge. For an example, a reference to an inside joke might be a creative response, but the judge may not understand the reference and score it as common. The judge will not ask the team to explain their response
- Verbal problems, sometimes the team members must give a response in sequence (take turns). At other times there are systems that slow the teams down. One suggestion is to practice turning cards, without giving responses. Practice will help them learn to focus on what they must do beyond giving responses
- Usually verbal problems require many responses. Common responses receive 1-point, while creative responses worth 3 or 5-points. Verbal problems allow team members to give multiple responses and team members should try to have several responses ready before their next turn. The team must realize that excessive speed may cause them to finish early, but with fewer creative responses. They should use their *time wisely*. If a problem limits the number of responses, it is best to take time to think of something creative and earn 5 points, rather than rattle off many 1-point responses
- Each team member should pick a topic such as sports, famous people, movies, music, politics, medicine, current events and so on. They should spend some time each week studying the latest news on that topic. Then, if a team member gets stuck on a spontaneous problem, he or she can associate the problem to the topic studies. (Be careful, judges may not know the latest rock groups or television characters.)
- In hands-on problems, there are various strategies that the teams can employ. All problems are pre-tested to ensure that there are a variety of known and unknown possible solutions. In competition teams use their combined creativity and usually come up with many more solutions with wonderful results.
- Combination problems have a verbal scoring element and a hands-on component with additional scoring.
- If a spontaneous problem has a scoring category, "How well the team worked together" then the team should usually present itself at its best. It should show itself as organized, cooperative and a cohesive whole. This will receive higher score for this category and will lead to a superior solution for the problem itself. Arguing wastes time and will lower score if "How the team works together is judged."
- Humor is often rewarded in spontaneous problems, as well as long-term problems.
- Before the team enters the room, they should elect a spontaneous captain who will be the facilitator for the decision-making process during this critical planning time. This cuts down on the arguing that will occur when everyone has their own idea of how to solve the problem.
- Teams should refer often to the written copy of the problem — they need to be sure to stay within the problem's intent. If there is uncertainty about an aspect of a problem, team members may ask the judge(s) questions. Time will not be stopped, but a misunderstanding or wrong assumption can lead to a low score.
- If a team fails at a problem, encourage them to do it a second time after you have analyzed what went wrong
- Debrief after each problem – positives, negatives, questions, other solutions
- Plan – seating arrangement, who will compete, leaders, timekeepers, readers, etc.

LISTENING TIPS

- Never assume anything.
- Do not jump to conclusions. Listen and understand all the information before deciding your approach.
- Work at listening. It does not just happen.
- Concentrate on the problem.
- Be objective.
- Listen to your teammates. They might say something you can build on.

DEVELOPING VERSATILE THINKING

Responding to Pictures, Cartoons, Objects, etc.

- Teach team members to look at the problem from different points of views. (i.e. If they are asked to speak to or about an object, have them look closely at the object and ask themselves questions like: What are the materials used to make the objective? What is the purpose of this object? What unusual experience or sayings are associated with this object? What associations can be made with the people or things shown in this picture or cartoon?

Webbing or Category Thinking

- Teach team members to think in general terms. Categories, such as shapes, colors, professions, athletics, clothing, transportation, books, and celebrities are used as a trigger for multitude of responses.

Stuck Strategies

- Your team should brainstorm possible strategies to use in a competition when a student is searching for a response. They should consider their surroundings, including the furniture and decorations, when seeking an idea. The team may consider whether this is the time to give a common response immediately or use the example given in the problem.

Videotaping

- Use video to record your team's spontaneous sessions. It also helps to judge the team from the back of the room during practice. This encourages teams to speak loudly and clearly.

Multiple Responses

- Get your team members to become prolific with responses by requiring that they give two to five answers with each turn. When turning cards, they must give the same number of answers as the number on the card (1-5). The team can also practice by rolling a die and giving as many answers to the problem as the number rolled. You may also put team members in small groups of two or three and have them respond in turn.

Debriefing & Critiquing

- After each problem, critique – don't criticize student responses. Ask questions like: How did you get that answer? Which answers were most creative? Could any of the common responses have been made more creative by elaborating? Were some of the responses too elaborate? Could the point have been made in fewer words? Critiquing should be used to encourage more answers, not inhibit them.

Piggybacking or Hitchhiking

- Teach team members to listen carefully to each other's responses. Ideas can then be combined supplemented, expanded upon, or enhanced.

SPONTANEOUS TOP TEN LIST

- #10 Walk in with *Confidence* and look like you are having fun!
- #9 Limit pure silliness and answers about weapons, body humor and no inside jokes
- #8 Ask the judges questions if you do not understand or are not sure about something
- #7 Play it up! Be Dramatic! The answer might be judged as common or creative, based on how you say it.
- #6 Practice solutions during the stated practice time – it is the best way to find and correct problems you may have before they happen during scoring time
- #5 Watch your time – how much time you have to think and how much you have left
- #4 The job of every team member is to make your other team members look good too. That is part of **good teamwork!**
- #3 Figure out a way to resolve disputes politely and quickly before you go into the room. Avoid any type of arguing, bad feelings, or put downs during spontaneous competition. **Always be respectful to the judges; do not argue with them; their decisions are final.**
- #2 Talk to each other OUT LOUD! Do not whisper to each other! Let the judges hear how you are working together and all your good, creative possible solutions, so they will know what you are trying to accomplish...and then may give your team points for good teamwork and/or creativity too!
- #1 Figure out where the points are in the problem, so you know how to best allocate time.
- #0 One Extra – Team Assignments:
 - 1 team member to be the timekeeper to make sure you do not spend all the time talking about the solutions and no time to solve the problem
 - 1 team member to make the final decisions if you cannot decide on how to proceed
 - 1 team member to read the problem and make sure the team does not miss something
 - 2 team members to read the problem over and over

ITEMS NEEDED FOR SPONTANEOUS CHALLENGES

Paper clips (large and small)	Scotch tape	Aluminum foil
Pipe cleaners	Toothpicks	Ball bearings
String	Lunch bags	Marbles
Masking tape	Tubes (toilet/paper towel)	Egg cartons
Noise makers	Yarn	Thumbtacks
Balloons	Mailing labels	Newspaper
Pencils	Spoons (plastic)	Play-Doh
Foam	Boxes (various sizes)	Styrofoam peanuts
Buckets (various sizes)	Nails	Coffee cans
Styrofoam cups	Adhesive tape	Cotton balls
Index Cards	Band Aids	Straws
Rubber bands	Markers & Crayons	Tennis balls
Duct Tape	Cardboard	Golf tees
Paper plates	Waxed paper	Golf balls
Clay (in stick form)	Self-adhesive labels	Ping pong balls
Popsicle sticks	Business envelopes	Coffee stirrers (McDonald's type)
Ribbon	Rulers & Yard stick	Pliers / Screwdriver
8.5 x 11 paper & folders	Dowels	

Wrapping Gifts Challenge

Materials:

- Shirt box or other regularly shaped box
- Gift wrap
- Ribbon and bows
- Scissors
- Tape
- 2 Blindfolds

Exercise 1

- Break the team into groups of two or three.
- Using just one hand each, have them wrap a present
- Give them a time limit to add to the challenge.
- Add penalties for using the second hand.
- Review where teamwork helped and where the lack of it hindered their success. (It takes real teamwork to pull this off and come up with a good-looking package.)

Exercise 2

- Repeat Exercise 1 with new complications.
- The hand used must be their non-dominant hand and there is no talking allowed.
- Review some of the non-verbal communication techniques they used and let them try it again.

Exercise 3

- Blindfold two of the team members.
- Have a third member provide them with directions to get the package wrapped.
- The blindfolded members cannot talk.
- With D1 teams, let them use both hands, but D2 and D3 teams should only use one hand.
- Review again the teamwork techniques used.
- Congratulate them on what they have learned.

SAMPLE VERBAL PROBLEM

A. JUDGE READS TO TEAM:

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 3 minutes to respond. You may ask questions at any time, but the clock will continue.
2. You will receive one point for each common response. Highly creative response will receive five points.
3. A number has been placed before each of you. That is your assigned number.
4. A stack of cards appears before you. When time begins, the judge will turn over the first card. The team member whose number corresponds to the card number will give the responses. For example, if the first card is 3 then team member number 3 will give the response.
5. After the team members gives the response, he or she will turn over the next card. That team member will respond, and so on.
6. You may not skip your turn or repeat or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.
7. Once time begins, it will not be stopped. Speak loudly and clearly.
8. Your Problem is: Use a word or words to make a first and last name. You must relate this name to an occupation. For example, Budweiser could be split into Bud as the first name and Weiser as the last name. Bud Weiser could be a beer distributor. The first word must be a recognized name or nickname. (Repeat, Your Problem is...)

B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:

1. Be sure to give exactly one minute to think and three minutes to respond. Timing is crucial.
2. Score: One point for each common response. Highly creative response will receive five points.
3. In order to ensure that in every five cards turned over each team member will give one answer, stack the cards in the following order for each team: 2,4,3,1,5; 3,1,4,5,2; 3,2,5,4,1; 4,3,5,2,1; 2,1,4,3,5; 2,4,5,1,3; 1,5,3,2,4; 5,4,2,1,3; 4,1,3,5,2; 1,3,5,4,5.
4. If all the cards have been uses, turn them over and start again. At the end of the session, the timekeeper should the order of the cards and rearrange them if any are out of order.
5. Be sure that all cards assigning seat position have been placed into position prior to calling in the team. Place the blank response sheet on the table for the team to see.
6. Examples of Common Responses:
 - Bud Weiser is a beer distributor
 - Sal Iva is a dentist
7. Examples of Creative Reponses:

SPONTANEOUS BRAINSTORMING

PROBLEM: How many different uses for a _____?

- Coat hanger
- Airport windsock
- Turn on/off TV from a distance
- Open a locked car door
- Attach a magnet for metal pickup
- Axle for small-wheeled carriers
- Binocular holders
- Pajama strap finder
- Drawer dividers
- Handle for big dollhouse
- Book holder
- Small basketball hoop
- Jewelry item holder
- Weathervane
- Holder for loop earrings
- Frame for linen lunch box
- Bath towel holder
- Badminton frame
- Slingshot
- Frame for rag doll
- Bicycle basket
- Clock hands
- Hot plate stand
- Wire sculpture
- Dipstick for Easter eggs
- Christmas tree stand
- Bicycle stand
- Hanging pot hooks
- Doorstop
- Conductor's baton
- Musical instrument
- Bird feeder stand
- Plant stand
- String instrument piece
- Umbrella frame
- Oil dipstick
- Holder for yard signs
- Gate hinges or gate latch
- Twists for garbage bags
- Nail Puller
- Paint stirrer
- Sundial
- Dog leash
- Shoe rack
- Muzzle for a dog
- A bow
- Parts for a mobile
- Use for hanging ornaments
- Kite frame
- Rain gauge
- Butterfly net frame
- Depth stick measure
- A paint roller holder
- Portable fishing pole
- Permanent chopsticks
- Shish kebab skewer
- Stakes for tent
- A hat rack
- Giant safety pin
- Large paper clip
- Shoe scraper
- Dish holder
- Cartridge holder
- Tool holder
- Lunch box organizer
- Back scratcher
- Hot dog stick
- Planting pot rake
- Make home address numbers
- Wire cage handle
- Lightning rod for feeding angry alligators
- Marshmallow stick
- Newspaper rack
- Gun barrel cleaner
- Sheet music holder
- Cookie cutter
- Fireplace Poker
- Spare button holder
- Soap bubble maker
- Storing washers

SPONTANEOUS BRAINSTORMING...CONTINUED

- Name uses for a watercolor maker.
- Combine a door and an ice cream cone
- Statue: Strike a pose and make a comment
- Name containers and what they hold
- Use the word "Tall" in a word or phrase
- Use the word card in a phrase, or name kinds of cards.
- Use the word "wheel" in a word or phrase
- Improvise with or show a use for a pencil or pen
- List words with the same first and last letter (Dad).
- Name things you could see through a porthole.
- Name things you would see if you were a worm.
- Name things you would find in a kitchen drawer.
- Name things you do to get ready for the holidays.
- List things that are beautiful and tell why.
- Name things you could wrap around your finger.
- Name ways to cut grass without a lawn mower.
- Name things that are green and can be eaten.
- Name a use for a room, or name kinds of rooms.
- Name things with many small pieces or parts.
- Name things you would find in a movie theater.
- Name things you might send in an envelope.
- Name things you would find in a spider's web.
- Name things you would find in a bowl of soup.
- What can you do with a large pile of snow?
- List purple things.
- Compare a button & paper
- Name kinds of bottles
- Name kinds of holes
- List uses of chewing gum
- List things you could store in a shoebox
- Name things you can read
- List things you don't like to hear
- List places to go on field trips
- List things at a zoo
- List things in a bag lunch
- The answer is 12; what is the question?
- Name a place to play
- Name ways to make people laugh
- List words that begin with "Y"
- Name classes you could take at a school.
- List things associated with old age.
- Name things that come in pairs.
- Name different kinds of hats.
- List things that come in boxes.
- List things that are round and yellow.
- List jobs that help people and who they help.
- Name things that are flat and good to eat.
- Name things that melt.
- Name things that give off light.
- List shiny things.
- Name things that are white and soft.
- List things that include the word heart.
- Name things that are sweet and round.
- List things found in a toolbox.
- List things that are free.
- List things that you are thankful for.
- List Thanksgiving things.
- Name kinds of animals and where they live.
- The answer is red; what is the question?
- List uses for a worn-out light bulb.
- What could you make out of an old shoe?
- Name things that are hollow.
- Name holidays.
- The answer is morning; what is the question?
- List gifts you would like to receive.
- List things to do on a winter vacation.
- Give uses for an old Christmas tree.
- Name things that are smooth.
- List two letter words.
- What could you do with a piece of string?
- Name things you can hang on a wall.
- Name things found in a castle.
- List uses for a toothbrush.
- Give uses for a light bulb
- List all the uses for an umbrella
- Name all kinds of boxes
- List all kinds of beds
- Make up three-syllable rhyming words

SPONTANEOUS BRAINSTORMING...CONTINUED

- List titles of books
- Name kinds of cookies
- List boy's names.
- List things in a kitchen cupboard.
- List uses for a garbage can.
- Name things you can do by yourself
- List things you can do only once
- List words that rhyme with take.
- Name places you like to visit.
- List brand names.
- List words ending in “~ly.”
- List reasons to stay in bed.
- Name cities.
- List things with points.
- Name kinds of fuels.
- List kinds of cars.
- List games.
- Talk to or improvise with the key.
- Name outdoor winter activities.
- Name ways to get to school.
- List words with five letters.
- List names of authors.
- Name things with spots.
- List three letter words.
- List things that are white and cold.
- List words beginning with the letter “J.”
- List things you could do with a pail of water.
- Name valuable things.
- List things you can do with one hand.
- List things that are sweet.
- List uses for a plastic sled
- List words beginning with “in~.”
- Name uses for Scotch tape
- Name all the supports you can think of
- List sports
- Name things you find in the ground.
- Now try four-syllable words
- List things a grandmother might say.
- The answer is “cold”; what is the question?
- List things you see out your front door.
- List words with three syllables.
- Name things with four corners.
- Name things you would find in a lake.
- Name things you think are beautiful
- Name words ending in “~ing.”
- Name things you put on.
- Name animal sounds and tell type of animal.
- Name breakfast things.
- List words that end in “W.”
- Name things you throw away.
- List bad habits.
- Name things with seeds.
- Name places to explore.
- Where would you find numbers?
- List things that crumble in your hand.
- List things you can wash.
- Name things that are white and hard.
- List uses for an empty film container.
- Name uses for “post it” notes.
- Name things that come in threes.
- Name things that you can see through.
- Name things that you turn.
- Name ice cream flavors.
- Name uses for a glove.
- Name ways to tell time.
- Name things you avoid.
- Where would you find a key?
- List things that become more valuable with age.
- List foods that are yellow
- List gifts that do not cost anything
- Use an animal in a phrase or sentence
- Name uses for a sidewalk

Outside Assistance

New Coaches

Hardest part...
Letting the team do it themselves

Experienced Coaches

Hardest part...
Letting the team do it themselves



OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE – MAINTAINING ODYSSEY ETHICS

Students learn best when they complete tasks on their own, and they develop a sense of pride and increased self-esteem when they go beyond what is expected. To ensure that team members get the full benefits of participation, and to ensure fairness, team members must design and create all aspects of their problem solution.

TEAM MEMBERS = ODYSSEY IS HANDS-ON

COACHES, FAMILY, FRIENDS = ODYSSEY IS HANDS-OFF

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IS IF ANYONE BESIDES TEAM MEMBERS...

- *Suggests or Chooses* the theme, music, costumes, props, etc.
- *Suggests or Makes* any part of the solution or style materials
- *Offers Ideas or Solves* the problem for the team
- *Fills Out* any of the paperwork except Division 1 – may record the team’s ideas/decisions in the team’s own words
- *Assists* in applying makeup, repairing materials or hairstyling
- *Assists* the team in any way once they have left the staging area judge
- *Answers* questions addressed to the team by a judge
- *Signals or Assists* the team in any way while they perform

TEACHING TEAM MEMBERS SKILLS

A coach or parent can be most helpful to team members when they teach them a skill that they may not have possessed before the Odyssey season. One of the ideas behind the Odyssey program is for team members to learn new skills. The following is an example of a situation.

Situation: A team member is trying to hammer in a screw with a wrench. Most people would realize that this is not a proper technique. Approach the team member and ask them “Is that the proper technique for the job?” Most likely they will say “No.” There are several different techniques that the team member could use to solve the problem. Question the team member and allow them to explore some different techniques before allowing them to continue.

- Q1: What do you normally hammer into a piece of wood?
They could discover that they need a nail and hammer
- Q2: What do you normally use a wrench for instead of hammering?
They could discover that they need a bolt and wrench
- Q3: Are there any other methods of attaching the two items?
They could discover that they could glue it together

Whatever technique they choose, once they have decided, someone can teach them the skill need for that job if they do not possess that skill.

FIRST LET’S REVIEW THE BASICS

Coaches have the responsibility to organize the team, maintain order and discipline. They may serve as a “secretary” to a team (no matter what division) if they write only what the team members say. (However, for official forms, coaches may fill them out only for Division I teams).

Coaches can ask the team members questions to get them to think about their solutions and how to improve them. However, they may not ask questions in a leading way. For example: “Don’t you think it would be better to narrate your play, rather than act it out?” The correct way to state the question would be, “How many ways are plays presented?” This will encourage the team to think creatively and not indicate that the coach thinks the way the play is presented should be changed. By asking broad questions, the coach stimulates the team members to think. This is the heart of the Odyssey of the Mind program.

GENERAL CONCEPT

- The Team **MUST** conceive, design, construct, and perform their own ideas.
- The solution is the Team's design, their work, their performance, and their score.
- The Team **IS** responsible for what they do, not the Coach. The Coach is a **FACILITATOR**.
- Odyssey of the Mind™ challenges are for the students, not the coaches, nor the parents

Conception and Design – Coaches CAN:

- Help the team to generally understand the rules
- Explain the Long-Term Problem to the team (without specific solution hints)
- Conduct brainstorming sessions for both Long-Term and Spontaneous
- Ask the team questions to make sure its solution is well thought out
- Give the team "homework" assignments based on their ideas
- Write down team's ideas and/or instructions in the team's words
- Have a resource person instruct the team on techniques – sewing, painting, acting, photography, sawing/hammering, construction
- Present many construction options to the team and let them choose
- Watch films, videos and live theater

Conception and Design: Coaches CANNOT

- Coaches/Parents/Friends/etc. verbalize their ideas/solutions to the team
- Ask leading questions that cause the team to think of "your ideas"
- Have a person instruct the team on engineering techniques to specifically improve their unique solution

Construction/Preparation/Practice – Coaches CAN:

- Plug cords and/or electrical equipment into an outlet
- Move equipment and materials for the team
- Have the team participate in a Basic Skills Workshop to demonstrate proper use of power tools/equipment
- Schedule practice sessions
- Help the team improve its Spontaneous skills and evaluate Spontaneous practice sessions

Construction/Preparation/Practice: Coaches CANNOT

- Use a power tool on the team's actual solution
- Demonstrate a construction technique specifically on the team's actual solution
- Hold a team member's hand while performing a task
- Use prior year's props with a different team
- Help work on the team's solution (only the actual team can do this)
- Help finish a prop due to lack of time (team members know how to do it)
- Give "stage directions" –e.g. "You need to speak louder" (A team member should be the Stage Director)
- Act as a "judge" who gives critical feedback to the team during a dress rehearsal

Performance – Coaches CAN:

- Help move the props up to the Pre-Staging/Staging area & help with props after the performance is over
- Help the team "warm-up" for Spontaneous
- Obtain the team's Long-Term scores after their performance

Performance: Coaches CANNOT

- Help the team with anything – costumes, hair, make-up
- Plug electrical cord/equipment into a performance site outlet
- Tell the team where to place a prop
- Prompt a "stuck" team member
- Help, signal, or assist in any way during the team's performance

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FOR PARENTS

What parents may not do is provide the dreaded "Outside Assistance" for which the team will receive penalties at the tournament. Just remember that all ideas for the Long-Term problem solution, as well as all the implementation of those ideas, must come from a team member.

Did your child tell you that you may not help?

**That is
absolutely
wrong!**

**That is
absolutely
right!**

**Well?
Which is it?**

BOTH! You may do many things to help the team, but there are also things you might want to do that would cost the team penalty points. So, how do you know the difference? Here is your own handy, dandy, just-for-parents guideline!

Do

- Transport the team to buy things
- Transport the props
- Help provide snacks
- Bring spontaneous problem supplies
- Help get the props into the building for the tournament + staging area
- Open attics, closets, basements for “garage sale value” materials
- Teach the team a skill, IF the team asks, such as:
 - Sewing
 - Woodworking
 - Art electronics
 - Engineering
 - Principles of simple machines

Don't

- Suggest what to buy
- Repair props if broken in shipping
- Suggest which skills to use to solve a problem
- Suggest which skills would result in a better looking or better functioning solution
- Give any ideas for their problem solution
- Sew anything, paint anything, do anything to contribute to the team's problem solution
- Analyze why something failed
- Expect perfection from a solution not done by adults (or from a solution done by adults, for that matter!)
- Suggest what materials to get from the attic, closet, or basement
- Fix anything that breaks
- Criticize any part of a team's solution
- Put emphasis on scores instead of fun

Parents ARE important, as resources for learning skills, helping get materials, providing moral support, supplementing working brains with nourishment, and generally facilitating the logistics of a working team. Without your encouragement, your child will not develop the self-confidence that Odyssey of the Mind promotes.

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE Q & A

Scenario	Question	Answer
Div I, a parent plugs in a power tool for the student, it's a rule in their house that no children are allowed to plug in any appliance	Is it OA for any non-team member to plug in a power tool that the team uses to complete its solution to the problem?	No, the parent may not plug anything during the performance.
Kids try to assemble 2 boards together perpendicularly (4th graders) with screws and nails, but they keep falling apart.	Is it OA to ask an adult who is familiar with carpentry how to fix the problem?	An adult can show + tell team members various ways to brace the boards but cannot not show them specifically what to do for their solution.
A team decided their skit revolves on a CELL theme. Coach gives them homework assignment to come up with as many words that contain the word CELL, such as cellophane, cellular, etc.	Is it OA for a coach to give a homework assignment that gets the kids to think more creatively about an initial idea that they came up with?	Although the coach should not give the team any examples, the assignment is one of the types of things the coach should do to help the team develop its creativity.
A team deliberates on its solution, coach asks questions to make sure that the solution is well thought out.	Is it OA for the coach to ask questions as the team is developing its solution?	No – that's exactly what a coach is for! (Just don't ask leading questions.)
A team wants to paint props with colors that were mixed by last year's team.	Would it be OA for a team to use something that was made by someone?	This is not OA as it is not the prop itself.
Four of seven team members on a team in one year build some backdrops for use in their presentation. These same four are on a team the following year with three new members.	Is it OA for the new team to use the backdrops built in the prior year? May a team use props from prior year in any situation without incurring an OA penalty?	Props may be used from year to year ONLY if the team is entirely the same team. No new team members. The work must be that of all current team members regardless of when it was done.
A Division I team is spray-painting a prop.	Is it OA for the coach to hold a team member's hand, to help show the proper way to paint?	Only if coach shows them to paint by using scrap piece of wood/paper to give this lesson.
A Div. I balsa team has a sheet of paper describing the order to put weights on (smaller diameter first, then larger, to allow hand grip space). Teams words, but the coach wrote it.	Is it OA for a non-team member to write down the instructions used by team members during their presentation? Is this any different than the coach completing the Style Form for Division I?	If the team members provided the information, it is okay for the coach to write it out. It is NOT different from the rules for the Style Form.
With proper training, it is possible to examine a structure and determine which element failed first and why.	Is it OA for someone other than a team member to examine a failed structure and provide information for the team?	May tell the team what failed; however, he/she cannot tell the team why it failed or what to do to keep if from failing in the future.
The coach picks spontaneous problems to practice & gives them feedback on creative/ common responses & quality of their solutions.	Is it OA for the coach to prepare their team for spontaneous competition in that manner?	No, preparing teams is one of the primary roles of the coach.
A coach presents a simple, generic demonstration of an engineering concept and the team immediately applies to their solution	Does the presentation of an engineering concept represent OA in this circumstance?	Yes. The coach has to present several options of construction and demonstrate how each fail, but the team must draw their own conclusions.
During pre-staging the coach hands the paperwork to the pre-staging judge.	Is it OA for the coach to hand the paperwork to the judge?	Let the team handle the paperwork, there is no rule against the coach handed it to the judge.
A coach asks each team member to read one of the elements of the problem and explain what it means.	Is it OA for the coach to write down elements, ask the team to group them & once the team organizes elements, can the coach write them down, make copies, & distribute to team?	Any Div -It's okay for the coach to write down the elements, team groups them & coach makes copies & distributes copies to the team members. The coach may not add or change anything.
The performance has been taped. Four kids want to schedule an extra practice; three do not and the performance needs all seven.	Is it OA for the coach to make the decision?	The coach can make the decision on how the decision is to be made. Practice schedules are entirely within the coach's purview.
Div. I team has decided to use what they think is tasteful bathroom humor in their skit. The coach discussed with team the rule about vulgarity.	The team does not think it is vulgar and have no clue what's vulgar. Is it OA for them to tell other adults their jokes and ask if they think it is vulgar?	No, this is okay to do. Even a clarification will not be able to state what any judging team will deem acceptable versus vulgar.
A judge stops a team's LT performance because the vehicle is marking the floor. After performance parents lift the car to protect floor.	Is it OA for any non-team member to help with the props after the performance has ended?	No. The team may have help with prop movement at any time except during the timed competition period.
Kids get to World Finals and are uncrating their scenery and props (unscrewing crates).	Is it OA for the coach to tell the team what order to do everything, point out things that broke and ask if the team is going to repair them?	The coach can tell them the order to uncrate, point out broken things & ask if they wish to repair them. Team decides whether & how to make repairs.
A team member tells the adult who is helping to stack weights that he is going to go help resolve a problem with a prop. The adult verbally acknowledges that statement with the affirmation, "Sure, go ahead."	Does this represent OA?	No. The team member made the decision to do this. It would be OA if the adult said, "Weight placement is more important, just stay here & continue with this" or told the team member to go help with the prop.

Div. 1 Team is creating the script.	Is it OA for the coach to write what they say.	This is okay in any division provided the coach writes only the team members' words.
A Div. I team is having major problems figuring out how to keep track of information for their Materials Cost Form.	Can the coach ask what information they are trying to track, how they intend to track it, & prepare a spreadsheet for them to use	Yes, the coach may do this.
A team observed another team dressed up in chicken costumes that did very well. The next year they decided to dress as chickens.	Is it OA (NOT creative) to observe successful performances in one year and copy facets of it in the next?	No, it is not OA, but the coach should try to motivate the team to be original.
Your team is doing the structure problem. A structural engineer talks & tells them what makes structures hold weight & what makes them break	Is this outside assistance?	NO. The structural engineer is not telling them how to solve their problem.
The team has designed a device that requires some very unusual parts. The team gives you their list of parts, and on your day off, you go to the local salvage yard to find them.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. If the team has provided you with the specifications, you may buy the supplies for them. It is only OA if they did not give you the requirements & you decided what to buy.
Several different OotM teams are convened for practicing spontaneous. The coaches have prepared different problems for each team.	Are the coaches in this instance providing OA? The coaches score the teams, is this OA? The scores are provided back to the teams, is this OA?	None of these circumstances is OA.
As coach, you select the team, LT problem, schedule for the year, assign parents specific duties & manage all aspects of team activities	Is this outside assistance?	NO. It is an example of an overbearing coach! Coaches should involve the students in all the major decisions related to the team.
The team has been working for several months on Spontaneous but has not decided on the Long-Term. Two members leave the team, the others decide to bring a new team member.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. Since the Long-Term problem has not been addresses this would not be OA.
The team has been working on Spontaneous and Long-Term for months. The student who designed the structure is moving and the team decides to use the structure he/she designed.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. If the member who left is not replaced, that structure design may be used. The student's name should be listed on the forms.
The coach & team discover that they are over the cost limit. The coach suggests what items are too expensive, should be replaced and makes the adjustments on the Cost Form.	Is this outside assistance?	YES. The coach is making decisions for the team that relate directly to the team's solution. The team should be making these decisions and the adjustments.
The team is unaware that their vehicle left the performance area & is running off stage. Someone from the audience calls out a warning during the performance. A team member hears & reacts to keep the car from falling off the stage.	Is this outside assistance?	YES. There cannot be assistance of any kind from anyone other than the seven team members during the performance.
The team is in the staging area. They get okay to move their props to the performance area. A team member's father lifts a heavy piece of scenery onto the performance area.	Is this outside assistance?	YES. No assistance is allowed from a non-team members moving props from staging area to performance, but Ok to move to staging area. If a prop is too heavy, the students should not use it.
At the tournament, a team supporter of yours presents you with a video tape of an alleged infraction of another team. The supporter's intent is to have the other team be penalized for this alleged rule infraction which would help your team move up in the standings.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. While this is not OA, it would be considered Unsportsmanlike Conduct & could result in a penalty for the team if the video were presented to an official. No one video tapes or reports on another team's activities in Odyssey of the Mind. Judging teams are the only ones who evaluate teams' performances and related activities.
You have arranged for an engineer to talk about the power source they are planning to use. The team narrowed down to two choices, & the engineer tells them which of these will work best for their purposes.	Is this outside assistance?	YES. The engineer has made the choice for the team. He should have given them pros and cons about each power source, and let the team decide on their own which on would best suit their purpose.
Your school's drama teacher has viewed the team's performance & gives tips on how to use timing to make the skit more humorous.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. The drama teacher did not help them solve the problem in any way. She is only giving acting tips.
The coach & team meet often as the team feels is necessary. Every meeting the Coach practices spontaneous, arranges for snacks, & provides supplies the team has asked for. Guides them by asking questions designed to make them think about their solution. Reminds them to re-read the problem & keep up with their paperwork.	Is this outside assistance?	NO. The coach is doing an excellent job, by providing guidance, not solutions.

Going To Competition



BEFORE TOURNAMENT

Being prepared lowers anxiety and prevents panic

Failure Proof your Team

- Re-read the Problem and focus on all sections
- Check for any Problem Clarifications
- Brainstorm on all the things that could go wrong & make a contingency plan
 - Construct a master list and rank the potential problems they could cause
 - Determine how the potential problems are related to each other. Group them appropriately (e.g. props, people, equipment, etc.)
 - Expand the list where needed, and combine items which the team thinks are really the same
 - Do not delete anything from the list unless the team agrees unanimously
 - Rank the potential problems for the seriousness of the result
 - Remind the team that small things can sometimes have disastrous results
 - Review each group and make any adjustments
- Think of all the ways to prevent problems or minimize them
 - For each problem ask, “if this happens, we could...?”
 - Discuss problems that cannot be prevented, e.g. weather, crowd noise, etc.
 - Encourage your team to HAVE FUN, and be creative with their ideas
 - If someone forgets their lines - remember that improvisations always score well
- Prepare a plan of action
 - Include who, what, when and how
 - Review the “disaster plan” periodically
 - Cause spontaneous mishaps during practice to allow your team to practice the plan (prop falls)
 - A good example is deliberately leaving the batteries out of the device or knocking over a prop during rehearsal

Team Questions

- Is the team membership sign “legal” and will it be visible the entire performance?
- Do you think any other team will think of our solution?
- What makes our solution unique?
- Are the things you are including necessary? Do they advance the story – help solve the problem?
- Will the judges and audience understand your solution in 8 minutes?
- Will adults (particularly judges) think this is funny and in good taste?
- Have you chosen the best items to be scored in style?
- Do all the things you have listed to be judged in style add to and enhance your solution?
- How can you be sure you will not go overtime?

Get your Forms Ready

- Have you filled out the forms and made photocopies?
 - Material Values Form (1 copy + back-up)
 - Style Form (4 copies + back-up)
 - Outside Assistance Form (1 copy + back-up)
 - Team Required List (specified in some problems – 4 copies + back-up)
- Download the forms on our website. The PDFs can be filled in. **However, be sure not to alter the forms in any way!**
 - Within Acrobat, open a PDF file
 - Click on the Fill & Sign tool in the right pane
 - Click on the text insertion tool in the toolbar at the top of the page, and then type on your form. Use the pop-up menu to change type size or save your data to use it again in the future, if desired.
- Coaches may scribe for Div. I team, but the content must be provided by the team. Div. 2 and above must complete their forms themselves.

BEFORE TOURNAMENT - CONTINUED

Sportsmanship

- Have fun with your team! Emphasize how much they have learned and how much fun they had rather than scores and placement. Remind your team (and parents) that the simple act of bringing a solution to show the judges at a tournament makes your team a winner!
- Show respect for other teams' efforts. Do not verbally critique, insult or criticize other teams' performances.
- Team should be quiet/non-disruptive when they are near a competition area. As teams walk around, they should not touch another team's props/scenery/costumes/etc. Rowdy behavior and/or damaging another team's items may result in a team penalty. Give them the same respect you would expect for your own team
- Good sportsmanship rules apply to everyone – team members, coaches, parents, siblings, and friends. If you see someone associated to your team doing something inappropriate, it is your job to interrupt it!
- Once you have picked up your raw scores, share them with your team, but keep them to yourselves within the team and parents. Remember raw scores are only one component of your results, and other teams may not have performed. Gloating or discussing scores in public is impolite.
- Parents do not need to tag along with the team for the entire day. Feel free to discuss with them to go and watch other teams from your school, or other teams competing in your team's problem
- Remind all the rules of outside assistance
 - No-one other than team members can contribute to the solution in any way
 - No coaching during the performance is allowed
 - Only team members may interact with judges

Things to bring on Tournament Day

- Make sure your team has an emergency tool kit at the tournament! Be prepared for ANYTHING! Props will break, tear, or disconnect, be sure you have everything you need to repair it
 - What did you use to build your backdrops, props, technical devices, and costumes?
 - What will you need to fix your backdrops, props, technical devices, and costumes?
 - What falls apart regularly? What is not put together too well to start with?
 - What did you use to construct it in the first place? Do you have any extras?
 - What power source(s) will you need? What items are portable? Will it fit into your transportation?
 - Who will assemble this emergency box and its contents? What kind of container will it go into?
- Toolkit
 - Duct Tape / Masking Tape / Hot Glue Gun / Glue Sticks
 - Sewing Kit / Scissors / Hammer / Screwdriver / Drill
 - Hardware: screws, nuts, bolts, etc.
 - A Checklist the team has created, to make sure everything is ready for the performance
- Coaches First Aid Kit
 - Band-aids / Kleenex
 - Extra copies of required paperwork – in case team wants to make changes
 - Emergency phone numbers for parents
- Pack
 - Costumes/accessories for each team member in a separate bag (garbage bags work well) Label with their name – when they change into costumes, they can put street clothes into bag

Transportation – Unload/Load Plan

- How will you get backdrops, props, etc. to competition site?
 - What types of transportation are available to your team?
 - Car / Truck / Rental Truck / Rental Van / Bus
 - How will stuff fit into the chosen transportation? Can items be taken apart?
 - Have a dress rehearsal of getting stuff into chosen transportation – if it will not fit, what will you do?
 - How can items be modified to fit?
 - Is there other transportation available?
- How will your assembled solution, backdrops, props, etc. fit into the performance area?
 - Will it fit through a standard door?
 - How much time is needed to assemble items?

WHAT HAPPENS AT A TOURNAMENT

You walk in the door...oh, my goodness! So many people! Everyone carrying props, costumes, and vehicles. Where do we go? What do we do? All tournaments are different, so be sure to check the official schedule. But in general, this is the way your day should go:

7:15 – 8:00am	Team Check-In {Coaches only} <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Registration table will be located at the school entrance. Coaches bring Media Release Form and will receive packet with tournament booklets and score picker up card.▪ The team will arrive – have them meet in designated place {cafeteria}
7:15 – 8:00am	Balsa Structure Weigh-In and Check-In
7:15 – 8:00am	Judges Check-in & Meeting
8:00am	Opening Ceremonies
9:00am	Team Present Long-Term Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ View the performance area; where the judges will be, audience sitting area, etc.▪ Pre-Staging {Teams line-up 45-30min early}▪ Locate a place near the Pre-Staging where team can change into their costumes and do their hair/make up/etc.▪ Getting scores - Coaches will be informed when to pick up their LT scores. Head Judge will release the scores only to the team coach with the score picker-up card. Coaches have 30 minutes after receiving their scores to return with any questions. Spontaneous scores are not given out until after the Awards Ceremony. Overall scores are posted on the state website after the Tournament.
9:00am	Spontaneous Begins <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 1 Coach & 1 Team Member check-in 15min before competition time
All Day	Food Sales
All Day	Souvenir Sales
3:00pm	Creative Activity
5:00pm	Awards Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teams, coaches, family, and friends all feel the excitement of the Awards Ceremony! Get there early, so you can sit together. There will be general announcements, OMER's Award, Ranatra Fusca Award, as well as the tournament results. Please stay until all results are announced — everyone deserves your applause.▪ World Finals Coaches Meeting after State Finals Awards Ceremony – for eligible teams advancing to World Finals. Coaches are required to attend this important meeting.

TOURNAMENT DAY

Arrive Early

- Find parking closest to your performance area

Check-In {Coaches only} located at the school entrance

- Have parents/team wait in designated area {cafeteria or gym}
- Bring Media Release Form –Coach will receive packet with 8 Programs and Score Picker-up Card

Opening Ceremony

- Team line-up / Parents & Coaches sit in gym

Scout your performance area and pre-staging – Having your team see where they will perform can help reduce their anxiety

- Let the team make a plan – prop placement / extension cord/ etc.
- Discuss how they might need to adjust their performance (speak louder) or prop placement (face audience)
- What door to bring props in from parking lot
- Where is team going to set-up?
 - Where to change into costumes?

Spontaneous

- 1 Coach & 1 Team Member check-in 15min before competition time

Long-Term Performance

- Unload and assess all props/devices are in working condition – things happen during transport
- Please do not clog hallways
- Have parents watch props while team changes into costumes – keep restrooms clean – makeup, glitter, etc.
- Pre-Staging - Teams line-up 30mins before their performance
- Staging Judge will ask the team questions, request paperwork, and verify if team is wearing shoes
- Performance {refrain from any assistance to team during performance – no movement from coaches}
- Team members should be prepared to answer questions from judges. Elaborate & explain how items were made
- Head Judge will signal to Clear Stage {team, coaches, parents move props out, clean floor of debris}

After the Performance

- Make sure all props are safely loaded back into your vehicle. Do Not discard any props/supplies at the venue
- Go see and support other teams
- Visit the Souvenir table / Play – cards, games, frisbee, etc.
- The school will offer limited food service – make sure your team cleans up any mess. We are guests – please treat it with respect! One {1} table per team and be courteous to other team's tables and belongings
- Lunch – have food brought in or go to a local restaurant / Brink snacks – cheese, fruit, drinks, etc.

Getting Scores - {Coaches only}

- Spontaneous scores will NOT be given out – will be available online after Awards Ceremony
- Do not wait until the end of the day to pick up your scores. Judge will tell you when scores will be available
- Any questions or concerns concerning your scores must be reported to the head Judge for your problem within 30 minutes of receiving your scores
- Find quiet spot, let the team know your proud of them, go over their scores & sticky notes
- Spontaneous scores will be posted on the state website after the Awards Ceremony

Awards Ceremony

- Get there early, so you can all sit together. Teams sit on floor.
- Primary – no need to stay / there is no award placement / only sticky notes
- General announcements: OMER's Award, Ranatra Fusca Award, and tournament results.
- Please stay until all results are announced — everyone deserves your applause.
- Team Advancing to State - Coaches will receive State packet

TEAM ITINERARY - SAMPLE

7:00 AM – 7:45 AM	JUDGES CHECK-IN – NAME	ROOM 3.107
7:45 AM – 8:45 AM	JUDGES MEETING – NAME	ASSIGNED AREA
ASSIGNED TIME	VOLUNTEER CHECK-IN – NAME	ASSIGNED AREA
7:30 AM	TEAM MEETING PLACE	CAFETERIA
8:00 AM	OPENING CEREMONIES	NEW GYM
8:45 AM	SPONTANEOUS WARM-UP & SNACK (TEAM MEMBERS ONLY PLEASE)	TBD
10:00 AM	SPONTANEOUS	HALLWAY 100-A
10:45 AM	UNLOAD PROPS - PARENTS	PARKING LOT
11:00 AM	TEAM PROP SET-UP	TBD
12:30 AM	TEAM CHECKLIST + CHANGE INTO COSTUMES	TBD
1:00 PM	LONG TERM PERFORMANCE	OLD GYM
1:30 PM	LOAD PROPS - PARENTS	PARKING LOT
2:30 PM	LUNCH	TBD
4:15 PM	CREATIVITY CELEBRATION	NEW GYM
4:45 PM	AWARDS CEREMONY	NEW GYM
ALL DAY	CONCESSIONS	CAFETERIA
ALL DAY	SOUVENIR SALES	CAFETERIA

TOURNAMENT DAY – A PRIMER FOR PARENTS

Tournament Day is a special day for an Odyssey of the Mind team. It is the culmination of months of hard work. The team has planned their solution, tried ideas, failed, redesigned, and finally completed the requirements. They are likely to be both excited and nervous as competition day approaches.

As loving parents, it is natural that you want what is best for your child. You naturally care how they do and want everything to be perfect. This is what to expect and how to support your child on tournament day.

What to expect (and what not to expect):

- Do not expect everything to go flawlessly. Murphy loves Odyssey of the Mind tournaments.
- Do expect things to be fixed/repared, just give your children the space to do that **on their own**.
- Do understand that judges, coaches, other teams, and other parents all want the best for all children.
- Do expect that judges will want to talk to the team after the performance. This is normal. Do not move in with your congratulations until the judges are done and give the okay.

Some things you should be sure to do:

- Do say “thank you” to the tournament volunteers.
- Do say “thank you” to the coach.
- Do congratulate your children, and support them emotionally, but give them the space to be alone with their teammates before and after performance.
- Do help your children unload/load props from the car/truck/trailer.
- Do help your children remove items from the performance area after they have finished with speaking to the judges.
- Head judge will give the okay to clear items out.

Some things you should not do:

- Do not talk to the judges, except to say, “Thank You.” Leave all other interactions to the coach/team.
- Do not help your children move anything into the performance area.
- Do not help with costumes or make-up.
- Do not give advice on anything relating to the problem solution, even the smallest thing.
- Do not assemble, reassemble, or repair anything! If something breaks, the team must repair it, **even if you broke it!**

Information for Parents, Family and Fans:

Our team’s **Problem** is called _____. Our **Division** is _____. Our Performance time is _____, held at _____. Our Spontaneous time is at _____. Please understand that only coaches can take us, but please be there at _____, so when they exit the building, we can cheer for them.

A word about success and winning in the program

By the time teams have made it to the tournament, **they have already succeeded and won**. They have taken on a problem and solved it on their own. This constitutes success in Odyssey of the Mind. Teams may win or they may lose. They may get first place, or they may get last. In any case, they have accomplished their goal and solved their problem. They deserve respect and sincere congratulations for their hard work and dedication.

Never utter the phrase “It’s all right, honey” to an upset team member. Do not subscribe to any critical thoughts they have. Let your words define their success. If they failed, acknowledge the failure, and congratulate them for their hard work and dedication.

Praise the team for their accomplishments, encourage them to improve upon their failures, and encourage them to judge based on a year of hard work. Odyssey of the Mind participants cannot help but compare themselves to what they see but remind them what they learned this year and encourage them to continuing learning. What they will remember about Odyssey of the Mind is a year of fun meetings and friendships.

LONG-TERM PROCEDURES

Set-up

- Figure out how much time is needed to set-up props, costumes, etc.
- Unload props and find an area where you can set down your props, near pre-staging area.
- What happens if something goes wrong during set-up?
- Who handles what task during set-up?
- Props must be able to fit within a standard doorway (refer to Program Guide)

Pre-Staging

- Teams report to Pre-Staging for their problem at least 15-30 minutes **before** they are scheduled to compete
- The Judge will collect paperwork – have one team member in charge of paperwork
- Judge will check, measure, etc. any problem specific requirements, verify membership sign
- Judge will check footwear, that all props are safe, and other safety issues (batteries)
- The Judge will ask team about photography, video & strobe light
- Coaches and other individuals may help move props into the Staging Area

Staging Area

- Timekeeper will introduce you to the audience / he will ask you to silence cell phones and note whether flash photography and/or video taping is allowed
- “Team are you ready?” – Team can have a clever response
- “Judges are you ready?” – Judges usually have a clever response too
- Magic Words – “Time begins NOW!” – 8 minutes

Performance

- You will have 8-minutes to set-up props, and present solution with style
- Some problems require a signal to let judges know that the performance is over. Example: “Time”
- Other problems have an overtime penalty

Talking to Judges

- After the performance, judges will ask questions regarding elements of their solution or demonstration. This is an opportunity to show off any special aspects of your solution. Practice this process with team.
- The judges will dismiss the team and team/coaches/parents must clear the site quickly, leaving it clean.
- When the judges ask about a certain part of the solution / props / backdrop / costumes / ideas – who should answer the judges’ question?
 - The person who did the work
- If the judge asks you a question you don’t know the answer to, you should
 - Take the judge to the team member that knows and made/created it
- Before competing, the team should
 - Practice talking to judges about their performance, props, backdrops and ideas
 - Practicing pointing out to judges the things the team is particularly proud of that the judges might not have noticed

SPONTANEOUS PROCEDURES

Check-In

- One team member & coach registers the team
- Team waits until they are called to compete
- Coaches are not allowed to escort team

Holding Room

- Team will wait until the judge escorts them to the competition room

Entering Spontaneous

- The judge will tell the team what type of problem they will solve
 - Hands-On
 - Verbal
 - Combination
- All members of the team will compete in Spontaneous

Starting Spontaneous

- Judge will read the problem aloud – listen carefully
- A copy of problem will be available for the team to follow and reference during the competing time
- Judge will say “Begin” and time starts
- You may ask questions, but time will continue

Competition is over

- Leave the room quietly and thank the judges
- Team will go into a cool-down room and have a chance to discuss the problem (this will be the only time)
- It is important to keep Spontaneous problems confidential until after World Finals
- All teams competing in the same problem & division have the same Spontaneous problem. Teams MUST keep the problem confidential until after World Finals. Your team can be penalized for discussing the Spontaneous problem outside of the Spontaneous room. Coaches/Parents are included in the NOT know.

Scoring



SCORING ODYSSEY PROBLEMS

All scores awarded by officials after competition are “raw” scores. Long-Term raw scores may be any number up to 200. Style scores may be any number up to 50. Spontaneous raw scores may be any number, depending on the problem and the scoring criteria. Raw scores are then “scaled” (sort of like curving grades).

YOUR TEAM’S RAW SCORE MEANS ALMOST NOTHING BY ITSELF - a Long-Term raw score of 120 out of 200 might be the highest or the lowest score of the day. You will not know how your score compares with others until the scores are announced at the end of the awards ceremony. Long-term scores are given to the coach by the Head Judge approximately 30 minutes after the team’s Long-term performance. The head judge will explain the Long-term scores and answer any questions. Raw Spontaneous scores are not given after they compete in spontaneous.

The top Long-Term raw score in each problem and division is scaled to 200 in the Score Room. The highest Style raw score is scaled to 50. The highest spontaneous score in the same problem and division is scaled to 100. All other teams’ scores are scaled accordingly. **Penalties are deducted in the Score Room from the final, scaled total score.** A team that has a raw score that qualifies them in first place in all three categories, with no penalties, would have a scaled total score of 350. Many times, one team may be top in spontaneous, another will be top in long-term, and perhaps a third team will be top in style. Thus, you cannot see your team’s placement until all scores are entered and scaled, Looking at your scores only tells you what the judges liked and what perhaps impressed them less.

Some scores in Long-Term are OBJECTIVE: whether the vehicle crossed the line, or it did not; either the sound effect was produced, or it was not. Long-Term judges will give the team the same score (all or nothing -- the action occurred, or it did not). The judges’ decision is final (video tapes will never be considered in making a judgment call). If all the officials agree that they did not see something, it did not happen (so far as scores are concerned).

Some scores in Long-Term are SUBJECTIVE: the score reflects the opinion of a given set of officials on a given day. SUBJECTIVE SCORES may not be questioned. Officials have given their opinion of a team’s creativity or performance, and their decision is final! The officials judging a given category each give their scores and these scores are averaged. If they thought a musical composition was worth 10 points out of 20, it would not matter if John Williams or Mozart were in the audience saying it was a perfect composition--subjective scores are final! This includes all style scores, which, of course, are entirely subjective.

Scoring Examples:

Team A Raw Scores:	Long-term 162	Style 37	Spontaneous 95
Team B Raw Scores:	Long-term 140	Style 43	Spontaneous 125
Team C Raw Scores:	Long-term 122	Style 49	Spontaneous 100

When these team’s scores are scaled, the final scores (and total) will be as follows:

Team A Scaled (Final) Scores:	Long-term 200	Style 37.76	Spontaneous 76	Total: 313.76
Team B Scaled (Final) Scores:	Long-term 172.84	Style 42.14	Spontaneous 100	Total: 314.98
Team C Scaled (Final) Scores:	Long-term 150.62	Style 50	Spontaneous 80	Total: 280.62

Note: To get Team B’s scaled long-term score, take the raw score, 140, multiply by highest possible, 200, and divide by the top long-term score, 162. Use this procedure for each score in each category, according to the possible maximums. Also note that the range of spontaneous raw scores can result in a great impact on the total, scaled scores. Sometimes spontaneous scores are all close; sometimes there is a very wide range. In the example above, Team A was first in Long-Term, Team C was first in Style, but Team B was first in spontaneous and had strong long-term and style scores, placing them first overall.

It is extremely important that teams understand that scoring at a tournament is subjective. Teams cannot control all their scores and should concentrate on solving the problem to the best of their abilities. A team that has given its best effort will be a winner, regardless of score. Even failure is a positive in Odyssey, because, in the words of one former participant, “you learn more from failure than you ever learn from success.”

At the Regional level, the top teams based on the number of teams competing advance to State Finals. First and second place teams continue to the World Finals competition. Teams awarded the Ranatra Fusca award for exceptional creativity, automatically advance to the next level of competition.

COMMON PENALTIES

Long-Term problem penalties. These are intended to ensure that teams do not circumvent the rules, present a safety hazard, cause delays in the tournament, or act inappropriately.

Penalty points are deducted in the score room from the team's calculated score.

Common Penalty Categories

Spirit of the Problem for circumventing the intention of the rules or the intention of the problem itself.

- Applies to spontaneous problems too
- -1 to -100 points, depending on how many points judges feel the team gained from it
- Anecdote: This penalty originated when a problem required teams to build a vehicle powered by a battery. A young man told Dr. Sam that he was going to put a battery on the floor and power his vehicle by pedaling it in front of the battery, this powering it "by" the battery.

Unsportsmanlike conduct for when teams (and/or coaches) hurt another team's chances, are disruptive, or use profanity, and so on.

- Odyssey of the Mind expects its participants to act in an exemplary manner and to be examples of creative, honest, well-behaved competitors.
- -1 to -100 points, depending on the degree of questionable behavior.

Outside Assistance if a team uses help from someone other than its members

- Parents or others who sew costumes, engineer solutions, build props and so on, will cause their team to be penalized.
- This takes away from the experience that the program provides to kids.
- Most teams would prefer to receive a lower score and use their own ideas, rather than earn a higher score by using the ideas of someone who is not on their team. They will benefit in many other ways.

Incorrect or missing membership sign. The sign:

- Must contain team's membership name and number
- Must be readable from 25 feet away throughout the team's performance
- May be penalized -1 to -15 points, depending on the infraction (if it is not a scoring category).

Over time limit.

- Teams cannot incur an overtime penalty in problems where the judge calls "Time".
- For problems where the team signals it is finished but their solution exceeds the 8 minutes, they will be penalized -5 for every 10 seconds over the limit.

Over cost limit.

- The value of the items used in the presentation of the team's solution may not exceed the cost limit stated in the problem.
- All items, except for trash items and those listed as exempt in the *Program Guide*, must be counted in this value, and listed on the Cost Form.
- May incur a -1 to -100-point penalty, depending on the amount over the limit.

Most problems have penalties that are specific to that problem. Coaches should assign one of the team members to be familiar with the penalties in the team's problem. This person will be useful during the Long-Term performance when something does not go as planned.

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE PENALTIES

There are rarely Outside Assistance Penalties in Spontaneous. However, if a team somehow received a copy of the problem ahead of time, or if another team were to share the problem with them, then a penalty would be assessed.

What are the penalties in the Long Term Problem, if Outside Assistance is present? Here is how an Outside Assistance penalty should be considered:

First, you must consider the amount of assistance given. As an example – The coach who holds a team member’s hand for a few seconds while he/she is spray painting. If this is done while painting the prop, then a **small Outside Assistance penalty** should be given. The questions the judge should ask are, “If the coach did not help spray this part of the prop, would my score have changed? How much did it help the team?” The assumption is that if the coach did not spray that part, he/she would have taught the team member to spray paint using another item. The answer to the question is obviously that the score would not have changed or would not have changed significantly.

If the coach helped paint the entire prop, a **larger penalty** would be assessed. If the coach made the entire prop, a **larger penalty**, and if the coach had the idea for the prop as well as made it, an **even larger penalty** should be given. However, there is a second consideration. How much is the prop worth to the team? The team should consider making the prop on their own.

However, suppose that the team is in the Classics problem where the set can be paramount to the play. Its set is the focal point for the performance. The penalty should be much greater. In the first instance, the structure problem, the judge should say to him/herself, “If I give this amount of penalty for a Style item, what penalty would I give if the coach designed and made the structure?” This obviously would be a maximum penalty since it is the entire Long-Term problem solution.

Remember: A coach helps the team to grow. This means providing a good environment, maintaining discipline, and motivating – not influencing the teams thinking.

COMPLETING THE OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FORM

Every team is required to fill out an Outside Assistance Form. If the team DID have any outside assistance, make sure they record it on the form or omit the assistance from the solution. Finding alternative ways to solve the problem with outside assistance is the spirit of the problem. Question your team prior to competition to make sure they have not received any help that they feel was not from a fellow team member. Make sure they understand what is and is not OA before they sign the form. If none, the team must state “NONE” on the OA form. **The team will be penalized for any outside assistance that they received, even if it is stated on the form.**

Forms

NOTE:

THE NEXT FEW PAGES ARE AN IDEA OF HOW
ONE TEAM ORGANIZED THEIR SEASON



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

TEAM PARENT MEETING AGENDA

SAMPLE

- I. Odyssey Overview
- II. Component Overview
- III. Discuss Process
 - Typical Competition Day
 - Regional Tournament Choices
 - March 1 - Davis MS - Flowery Branch
 - March 15 - Parkview HS – Lilburn
 - State Tournament - Mar. 29 – Columbus State University, Columbus, GA
 - World Finals – May 20 – 24 – Michigan State University
- IV. Expectations and Responsibilities
 - Team Members & Parents Contract
 - Volunteer(s)
 - Tournament
 - Judge Training (Jan. ____ @Trickum MS 8:30 – 2:30)
 - Tournament Day Volunteer (1-2 hrs.)
 - Regional Tournament - Cake for Bingo (store bought or homemade)
 - Lunch/Dinner – parents alternate to bring lunch/dinner on Saturday's
 - Parents as Resources
 - Art Techniques / Engineering / Junk/Materials
- V. Outside Assistance
- VI. Budget
 - Team Account
 - Georgia Odyssey of the Mind - Team Registration - **\$85 team**
 - Spontaneous Workshop - **\$45 team**
 - Materials (paint, duct tape, hot glue sticks, wood, bolts, nuts, etc.)
 - Snacks & Field Trip Event Tickets
 - Team T-shirts
 - State Tournament Expenses (April)
 - U-Haul/Transportation
 - Hotel/Meals
 - Materials
 - World Expenses (May)
 - Registration Fee
 - Materials
 - Transportation/Hotel/Meals
 - Props Shipping Cost
 - Extras: T-shirts for Family members & Trading Pins
- VII. Set Meeting Calendar
- VIII. Miscellaneous
 - Field Trips
 - Carpooling/ Transportation
 - Communication

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

EXPECTATIONS

SAMPLE

Expectations of Students:

- Your coach has volunteered to work with your team. He/She had to give up some other activities to coach your team. Never forget that.
- This is a school-sponsored activity. Regardless of whether the meetings are held at school or in someone's home, behavior that is inappropriate at school is inappropriate at Odyssey of the Mind meetings.
- In Odyssey of the Mind, all ideas are worth hearing. Rude remarks about the ideas of others will not be tolerated.
- Being on a team...means being responsible for your share of the tasks. If you volunteer to do something, follow through.
- Odyssey of the Mind is an extracurricular activity. That means it should not interfere with your schoolwork in any way. Homework before Odyssey of the Mind work!

Expectations of Parents:

- Please be considerate of the coaches' time. Be prompt when dropping off/picking up at meetings.
- Do not schedule appointments for your child during the time usually reserved for the team's regular meeting unless it is absolutely, unavoidable. At meetings, every team member is needed.
- Expenses occurred by the team in creating its solution must be shared by team members. Some coaches are uncomfortable about asking for money, so make it a point to ask from time to time. Materials should not cost much, but the coach should not have to pay for everything.
- Parents must have respect for the integrity of the team's solution. "No Outside Assistance" means just that. The coach should never allow his/her ideas to enter the team's solution.
- Please don't say: "I wish I could help you, but I work." We are all busy people. We all work full-time. Helping the team by being a go-fer, assisting the coach, or providing a snack can be very convenient. Please try to say yes when the coach asks for something.
- If you have any concerns about your child, the team's progress, or the coach, communicate with appropriate party. Do not wait for a small problem to become a big one. Tell the coach or the Odyssey of the Mind Coordinator.

Expectations of Coaches:

- Coaches will provide monthly meeting calendars so that everyone knows when and where meetings will be held.
- Coaches should help every team member contribute his or her unique skills and talents to the solution of the problem. In all teams, there are members who are outgoing and assertive, and members who are quite and less likely to volunteer ideas-coaches should try to "level the playing field" so that all members of a team feel comfortable sharing ideas and expertise.
- Coaches May Not have competitive goals for the team. A coach's role in Odyssey of the Mind is to oversee the process, to help the team organize itself to meet its own goals. *Pushing the team towards its best effort is different from pushing the team to win.* Emphasizing, "winning" rather than "best effort" may result in the team feeling a sense of failure at anything less than First Place. Coaches need to remember **Odyssey of the Mind is supposed to be Fun!**

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

STUDENT CONTRACT

_____ School supports the Odyssey of the Mind team and their coaches as they work toward completing their problem. To show my support of my fellow team members, coaches, and my school:

- I will **encourage and be supportive of** my fellow team members. I will **listen** to and **consider** their suggestions and ideas. I will not criticize anyone's ideas. I will **show respect** for the feelings of my team members.
- I will **accept** that my ideas may not always be used immediately. If a suggestion I make to the team is not used, this does not mean the suggestion was not valuable. It may be used later.
- I agree to cooperate on whatever solution the team chooses, even if it is not my first choice.
- I agree that all solutions, 'including props, costumes, signs, etc., will be made completely by me or a member of my team. I realize that if there is any part of our solution that the team cannot complete without assistance, we must redesign that part of the solution.
- I will **respect** my coaches and remember that they volunteer their time to help me and my team members work toward our solution. I understand that there will be consequences for misbehaving.
- I agree that my behavior at meetings will be constructive. If it is behavior that is not appropriate in school, it is not appropriate at an Odyssey meeting.
- I agree to **solve** the problem with only my fellow team members. I will talk to my coaches when I am not sure what kind of assistance is acceptable.
- I understand that, at the competition, only 5 team members will participate in Spontaneous and all 7 team members will present the long-term solution. However, each member of the team is responsible for having solved the problem.
- I understand that the Georgia Odyssey program recognizes all teams that bring a solution to the tournaments are considered "winners." I agree to show other teams the utmost respect and good sportsmanship.
- I understand that Odyssey of the Mind is a **commitment**. My fellow team members, coaches, and family are showing commitment too. I **will attend meetings, participate, and work** toward all goals. I have a responsibility to these other people.
- I will **enjoy** myself. Along with all the work, come friendships, pride of accomplishment, and **fun!**

Student Signature

Date

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

PARENT CONTRACT

_____ School supports the Odyssey of the Mind team and their coaches as they work toward completing their problems. Each child should experience a supportive environment within his/her team. To show my support for the team and the coaches:

- I agree to support the philosophy of Odyssey of the Mind, including **good sportsmanship, team cooperation, and proper manners** toward others.
- I understand that Odyssey of the Mind is a **long-term commitment** and I will ensure that my child attends and participates at each team meeting for the full meeting time. If there is a scheduling conflict or illness, either my child or I will notify the coach in as far advance of the meeting as possible. I understand that each team member is critical, and I will see that my child honors his/her commitment to the team.
- In the proper spirit of Odyssey competitions, I agree not to assist with the actual development or construction of the team long-term problem solution. **I understand “Outside Assistance”** and acknowledge that all creations, inventions, decorations, and ideas must come from the team members themselves.
- I agree to remember that my child has worked hard to do their best and proud of their accomplishments. **I will encourage creativity, perseverance, teamwork, and divergent thinking** by supporting the Odyssey of the Mind program at my school. I will remember that Odyssey of the Mind team members are winners because they’re trying.
- I agree to make every effort to have my child attend each meeting. If there is a conflict, either my child or I will notify the coach(es). I realize that my child's coach(es) will be contributing a significant amount of time and effort to provide a rewarding experience. I can help ease the coach(es) time commitment by providing snacks when it is my turn, occasionally driving team members on supply runs, and being punctual when dropping off or picking up my child from meetings.
- I agree to discuss all items on this contract with my child.

Parent Signature

Date

Outside Assistance Form

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____
 Membership Name _____ Membership Number _____
 City _____ State/Prov. _____ Country _____

We understand that it is against the rules for anyone other than the team members to design, build or present the long-term problem solution.

We understand that any team member who was ever on our team must remain on our roster and will count as a team member.

We realize that we may get instruction in various areas of design and construction or in performance techniques, but know that these instructions may not be specific to the long-term problem solution. By signing below, we testify that we have followed all of the rules regarding outside assistance. If there are any exceptions, we have listed those.

WE HAD HELP WITH: (Please describe any assistance with your specific problem solution if you had any. State NONE if no assistance was received. Also, please list names of former team members no longer on your team (if the roster exceeds seven) and when they last worked with the team.

Coach # 1 _____
 Coach # 2 _____
 Coach # 3 _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____

Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____
 Team Member _____
 Birthday: _____ Grade _____

Note: This form may be photocopied or scanned into a computer, but it may not be altered in any way.

Style Form

Team members must complete this form. Adults may help fill it out for Division I team members only. A minimum of four copies is required for each competition. These must be presented to the Staging Area Judge.
PLEASE PRINT. *Note that no element scored in the Long-Term problem may be selected.

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____

Membership Name _____ Membership # _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Country _____

Judge(s) _____

Style Category (Team fills in #1 to #4)	Possible Points	Points Awarded (Judge fills in)
1.	1 to 10	1. _____
2.	1 to 10	2. _____
3.	1 to 10	3. _____
4.	1 to 10	4. _____
5. Overall effect of the four Style elements in the performance	1 to 10	5. _____

Briefly tell how the four Style elements combine to enhance the long-term problem solution. Please print or type and use only the space below.

TOTAL STYLE SCORE =
 (Maximum possible = 50 points)

NOTE: This form may be photocopied or scanned into a computer, but the information may not be altered in any way.

Cost Form

Team members must complete this form and list all items used in the presentations of their problem solution, including those exempt from cost and assigned a value. Adults may help fill it out for Division I team members only. Do not include sales tax.

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____
 Membership Name _____ Membership # _____
 City _____ State/Prov. _____ Country _____
 Judge(s) _____

Name of Item (e.g. wood, fabric, etc.)	Used For (e.g. costumes, props, all areas etc.)	Value (used value)
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____	10. _____
11. _____	11. _____	11. _____
12. _____	12. _____	12. _____
13. _____	13. _____	13. _____
14. _____	14. _____	14. _____
15. _____	15. _____	15. _____
16. _____	16. _____	16. _____
17. _____	17. _____	17. _____
18. _____	18. _____	18. _____
19. _____	19. _____	19. _____
20. _____	20. _____	20. _____

TOTAL VALUE OF MATERIALS USED = _____

NOTE: This form may be photocopied or scanned into a computer, but it may not be altered in any way.