

# Verbal / Hands-On

It is absolutely essential that all team members understand that they **must include a Hands-On component with every response given.** Any response that does not include a Hands-On aspect **MUST** be scored as common, no matter how creative the idea is, or how well the response is delivered. This is an absolute rule that is applied worldwide and there are no exceptions. Review this rule with the team before doing this problem. Don't give the kids any leeway on this during practice because they won't get any in competition.

**Set up:** You need a desk or table large enough for all team members to gather around it, but not so large that the kids can't reach the center of the table. Place 1 pencil, 1 paperclip, 1 rubber band, 1 plastic cup or mug and 1 toothpick in the center of the table.

*(Read the rules to the team, but don't read them material in parentheses. That information is for coaching/judging only.)*

- 1. This is a Verbal / Hands-On problem.**
- 2. You will have 1 minute to think and 4 minutes to respond.**
- 3. You are not allowed to talk to each other at any time.**
- 4. Team members will respond in order starting with the person closest to the teacher's desk and going around the circle.** *(Tell the team who will start, who goes next, etc.)*
- 5. You are not allowed to pass or skip a turn.**
- 6. You will receive 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative response.** The team will also receive 1-10 points for participation and teamwork.

You've been given several common items to use in this problem.  
*(Point to the items in the center of the table.)*

**Your problem is to choose two of the items provided, tell how they can be used together to perform a useful task, and demonstrate that task.**

**For example, if you choose the pencil and the cup you might say**

**"I put my cocoa mix and milk in the cup, stir it up and I've got the perfect winter treat!"**  
*(Act out pouring cocoa & milk into the cup, use the pencil to stir, then drink it.)*

*(After reading the entire problem aloud, repeat the items in boldface. Begin by saying, "I repeat..." After the second reading is complete say "Part 1 begins NOW" and start timing. When Part 1 is over say "Building time begins NOW" and start timing.)*

## Coaching / Judging Notes:

- Judges will assess the verbal component of each response just like a purely Verbal problem. I gave my top 5 tips for Verbal problems in the October newsletter and all those tips apply to Verbal / Hands-On problems too.
- Pointing to, or picking up an object and talking about it is not enough to meet the Hands-On requirement of the problem. Team members must act out their response using the objects they have chosen.
- Do a debriefing after the team has completed this problem. Assess not only the verbal elements of each response, but the demonstration as well. Discuss ways to improve both aspects of responses.
- If team members failed to meet the Hands-On element of this problem with any of their responses make sure they are aware of this during the debriefing. If you can remember which responses were lacking a demonstration, have the kids repeat the response with a demonstration.
- It's important that the items be put back in the center of the table as soon as they are used in a response. Team members are not allowed to talk at any time during this problem. If someone is holding a particular object that their teammate wants to use for their response, that can cause problems because the person who wants the object can't ask for it. This is a common issue that comes up every time we do Verbal / Hands-On problems. How did your team do?

**Examples of common responses:** Clip the paperclip onto one end on the toothpick at a 90' angle so it makes a tiny hammer. Tap the hammer on the tabletop and say "It's a hammer." Use the pencil to pick up the mug and say "It's a cup hook." These aren't terrible responses, but they only give the minimum and will only receive the minimum score.

**Examples of common responses:** Clip the paperclip onto one end on the toothpick at a 90' angle so it makes a tiny hammer. Tap the hammer on the tabletop and say "It's the judge's gavel in small claims court. I now call this court to order!" Deliver this with emphasis on the humor – a very small hammer for small claims court – and it's good for 5 points. With the same hammer and demonstration you could also say "I use this hammer to pound nails in my doll house furniture." This is a much better response than the common response example because it gives enough detail to paint a complete picture by explaining why you would use such a tiny hammer. Use the pencil to pick up the mug and say "Pass me an evidence bag, we need to dust this for fingerprints." This tells a very brief story. There's been a crime and this mug is evidence so the detective is picking it up without using their own hand. Anyone who's watched any police TV show or movie knows exactly what is happening.