



# Maine Odyssey of the Mind

## COACHES' MANUAL

[www.meodyyssey.org](http://www.meodyyssey.org)

Maine Odyssey of the Mind gratefully acknowledges  
Chris Eaton and Carol Fortier  
of Arizona Odyssey of the Mind,  
who have granted permission to revise that association's  
manual for use by coaches in Maine.

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## Can I get help with my questions?

There are many resources available to you:

1. Current Program Guide can answer most basic questions you may have. If you are an experienced coach, you should note some important changes this year.

[www.odysseyofthemind.com/downloads/programguide.pdf](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/downloads/programguide.pdf)

READ THE PROGRAM GUIDE CAREFULLY!

2. Websites — TONS of information can be found here. Check them often!!

Maine Odyssey of the Mind:	<a href="http://www.meodyssey.org">www.meodyssey.org</a>
Odyssey of the Mind:	<a href="http://www.odysseyofthemind.com">www.odysseyofthemind.com</a>
State Board Members:	<a href="http://www.meodyssey.org/about/">www.meodyssey.org/about/</a>
Coaches Training:	<a href="http://www.meodyssey.org/calendar/">www.meodyssey.org/calendar/</a>

3. Your Odyssey Coordinator (if you have one).
4. Other Coaches — many are willing to share their knowledge and experience!

## What is on the website to help me?

Maine Odyssey of the Mind maintains a complete and current website. Checking the website often will really keep you and your team members informed. Familiarize yourself with our site, and visit often! Of particular interest will be the section titled Resources. Make sure to take advantage of what this area of the website has to offer.

Long-Term problem synopses can be found on the Odyssey Website

<https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/2019-long-term-problem-synopses/>

All problems have an 8-minute time limit.

## GENERAL COACHING GUIDELINES

What is the role of the coach?

- Schedule (how often and where the team meets)
- Facilitate (helps the team stay organized)
  - Determine goals and the path to reach them
  - Assist team in developing a timeline for projects
  - Help team read and understand the problem including scoring
  - Help team keep track of tasks and deadlines
  - Take notes (remind them of their previous ideas)
  - Lead brainstorming sessions (without interjecting ideas)
  - Bring in “experts” to discuss and teach skills
- Teach basic Skills
- Ask open-ended QUESTIONS (to help team focus)
- Guide team in Spontaneous practice (practice often, variety, teach strategies)
- Guide team through forms
- Go-fer (take team members to store for supplies)
- Organize snacks (fuel for busy minds)

How do we select a team?

There are several options. Friends can group themselves into a team, coaches can group interested students into teams, or you can have auditions or tryouts for teams. Teams compete by divisions, which are determined by grade level (for school-based teams) or age (for homeschool teams). The grade of the oldest team member determines your division.

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. All potential team members should be made aware of the time commitment before the team is formed

Teams may choose to have the same members from year to year, or to vary team members from year to year. You must decide what you think will work best for your team and your school.

How can we replace team members who leave?

Odyssey of the Mind teams are composed of up to seven team members.

Only five team members may compete in the Spontaneous portion of the competition, but all seven may participate in the presentation of the Long Term problem solution.

**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 your Regional or 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 tournament 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.

*Refer to current year Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*

What are my responsibilities as a coach?

1. Focusing the team in understanding the Long Term problem.
2. Supervising all practice sessions.
3. Conducting brainstorming sessions for Long Term and Spontaneous problems.
4. Holding and evaluating Spontaneous problem practice sessions.
5. Helping the team obtain the materials and knowledge necessary to solve the Long Term problem. (Refer to information about Outside Assistance)
6. Contacting your local Odyssey of the Mind organization for information.
7. Keeping current by reading e-mails from MeOotM Board members
8. Registering the team for competitions.
9. Checking national website regularly for clarifications
10. Accompanying the team to competitions.
11. Representing the team if a problem occurs.
12. Helping the team work effectively
13. Look at the “Coaching Do’s and Don’ts” section of the Appendix.  
(Refer to current year Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide)

How often should we meet?

This varies throughout the year. Teams usually start off the year meeting once a week. As it gets closer to competition they usually meet more often and for longer periods of time.

The beginning of the year usually involves a lot of time devoted to, team building activities, choosing your Long Term problem and doing research.

The middle of the year involves writing, building, creating, inventing and practicing spontaneous, etc.

Competition time requires that everything get completed, revised, and rehearsed. Teams need to practice, practice, practice.

It is important that you practice Spontaneous all year long! It is a major component of your score at the competition, and beginning coaches often don't have their teams spend enough time on it. You may want to make up (or have a supportive team parent make up) and have on hand extra packets of spontaneous problems to solve.

Remember to discuss the time commitment that Odyssey involves when your team begins. Odyssey is a team activity — one or two members cannot reasonably be expected to do most of the work. Team members need to agree to work together and to depend on each other. A team is like a family—with different and unique individuals. Judges will look for teamwork at your competition.

Make sure that teams are aware of all Training and Tournament dates. This information will be posted on the calendar section our website after our September Meeting.

[www.meodyssey.org/calendar/](http://www.meodyssey.org/calendar/)

What are clarifications?

In keeping with the Odyssey of the Mind philosophy, problem limitations are written to provide just enough guidance to solve the problem without limiting creativity. If the problem does not specify that something cannot be done, most likely it can be done. Often, however, a team may question the interpretation of a limitation, or it may be unsure that an aspect of its solution is allowed to meet the problem's requirements.

General clarifications amend or further explain a problem's limitation. Team members may go to [www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications/](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications/) to find general clarifications. If they do not find the answer to their question there, they may electronically submit their question to International Odyssey of the Mind (CCI). When asking questions, refer to the section of the problem or program guide you are referring to. **If possible, ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" to avoid ambiguity.**

Team specific clarifications pertain to a particular team's solution. These are confidential since teams must describe details of their solution to ascertain an accurate reply. If the answer to a team's clarification allows for a very creative solution, it may be published and distributed for judges only. These are never made available to other teams.



If a team receives a clarification, it is important that it presents the signed, written clarification form, or a printout of the e-mail to the judges at competition to avoid any discrepancies. Only problem clarifications issued by CCI are official.

Clarifications must be submitted by February 15. No team clarifications will be issued after that date, however, teams should be aware of clarifications issued up until the Tournament date.

(Refer to current year Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide)

What is outside assistance?

Only the seven-team members may contribute to the Long Term solution. Team members must design and create all aspects of their problem solution, including membership signs, props, all technical requirements (vehicles, structures, etc.), and costumes. These must either be (1) made by team members or (2) put together by the team members from commercially made parts. If team members are not able to make a solution, prop, costume, or sign that they have designed, they must redesign it so they can make it themselves.

Coaches are to facilitate the team in creating the problem solution, **but they are not allowed to provide suggestions on how to solve the problem.** They should ask thought-provoking questions that stimulate thinking, but they should never hint at a solution. For example, if the team asks the coach "How can we make this prop/ costume/ scenery/ membership sign/ structure/ vehicle/ etc.?" the coach should answer something like this:

- ★ "What ideas do you have for making it?"
- ★ "What are some ways that you could make it?"
- ★ "What would be a creative way to make it?"

If a team asks the coach's opinion, the coach should respond, "That is something that the team must decide." Unless a situation is deemed potentially dangerous, always let the team make the final decisions on developing a solution. The appendix provides some suggestions for "How to Ask Questions".

**Parents and supporters may act as tutors or instructors, but advise them that they may not suggest to the team members how to solve the problem.** When it comes to solving problems, Odyssey of the Mind is a "hands-on" experience for the kids and a "hands-off" experience for the adults. See the Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide and refer to appendix on What is Outside Assistance?

What can parents and others do to help?

**PSSST... ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAM  
PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!**

(Yes, you, the ones who are driving the carpools, forking out money for pizza, opening closets for major scavenging, waiting while the team cleans up after a meeting, postponing dinner because one more prop needs to be finished, and generally watching from the sidelines while the team "gets creative!")

**DID YOU KNOW.**

You are the team's secret weapon for success??

You are the "wind beneath the wings" of the team and the coach??

You are a vital part of Odyssey of the Mind??

**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 are your own handy, dandy, just-for-parents guidelines!

<u>WHAT PARENTS CAN DO</u>	<u>WHAT PARENTS CANNOT DO</u>
Transport the team to buy things	Suggest what to buy
Transport the props	Repair props if broken in shipping
IF the team asks, teach a skill such as sewing, woodworking, electronics, calligraphy, engineering, principles of simple machines, art, etc.	Suggest to the team which skills to use to solve a problem, or demonstrate on a part of the solution.
	Suggest to the team which skills would result in a better-looking or better functioning solution.
Help provide snacks	Analyze why something failed
Bring spontaneous problem supplies	Expect perfection from a solution not done by adults (or from a solution done by adults, for that matter!
Help get props into the building for the Tournament, even to the staging area.	
Open attics, closets, basements for "garage sale value" materials	Suggest what materials to get from the attic, closet or basement

Provide lots of encouragement	Criticize any part of a team's solution
Provide a place to meet/store props	Fix anything that breaks
Get everyone and everything to the tournament	Put emphasis on scores instead of fun
Applaud A LOT and get props offstage afterward	

As you can tell, parents ARE important, as resources for learning skills, helping to 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.

How should I refer to “Odyssey of the Mind”?

You should refer to Odyssey of the Mind either by its full name, as OotM, or as Odyssey, not “O.M.” Please use one of those names or abbreviations on tee shirts, literature, or discussions about the program.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

First, coordinators register the school/group with CCI: <https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/join/>

### Maine Odyssey Tournament Registration

Once you have received your membership packet from CCI containing the Long Term problems and one copy of the Odyssey Program Guide, you are ready to register your team(s). Your tournament choices will be Challenge Region, Discovery Region or Primary Tournament.

<https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/member-area/>

**Note: In order to register a team online, you will need the following information:**

- ★ Your school/group membership number and zip code (usually the school's zip code)

- ★ Problem your team wishes to solve
- ★ Division for which your team qualifies (there is a division finder tool located within the Member Area of <https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/member-area/> for your use if you are unsure.)
- ★ School or organization name, address & e-mail (usually coordinator's e-mail)
- ★ Coach (and co-coach(s)) name and address & e-mail
- ★ Coach home phone and/or cell phone (whichever is best for us to reach you)
- ★ Team members' names & grade in school (or age for homeschool teams)
- ★ Judge\* name, address, phone # and e-mail
- ★ Volunteer\* name, address, phone # and e-mail

**NOTE:** If you have a returning judge, we may have contacted them already. They are still available for you to use as your judge providing they haven't signed on with another team.

After registering each team online you will receive an e-mail confirmation to the coach. Please print that confirmation as your receipt. Confirmation of payment for Maine Odyssey of the Mind Tournament will be by e-mail if requested.

## JUDGE AND VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

The quality of the Maine Odyssey of the Mind program is dependent on volunteer participation. Without volunteer judges and tournament workers our Odyssey program would not be possible.

Maine Odyssey of the Mind requires the following from each team:

- ★ Division I, II, III and IV teams must provide one judge and one volunteer for their respective Regional Competition. Should a team advance to the State Tournament, the judge for that team is expected to judge at the State Tournament as well, unless otherwise advised.
- ★ Primary teams must provide one judge and one volunteer for their tournament.

Being a judge or a volunteer is a commitment. Coaches need to have their judges check their schedules to be sure they can attend the training day and the team's Regional Competition and State Tournament (should the team move on).

Judges and volunteers should give their information to the coach, to be submitted with the Maine Odyssey Online Registration form. More than one judge and one volunteer is greatly appreciated.

### General Information about Judges

- ★ No experience is needed to be a judge. **We will teach everything they need to know at a judges' training workshop** (usually a 6 hour session).
- ★ Your judge will not be assigned to judge the problem/division in which your team is competing.
- ★ A judge is scheduled to work his/her own problem/division for the entire day, and will not be able to watch your team compete.
- ★ Judges should be 18 yrs. of age or older for Regional and State competitions.

- ★ Judges will be provided with lunch on training and tournaments days (*when expected to run through the lunch hour.*)

#### General Information about Volunteers

- ★ Volunteers should not be coaches! It is suggested that parents or other Odyssey supporters volunteer for this position.
- ★ Volunteers will not be scheduled to work during your team's performance.
- ★ We ask that Volunteers work a two to three hour shift.
- ★ If volunteers are parents, they should not have children on multiple teams, as this restricts our ability to schedule them.
- ★ Volunteers should be 18 years of age or older, unless otherwise instructed by the Volunteer Coordinator.

#### Start recruiting early!

**Note: In order to register judges and volunteers online, you will need the following information:**

- ★ School or Organization Name and address
- ★ Problem and division of the team the judge or volunteer is representing
- ★ Judge/Volunteer Name, Address, Home Phone (and/or cell phone), and e-mail
- ★ Job preference, if any

## THE LONG TERM SOLUTION

When you hear the phrase “Long Term” in Odyssey, people are referring to the Long Term problem/performance. The Long Term problems are described in a short synopsis form each year. They are divided into five categories:

Problem 1 — Vehicle

Problem 2 — Technical

Problem 3 — Classical

Problem 4 — Structural

Problem 5 — Theatrical

Primary problem — non-competitive

When selecting a Long Term problem, coaches/team members need to be aware of which divisions are allowed to compete in each problem. This will be listed in the synopsis.

Once you pay for your international membership, you will receive a packet that includes the program guide and a long, detailed description of each Long Term problem. These descriptions include an introduction problem summary; problem limitations; site, setup, and competition; detailed scoring information; penalties; style categories and scoring; what the tournament director will provide; and what the team must provide.

The choice of which Long Term problem the team will compete in should be based on information in this detailed description, not the synopsis.

Each Long Term problem has a cost limit, which is stated in the synopsis and long description. All Long Term problems have an 8-minute time limit in the competition. Set up time is included in the 8 minutes.

The Long Term problem is worth a maximum value of 200 points. Refer to the Long Term detailed description for scoring categories.

Creating a Long Term problem solution is a huge time commitment. Team members will take on various roles (writers, researchers, idea people, builders, etc.) as they go through researching and developing their problem solution. A team is not “locked in” to any Long Term problem until they register for a tournament. If a team is unsatisfied or unhappy with one Long Term problem, they may choose to do another. If a team is unsatisfied or unhappy with their solution for a Long Term problem, they may choose another solution.

The Odyssey of the Mind process involves constant change/reform/revisions, and this process should not frustrate the coach and team members. Remember that along with the hard work, Odyssey is supposed to be fun! If the team is not having fun, it's time for them to reevaluate their progress. As a coach, if you sense a lot of tension in your team, it might be time to call for a brainstorming session!

One of the most enjoyable components of the Long Term problem is that team members get to perform their solution in front of an audience. This is their moment to shine! Parents, friends, and coaches need to remember to enjoy the performance at the tournament — it's a time to celebrate how far the team has come!

Even when disaster strikes and things go horribly wrong during that 8 minutes, judges always talk to the team members after their performance to find out about the team's ideas and/or what was supposed to happen and can award creativity points for the ideas the team had even when it didn't go according to plan.

### **The Long-Term Problems**

- ★ Six new Long-Term Problems each year. The problem Synopses briefly describe them
  - Problem 1 — Vehicle
  - Problem 2 — Technical
  - Problem 3 — Classical
  - Problem 4 — Structural
  - Problem 5 — Theatrical
  - Primary problem — non-competitive (K-2) to learn the process
- ★ There is a cost limit to each problem (usually between \$125.00 - \$145.00)
  - Solutions cannot be “bought”
  - Only materials the materials used in competition are included in the cost
  - Duct tape & cardboard, lawn-sale value, scavenging
  - Some “standard” and safety items are exempt from cost, as listed in the Program Guide
- ★ All have a theme with a skit and are performed in 8 minutes or less
- ★ When teams start to work on the long term problem varies. Some start in October and others start as late as January to present their solution at tournament
- ★ Participation requires a commitment from:
  - Team members
  - Coaches
  - Membership Coordinators
  - Volunteer Judges and Officials

## THE STYLE PRESENTATION

Style is presented at the same time as the Long Term solution. It is defined as “that which is added to the problem’s solutions and relates to the theme of the problem or the solution, but is not a requirement of the Long Term problem”.

(Refer to current year Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide)

It allows the teams the opportunity to further showcase their creative skills through the elaboration of the problem solution. It also allows teams to choose which elements the judges will score, rather than limiting them to simply meeting the requirements of the problem.

For style scoring — each category is worth up to 10 points, for a maximum of 50 Style points. Style forms must be completed and handed to the staging area judge. On the form, you must explain how the style elements related to the Long Term solution, as well as how categories 1-4 contribute to the overall effect. **On free choice categories, teams may choose any items that are not scored as part of the Long Term problem requirements or as a mandatory style category.** The team should choose the most creative aspects of the team’s performance for style points, and be concise, but clear, when explaining their style choices.

Style categories reward teams for elaborating their Long Term problem solutions, since elaboration requires additional creativity. Think of Style as icing on the cake. If the Long Term problem is the cake itself, then Style is the way that the cake is decorated. All teams that solve the Long Term problem have met the requirements of the problem — the cake itself. But all teams have “decorated the cake” in unique ways — they have created special aspects of their solution that were not required — and that is their Style.

### **Do it with Style!**

***Style is the place for the team to showcase their strength and talents.***

- ★ Style is the elaboration of the Long-Term Problem. It is how the team shows the judges what they are particularly excited about or proud of. Style is presented during their Long-Term Problem Solution performance. What makes this performance really shine?
  - Artistic design, music, songs, choreography
  - Construction, creative use of materials
  - Humor, rhyme
  - Overall effect (theme)
- ★ 5 Categories (some mandatory, some team-choice, overall)
  - Choose carefully
  - Be clear, concise, and SPECIFIC

Hints for a more successful style presentation may be found in the appendix of this manual.



## WHAT IS SPONTANEOUS?

Spontaneous problems are presented to the team on the day of the competition when they see the Spontaneous judges.

Teams do not know what type of problem they must solve until they enter the Spontaneous competition room. Although all team members may go to the room, only five team members will solve the Spontaneous problem. Team members not involved in Spontaneous may remain in the room, but may not contribute in any way to the solution of the problem. Coaches, parents and spectators are not allowed to see the Spontaneous portion of the competition.

Teams competing in the same Long Term problem and division must solve the same Spontaneous problem, so **it is critical that no one discusses the problem**. Additionally, the same Spontaneous problems are used throughout the country and around the world, so team members are asked not to divulge the problem until after World Finals (in May). Anyone who reveals a Spontaneous problem is subject to disqualification and/or disciplinary action taken against the entire team.

There are three types of Spontaneous problems — TEAMS MUST BE READY FOR ANYTHING:

- ★ **Verbal** — problems require verbal responses. They may incorporate improvisation or dramatization.
- ★ **Hands-on** — problems require teams to physically create a tangible solution.
- ★ **Verbal/Hands-on** — problems require teams to create a tangible solution and include some type of verbal response. For example, creating a story about a solution.

The Spontaneous problem solution is worth up to 100 points. In a verbal problem, creative responses are scored higher than common responses. If a creative response is slightly modified by a team member, it will be scored as common. In a hands-on problem, the team is scored for how creatively they solve the problem, and oftentimes for how well they work together on solving the problem.

There are several resources for helping your team with Spontaneous. Maine Odyssey of the Mind has books of spontaneous problems for sale, and holds a special “Spontaneous Day” that provides a 3 hour workshop for teams to practice spontaneous with experienced Odyssey coaches. Please check the Maine Odyssey of the Mind website for additional resources and for more information about Spontaneous Day.

### Tips To Help Your Team

1. Before entering the Spontaneous room, know which team members will compete in each type of problem.
2. **LISTEN CAREFULLY WHILE THE JUDGE READS 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.

3. There are many possible skills that can be applied in hands-on problems, including building, strategy, measuring, communications, etc. Try to include specialists when choosing who will compete in hands-on.
4. In verbal Spontaneous, speak loudly and clearly. 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.
1. New coaches can significantly improve their ability to help their teams by attending one of the Coaches' Training sessions offered by Maine Odyssey of the Mind. See our calendar on the State of Maine website:

[www.meodyssey.org/calendar/](http://www.meodyssey.org/calendar/)

### Spontaneous Problem

- Spontaneous problems come in three types
  - Verbal – problems requiring verbal responses
  - Hands-on – problems requiring the manipulation of materials
  - Verbal/Hands-on (Hybrid) – problems with both verbal and hands on components
- PRACTICE... PRACTICE... PRACTICE!
  - Practice all three types (you don't know what you'll get for competition)
  - Do at least 3 spontaneous problems each time the team meets
  - Critique the team's performance (Coaches: Hints are fine here!)
  - Have each team member specialize in something
  - Have fall back plans...
  - Brainstorm ways to get "unstuck"

### Spontaneous Resources

Arizona Archive Site: [http://lsemel.github.io/odyssey/spont/non\\_verbal.html](http://lsemel.github.io/odyssey/spont/non_verbal.html)

Georgia OM: <http://www.georgiaodyssey.org/wiki/spontaneous/>

Maine OM: <http://www.meodyssey.org/resources/>

Northeast Pennsylvania OM: [http://nepaootm.com/wp/?page\\_id=9](http://nepaootm.com/wp/?page_id=9)

Virginia Archived Site: <http://va.odysseyofthemind.org/weekproblemarchive.html>

Tennessee OM: <https://tnodyssey.org/spontaneous-problems/>

Pinterest OM Site <https://www.pinterest.com/erimli/odyssey-of-the-mind-spontaneous-problems/?lp=true>


## THE THREE SCORED COMPONENTS OF ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

At an Odyssey of the Mind tournament, teams are judged in three distinct areas: the Long Term problem, Style, and the Spontaneous problem.

Scoring:

- ★ Raw Long-Term up to 200 Points
  - Weight held for structure can be much higher
- ★ Raw Style up to 50 points
- ★ Spontaneous can be any value
- ★ Long-Term is scaled to 200
- ★ Style is scaled to 50
- ★ Spontaneous is scaled to 100
- ★ Sum of scaled scores minus penalty is the calculated score

## The Three Components of OOTM



**Long-Term (LT)**  
**200 Points**

- Specific Rules
- Open-Ended
- All Solutions Presented in Skit Form (8-min)



**Style**  
**50 Points**

- Elaborated on Long-Term
- Pizzazz, Sparkle, Polish
- Team Chosen Elements



**Spontaneous**  
**100 Points**

- On the Spot/Anything Goes
- 3 Types: Verbal, Hands-on, Hybrid

**Long-Term + Style + Spontaneous = Total Score**

Raw Scores are “adjusted” so the team with highest raw score (for each component) receives the full possible score (200, 100, or 50 pts for the three components). Other team scores adjusted proportionally.

Creativity Unlimited of Wisconsin



Long Term Problem — 200 points

Every year, Odyssey of the Mind publishes five competitive Long Term problems and one non-competitive primary problem. Some problems are “dramatic” in nature (Classical, Theatrical), with the performance generally in the form of a skit. Other problems are “technical” in nature (Vehicle, Structural), involving the creation of one or more devices that accomplish certain tasks. Other

problems combine both areas (Technical), requiring some technical component in a dramatic skit. All problems are open-ended enough that an unlimited number of interpretations are possible. The Long Term problem solutions are prepared by the teams in advance of the tournament, and usually three to five months are spent developing these solutions.

Example: Build a vehicle powered by a jack that will maneuver an obstacle course.

Style — 50 points

Long Term problem solutions require creative problem solving. Odyssey of the Mind rewards teams for elaborating their Long Term problem solutions, since elaboration requires additional creativity. In Odyssey, we call this elaboration “Style”. Think of it as the icing on the cake: if the Long Term problem is the cake itself, then Style is the way the cake is decorated. All teams that solve a given Long Term problem have met the requirements of the problem—the cake. However, all teams have “decorated their cake” in unique ways; they have created special aspects of their problem solutions that were not required, and that is their Style.

Example: A team is required to do a skit about birds. The team creates the required skit, but elaborates on it by making it an opera, complete with subtitles. That is “Style”.

Spontaneous Problem — 100 points

Each Odyssey team competing in a tournament also solves a Spontaneous Problem. The purpose of this is to see how well the teams can solve a problem “on the spot”. Spontaneous problems take one of three forms:

- ★ Verbal: in which team members generate as many creative verbal answers as they can in a short time period;
- ★ Hands-on: in which a physical or technical problem must be solved in a short period of time
- ★ Verbal/Hands-on: in which a physical object and verbal answers are used to solve the problem.

All Spontaneous problem solutions require teamwork, and points are often awarded for this regardless of the success of the team’s solution.

Team members will not know the contents of the Spontaneous problem until the judge presents the problem to them.

Teams competing against each other must solve the same Spontaneous problem. Team members are not allowed to discuss the problem outside the Spontaneous room until after the World Finals (in May).

Example: Your problem today is a verbal problem. Tell me creative ways to use a brown paper bag.

At the Tournament, five members of the team compete in the Spontaneous portion of the competition. The team members may vary; one group of five might be the team that solves the problem if it is “verbal” and a different grouping might solve a hands-on problem. This is a decision of the team.

Coaches are not present in the room while the team is competing in the Spontaneous portion of the competition

## COMPETITION DAY CHECKLIST

When you go to your first competition, you won't know what to expect. Hopefully these tips will help prepare you and your team for the big day!

**Check in:** There will be a registration table set up near the entrance for the coach to check in the team(s). (Kids can wait away from the table!) Coaches will receive a tournament schedule, a map of the tournament site, and a certificate of participation for each team member and name tags for team members to wear all day (except when performing their long-term solution).

**Paperwork:** Please be sure that your team has completed all the necessary paperwork for their problem and has the required number of copies as listed in the problem. You will have no access to a copier at the high school. All paperwork (style, costs, outside assistance, and required list) will be reviewed as part of registration. You should plan on keeping copies of all the paperwork because you will need it if your team qualifies for the State Tournament.

**Check the schedule:** Be sure to check the schedule for your Long Term performance time and your Spontaneous time. In rare instances, there may be a last minute time change

**Find your Long Term and Spontaneous competition areas:** In the Long Term area find the Staging Area; check out the stage orientation in the performance area; where the judges will be, where the audience will be sitting, etc.

In the Spontaneous area, find the check-in table.

Be aware that it is important to be quiet when you are near the Long Term and Spontaneous competition areas, so that you do not disturb teams that are competing.

**Costumes and props** Find a place near the Long Term performance area where team members can change into their costumes and do their hair/make up/etc. **(Remember, team members of all ages must do their own hair, make-up, costumes, etc.)**

You also need to find a good place to unload your props from your vehicle(s). You will be assigned a "holding area" where you can leave props and materials not brought onstage during your Long Term performance. The holding area can be used to repair any props/materials damaged in transit. **Maine Odyssey of the Mind does not monitor holding areas; teams are responsible for all materials left in those areas.** Teams are also responsible for taking everything they bring into the holding area home with them, and for leaving those areas clean and free of debris.

**Spontaneous practice spot:** Allow the team time for a few Spontaneous practice problems before their Spontaneous competition. Find a place where they can practice without distractions. This will help settle the team and prepare them for competition.

## **Other Important Stuff**

There are usually snacks/drinks available for purchase at the tournament, though some teams bring their own snacks/drinks in a cooler.

One of the best things to do with your “down time” is to go and watch other teams perform their Long Term solutions. It’s fun to see some problems other than your own, and to see different divisions than your own. Team members can really appreciate the efforts of other teams while they watch their creative solutions!

### **Getting scores:**

Coaches will be told how long to wait before returning to the Long Term area to pick up their scores. The Head Judge will release the scores only to the team coach. Coaches have 30 minutes after receiving their scores to return to the judge with any questions or concerns. Scores from the first 4-5 teams performing in Long Term are “held” by judges to help them calibrate subjective scoring elements. Those scores are released to coaches after those first 4-5 teams perform. Check the schedule to help you determine when the scores will be available, or ask the head judge at your performance site for a time estimate.

Spontaneous scores are not given out until the day after the Awards Ceremony.

Overall scores are e-mailed to coaches the day after the Tournament.

### **Clean-Up:**

It is important that we treat the host facility, inside and out, respectfully. Please make sure that your team cleans up after itself. Used props, background, etc. must be taken with you when you leave the Competition. Teams will want to preserve the quality of their materials in case they find they will be moving on to the State Tournament. Lost and found items should be taken to and retrieved from the Registration area. Teams who do not leave their areas clean and free of debris may be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. Also, recycling bins will be available to teams in many areas. Please encourage your teams to recycle.

### **Who’s Responsible?**

The competing team is responsible for the actions of all those associated with it. If a coach, parent or other supporter violates Odyssey rules, e.g., does damage to the site, fails to clean up or acts in an unsportsmanlike way, the team may incur a penalty. Please remind those attending to be respectful of the site and other teams.

### **Set a Positive Tone:**

Remember that you are a role model for your team. Show good sportsmanship and encourage your team to treat other teams, workers and visitors with respect. All of the people working in the

tournament—judges, volunteers and Board members—are donating their time and energy for the benefit of our team members.

### **Awards Ceremony:**

Teams, coaches, family, and friends all feel the excitement when they come to the Awards Ceremony! It is best to get there early, so you can all sit together. Remind everyone that scores are sometimes delayed, so it's important to be patient. The Awards Ceremony will have some general announcements, OMER's Award and Ranatra Fusca Award and special awards as well as the tournament results. (It always seems like the results of your problem/division are announced last!)

Please stay until all results are announced — everyone deserves your applause.

### **Maine State Tournament:**

Teams that come in first, second or third in their long term problem in their division will be eligible to compete at the Maine State Tournament on Saturday, April 7 at Biddeford High School. Information about the State Tournament will be emailed to qualifying teams about one week after the Regional Competitions. All teams should remember to save copies of all their paperwork (style form, outside assistance form, cost form, team list if required, and clarifications received) because if they qualify for the State Tournament they will need these forms again.

### **World Finals Coaches Meeting:**

Meetings are held at different times and locations, one following the State Tournament Awards Ceremony, and one the following afternoon. Listen carefully for announcements at Awards Ceremonies.

*The Calendar of events will be posted after the Board's September meeting:*

<http://www.meodyssey.org/calendar/>

**\*\*CHECK-IN FOR ALL EVENTS BEGINS ½ HOUR BEFORE THE SESSION\*\***



Odyssey of the Mind Membership Application:

<https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/registration/application.pdf>

The Maine Odyssey of the Mind Board of Directors meets monthly from September through June

## Reminders for the Coach

### 1. Team provided volunteer and judge

Two weeks prior to the tournament, confirm that the two people that your team provided to work at the tournament are coming. We cannot have a tournament without judges and volunteers, so it's very important that the coach makes the contacts and verifies that they are coming.

### 2. Tournament transportation

Prior to the tournament, coaches need to make sure that transportation to the tournament is arranged. Teams can travel together to the tournament, or can meet at the tournament site. If you are meeting at the tournament, set a definite time and place to meet. Make sure that parents or other supporters know your problem and division so they can meet you at your performance site if they are not arriving with your group. Be sure to arrive early at the tournament!

### 3. Paperwork

Having your paperwork prepared in advance will make your tournament experience much more enjoyable. Have verification of payment of registration fees with you, as you may be asked to show that. Be sure the team has extra copies of their material values form, style form, outside assistance form, clarification form(s), and any other paperwork required for their Long Term problem solution. You should also have a copy of the receipts for the items listed on the material values form. Sometimes the judges will ask to see them.

### 4. Spontaneous practice

Have some Spontaneous practice problems prepared for your team. Bring a timer and any other necessary items required by the practice problems. This practice warms the team up for Spontaneous competition. End your practice with a lot of encouragement and positive reinforcement! Do not allow team members to take cell phones, watches that beep or any noise making device with them into the Spontaneous competition area. If something goes off unintentionally, it could interrupt the focus and/or timing.

### 5. First Aid Kits

The tournament site will have access to emergency medical help. It is also convenient for coaches to carry a small First Aid kit for little mishaps with the kids! Use your best judgment for this.

The team should have a "First Aid Kit" for their props/scenery/costumes/etc. It should include items to repair any damages that may occur; back up items; or "extra" items that may be needed.

## 6. Be Aware of the Time

It is the coach's responsibility to get teams to their competitions on time. You should report to the Staging Area 20 minutes before your Long Term competition time. You should report to the Spontaneous competition check in table 15 minutes before your competition time.

## 7. Parents attending

Remind parents to arrive early at the tournament. If they arrive after the team's Long Term performance has begun, **THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE PERFORMANCE AREA AND WATCH THE PERFORMANCE. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE!!!** Make sure that family members and friends understand this, so there are no misunderstandings on tournament day.

## 8. Buy souvenirs early!

Try to find some time early in the day to let your team members shop for souvenirs. Popular items often sell out early!

## 9. Free time

You should have blocks of free time during the day. Use this time to watch other teams perform, to snack, or just to relax and "play" (bring a Frisbee, jump rope, etc.). Be aware of team members' behaviors, if you sense a lot of stress/tension try to do something fun to relieve it. Go outside and play a game, have snack time together — do whatever it takes to relax the team. Remember — the competition day is supposed to be fun!

## Reminders for the Team

### 1. Is your tournament paperwork ready?

- ★ Style forms - you need to bring 4 copies to turn in
- ★ Material Values form 1 copy
- ★ Outside Assistance form 1 copy
- ★ Team Clarification(s) (*only if you've asked for and received a clarification*) 1 copy
- ★ Copy of your receipts 1 copy
- ★ Other paperwork that your Long Term problem may require
- ★ Make sure you have these together and completed before the tournament and be sure to keep a copy of each for yourself as these won't be returned to you.

### 2. Judges

It is important to be respectful to the judges at all times, and to listen carefully to their instructions and their questions. The judges want all teams to do their best. The competition is your opportunity to showcase all of your hard work for the year. Remember that judges are volunteers who work very hard to be knowledgeable about the problems and fair to team members.

### 3. Keep the Spontaneous problem confidential!!

All teams competing in the same problem and division have the same Spontaneous problem. Teams are on the honor system to keep the problem confidential until the tournament director tells them that they are free to talk about it (usually at the Awards Ceremony). Teams may not divulge the spontaneous problem until after the World Finals. Your team can be penalized for discussing the Spontaneous problem outside of the Spontaneous room.

### 4. Courtesy to other teams

Teams should be quiet and non-disruptive when they are near a Long Term performance area or the Spontaneous competition area. As teams walk around the tournament they should not touch other team's props/scenery/costumes/etc. Rowdy behavior and/or damaging another team's items may result in a penalty to your team.

### 5. Bringing personal items to the tournament

Team members should bring a small amount of cash for souvenirs/snacks. (If you are a serious shopper, bring Mom & Dad!) Try not to bring expensive personal items like jewelry, cameras, laptop computers, cell phones, etc. Items lost are almost always returned, but if you don't bring them — you can't lose them!

### 6. Have fun!

Remember that the tournament is supposed to be an enjoyable experience! Teams come to the tournament to compete against and to appreciate other teams. Have fun!

## Reminders for the Parents

### 1. No Outside Assistance

Parents must remember that team members have been working for months to prepare for the competition. The tournament is when teams get to present their problem solutions to the judges. Parents must refrain from making suggestions (Why don't you...?), helping (kids do hair and makeup themselves), touching up (This needs...), repairing, etc. Your team can receive outside assistance penalties if a judge or tournament official observes any of these things.

### 2. Be early for the Long Term performance

As a courtesy to the performing team, NO ONE may enter or exit the Long Term performance area once the judges close the doors. You should arrive early and look for the SPECTATOR ENTRANCE to insure that you will get to see your child's team perform. While attending a performance, be an involved audience member (you may react to the performance) but do not do anything that could be perceived as outside assistance. Don't prompt lines, no hand gestures, etc. When the judges announce that it's time to begin, you need to sit down and listen. Enjoy your child's performance! After the performance, and after the judges have talked with the team members, parents may, at the coach's request, help move everything off of the stage.

### 3. Encouragement

Your main job today is to be encouraging to your child, the team, and the coach. When the team is “working”, step back and let them work. You are very important to the success of the day. The kids have been working hard for this all year, and having you in the audience, applauding and cheering, is important to them. Keep comments positive, and have fun!

## TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION

Team registrations must be completed online at: [www.odysseyofthemind.com/members/](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/members/). You will need the national membership number and zip code associated with that membership in order to log into the site. Once you've logged in, click on "Team Registration" to fill out the team registration form. Items in BOLD are required fields and you will not be able to continue until you provide the necessary information. Please look around at the information that is provided to you in the Member Area of the site.

### **Regional Competitions**

All Div. 1, 2, 3, and 4 teams will participate in their assigned Regional Competitions. Those teams placing first, second or third in their respective long term problems and division will advance to the State Tournament.

### **State Tournament**

The Maine State Tournament schedule will be posted on the Calendar after the September Board Meeting

Each team must supply one judge and one volunteer for the day of the regional competition; judges for teams advancing to the State Tournament may be required to judge at the State Tournament as well. All judges must attend training.

You can find information on the judges training dates at:

<http://www.meodyssey.org/calendar/>

### **Team Member Information**

There is a maximum of seven team members per team. The team must compete in the lowest division for which it qualifies. The team member in the highest grade determines in which division the team may compete:

Primary	Grades K-2
Division I	Grades K-5
Division II	Grades 6-8
Division III	Grades 9-12

## Non-Refundable Tournament Registration Fees

See Maine Policies and Procedures Page 14

[http://www.meodyyssey.org/files/6915/1571/7264/2017\\_Policies\\_and\\_Procedures.pdf](http://www.meodyyssey.org/files/6915/1571/7264/2017_Policies_and_Procedures.pdf)

PLEASE NOTE: Your team is not officially registered until we have received payment. All checks must include membership name and number in order to be posted to the correct team. Checks that are received without this information will be returned, causing a further delay in the team becoming officially registered. We do not accept credit cards.

If you register by January 15, your check must be received before January 31 or it will be returned and you will be responsible for paying the higher \$50 fee. If you are registering after January 15, your payment must be received within two weeks of the date you registered. TEAMS WILL NOT BE PLACED ON THE SCHEDULE UNTIL PAYMENT IS RECEIVED. Tournament registration fees are non-refundable.

Please make checks payable to: **Maine Odyssey of the Mind** and mail to:

Maine Odyssey of the Mind  
c/o Jim Rowe  
84 Milton Lane  
Mechanic Falls, ME 04256

If you need help or have any questions about the registration process, you can contact Jim at:

## FORMS

<https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/downloads/styleform.pdf>

## SPONTANEOUS EXAMPLES

### Animal Rhymes

(This problem is adapted from Competition Stimulates Creativity by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus and Samuel W. Micklus.)

This activity may be done with any number of students. However we suggest you divide the class into groups of 5-7 students and have a contest to see which group comes up with the greatest number of creative responses. You may wish to designate a timekeeper so you can concentrate on the quality of the responses.

#### **Instructor:**

Read the problem to the team.

1. Give the team one minute to think, then begin the 2-minute response time. (Increase response time accordingly for groups larger than seven members).
2. Mark each response as either common or creative (do not allow repeats or very similar responses).
3. Call "time" at the end of 2 minutes, allowing any student responding at this time to finish. 5. Total the score, awarding 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative response.

#### **The Problem:**

1. You have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. You may ask questions during your thinking time, but time will continue. You may not talk to each other at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative or humorous response.
3. You will take turns responding. You may not skip your turn or repeat a response. If one person cannot think of a response, response time will end.
4. Your problem is to make a rhyme using a name or species of an animal. For example, you might say, "I think mice are nice" or "There's a cat in the hat."

#### **Judging the Responses:**

##### **Examples of common responses:**

Simple statements with little humor and anticipated rhymes: There's a deer over here; Black bears have black hair. Poorly rhymed statements: I saw a lion who was blind; There's a dog on the log. Popular rhymes: I saw a butterfly flutter by; I hate meeces to pieces; See you later, alligator, in a while crocodile.

##### **Examples of creative responses:**

Humorous or unique rhymes: There's a caterpillar in a roto-tiller; I can step on an ant, but on an uncle I can't; The tiger's stripes were different types; I lost my baseball bat \_ do you know where it's at?

Multiple rhymes: The bear ate a pear while in its lair; The moose got loose and chased the goose; Bird is a word that I've often heard.

Combining animal names with peoples' names: Donald Duck had bad luck; Bugs Bunny doesn't eat honey; Larry Bird is seldom heard.

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# Cantilever Structure

(This problem is adapted from Make Learning Fun! by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus.)

## A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:

1. You will have 10 minutes to complete this problem.
2. You are to build a structure of toothpicks and clay that will sit on a table behind a boundary line. The structure will cantilever, or stick out, as far as possible beyond the boundary line without touching the table surface.
3. You may work anywhere you wish. You may also talk.
4. You may break the toothpicks into smaller pieces if you wish.
5. If your structure touches the table surface, you must break it off until it is cantilevered.
6. The structure will be measured after the 10 minute construction period. The distance cantilevered will determine your score.
7. You will be given 50 toothpicks and a piece of clay. The clay will be used to make the joints for your structure.
8. The team must rest the structure on the table behind the boundary line. You may not press down so that the clay adheres to the table to support the cantilever.
9. Scoring will be as follows: You will score one point for each 1/4" the structure extends beyond the boundary line without touching the surface. The end of the cantilever must be above the yardstick when the judge takes the final measurement.

## B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:

1. Give each team 50 toothpicks and an equal amount of clay. OM recommends Plast-I-Clay by Amoco, or Crayola's Claytime Clay. (The latter is more expensive.) These are available at Toys "R" Us and other stores. If Plast-I-Clay is used, give each team a 1" x 1" x 1" piece or the equivalent.
2. You need a table on which a boundary line is taped across the top and a yardstick.
1. Teams may use their unused clay as a counterweight. 4. Be sure to end at 10 minutes.

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# Be Patient

(This problem is adapted from Make Learning Fun, by Dr.C. Samuel Micklus.)

This activity may be done with any number of students. However we suggest you divide the class into groups of 5-7 students and have a contest to see which group comes up with the greatest number of creative responses. You may wish to designate a timekeeper, so you can concentrate on the quality of the responses.

## Instructor:

1. Read the problem to the team.
2. Give the team one minute to think, then begin the 2-minute response time. (Increase response time accordingly for groups larger than seven members).
3. Mark each response as either common or creative (do not allow repeats or very similar responses).
4. Call "time" at the end of 2 minutes, allowing any student responding at this time to finish.
5. Total the score, awarding 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative response.

## The Problem:

1. You have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. You may ask questions during your thinking time, but time will continue. You may not talk to each other at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative or humorous response.
3. You will take turns responding. You may not skip your turn or repeat a response. If one person cannot think of a response, response time will end.
4. Your problem is to pretend you are a patient in an operating room and you hear noises and conversation. Say what you would like to hear or what you would not like to hear. You must begin each response with "I would like to hear . . ." or "I would not like to hear . . . ."

## Judging the Responses:

### Examples of common responses:

I would like to hear . . .  
Everything will be O.K.  
This operation is routine.  
You will be just fine.  
The doctor is good.  
You'll be able to walk, see, eat, etc. again.

I would not like to hear...  
You have a 50/50 chance.  
His/her blood count is low -- be careful.  
Some people come through this O.K.  
Try not to worry.  
This is going to hurt.

### Examples of creative responses:

I would like to hear . . .  
We're lucky we have two kidneys.  
Your doctor's other patient is President Clinton.  
even know he/she won the lottery.  
The stone passed -- we don't have to operate.

I would not like to hear...  
Whoops!  
The transplant organ is lost in the mail. He/she doesn't  
My cat wouldn't eat this liver.  
What happened to the sponge?

Your insurance will cover everything.

You forget to pay your insurance bill.

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# Names and Occupations

## A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:

(Do not read numbers or phrases in parenthesis.)

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 3 minutes to respond. Questions count against your thinking time.
2. You will receive one point for each response. Highly creative responses will receive five points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judge, and the judge's decision is final.
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 response. For example, if the first card is 3 then team member number 3 will give the response.
5. After the team member 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 the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat an answer, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. 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 a first name and Weiser as a last name. Bud Weiser could be a beer distributor. Or, saliva could become: first name "Sal" and last name "Iva" and Sal Iva could be a dentist. The first word must be a recognized name or nickname. (Repeat No. 8, "Your problem is:")

## B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:

1. Be sure to give exactly one minute to think and three minutes to respond. Timing is critical. A student responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: One point for each common response and five points for each creative response.
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 used, turn them over and start again. At the end of the session, the timekeeper should check 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:

Examples given: Bud Weiser is a beer distributor

Sal Iva is a dentist Responses similar to one already given, e.g., Bud Weiser is a bartender

### 7. Examples of Creative Responses:

One word broken up to make a first and last name:

Minnie Ster is a clergyman

Lou Pole is a tax advisor

Dan Druff is a hairdresser

Paul Bearer is an undertaker

Bill Fold is a pickpocket

Bee Keeper is a honey farmer

Clara Net is a musician

Jack Hammer is a construction worker  
Ali Gator is a marine biologist  
Bill Board is an advertiser

Two words put together to make a name:

Chuck Roast is a butcher  
Rose Bush is a landscaper  
Jim Floor is a basketball coach  
Cliff Hanger is a mountain climber  
Sandy Rhoades works for the highway department  
Mark Spotter is a surveyor  
Carrie-West is a pioneer  
Armond Hammer is a carpenter  
Don Garments is a model  
Johnny Mop is a janitor  
Ted E. Bear is a zookeeper  
Al Kaseltzer is a pharmacist  
Matt Weaver is a tailor  
Will Writer is a lawyer  
Pete Spreader is a gardener

NOTE: Once an answer is given, if a very similar answer is given, count it as common only and then declare any other answers that are basically the same as repeats.

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## WHAT IS OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE?

First let's review the basics: Coaches need to organize the team, maintain order and discipline, and sometimes motivate the kids. They may serve as a "recording secretary" to a team (no matter what division) as long as they write only what the team members say. Only Division I coaches may fill out official forms for the team. Division II and III team members must fill out the forms themselves.

Coaches are allowed to ask the team members questions to prod them to think about their solutions and how to improve them. However, these questions must not lead the students. For example, a coach could not ask, "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 different 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 OotM program.

Because coaches want to do their job, do it well, and never place a team in jeopardy due to their own misinterpretation of what Outside Assistance is or isn't, it is important that they know just what does and does not qualify as Outside Assistance.

Excerpted below are sample questions posed by coaches and OotM's response.

**Scenario A:** For a Division I team a parent plugs in a power tool for one of the students because it is a rule in their house that no children are allowed to plug in any appliance.

Question: Is it Outside Assistance (OA) for any non-team member to plug in a power tool that the team uses to complete its solution to the problem?

Answer: No, it is not OA for a parent to plug a cord in an outlet for practice. (The parent may not use the power tool to work on the problem solution.) However, it is OA if someone other than the team plugs a cord in during the team's performance time.

**Scenario B:** Kids try to assemble two boards (fourth graders) using screws and nails, but they keep falling apart.

Question: Is it OA for the team to ask an adult who is familiar with carpentry how to fix the problem?

Answer: An adult can tell and show the team members various ways to connect boards. He/She must not show the team one specific way to connect the boards in the team's solution. An adult should give the team many possible ways to assemble the boards and must allow the team to determine what it will do in its solution. There is a principle that if information can be found through research, an adult can tell the team.

**Scenario C:** A team decides it will center its skit on a CELL theme. The coach gives the team members a homework assignment to come up with as many words as possible that contain the word CELL, such as cellophane, cellular phone, etc.

Question: 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?

Answer: 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.

**Scenario D:** Team members decide to narrate a good deal of the solution.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to ask them if they can think of other ways to tell a story, rather than reading a piece of paper?

Answer: Inspiring the kids to generate ideas is part of coaching. As long as the coach is not instructing the team to change its solution it is allowed. For example, a coach may not say, "You need to think of a different way to tell the story." A coach may say, "What are the different ways a story can be presented?" This way, the coach is trying to stimulate their thinking as opposed to guiding the solution.

**Scenario E:** As the team deliberates on what its solution will be, the coach asks questions to make sure that the solution is well thought out.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to ask questions as the team is developing its solution?

Answer: No – that's exactly what a coach is for! (Just don't ask leading questions.)

**Scenario F:** Four of seven team members on a team in one OotM year build some backdrops for use in their presentation. These same four are on a team the following year with three new members.

Question: 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?

Answer: The team can use any material that was part of an Odyssey of the Mind solution from a previous year. If the materials were created by the exact same team, that is, there are no members from the original roster missing from the current roster, they will be considered team-created. Otherwise, they will be judged commercially produced. These items, such as props and backdrops, will be considered the same as items found in a thrift shop, school theater department, etc. In no case may a team use anything created by anyone who is not on the team's roster to specifically aid in solving the current problem. In other words, if the team uses anything that is produced or provided by a non-team member during the process of solving the problem, it will be considered Outside Assistance.

**Scenario G:** An OotM team wants to paint some props. There is some paint that was left over from last year, but last year's team mixed the colors.

Question: Would it be OA for a team to use something that was made by someone else even though essentially the same thing could easily be bought by any team.

Answer: No. The decision to paint a prop a specific color is a team decision. It does not matter if the paint used came from a store, the school, a garage, etc., as long as it is selected by the team and included on the materials value form.

**Scenario H:** A Division I team is spray-painting a prop.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to hold a team member's hand for about 2 seconds (out of a 30-minute job) to help show the proper way to spray paint?

Answer: Yes. The coach may not help spray paint anything used in the solution. However, the coach may teach the team member how to spray paint by using something that is not part of the solution such as a scrap piece of wood.

**Scenario I:** A Division I structure team has a sheet of paper describing the order to put weights on (smaller diameter first, then larger, to allow hand grip space). Team members composed the form (came up with the idea) but the coach actually wrote it.

Question: 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?

Answer: As long as 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 regarding Division I teams.

**Scenario J:** A Division I team is brainstorming its solution.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to write down the team members' ideas for later review?

Answer: This is a good idea. The only rule surrounding this is that the coach may only write down what the team members say.

**Scenario K:** A coach interprets an "engineering practice" to make it applicable to the current problem. For example, the engineering practice of material quality assurance could be translated into inspecting and sorting balsa prior to its use in a structure.

Question: Does the interpretation of how to apply a general engineering practice to a problem represent OA?

Answer: Not enough information is provided. The ruling would depend on how the information is presented to the team. If the coach (or any non-team member) guides the team by providing a single idea or practice that the team otherwise would not have sought, it would be OA. For example, if the team never even considered that there might be a difference in the quality of strips of balsa wood, it would be OA to tell the team there is a difference, which wood to use, and to show the team members how to pick wood. It would not be OA if the team asked about the properties of wood and how to inspect strips. That information can be found using research and may be communicated by the coach. The coach should direct the team to test different pieces of wood.

**Scenario L:** With proper training, it is possible to examine a structure and determine which element failed first and why.

Question: Is it OA for someone other than a team member to examine a failed structure and provide this information for the team?

Answer: Not if the team asks the person and all he/she does is tell the team members what part failed. He/She cannot tell the team why it failed or what to do to keep it from failing in the future.

**Scenario M:** A coach presents the team with a simple, generic demonstration of an engineering concept that the team immediately applies to its solution (e.g. a simple demonstration of how a truss withstands lateral loads better than a frame).

Question: Does the presentation of an engineering concept represent OA in this circumstance?

Answer: As stated, yes. The coach would have to present several options of construction and demonstrate how each fails, but the team members must draw their own conclusions.

**Scenario N:** A division I team needs to move a 4' x 6' sheet of plywood from the garage to a workshop area.

Question: Is it OA for non-team member to move the plywood for them?

Answer: No, this is okay. Non-team members may move items except during the team's performance time.

**Scenario O:** A goal for a team is to learn how to take a complex problem apart, test each component in a controlled manner, then reintegrate the resulting solution and validate if it performed as expected.

Question 1: Is it OA for the coach to encourage the kids to approach the problem this way?

Answer 1: No. The coach may encourage the kids to approach the problem this way.

Question 2: Is it OA for the coach to build jigs or testers to facilitate testing the alternatives the team came up with in its sub-components?

Answer 2: No for testers and yes for jigs. Anyone may make a tester but only the team may make jigs because they are construction aids.



**Scenario P:** A younger sibling has been following with interest the experiments, designs, and “tricks of the trade” on an older sibling’s team.

Question: Can the younger sibling adopt the many “lessons learned” from following an older sibling’s team around for several years without incurring OA?

Answer: This is okay to do as long as the younger sibling does not produce exact thematic copies.

**Scenario Q:** A Division I coach asks each team member to read one of the elements of the problem and explain what it means.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to write each element on a piece of paper and ask the team to group the elements so that it now has a bubble diagram that organizes the elements? Once the team organized the elements, can the coach copy them down, make copies, and distribute them to each team member?

Answer: (Any Division) No. It is okay for the coach to write down the elements, ask the team to group them and then copy the grouping and distribute copies to the team members. The coach may not add or change anything, however.

**Scenario R:** A team is brainstorming about all the things that make you think of tropical islands.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to put those ideas on a flip board for everyone to see?

Answer: This is okay provided the coach writes only the team members’ words.

**Scenario S:** Team members are creating the script (Div. 1).

Question: Is it OA for the coach to write down what they say so that they can look at what they already have?

Answer: This is okay in any division provided the coach writes only the team members’ words.

**Scenario T:** A Div. 1 team is reading the OotM Program Guide and cannot figure out what will happen if they have printed materials for judges to read.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to help them figure out what the rulebook is trying to tell them?

Is it OA if the kids ask what the coach thinks it means? Is it OA if the team asks the coach what he/she would do if he/she were them?

Answer: The coach should help them interpret the rulebook. The coach may tell the team what he/she thinks it means. The coach cannot tell the team members what he/she would do unless the answer is “write for a problem clarification.” However, he/she should encourage the team to think about what it means first.

**Scenario U:** A Div. I team has decided to use what it thinks is tasteful bathroom humor in its skit. The coach has made sure everyone is aware of the rule about vulgarity.

Question: The team doesn’t think it’s vulgar but does not have a clue what adults think is vulgar (TV examples abound in the arguments as examples of what adults think is acceptable). Is it OA for them to tell other adults what their jokes are and to ask if they think it’s vulgar?

Answer: No, this is okay to do. Even a clarification will not be able to state what any particular judging team will deem acceptable versus vulgar.

**Scenario V:** The performance has been taped. Four kids think they need to schedule an extra practice; three think they do not and the performance cannot be done with just four.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to make the decision? Is it OA for the coach to say “Majority rules?” Is it OA for the coach to say they must come to a consensus (meaning every person but one must agree)?

Answer: It is up to the coach to make the decision or to decide on how the decision is to be made. Practice schedules are entirely within the coach’s purview. The coach should create this structure when the team is first assembled.

**Scenario W:** A judge stops a team’s performance in long-term because its vehicle is marking the floor. At end of the performance parents standing outside the taped area lift the car to protect the floor.

Question: Is it OA for any non-team member to help with the props after the performance has ended.

Answer: No. The team may have help with prop movement at any time except during the timed competition period.

**Scenario X:** During check-in the coach hands the paperwork to the judge.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to hand the paperwork to the judge?

Answer: No. Although it is always good to have the team members hand in the paperwork, there is no rule against the coach handing it to the judge.

**Scenario Y:** 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.”

Question: Does this represent OA?

Answer: No. The team member has made the decision to do this. It would be OA if the adult said something like, “Weight placement is more important, just stay here and continue with this” or if the adult initiated the conversation by telling the team member to go help with the prop.

**Scenario Z:** A team is preparing for its spontaneous competition. The coach picks problems for them to practice with that he/she thinks represent the type they will get in competition. The coach tells them whether they made a creative response or a common one. The team is given constant, direct feedback on the quality of their spontaneous solutions.

Question: Is it OA for the coach to prepare their team for spontaneous competition in that manner.

Answer: No, preparing teams is one of the primary roles of the coach.

**Scenario AA:** Kids get to World Finals and are uncrating their scenery and props (unscrewing crates).

Question: Is it OA for the coach to tell the team in what order to do everything? (We know they can help do it but does a team member have to tell the adult to do it?) Can the coach point out things that broke and ask if the team is going to repair them?

Answer: It is okay for the coach to tell the team what order to uncrate things. It is also okay for the coach to point out things that broke and ask if the team wishes to try and repair them.

However, from that point on it is up to the team members to decide whether and how to make repairs.

**Scenario BB:** A Div I team is having major problems figuring out how to keep track of information for its Materials Value Form.

Question: Can the coach ask what information the team is trying to track and how they intend to track it, and then prepare some sheets for the team members to use to write down all the information as they go?

Answer: Yes, the coach may do this.

**Scenario CC:** It is summer time and the synopsis of next year's problems have been published, but the full version has not been published.

Question: Since the problem has not been completely specified, is there anything the coach can do in this scenario that he or she couldn't do (with respect to OA) after the problems have been published?

Answer: No, the rules are the rules all year.

**Scenario DD:** A team observed another team dressed up in chicken costumes that did very well. The next year the team decided to dress up as chickens.

Question: Is it OA to observe successful performances in one year and copy facets of it in the next?

Answer: No, it is not OA but the coach should try to motivate the team to be original.

**Scenario EE:** A local group of several different OotM teams are convened for the purpose of practicing spontaneous problems. The coach of each team has prepared a different spontaneous problem to give to each of the teams.

Question: Are the coaches in this instance providing OA? If not, and the coaches score the teams, is this OA? If not, and the scores are provided back to the teams, is this OA?

Answer: None of these circumstances is OA.

**Scenario FF:** Same as the above, but the purpose is to practice each team's long-term solutions and present them to all of the other teams.

Question: As described, is anyone in this instance providing OA? If not, and the teams are scored, is this OA? If not, and the scores are provided back to the teams, is this OA?

Answer: The teams may present their solutions to each other and may be scored. They may be given verbal comments. (Verbal comments would tend to give the team more specific direction in not only what category should be improved (indicated by the score), but what specific items or changes should be made (e.g. "Costumes were colorful, but all were alike so little creativity was exhibited.")

## HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS OR...HOW *NOT* TO PROVIDE OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

Coaches need to be aware that the *WAY* a question is asked may limit the creativity of the answers. Here are some general, all-purpose questions you can use with your team(s):

- Do you think any other team would think of this?
- Can you think of a more creative way to do this?
- What other materials could be used to (create this effect, to make this move, to make it lighter in weight, to make it funnier, etc.)?
- What kinds of things do we need to find out in order to do this?
- How else could you...?
- Why did this happen?
- Where could you find out?
- Is this your best...?
- Does this meet the standard?
- Is this job done?
- What do we mean by style?
- What should be done?
- When should it be done?
- Who should do it?
- Can this be tested?
- Can we combine ideas?
- Why is it necessary?
- How else could this be arranged?
- What should come next?
- What makes sense? What makes nonsense?
- What could be said? What could be left unsaid?
- Have you considered where the points are?
- What are the pros of your solution? What are the cons?
- Are you satisfied with your idea/work/solution/performance?
- Do you feel like you are "in the box" or "out of the box"?
- If you were judging this problem how would you score your solution?
- Are you respectful of your team members' ideas?
- What do you think each of your team members strengths are?
- Are your team members' strengths being utilized?
- If you were coaching this team, how would you handle this conflict?
- If you were coaching this team where would you take the team to have a fun afternoon off?
- Can you think of a good field trip that would relate to your problem?
- Will it fit through a door?
- How many people will it take to move it?
- How will you get "it" to competition? If we only have a car, will it fit? A van? Will we need a truck? A trailer?
- Can you check out the survivability of the prop?

Will it fit in a van (or whatever is being used to transport props/backgrounds to competition)?  
Re Style: What would you like to use for your free choice elements?

Why are these elements special?

What are you most proud of? Why?

What is the neatest part of your solution?

What makes your performance really shine?

Good questioning can really help elevate your team's solution and enjoyment of creative problem solving, without introducing outside assistance.

## HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM (TEAM TIMELINE)

**These are *suggestions* for organizing your team's time. Please note that the steps overlap so more than one step may occur at a meeting.**

### **Step 1. Read the Problem** (First 2-3 meetings; as needed after)

Go through each section of the problem

Make sure each participant understands what is required

General ideas are OK, but don't focus on brainstorming solutions yet

Understand how each of the parts interact

### **Step 2. Brainstorm Possible Solutions** (Meetings 2-5)

Generate lots of ideas (keep track of them)

Don't evaluate them yet... just keep track of them

Break the problem down into manageable pieces

Encourage wild, creative solutions

### **Step 3. SCAMPER** (Meetings 4-6) (*information on this technique follows the timeline*)

Use the SCAMPER technique to come up with more ideas

Change the ideas, generate even more

### **Step 4. Evaluate Ideas** (Meetings 4-6)

Which ideas do the team like best?

Evaluate, but don't criticize

Select a preliminary solution

### **Step 5. Determine Tasks & Timeline** (Meetings 5-8)

What types of tasks, skills, props, contraptions, are needed to complete this solution?

Who and how will they do these things?

Determine a basic time-line for completing the solution.

Continue to evaluate the solution and refine/revise as needed.

Do the items decided upon fit the problem specifications?

### **Step 6. Begin Construction** (Meetings 6- )

Start building things and writing a script.

Revise/refine (continuously) and as necessary.

### **Step 7. Put it Together**

As props, tasks are near completion, or are completed, test them out.

Continue to refine/revise.

Does the proposed solution fit the problem?

### **Step 8. Finish it Up and Practice** (2-3 Meetings before Tournament)

Celebrate major accomplishments as they happen.

Test things out... do they work? Can they work better?

Practice the whole skit. Timing.

What happens if something goes wrong? Background tips over?

Revise/refine.

## **SCAMPER** your Way to Creative Thinking

The SCAMPER technique was developed by Bob Eberle. SCAMPER is an acronym for idea-spurring verbs to improve objects or generate ideas. The letters represent the words "substitute," "combine," "adapt," "modify," "magnify," "minify," "put to other uses," "eliminate," "rearrange," and "reverse." Questions associated with these verbs, as well as examples of objects that illustrate them, are listed below.

**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 together? 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 race cars 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? Wristband 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 illustrates "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.

## COACHING DO'S AND DON'T (hints from coaches)

- ★ Do keep in touch with team members and families. A calendar and phone tree can make your life much easier.
- ★ Do let parents know your ideas about snacks. Will they take turns providing them? Will they contribute a certain amount toward food expenses? Will they leave a supply of snacks at your house? Will there be no snacks?
- ★ Do have fun as a coach.
- ★ Do let the kids solve the problems.
- ★ Do recognize that stress increases as competition draws near. Do recognize that the team will not be ready as early as you would like them to be.
- ★ Do keep your sense of humor.
- ★ Do make clear your expectations of the team: be on time, be respectful, be reliable, etc.
- ★ Do ask lots of open-ended questions: Are there any other ways you could...? What are the strengths of this solution? What talents do each of us bring to the problem? How can we use these talents? What do you think of the solution (or component)?
- ★ Do remind the team to read the problem. Then read it again. Then read it again.
- ★ Do try to start and end your regular meetings on time.
- ★ Do stay on top of forms and paperwork.
- ★ Do keep track of due dates.
- ★ Do encourage risk taking.
- ★ Do encourage brainstorming: Look for multiple solutions. No one criticizes ideas during the brainstorming sessions.
- ★ Do celebrate accomplishments.
- ★ Do encourage kids to take responsibility as a team for what they do and do not do.
- ★ Do let the team provide the answers.
- ★ Do practice spontaneous as often as you can.
- ★ Do laugh. A lot.
- ★ Do remember that if you have a specific question about a problem, a clarification is the best way to get an answer.
- ★ Don't allow the team to waste creative energy by blaming.
- ★ Don't fix up, make suggestions for cute lines, do it for, make it neater, steer toward solutions, etc. If you think something may be Outside Assistance, avoid doing it.
- ★ Don't forget: By tournament day, it will be all over (for most of you!).



## HINTS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL ODYSSEY OF THE MIND STYLE PRESENTATION

1. Treat the creation of the style performance as a "spontaneous" problem.

For example, for the structure problem called "A New Twist," one team thought of everything that could twist, including licorice, the dance, Oliver Twist - and settled on a story that was filled with twists and turns.

2. Think about the strengths and weaknesses of the team.

Have them list their individual strengths, then have the rest of the team talk about what each person can do well. You may discover that someone has a vast knowledge of the Civil War - can that be used in the style presentation? Can someone compose original music? Can they write poetry? If a member is a gymnast, think about whether their skill can be incorporated. Conversely, if painting is not a strength, you may want to think about working with other media. If the team wants music but no one sings well, can they talk or rap the song? Although you cannot suggest these uses, the questions "How could we use Billy's talent?" or "How can we get around our lack of musicians?" may bring the team to some creative solutions.

3. Have the team get an image of what they would like their performance to look and feel like.

Do they want it to be funny? Poignant? Dramatic? Colorful? Stark? Use this as an opportunity to set goals for the team, and refer to the list as you go about creating the style presentation. If the team says they want their style to involve large props, items that move and a black & white motif, is that what they are developing? They may want to refine the list as they go on, but prominently posting the list can help in guiding the creation of the style presentation.

4. Pay attention to details.

Practice setting up. Practice again. Then practice again. A refined set-up creates a good tone for the performance and gives it polish. Each team member should know what their job is and where they should be. Who will plug in the extension cord? When will the background be brought in?

Add special touches that reflect care and elaboration. If you are using music, does it relate to the style or is it just "there"? Are the props on the stage for a reason or just to fill space?

5. Plan, plan, plan

Look at "what-if" situations. What if the scenery falls down? What if someone gets laryngitis? What if the structure doesn't break? What if the vehicle runs into an obstacle? Thinking about these possibilities ahead of time can make the team more relaxed if something should actually happen.

The most important part of the planning is reading the problem and the rules. Every year teams are penalized because they did not read the problem or did not understand the rules.

#### 6. Style presentations should be seen and heard.

Can the judges hear the actors? Practice projection by standing in the back of the room and seeing if you hear what the performing members are saying. Can your props be seen? A first year team had some nice props, but you couldn't tell what they were at a distance. Call attention to aspects of the performance you want noticed.

#### 7. Make sure the forms are filled out in advance and tell your story.

Think about the items you want the judges to score. In each problem this year, the team has the choice of two items, there is overall effect, and two items are predetermined. Have the team think critically about their presentation. Remember that the judges are looking for creativity. A team member may play the violin very well, but this is considered "talent" and not creativity. If, however, they write the composition that will be played, judges will see this as being more creative. Each year there are teams that score very well or very poorly in style, often because of the way they have completed their style forms. Call attention to your strengths. If there is a known weakness to your performance, do not ask to have it judged.

Remember that judges only have a few moments to read the section about how the style relates to the problem solution. They shouldn't have to wonder what your performance means or what you were getting at. Make it clear.

#### 8. Be unique.

Ask the team if they think their theme will be unusual or if everyone else will think of it. Some of our best ideas came from looking at our brainstorming list and putting together parts that do not seem to go together. A performance a few years ago was Romeo & Juliet told from the point of view of shoe puppets. We knew that no one else would have an identical theme.

Think about common or very current themes that judges may see a lot. Can they be done in a novel way that sets them apart?

If the team is very clever in its presentation (e.g., through satire or parody) these can work, but think about whether this is really going to be unique.

#### 9. Remember who the judges are.

Judges are adults. Ask the team if adults will find what they are doing funny. Adults usually do not find potty humor funny, although fourth graders may think they are hysterical. Beware of running around aimlessly. A talented team can pull off a Keystone Kops routine with style, but this can run the risk of looking disorganized (and may knock down props along the way).

## 10. Be sensitive.

Humor is subjective. Think about whether what you do and say may offend someone. Ask the team whether anyone's feelings might be hurt by this presentation.

Be aware of language. Are there potential slurs or words adults consider swears in the performance? This may work against your performance. Many judges are also offended by gratuitous violence. It is the team's choice as to how they present themselves, but you can reasonably ask if anyone might be offended by their performance. They may still choose to proceed in the same way, but they have been forewarned.

## 11. Watch other performances.

If time allows, watch other teams perform. Appreciate what they have done well. Watch teams that are competing in different problems as well as your own; it will help in establishing the criteria for what makes something creative.

## 12. Keep a lot of stuff in your house.

You never know what you'll need. Go to your local recycling center and collect up assorted "junk". You can never tell which items will become just the right treasure. Some supplies that you might want to have handy are:

- ★ refrigerator and other cardboard boxes
- ★ poster board
- ★ duct tape
- ★ markers
- ★ Velcro fasteners
- ★ masking tape
- ★ paint brushes
- ★ primer paint
- ★ newspapers (to protect work areas and for papier mache)
- ★ standard workshop tools: screwdrivers, hammer, pliers, hot glue gun and glue sticks, white and carpenter's glue
- ★ tape measure
- ★ nails and screws
- ★ hooks and eyes
- ★ fabric
- ★ old white sheets
- ★ construction paper
- ★ batting or poly-fil
- ★ wood scraps
- ★ glitter
- ★ utility and x-acto knives,
- ★ tempera paints,
- ★ paper towel rolls,
- ★ aluminum foil,

★ pie pans

And, most importantly, pizza!

13. Read all program materials carefully.

Make sure that the team understands what they are to do. Read and be familiar with this year's program guide. Read and re-read the problem. Don't lose points because of carelessness in following rules.

14. Be wary of things that are "good 'nuf".

Think high quality. Ask the team repeatedly, "Is there anything you can do to make this better?" Encourage them to stretch and surpass what they ever thought they could do. Have them evaluate what they think they might score on each element; it may point up their strengths and/or shortcomings and encourage the team to put that little extra into their performance.

## MAINE ODYSSEY OF THE MIND AWARDS

### The Casey Irish Award

The Casey Irish Award is given in memory of Casey Irish, a longtime member of our Maine Odyssey of the Mind family, whose life was cut short in a tragic accident on November 9, 2010. The award is to be given to a team or individual who exemplifies an exceptional level of commitment and perseverance along the journey to their Tournament. We hope that in some small way, this will help us celebrate the life of this extraordinary young man.

Nominations for the Casey Irish Award may be submitted by any adult or student who is involved in the Odyssey of the Mind program. This could be a school administrator, teacher, coach, parent, student, relative, etc. The written nominations must be provided to MeOotM at least one week prior to your Tournament. MeOotM will evaluate each nomination and, if warranted, will present an award during the Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament.

MeOotM encourages any individual in the Maine Odyssey of the Mind program to consider their deserving students for this award.

### Steve Walsh Meeting A Challenge Award

The Steve Walsh Award is given in memory of Steve Walsh, a longtime supporter of our Maine Odyssey of the Mind family. Steve Walsh was a coach and MeOotM Board member for many years. Steve Walsh gave of himself at all times, even in the face of a terminal illness. The award is to be given to a team or individual that has overcome a substantial obstacle and continued their efforts at the MeOotM state Tournament. We hope that in some small way, this will help us celebrate the life of this extraordinary man.

Nominations for the Steve Walsh Meeting A Challenge Award may be submitted by any individual who is involved in the Odyssey of the Mind program. This could be a school administrator, teacher, student, coach, parent, relative, etc. The written nominations must be provided to MeOotM one week prior to your Tournament.

MeOotM will evaluate each nomination and if warranted, will present an award during the Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament. MeOotM encourages all individuals in the Maine Odyssey of the Mind program to consider their deserving students, teams, coaches, parents etc. for this award.

Nominations should be submitted to: