

**ODYSSEY
OF THE MIND**



Vermont Odyssey of the Mind Coaches' Training

What is *Odyssey of the Mind (OOTM)*?

- International Creative Problem-Solving Program.
- Based upon the idea that creativity is a skill that can be taught and further developed with practice.
- Focus is to develop divergent, independent-thinking abilities (thinking outside the box, taking the path less traveled) through a challenging, but **FUN**, learning process.
- Team-effort, based loosely upon a sports model.
- Teams demonstrate their solutions at the State Tournament. Every team presenting a solution is a WINNER!
- Participants are K- College, but compete within age **Divisions**
- OOTM develops real-life communication and brainstorming skills, and rewards creativity and “calculated” risk-taking in the solution of complex problems.

Typical *Odyssey of the Mind* Calendar

Purchase Membership (One per school, sometimes two, \$135)

Establish Membership Coordinator (who the mail goes to)

Form Teams, Recruit Coaches

Attend Coaches Training

Teams work on Solutions (November – March)

Register Teams for Tournament (January 18th, 2019)

Register Judge and/or Volunteer

Vermont State Tournament (March 16th, 2019)

OOTM World Finals (May 22-25, 2019)

at Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Program Structure -- Teams

Teams of 5-7 students participate in their choice of the current-year Long-Term Problems and practice Spontaneous Problems

- All Team Members may participate in the LT presentation
- 5 Team Members only may participate in Spontaneous (team choice). Other team members may observe.
- A maximum of 7 “Minds” can work on the problem

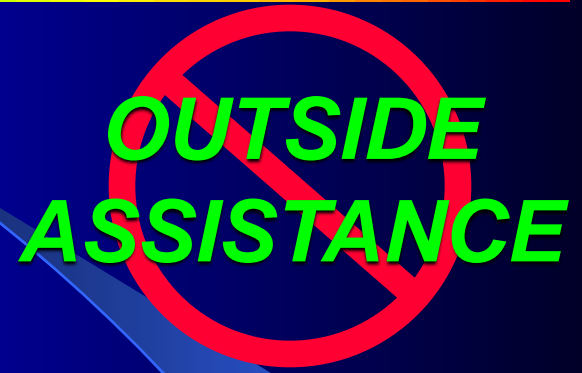
Teams participate within Age Divisions. In the U.S., these are based upon age of oldest team member and the grade level.

- Primary (Usually K-2)
- Div I (every team member in 5th grade or less)
- Div II (at least one team member in 6th-8th grade)
- Div III (at least one team member in 9th-12th grade)
- Div IV (all members with high school diploma and taking at least one college course)

Outside Assistance



One of the most important parts of OM is that the Team MUST conceive, design, construct, and perform their own ideas. Help external to the team is termed Outside Assistance (OA).



The solution is the Team's design, their work, their performance, and their score. The Team is responsible for what they do, NOT the coach.

OM is a Hands-On Program for Kids,
but a Hands-Off Program for Adults

(It's Important that Parents Know OA Rules Too)

What is Needed to Solve the Problem

There are three major information sources that are required to coach an Odyssey of the Mind team

- **2018-2019 PROGRAM GUIDE**

(www.odysseyofthemind.com / vt.odysseyofthemind.com)

- The Team's chosen **LONG-TERM PROBLEM**
(available from your school's membership coordinator)

- **CLARIFICATIONS** (General and team, available on the web, through your coordinator, or through your State Association, released throughout the season)

- **OTHER RESOURCES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL**

Other Coaches

Membership Coordinator

Printed Materials

Websites / OdysseyWorld chat group

Local Association (AD, RD, State Coordinator, Problem Captains)

International Program Headquarters ([general info](#), [videos](#), [books](#))

Problem Procedures (usually released in late-Fall in Newsletter)

The Long-Term Problems

Six new Long-Term problems are released each year (Sept)
The PROBLEM SYNOPSES briefly describe these

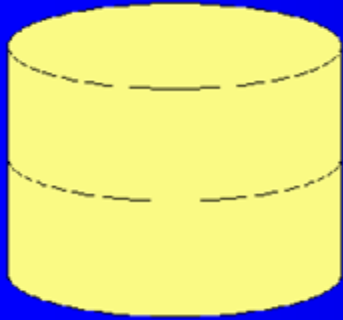
- Vehicle – Problem 1: OMER to the Rescue Again
- Technical – Problem 2: Hide in Plain Sight
- Classics – Problem 3: Leonardo's Workshop
- Structure – Problem 4: Structure Toss
- Theatrical – Problem 5: Opposites Distract
- Primary – Demonstration Only: Museum Makers

All problems (except Primary) are offered to all age Divisions
There is a cost limit to each problem (usually ~\$125-145)

- therefore solutions cannot be “bought”
- only the materials used in competition included in the cost
- duct tape & cardboard, lawn-sale value, scavenging
- some “standard” and safety items are exempt from cost or have “assigned values” as listed in Program Guide.

The Three Components of OOTM

Long-Term



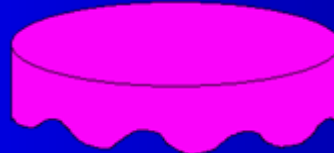
200 Points

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

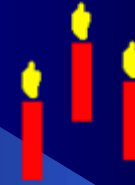
Style

50 Points

- Elaboration of Long-Term
- Pizzaz, 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

The Long-Term Problems Continued ...



Participation requires a commitment by:

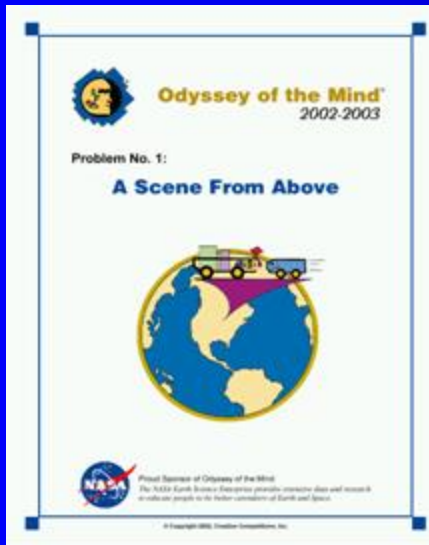
- Team members
- Coaches
- Membership Coordinators
- Volunteer Judges and Officials

Teams generally work on their Long-Term Problems from November-March and present their solutions at the Vermont State Tournament.

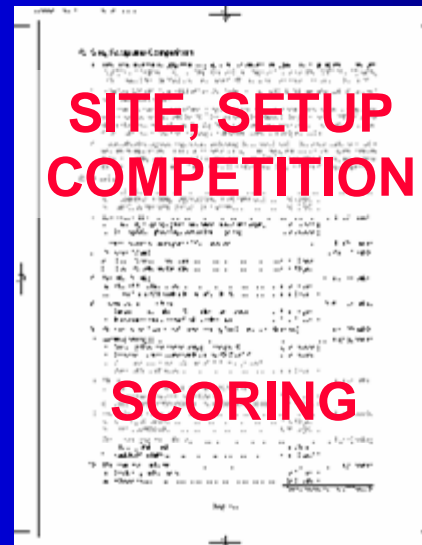
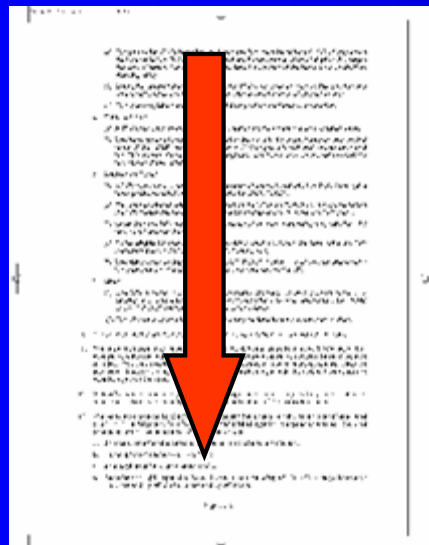
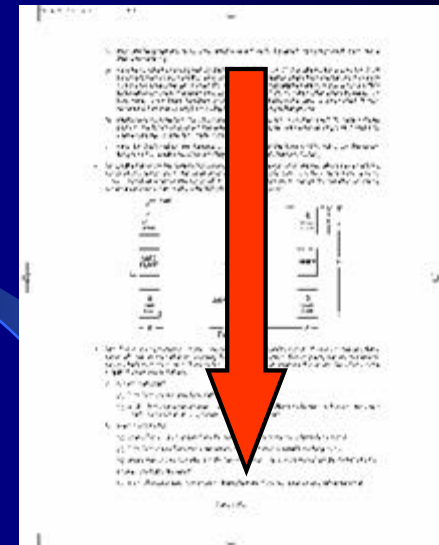
If there is a question not answered in the [Guide](#) or [Problem](#), teams may request a Clarification via the [web](#)

In general... if it doesn't say you can't do it ... you **CAN!**

The Parts of a Long-Term Problem



INTRODUCTION
THE PROBLEM
LIMITATIONS



SCORING

PENALTIES
STYLE
TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR WILL PROVIDE
TEAM WILL PROVIDE

Do it with Style !

Style is the elaboration of the Long-Term Problem. It is a place where the team can show the judges what they are particularly excited about or proud of. Style is presented during the Long-Term Problem Solution performance.

What makes this performance really shine?
Style is the place for the team to showcase their strengths and talents.

- artistic design, music, songs, choreography
- construction, creative use of materials
- humor, rhyme
- overall effect (theme)

BE SPECIFIC !

5 Categories (some mandatory, some team-choice, overall)



STYLE NOTES:

- "Free Choice of Team" means make something up!
- The trickiest thing about STYLE is that a team CANNOT ask to be scored for something on style if that element is already being scored in the Long-Term scoring rubric.
- The close 2nd is that teams often DO NOT understand what Style is – give them a Warhol, Beach Boys, or Beatles: you know when you see/hear it.
- Lastly, Style elements should reinforce each other!

Spontaneous Problems

Spontaneous problems come in three types:

- Verbal – problems requiring verbal responses
- Hands on – problems requiring manipulation of materials
- Verbal/Hands On (Hybrid) – problems with both verbal and hands on components

PRACTICE... PRACTICE ... PRACTICE !

Do lots of different types.

Do at least two spontaneous problems each time the team meets.

Critique the teams performance (Coaches Hints are fine here)

Have each team member specialize in something.

Properties of materials ?

Fall back plans

Brainstorm ways
to get “unstuck”

Spontaneous Resources

[Odyssey of the Mind](#)

There are a variety of spontaneous practice books and kits [here](#).

TRAINING FOR SPONTANEOUS

- Although Spontaneous is designed to be a surprise, you **CAN** and **SHOULD** practice for it!
- There are books available for purchase (www.odysseyofthemind.com) and free resources online
- Explain what is meant by “Verbal,” “Non-Verbal,” and “Hands-On” Spontaneous problems
- Students should be comfortable completing any type of Spontaneous problem
- Also know how some Spontaneous problems have “card” systems for responding to problems
- The key to being successful at Spontaneous is being familiar with the basics
- The additional secret: good teamwork
- The team should know which 5 members will complete Sponto based on the kind of problem

IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO JUDGE THEIR SOLUTIONS IN SPONTANEOUS?

- Of course! This is how the team practices and gets better
- Remember: you are just there to provide your opinion w/ respect to ‘creative’ or ‘common’
- The ***RIGHT*** question to ask is: “How could these responses have been more creative?”

So What Is the Role of the Coach?

- ✓ Scheduler (how often and where team meets)
- ✓ Facilitator (helps the team stay organized)
 - determine goals and the path to reach them
 - helps them read and understand the problem
 - helps team keep track of tasks and deadlines
 - takes notes (remind them of their previous ideas)
 - leads brainstorming sessions (without injecting ideas)
 - explains scoring
 - brings in “experts” to discuss & teach skills
- ✓ Teacher (teaches **basic skills**)
- ✓ Asks **QUESTIONS** (to help team focus, open-ended)
- ✓ Assists team in developing a timeline for projects
- ✓ Spontaneous practice (practice often, variety, strategies)
- ✓ Forms (helps Primary and Division I teams fill out forms)
- ✓ Go-fer (takes team members to store for supplies)
- ✓ Snack Organizer (fuel for busy minds)
- ✓ Mentor, Cheerleader

YOUR ROLE AS AN EDUCATOR AND MENTOR TO THE TEAM

- Although you are NOT allowed to solve the problem for the team, you **CAN** help in other ways
- Teams are permitted to meet with 'experts' – artists, architects, auto mechanics, etc.
- These 'experts' can provide **general knowledge about their field, art, or craft** to the team
- Okay/Not Okay Examples:

OKAY: An architect talking about shapes and their relative strength

NOT OKAY: An architect drawing up potential structure ideas for the team's solution

OKAY: An actor talking about good stage presence, performing practices, and general sketch structure

NOT OKAY: An actor suggesting specific lines or ideas for the team's sketch

OKAY: A parent showing team members how to use a machine saw safely and properly

NOT OKAY: A parent cutting pieces of wood or other materials for the team to ensure safety
(If teams cannot do it themselves, they need to find another solution they *can* do)

- You **CAN** and **SHOULD** be this person whenever possible, as it is one of the most rewarding aspects of being a team's coach. "Teach a man to fish..." Let them do the true learning!

TASK MASTER AND RULE FOLLOWER

- You are permitted to remind teams of the program's rules – this helps keep them on track.
- As an educator/mentor, it is also okay for you to remind them to get their work done (...you just cannot tell them what to do, specifically – more on this later).

PART OF THE LEARNING IN ODYSSEY: KNOWING WHERE THE POINTS ARE

- It is okay, normal, and good to direct the team's attention to these scoring guidelines.
- Something that may be insanely creative or cool but that does not specifically address the scoring elements may not be something the team wants to include – they have to come to this realization on their own or choose to take the risk, but you can remind them of scoring!
- Ranatra Fusca awards extremely creative, risky solutions that defy what would be expected.
- Although a great honor to receive a Ranatra, we would all probably agree that a solution that is both **highly creative/risky AND that gets the job done** is better than one that is just highly creative/risky but ineffective.

HOW DO I ASK THE *RIGHT* QUESTION WITH RESPECT TO SCORING?

- “Do you think this idea satisfies the scoring requirement as outlined in the problem?”
- “Is this element the best in can possibly be with respect to what the problem is looking for?”
- “How can you potentially improve this element to ensure you will obtain maximum points?”

Team Building

It is important that this group of kids comes together and functions as a team. Important decisions should be made together.

Incorporate some team-building games into each practice session, especially early in the season. This will build team trust, and teach students to work together to solve problems that they can't manage alone.

Do not allow criticism of people or their ideas. It is OK to evaluate ideas on their merits, but it must be done constructively.

Celebrate milestones and major break-throughs/accomplishments.

Once an IDEA is generated and discussed, it is no longer owned by the originator....it is the TEAM'S idea.

PENALTIES

Penalties are designed to prevent teams from bending or breaking the rules, creating a safety hazard, interfering with other teams, delaying competition, or misbehaving.

Spirit of the Problem - Aimed at preventing teams from circumventing the intention of the rules in either Long-Term or Spontaneous (-1 to -100 Points).

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - For impairing another team's solution, disruptive behavior, inappropriate language. Intentional (or unintentional) damage to facilities (-1 to -100 points).

Outside Assistance – If team receives help from anyone. This applies to audience as well. Thus teams shouldn't encourage audience participation (-5 to -200 points).

Incorrect/Missing Membership Sign – -1 to -15 points.

Over Cost Limit – Materials over cost limit (-1 to -100 points)

Over Time Limit – For each 10 sec or fraction (-5 points)

Tournaments

Odyssey of the Mind tournaments are held in the spring of each year around the world at various levels

- Vermont State => World Finals

These tournaments provide an opportunity for teams to present their creative solutions, and to be judged against the problem criteria. Although the event is a competition, it is also meant to be a time for the teams to be rewarded and to have FUN!



Tournaments Continued ...

EVERY TEAM PRESENTING A SOLUTION IS A WINNER !

However, because a sports-based competition model is used, teams are judged for how well and how *creatively* they satisfy the problem criteria, and only one team is awarded 1st Place overall for each LT Problem and Division



1st and 2nd Place Teams and *Ranatra Fusca* recipients are invited to attend the *Odyssey of the Mind* World Finals

(the policies of your school and local association may vary)

What Happens at a Tournament?

Teams that wish to present their solution at a sanctioned Odyssey of the Mind tournament must register. Please check the Vermont OM Website for deadlines, instructions, and fees for participating.

Teams registering for the tournament are scheduled for their Long-Term and Spontaneous performance times.

Typical Order of the Day

- Registration Desk Opens

- Competition (throughout day)

- Closing and Awards Ceremonies (late afternoon)

- CHECK YOUR LOCAL SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS -**

What Should Coaches Do on Tournament Day ?

- Pick up Your Registration Package. Take 5 minutes to check through it.
- Get your Team to the Staging Area (for LT) at least 15 min before your scheduled LT competition time.
- Bring your team to the Spontaneous Holding Area about 15 min prior to their scheduled Spontaneous competition time. Parents and other supporters should not accompany the team.
- Enjoy other performances
- Enjoy your team...
- Enjoy the day...

Start planning for next year... ☺



COACHING TIPS

READ THE PROBLEM, then RE-READ THE PROBLEM

If You Start Me Up

The Timekeeper will ask the team, "Team, are you ready?"

Many (especially experienced) teams come up with a clever response



What Setup Time?

Don't make the mistake of neglecting to figure in set-up time.

What happens if something goes wrong during setup?

Who handles what tasks during setup?

Is it better to have a complicated setup, or a simple setup and more performance time?

Is there something someone can do during setup to start the performance?

Time does not stop if the team encounters a problem (except for medical emergencies).

Wrapping it Up

In some (not all) problems, the team needs to signal the Judges that the performance is over.

Like the beginning, the end is important. Experienced teams find a "creative" way.

Tell it to the Judge!

After the performance ends, the judges will talk to the team and ask them questions about their solution. This is a part of the the solution. Let the team know to expect it and practice it with them.

Don't forget the Membership Sign... Contingency Plan!

Odyssey of the Mind Recognition

OMER's Award

In recognition of teams or individuals who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and exceptional talent

Ranatra Fusca

presented to teams or individuals who exhibit exceptional creativity, either through some aspect of their problem solution, or an extraordinary idea beyond the problem solution

Tournament Placement

determined by total score

Ties are awarded if there is less than 1 point difference



MATERIAL VALUES FORM

Team members must complete this form. Adults may help fill it out for Division I team members only.

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____

Membership Name _____ Membership # _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Country _____

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

TOTAL VALUE OF MATERIALS USED =

COST FORM

- one copy for Staging Judge
- includes everything used during the LT & Style PRESENTATION
- doesn't include items not used during presentation
- garage sale value if used items
- combine value of small items
- exemptions (Program Guide p.49)
- be "creative" in acquiring materials, the art of scavenging
- cardboard & duct-tape
- even "donations" have value

STYLE FORM

Team members must complete this form. Adults may help fill it out for Division I team members only. **A minimum of two copies are required for each competition. At World Finals, and in some other competitions, three copies are required.**

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____

Membership Name _____ Membership # _____

City _____ State _____ Country _____

Judge(s) _____

Style Category (Team fills in #1 to #4) (If the category is "Free choice of team," do not include anything that is scored in long-term problem scoring.)	Possible Points	Points Awarded (Judge fills in)
1.	1 to 10	1. _____
2.	1 to 10	2. _____
3.	1 to 10	3. _____
4.	1 to 10	4. _____
5. Overall Effect	1 to 10	5. _____

To describe your Style presentation, briefly tell how the it enhances the long-term problem solution. **Please print or type and use only the space below.**

TOTAL STYLE SCORE =
(Maximum possible = 50)

STYLE FORM

- four copies for Staging Judge
- adds to the Long-term problem
- relates to the theme of solution
- team can showcase strengths
- cannot be items already scored as part of Long-Term
- Categories
 - Specific Scoring Elements
 - Free Choice Elements
 - Overall Effect
- be very specific

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FORM

Long-Term Problem _____ Division _____

Membership Name _____ Membership # _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Country _____

We understand that it is against the rules for anyone other than the team members to design, build or present the long-term problem solution. We realize that we may get instruction in various areas of design and construction or in performance techniques, but know that these instructions may not be specific to the long-term problem solution. Our signatures below signify that we have followed all of the rules regarding outside assistance. If there are any exceptions, we have listed those.

WE HAD HELP WITH: (Please describe any assistance with your specific problem solution if you had any. State NONE, if none was received.)

Coach #1 _____ Team Member _____

Coach #2 _____ Team Member _____

Coach #3 _____ Team Member _____

Team Member _____ Team Member _____

Team Member _____ Team Member _____

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FORM

- one copy for Staging Judge
- only 7 members can contribute to problem solution
- coaches are facilitators
- coaches can *assist* Div I teams in filling out forms, but must use team's own words
- if OA did occur, list on form, may result in a penalty
- penalty is proportional to amount and type of help given

TEAM LIST FORM

Runaway 'Train'

Team's Required List Form

1. Membership Name: _____

Number: _____ Division: I II III (circle one)

2. A brief description of the vehicles and the required propulsion system(s) it uses:

3. The five obstacles overcome by the vehicle(s) and which vehicle will attempt them if more than one:

#1	_____	_____
#2	_____	_____
#3	_____	_____
#4	_____	_____
#5	_____	_____

4. The signal the team will use to indicate it has finished presenting its solution is:

- four copies for Staging Judge
- problem will indicate if it is needed
- lets judges know exactly what aspects of the solution the team wants scored
- no penalty if not used, but judges may miss a scoring element
- can be downloaded from the Member Area or written on a piece of 8 1/2" x 11" paper
- Staging Judge will have extras on hand if team forgot a list and time allows

Contact Information

For more information, or to register, contact:

International Headquarters:

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

406 Ganttown Road

Sewell, NJ 08080

Tel: (856) 256-2797

Fax: (856) 256-2798

email to: Info@odysseyofthemind.org

<http://www.odysseyofthemind.com>

Vermont Odyssey of the Mind

Tel: 802-324-6633

Email: vtootm@accessvt.com

<http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org/wp/>



Odyssey of the Mind



Be Creative !