



# Odyssey of the Mind®

## Passport

An interactive planner and guide for  
new and seasoned Odyssey of the Mind  
coaches and teams



Membership Name \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_ Problem Number \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_

Coach Name \_\_\_\_\_

Coach Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Coach Email \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Coach Name \_\_\_\_\_

AC Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ AC Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Welcome to the Odyssey of the Mind!

This passport was designed to help both novice and seasoned coaches guide their teams through an Odyssey of the Mind season. This detailed passport is an interactive, structured guide that will support you in keeping track of your team meetings, goals, objectives, deadlines, and more.

This passport will carry you through ten phases, beginning with the first meeting and ending with competition. Each phase can be adapted to fit your schedule. Determine how much time you have from the first meeting to the first competition and adjust the timeline to allow the team to spend more time focusing on certain objectives. No matter how you adjust it, it is your Odyssey!

#### Reminders:

- Reference the Program Guide. The Program Guide explains the program rules, has definitions, explains competition site information and more. Be sure that you and your team reference the Program Guide often. Common questions can usually be answered by the Program Guide. You'll find QR codes and hyperlinks to the Program Guide throughout this Passport.
- Check Clarifications often. Clarifications are answers to *un* common questions or a more detailed explanation of what is allowed in your solution and what is not. Clarifications may be added often, so make sure that you and your team are aware of them.
- Have fun!

#### Program Contact Information:

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Association Director \_\_\_\_\_

AD Phone Number\* \_\_\_\_\_ AD Email \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Director \_\_\_\_\_

RD Phone Number\* \_\_\_\_\_ RD Email \_\_\_\_\_

Tournament Director \_\_\_\_\_

TD Phone Number\* \_\_\_\_\_ TD Email \_\_\_\_\_

\* Some phone numbers may not be available

## Member & Parent/Guardian Contact List

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

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## Odyssey Timeline:

April/May Previous Year

Long-Term Problem  
Synopsis are released.

July 1

Season officially begins.

August

Full Long-Term Problems  
are released.

September

Some early bird teams  
start solving a problem.

October

Most teams meet for the  
first time.

November/December

Coaches trainings.

January

Final checks: Make sure  
your team is almost  
ready for competition!  
Judges Trainings.

February-April

Regional and Association  
Competitions.

Late May

World Finals.

Dates to remember:

Tournament Registration Deadline(s):

Regional \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

World Finals \_\_\_\_\_

Tournament Dates:

Regional \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

World Finals \_\_\_\_\_

Coaches Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes to Self: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Resources:

Association Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Program  
Guide



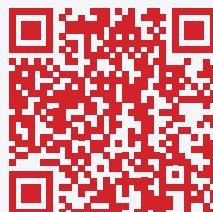
Local  
Contacts



Clarifications



Member  
Resources



FAQ



# THE LONG-TERM PROBLEM

The Long-Term Problem is broken up into an outline format. Often parts of the problem will be referred to by the letter and number within that section, for example. B6 – would be #6 in section B.

**\*Have a Long-Term problem with you when you read this section- it'll make more sense!\***

## INTRODUCTION

Some problems include an introduction – it often explains the inspiration behind the problem and gives various examples of the subject matter at hand. Nothing here is required, but reading it can help the team focus on important aspects of the problem.

## A. THE PROBLEM

This lists what is expected in the team's solution of the problem, along with the Creative Emphases, and the Spirit of the Problem. The Creative Emphases are items scored specifically for creativity. Each problem has an infinite number of solutions, but the Spirit of the Problem is the overall objective. If a team circumvents the basic objectives of the problem or violates rules that are not scored (and no specific penalty listed), it will receive a Spirit of the Problem penalty.

## B. LIMITATIONS

These are the rules of the problem and a very important aspect to solving an OM problem. It will list the cost limit (how much you can spend on solving the problem), how to submit a clarification if you have questions about the rules, and then more in-depth limitations for each requirement as described in A. The Problem. They are called limitations because while there are some specific things you may not be able to do, generally the problem does not tell you exactly how to solve the problem—that is up to your team and their creative ideas!

## C. SITE, SETUP, AND COMPETITION

This will tell you the basic size of the competition site, any taped areas/start lines if applicable to the problem, and what will be available for team use that is part of the site (electrical outlets, etc.). It will also list the general steps of the competition from arriving to the competition site, setting up for the performance, and anything up until when time ends and the team leaves the site. If you have specific questions about the site such as flooring type, lighting, etc. please contact your tournament director.

## D. SCORING

This lists every part of the solution that receives a score. It's important to note what will be scored and how much weight that scoring element holds. Some requirements are scored objectively, meaning it receives a set amount of score if it is presented or not (0 or 5). Some are subjectively scored, meaning there is a set range of scores (2-10) awarded as determined by the judges

and are based off creativity, effectiveness, and more as listed in section D. Long-Term scoring is worth up to 200 points. The team earning the highest score for each long-term problem and division in a competition is awarded 200 points. As the team is solving the problem, encourage them to reference this section. Referencing this section allows the team to decide if the solution addresses each scored element as well as it could.

## E. PENALTIES

Each problem has its own specific penalties that differ between years as well as some common ones: Spirit of the Problem (circumventing the objective of the problem, read section A), Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Incorrect or missing membership sign, Outside Assistance (see Program Guide for descriptions of all). Any penalty points are deducted after scores are calculated. Missing a scored element is not cause for a penalty, you would simply not receive score for anything not completed.

## F. STYLE

Style is how you enhance your solution and give it a 'wow' factor during your presentation. It's a way to include the individual special interests and talents of your team members. There will be two elements required, two free choices of the team, and the overall effect of the Style elements. Style is worth up to 50 points and is a way to add in plenty of fun elements!

## G. TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR WILL PROVIDE

This will list everything the Tournament Director will supply the team with during the competition. Some problems may require certain measuring devices or items on a course, etc. It will list those items here, the team does not need to bring them.

## H. THE TEAM MUST PROVIDE

This will list anything in addition to the solution that the team must bring. Often it includes paperwork, documentation about aspects of the solution or things that must be created as part of the solution in certain dimensions.

## I. PROBLEM GLOSSARY

If there is a word used in the problem with a specific definition that is different from its original or most-used meaning, it will be defined in the Problem Glossary or the Program Guide. You will know a word has a special "OM definition" if it is in italics.

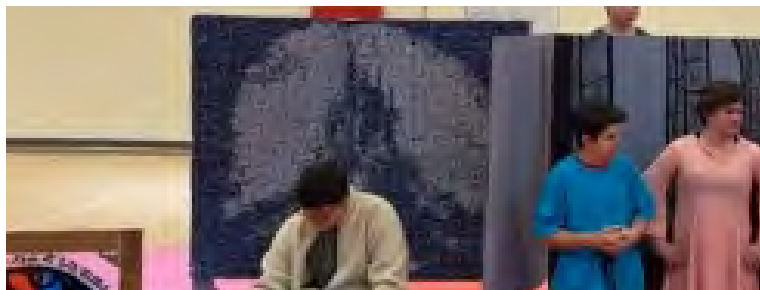


## STYLE:

### 5 ITEMS IN EVERY PROBLEM

1. Mandatory Style- Required by Problem
2. Mandatory Style- Required by Problem
3. Free choice of team
4. Free choice of team
5. Overall Effect (1\*2\*3\*4)

Style is an added element that enhances the presentation of the solution. The Style portion of the competition gives teams an opportunity to further showcase their talents and creative skills, emphasize their interests, and elaborate on their Long-Term Problem solution. Each problem has its own required Style elements, as well as Free Choice Style categories that are determined by the team. These provide incentive for creativity in different areas because teams can choose the elements *they* want to include and have scored. Style score is in addition to the Long-Term Problem score.



2020- A Division III team used dice and it's various sides for a "shading" effect to create their castle backdrop.

**Mandatory Style categories:** Usually each problem will include one or two mandatory Style categories. These are categories that are scored in every team's solution for that problem. However, a different element, or a different aspect of that element, may be scored from team to team.

**Free choice categories** should be what the team feels to be the most creative aspects of its problem solution. The team must be careful to list on its Style Form exactly what it wants scored. For example, the team may choose a hat on a specific character or use of materials in the hat.

## SPONTANEOUS:

Three Types:

1. Verbal
2. Hands-On
3. Verbal/Hands-On Combination

In competition, every team solves a spontaneous problem. This part of the competition is called "Spontaneous" because teams don't know what they'll have to do until they enter the competition room. Solving spontaneous problems teaches students to "think on their feet."

The nature of the spontaneous problems vary, with each having its own set of specific rules that are read to the team in the competition room. Teams will have to solve only one type of spontaneous problem in a competition. Teams that compete in a technical long-term problem may have to solve a verbal spontaneous problem and vice versa.

**Verbal** Spontaneous problems require verbal responses. They may incorporate improvisation or dramatization. Teams are scored for common and creative responses.

**Hands-on** Spontaneous problems require teams to physically create a tangible solution. Each hands-on problem has its own specific scoring categories.

**Verbal/hands-on combination** spontaneous problems require teams to create a tangible solution and include some type of verbal component, for example, creating a story about the engineered solution. Teams are scored for both the tangible solution and the verbal presentation.



A Division II team, at World Finals, receiving well wishes from the Spontaneous Officials outside of the Spontaneous Competition Site.

### Odyssey Academy Videos (YouTube)



Lesson 3:  
The Long-Term  
Problems



Lesson 6:  
Focus &  
Style



Lesson 10:  
Spontaneous

### General Links



The Program  
Guide



Our  
Problems



Spontaneous  
Practice Problem  
Booklet

# Notes From a Former Coach and International Problem Captain

Just like all children in a family are different, all OM teams are different. There is no ONE correct way to coach a team, and each team will actually guide you. Some teams will like a structured meeting – a quick Spontaneous activity, followed by a brief “catch up on where we are”, followed by a work period etc. Others will come running in and need to share an idea, then go giggle in the corner about something. You must understand how structured the team wants their meetings to be.

OM should be FUN for everyone – but how does a coach help make this happen? One way is snacks! No matter what time of day it is, a team will be ready for a snack or two. An empty stomach isn't the best way to start a brainstorming session or a building session. As the coach, make sure your first preparatory task is to stock up on snacks and drinks.

Sometimes this part of coaching is overlooked, but you must remember that a huge part of coaching is

your attitude. Be kind, be motivational, be optimistic, be caring, be the non-judgmental voice in the room when needed, and be in control of your “take charge”

mentality. You, as the coach, do NOT need to know how to solve the problem. The team will choose the problem it wants to solve, and it will determine the solution to the problem and who is going to do what to create that solution. Your team can do it. If at any point the solution fails, be the cheerleader that helps the team regroup and try again. The kids are always watching, and they'll see how you respond to situations that arise.

Just as no two teams work the same way, no two coaches will coach the same way. No matter how you coach your team, it is your job as the coach is to be the “guide on the side” not “the sage on the stage.” Remember

to have fun, be present, be the cheerleader when the team needs it, and help them work together to achieve their team goals.



*Joy Kurtz, former coach and  
Spontaneous International Problem Captain.*

## Helpful tips for a coach:

- While you should record the timeline and tasks for the team, the team should ALSO keep track of their timeline and tasks. Each meeting, have them check where they are on the timeline they keep and compare it to yours. Is there an area that they have missed? Ask THEM how to better stay on track etc.
- Find a safe place where teams can store materials, props, etc., from meeting to meeting.
- If team members are taking items home, have the team keep a list of which team member is taking and doing what.
- Help the team stay organized. Ask them how they are staying organized. Be mindful that most teams will seem disorganized for the first few weeks. Also, remember that their organizational systems may not be the same as yours, and that is OK!
- Asking questions is the BEST way to support your team. These questions should be NON-JUDGMENTAL. How did you think of that? What else might work? Is there anywhere you can go to see an example?
- Allow members of the team to ask questions and respond, as well. Remember, even if a team member doesn't know how to build a bridge, that team member may have a great question about why the bridge is so high/low, or brainstorm what it could be made of.
- If you see the team becoming unfocused or falling behind schedule, don't fret. Have the team regroup and determine how they, as a team, can get all the tasks done. If they are all determined to make costumes, and you think they need to work on their set, remind them to look at the list of what remains to be done (part of the timeline they made) and see if they think everyone working on costumes is their best use of time? You, as the coach, will not assign roles. Assigning roles is the team's job.
- Have FAITH in your team. They got together, they are here, and they are doing this in their own way. If the team has tried its best, and they get to competition – you have succeeded, and they will have learned a lot.



# Spontaneous Suggestions from the Former Spontaneous International Problem Captain

It is important to practice many different types of Spontaneous Problems, as the problems and problem procedures change for every competition, which means your team will not solve the same problem twice! That's why it's called "Spontaneous." To help your team better prepare for the unknown, you should encourage your team to participate in some sort of Spontaneous activity during each meeting. Whether the team solves a published Spontaneous Problem or an "off-the-cuff" Spontaneous activity, any practice will help them during competition.

If you're looking for published spontaneous problems, practice problems can be found in the Members Area. If your team wants more spontaneous problems, Odyssey of the Mind Headquarters has a few published books filled with Spontaneous Problems available for purchase in the Odyssey Shop. While official spontaneous problems are fun to solve, spontaneous practice doesn't need to come from an official problem. Spontaneous activities can be put into each session easily; the only thing you need to do is present a few random items to the team and ask a question or tell the team to build something out of those random items.

Coaches should try to do one "official" type problem (either verbal, verbal/hands-on, or hands on at each meeting.) However, using brainstorming and less formal type problems are a good way to both prepare the team to think spontaneously, and also help teams think of solutions to incorporate in their Long-Term Problem. This is a way of using questioning techniques without providing Outside Assistance.

## Verbal Activities:

1. use brainstorming technique and record all answers
2. Make team members go around in a circle...one team member is stuck, team is stuck.
3. Make team members go around but use a "Free Pass" card.
4. On a 7-member team, have 4 respond and 3 "judge" then switch - let kids get used to listening to each other and scoring the best answers. Now do this and time the team. Start with 2 minutes and work up to four, five, etc.

## Sample Questions

1. How can you make a room that has lights on, which can't be turned off, look like it's nighttime?
2. What are different ways to scare people?
3. What makes people sad/happy etc.
4. What are all the things that turn?
5. Name two ways you can totally change the look of a costume?

Relate the questions to the Long-Term Problem they are solving or what they are trying to figure out. For example, if the problem is about going to sea you can ask:

1. What would you bring on your voyage?
2. What seas do you know? What do you know about them?
3. How do you make something look like it's moving? Standing still?

## Hands-On Activities:

Give the team a few objects in the room and have them manipulate them. NO RULES other than they can only use those objects.

Example: If there's a trash can in the room, find a few balls (tennis, ping pong), and give the team a piece of paper, a pencil, a paper cup and tell them to figure out a way to get the balls into the trash can from behind a line. These are not officially written Spontaneous problems. Instead, you are giving them a chance to practice skills they might need.

Another example, give each team member a piece of paper, a pencil, a crayon and pair of scissors. Tell them to make something. (They could incorporate the crayon, color on the paper, tear/cut the paper etc. ) Each team member works on his own and then they compare.

Let the team discuss what was clever, and encourage the team to use this kind of thinking when solving their Long-Term Problem.

**As the weeks go by, have the team members come up with their own Spontaneous Activities!**

# WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

## TEAM GOALS:


## COACH GOALS:


# TEAM GOAL AND ACTIVITY TRACKER:

PHASE	DATE	OBJECTIVES & GOALS	ACTIVITY



# Phase 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEET & BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Meet the team
- Do an icebreaker to get to know each other.
- Learn each other's strengths and interests.
- Make sure to collect contact information
- Write up a team contract to sign discussing commitment
- Determine a meeting schedule
- Select a Long-Term Problem (if not already assigned)

The fun part: the first learning moment for the team with respect to the Long-Term Problem and future life skills/success has to do with the technique called "Begin With the End in Mind." As the team reviews the Long-Term Problem(s) together and they've read through the Introduction and the Limitations (sections A and B), ideas may start entering the conversation. Encourage the team to explore those ideas and how they could be a potential solution. When they've discussed turning those ideas into potential solutions, they should reference the scoring rubric to determine where each scored element can be addressed. "Beginning With the End in Mind" gives the team the opportunity to brainstorm solution ideas and figure out how to maximize points in competition if that is their goal.

No matter if the goal is to get the most points in competition or to successfully solve a Long-Term Problem, the team should pay close attention to the Limitations and Scoring sections. Both offer detailed



*A Division I team poses with Dr. Sam with their first place medals at World Finals at Iowa State University.*

lists of things that are required and offer a guide on what the team can and cannot include in their solution. Together, these detailed lists will inspire more ideas for the team to discuss as potential solutions or ideas to enhance portions of the solution. Limitations or constraints may seem like a road-block when it comes to inspiring creativity, but the reality is the most creative ideas come from situations with defined parameters.

### PRO TIPS:

- As the coach, you cannot tell the team how to solve the problem, but you can ask questions. Get comfortable with asking questions like, "How will this connect with that?" and, "How does this answer that?"
- Your team may argue as they get to know each other. It is the job as the coach to help them work through their struggles. For reference, read the "Keeping the Peace" article on page 13.

**Homework:** Encourage team members to re-read the Long-Term Problem again on their own and to come with some ideas for solutions for the next phase where the topic will be brainstorming.

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 1:  
What is OM?

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 3:  
The Long-Term  
Problem

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice



## Notes:

Note taking suggestions:

- Take note of team member's interests, and how they want to contribute to the solution.

\*More note space on pages 26-29

# Phase 2

## BRAINSTORMING & STYLE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous activity team-building
- What is creativity?
- Long-Term solution brainstorming
- Remember to have fun!

You've probably heard the saying, "No idea is a bad idea." However, there is a way to run a brainstorming meeting that is more effective than many realize. First, introduce the team to the Long-Term Problem, encourage them to spend time individually developing solutions, then bring them together to share, making sure everyone gets even time. Then — here's the surprise one — send people away to let the ideas stew for a bit for an incubation period, before pulling the group together to settle upon an idea.

As the team begins brainstorming for its Long-Term Problem solution, it is also important to initiate a discussion about the type of Style it wants to integrate into its solution; refer to page 3 for the definition of Style.. Always remember that anything already being scored in the Long-Term Problem cannot be re-listed as a Style item. In other words, you cannot ask to be scored twice for the same thing. This can get tricky because "the creativity of

a costume," so if the latter is scored in the Long-Term Problem, the former could be selected as a Style category. But, keep in mind, if it is hard for you to make the distinction, it will be even harder for a judge who is unfamiliar with your solution. The best advice is to make Style stand out on its own so no overlap occurs in scoring.

### PRO TIPS:

- How can we get more creative? This is also a good opportunity to teach students about the actual definition of creativity. In Odyssey of the Mind, a creative idea is one that is: 1) original, 2) unique, 3) useful, and 4) effective. As the coach, you can ask your team if their ideas check all of these boxes.
- Keep asking questions and mediate when needed. Your team will have moments where they argue which idea is better, encourage them to work through their disagreements and find a common ground. This is a learning experience.
- You may want to end your meeting by engaging the team in a Spontaneous activity. Choose a Spontaneous activity that is relevant to what they are doing now. For example, if they are solving the vehicle problem, find a Spontaneous that is related to the automotive world.

### Homework:

- Nothing has been set in stone yet; ideas are brewing. Encourage team members to incubate all ideas presented today, including Style proposals, and come back in Phase 3 with a master plan for a solution. Remember, the focus varies by problem:
  - Vehicle teams should be dreaming up vehicle ideas
  - Structure teams: balsa designs
  - Classical teams: performances

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 4:  
Creativity &  
Brainstorming

Odyssey  
Academy

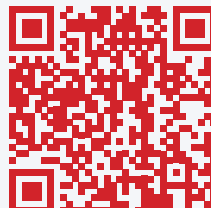


Lesson 5:  
How to Solve a  
Long-Term Problem

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice





## Notes:



Note taking suggestions:

- Write down the team's ideas.
- Take note of pro and con comments
- Which Spontaneous Problem did the team and what were the responses?
- What is each team member working on?

# Phase 3

## NARROWING DOWN & STYLE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
  - Verbal
  - Verbal-hands on
- Final ideas: solution direction
- Vehicle, Technical, and Structure teams start research and/or prototypes based on final ideas
- Style

Wow! We're heading into Phase 3 already?! Yep! That means it's time to start narrowing down our problem solution. Gotta keep the team moving if we want to make sure all the work gets finished on time for competition.

The goal of Phase 3 is to have the team present their foundation ideas for group discussion and consideration. Note: this is not the final product — the foundation ideas are what the team can begin to build their solution upon, it is the direction the team intends to take. Now is a great time to remind the team what matters most: the scoring rubric. As teams present their solution proposals, it is worth asking them, "Does the solution address the scoring elements?" Then, ask teams to explain, in detail, how their solution maximizes the number of points

possible within the problem. As a coach, it is within your job description to ask the team whether their solution is as creative and score-focused as it can be. Remember, some requirements are scored objectively, meaning it receives a set amount of score if it is presented or not (0 or 5). Some are subjectively scored, meaning there is a set range of scores (2-10) awarded as determined by the judges and are based off creativity, effectiveness, and more as listed in section D.

Talk about Style. This is the team's unique flair or twist that will make them known as "the team that did [amazingly unforgettable Style element]." This tends to be a very fun, creative experience for teams. Encourage them to keep open minds as they propose their ideas for making a unique mark on their solution. Revisit the Style section on page three..

### PRO TIPS:

- Ultimately, it is the team's decision which solution it pursues. Still, challenging them to think about how well their solution actually solves the problem and gets the points is important.
- Are you playing attention to the timeline between now and competition? Do you need to adjust the dedicated time in each phase? Make those adjustments now.

### Homework:

This may be the most important phase for homework because teams are tasked with creating something that aligns with the agreed-upon direction for their solution.

- If a Classics team selects "Romeo and Juliet" as its inspiration, then next week, the team should see scripts, costumes, and outlines.
- If a Structure team opts for a certain type of structure, we need to see variations of those structures by the next phase or ideas for those structures by the next meeting.

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 6:  
Focus &  
Style

Odyssey  
Academy

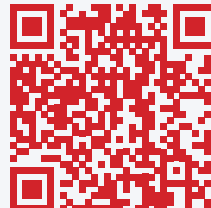


Lesson 7:  
How to Write  
a Skit

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice



## Notes:



Note taking suggestions:

- Refer to the previous week's ideas, which ideas have the potential to get the most points?
- What skills need to be learned? e.g., sewing, carpentry, welding, soldering, coding, painting techniques.
- What are the team's ideas for Style elements?

[illegible]

## NARROWING DOWN BY PROBLEM TYPE

The Narrowing Down process is similar across problem types. All teams must filter their many ideas down to just the few they believe will work best. From that narrowed-down list, one solution will emerge as the victor. However, this process varies slightly by problem.

One important lesson to instill in the students across all problems is that a joke loses its hilarity to you over time as you become super familiar with your skit, but when judges see it for the first time, the joke will be as funny to them as it was to your team the first time. Sometimes teams mistake fine tuning their solution for replacing elements that feel old. Those elements only feel old to the team because they are familiar to the team.

For Phase 3, the goal is to get the team on the same page about the direction of their solution. In Phase 4, team members will bring tangible solutions that fall within that agreed upon solution approach. The solutions brought in Phase 4 can be changed or edited — they often will be

- but the team has to move beyond thinking into doing.

Vehicle and Structure problems require testing, trial and error, and technical learning along the way. This is okay and expected. Still, the main idea still applies for Phase 3: teams need to figure out a solution to pursue so that idea can be put to the test. Technical teams will often hit snags along the way, but this is part of the learning process.

Classics and Performance teams will often run into different surprise issues as the Vehicle and Structure teams, but the same spirit of discovery and testing should be applied in these problems. Just as a Structure team may start with an original idea and tweak their structure's design over time as they learn what works and what doesn't work, so, too, can a performance-based team try new jokes or new ways of staging a scene that might be better or more creative.



# Phase 4

## IDEA SELECTION & STYLE SELECTION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
  - Hands on
- Choose “foundation idea” to run with
- Re-read the problem
  - Point focus
- Detail the problem out
  - Divide and conquer



Phase 4, the phase that will decide where the team is headed! Now is the time that the team chooses one solution to pursue and the style to integrate throughout their solution. Once this phase is completed, the team will focus on building their props, costumes, vehicles, artwork, everything! With this in mind, it's important that they work together to figure out which direction they're headed!

The process by which teams choose their solution and Style varies from team to team, and should include a conversation on: what will be the most fun, what will include skills from each member, what will get us the most points, what is the most creative, etc. This process teaches team members valuable skills when it comes to presenting your ideas, selling your ideas, and, in some instances, accepting that someone else's idea is better than yours. Also, solutions that tend to integrate the ideas from multiple team members often encourage

all team members to be involved in the process going forward. Encourage team members to think about how they will integrate one another and their respective strengths in their proposed solutions. That is important. Once the team determines the solution, then it's up to the entire team to 1) punch it up (i.e., propose improvements), 2) detail it out (what needs to be done, mock it up), and 3) divide and conquer.

### PRO TIPS:

- Have the team discuss the priority level of creation of the various solution elements.
- Have the team discuss which materials to use, the plan to get those materials, and who will be responsible for what.
- If there is a skill that the team doesn't know, how are they going to learn it? Have them decide how they want to go about learning their new skills.

**Homework:** By the next phase the group needs: 1) an updated “final” script, 2) tangible structures, vehicles, or technical devices (for those problems) for testing, 3) a list of materials to bring to create items needed for the solution, and 4) a detailed schedule outlining which team member is creating what and by when. It's time to start creating.

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 5:  
Solving your  
Long-Term Problem

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 7:  
How to Write  
a Skit

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice



## Notes:



Note taking suggestions:

- What skills need to be learned? e.g. sewing, carpentry, welding, soldering, coding, painting techniques.

- What are the team's Style elements?

\*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space

[illegible]

## KEEPING THE PEACE

Odyssey of the Mind tends to attract a certain type of student: intelligent, successful, and capable of seeing an idea through from idea generation to execution. But, as we know, in the real world, our vision isn't always realized. Selecting a solution to pursue can be tough, particularly for younger OMers who may not have experienced idea rejection. Still, this is an important part of the learning within Odyssey of the Mind. To help make that learning happen as gracefully as possible, here are a few tips:

## FOCUS ON SCORING

Since the team will be judged on how well its solution meets the scoring requirements, the team should ultimately select the one solution that best addresses these scored components. Keeping that in mind, solution selection is not personal, it's practical. A team cannot win if its solution does not address the scored elements. Remind team members idea selection is not based on any team member's intelligence or creativity. The idea gets selected based on how well it achieves the scoring objective relative to the other ideas proposed.

SPARKING NEW IDEAS IN EACH OTHER

Team members have their own interests, strengths, and talents. Let each team member play to their strengths. Encourage the team to listen to one another because something someone else says or suggests may spark a new idea in you, which is an important part of the Odyssey team experience.

## IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

Although the central theme for the solution may stem from one team member's idea, the entire team owns the solution. Each solution has multiple components, and it is expected that every team member will contribute to making that selected solution the best it can be. Odyssey is a team sport. Sometimes you carry the team, other times you are carried by the team, but at all times the team is in this together.

WE ARE ONE TEAM – TOGETHER

Keeping the team spirit alive and at the forefront is important in Odyssey. It takes everyone doing what they can and putting their best effort forward to help the team be successful. Odyssey is a team sport.

# Phase 5

## CREATING THE CONCEPT & CASTING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
  - Verbal
  - Verbal-hands on
- Create
- Build
- Assign roles
- Re-read problem
- Team build - Have FUN!

And we're off! At this point, the team should be building its props, backdrops, and other elements required to solve its problem. A few things, like the membership sign, are required of all teams. This information can be found in the Program Guide. Everything else that is required of the team is listed in the problem itself. Encourage the team to reread the problem over (and over and over) again as they work through ideas.

Creating the Context is the process of finishing all the pieces necessary to bring the solution to life. BUT — and this is a big but — keep in mind that creative does not necessarily mean the largest, the flashiest, or the sleekest. The team should be able to convey every aspect of their solution with their props and costumes but that doesn't mean that it must be without flaws. Build quality and the prop's effectiveness aren't necessarily the same. Something can work and the team can be proud of it, without

it looking professional. Skill levels vary by team and here is where most teams and coaches need a reality check: sometimes props look like they were made by second graders because they were made by second graders. Overall, the team should strive to build and create the best props, costumes, and sets they can and they should be proud of what they produce. Also, don't forget about the "creative use of materials" part of building the solution! Encourage teams to think Beyond the Box™ with respect to how they can deliver what the problem asks them to deliver in a novel, innovative way.

This is a good time to assign roles for presentation. Who will be the actors? Who will operate the vehicle or crush the structure? Who will do the backstage work? The team decides who fills which role, but as the coach, encourage the team to remember that they are a team and everyone can help in their own way.

### PRO TIPS:

- If you see your team struggling to put together their props and costumes, help them communicate what they are trying to achieve. Ask them "what are you trying to accomplish with this and how else can you get it to look like that?"
- Encourage your team to think of ways to use ordinary materials in unexpected ways.
- This is a good time to revisit where the points are and how (and on what) the team will be judged.

**Homework:** Encourage team members to re-read the Long-Term Problem again on their own. Memorize lines. Finish the list of items to be built/created per the team's agreed-upon timeline.

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 6:  
Focus &  
Style

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 8:  
Building Your  
Solution

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice





## Notes:



Note taking suggestions:

- Take note of who will play each role in the solution. Allow the team members to volunteer for the roles.
- Note how the building process is going. Is the team learning to work and build together?
- Does the solution still solve the problem?

\*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space

# Phase 6

## CREATING THE CONTEXT & EDITING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
  - Verbal
  - Verbal-hands on
  - Hands-on
- Completion of tasks
- Refine
- Evaluate and edit

Okay, coach. Competition day is getting closer, how is the team doing? Are they a little behind schedule? Are you realizing that you have no way of knowing either thing?

Relax. Every coach feels the same way! However, this is the point where everything should be coming together, and the team's focus should be on completing and perfecting their solution. Sometimes, a team may bring more ideas or shift gears to another idea altogether.

While the team continues to finish building all its props, sets, and backdrops, your job as coach is to make sure they don't get off track and start chasing shiny objects. This is particularly important when teams start thinking their work isn't as funny, isn't as cool, isn't as [fill in the blank] as they originally thought it would be.

Another skill to teach in Phase 6 is the importance of editing. Teams should have their performance down to 8 minutes with a little wiggle room to spare to avoid being forced to stop or receiving an overtime penalty. Depending on how complicated the solution is, the team should decide how much time to allow for those "uh-oh" moments that may happen. Sometimes the mechanics and logistics of a solution can be perfect and go off without a hitch in practice but can malfunction during competition.

Something else to consider with editing down the performance: nerves. Nerves can do many things; they can make us talk faster, they make us jittery, and they can make us forget things. Every team experiences some level of nervousness. The question is how will the team handle anything that goes wrong while they are feeling the pressure of performing at competition?

### PRO TIP:

- One of the challenges of working with the same solution over a period of weeks is that teams grow tired of their own ideas. Remind them that those ideas will still be fresh to the judges when they see it the first time and to keep focus.
- Have the team come up with a "regroup" moment in case something goes wrong at competition. .

**Homework:** This is it. The next phase will start a series of meetings where the team runs their solution over and over again, which means that everything the team needs—costumes, props, technical devices, the membership sign, etc.—must be finished and ready to go for the next phase. As such, the group's homework is to finish any of these tasks that are still not finished otherwise they won't be ready to start the run of rehearsals that begins in Phase 7.

### Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 6:  
Focus &  
Style

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 9:  
Tweaking for  
Improvement

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice



## Notes:

Note taking suggestions:

- Note how the building process is going. What needs the most attention?
  - Note any changes to the solution.
  - Does the team need to regroup and refocus?
- \*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space

[illegible]

## TESTING AND TUNING

By this stage, Vehicle, Technical, and Structure teams should be testing components like the vehicle(s), the technical item(s), and the structure(s), respectively. Once the team starts finding success with these components, encourage them to figure out if they can make them better. Challenge them to think about tweaks to their design that would make it more creative (remember: more original, more unique, more useful, and more effective).

Unfortunately, the reality is that devices may not function as designed during competition. Cars go off course, balsa structures shrink and expand depending on the humidity. Some of these factors can be accounted for with really clever solutions, but some things (like the weather) are out of the team's control. Your goal as a coach is to make sure the team continues refining these solutions until it gets to a point where it is satisfied with the solution's ability to attain maximum points while also working effectively. Calculated risk-taking is good, but a device that doesn't work or a clever structure that doesn't hold weight isn't going to score well at the competition.

If you are coaching a Classical or Performance team, don't think that their solution is free from improvement — or testing and tuning. Quite the opposite: performance-based teams should try new jokes, new dances, new staging, new blocking movements, and more. While you, as a coach, cannot tell the team what is or is not funny or what music is or is not good, the team can perform for parents or friends and get organic feedback from laughs and general audience reaction. This is the same technique employed by comedy clubs and stand-up comedians. As long as the audience isn't suggesting what teams should do, this is okay!

Part of Odyssey of the Mind involves encouraging teams to see their solution as an evolving work in progress that can be enhanced. At some point, the team will commit to the final version for competition, but until then, encourage them to challenge themselves to be even better than they already are. This keeps things interesting.

# Phase 7

## REVIEW SCORING & REHEARSAL

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
- Verbal
- Verbal-hands on
- Hands-on
- Fine-tune
- Run throughs
- Last touches on Style elements
- Re-visit problem scoring elements

### Homework:

- Encourage team members to reread the problem again on their own to make sure all elements have been met
- Complete final touch-ups
- Get final repairs ready for Phase 8
- Start a rough draft of all paperwork for all team members (and coaches!)
- Fine-tuning

All right, we're in the final stretch now! The end is in sight! Phase 7 brings an exciting time where the team should expect to run their solution as many times as possible during each rehearsal. The team should look at a printed copy of their scoring rubric and may even want to consider scoring themselves on their Long-Term solution and Style. This will help the team improve on all ideas in this final phase.

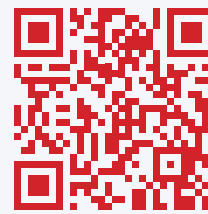
**PRO TIP:** record the performance for the team to review.

### Resources:

Program  
Guide



Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 11:  
Practice, Practice  
Practice

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 9:  
Tweaking for  
Improvement

## Notes:



### Note taking suggestions:

- Has the team decided on any changes or tweaks? Take note of them.
  - Have you looked at the required paperwork?
- \*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space

## PAPERWORK & REHEARSING

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- Spontaneous
- Verbal
- Verbal-hands on
- Hands-on
- Rehearse
- Last touches
- Paperwork

Each Long-Term Problem tells teams 1) the specific paperwork they need to have ready on the day of competition, and 2) the number of copies of each form they need at each level of competition. Teams must complete their own paperwork. The only exception are Division I teams: the coach can help the team physically write or type the answers, but the wording has to come directly from the team members. For specific information on how to do the paperwork, refer to the Program Guide.

**PRO TIP:** Prepare several copies of the paperwork (at least two more than required by the problem)!



Homework:

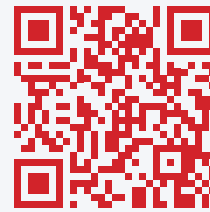
- Encourage team members to have fun with performing
- Paperwork completed
- Plan for competition travel and day
- Final touches

## Resources:

## Member Resources



Odyssey Academy



## Lesson 11: Practice, Practice Practice

Odyssey  
Academy



## Lesson 12: The Paperwork

## Notes:

[illegible]

Note taking suggestions:

- Have you met with the parents? Is there a plan to go to competition and how the props will be transported to the competition site?

\*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space




## FINE TUNING & REHEARSING

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

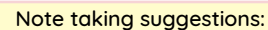
- Spontaneous
  - Verbal
  - Verbal-hands on
  - Hands-on
- Run throughs
- Final last-minute adjustments
- Final paperwork adjustments

Homework:

- Encourage team members
- They are READY!
- Pack that repair kit.



## Notes:

[illegible]

- Is the paperwork accurate?
- What needs to go in the repair kit?

\*Go to pages 26-29 for more note space

# Phase 10

## FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Watch it come together!
- Don't panic when nothing works perfectly... it's completely normal before tournament.

This is the calm before the storm. This is the last phase, meaning competition day is just about here. Soon, your team will be performing its solution in front of a panel of judges and heading into the Spontaneous competition!

There's one final thing we have not yet discussed: the judge questions.

First, don't panic: judge questions are informal. After the team is finished performing and receives applause, the judges will approach the team and ask them questions about their solution. The questions vary from team to team but all serve one very simple purpose: to help the judges better understand the team's creative process, the insight behind it, and the technical workings of the solution's many parts. Coaches are not part of this discussion; this is an opportunity for the judges get to know the team and understand the finer details of their solution.

The truth about the judges' questions is that we don't know what they will ask the team, we just know that there is a possibility that every part of the solution can be brought into question. The judges know what they are looking for. It is the team's job to accurately answer questions and highlight each element of their

#### Homework:

- Pack Up
- Double check that all is packed
- Double check repair supplies and kit



solution. Each member should be a pro at answering questions about the role they played and the portion they were responsible for creating. For example, the team members that built the balsa structure should be the ones answering questions about how they built it, and the team members who created the backdrop and other props should be the ones answering questions about those parts.

Okay, coach. You've made it this far, now it's time to check in and pay attention to how the team is feeling. Keeping the team in positive spirits is important at this point. Remind them of how much they've accomplished in the short time they've worked together. Remind them of what they've learned. You've watched them brainstorm and practice and build their solution, highlight the "AHA!" moments you've witnessed along the way.

One final thing to remember: competition can be stressful. The team is nervous, parents are parents, devices are unpredictable, and other teams also have wonderfully creative solutions and props. No matter the outcome at competition, the team should be proud of themselves.

**PRO TIP:** Some members may need a quiet room or a moment to collect themselves before and after competition. Find a place that allows them to do that. Don't be afraid to ask the Tournament Officials if they know of a quiet place to use if you are unfamiliar with the venue.

## Packing Up

By now the team likely knows its solution well. Still, it might be worth encouraging the team to create a Packing Up list so that they remember everything they need to bring in the excitement and nervousness that surrounds the week before competition. In addition to all the items essential to the team's Long-Term Problem solution, it is important that the team remembers to bring several completed copies of its paperwork for the judges. Everything should be packed in a safe, secure way to ensure that nothing breaks or gets lost in transit from the team's practice area to the

competition site. If materials need to be removed from the "home-base" prior to competition, make sure the plans have been made.

On the morning of competition, get everything out and find a safe spot for it in the host school (there are usually signs posted for this) where the team can check the status of all its props and backdrops. Be sure never to leave these items unattended, and remind parents they cannot fix anything or prep anything for the team. Parents can help carry items to and fro, but anything more could count as Outside Assistance that would result in a penalty.

# Going to Competition

In most situations, teams first compete at the regional level. Those who place at this level advance to Association Finals at the state/province/country level, according to qualification criteria set by the individual association. Teams that place here are eligible to compete in the annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

Teams in areas that do not provide official competitions before World Finals may apply to go directly to World Finals and are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. These teams must apply to CCI by April 1 of the program year to be eligible. They may also be allowed to participate in a neighboring state's official competitions, with champions being selected from each state represented. If the team wishes to do this, they must contact the Association Director of the neighboring state to learn the details. Contact your Tournament Director for specifics regarding the competition. In most cases you will be emailed this information after you register or qualify.

## On Competition Day for Traditional Tournaments

Teams may be required to register at a central location upon arrival. They are given a scheduled time to compete in Long-Term and in Spontaneous. Sometimes these are on different days, but often they're on the same day with sufficient time in between.

Teams should report to the area for their problem and division 15 minutes before they are scheduled to compete. A judge will then direct them to wait in the Check-In Area. Anyone may help the team move props there and to the Staging Area. When the competition has ended others may help the team remove items and clear the site. Parents and others should remember that if they carry an item for the team and it breaks, only the team may repair the item. Teams are welcome to look at the competition site before this but are not allowed to rehearse on site on competition day.

Either in the Check-In Area or the Staging Area,

depending on the competition site, a judge collects the team's paperwork, and checks for footwear and other requirements of the problem. The team remains here with all its props and materials until the Timekeeper gives the signal to begin.

## Checklist for Competing in Long-Term

In competition, each team must provide the following items for its long-term solution along with any forms required by the local competition's Tournament Director. The team members must fill out all of their forms on their own with the exception of Division I, where the coach may write for the team but the team members must dictate what is to be written. Teams should keep an extra copy of all their forms. Most of the following items will be examined and/or collected by the Staging Area Judge:

- Four completed copies of the Style Form.
- Four completed copies of the Team List Form (if required in the problem).
- One completed Cost Form.
- One completed Outside Assistance Form.
- One membership sign.
- Problem clarifications specific to the team's solution.
- All props, costumes, etc. necessary to complete the problem solution, except those listed in the problem under "Tournament Director Will Provide."
- Any items listed in the problem under "Team Must Provide."



## Resources:

Odyssey  
Academy



Lesson 13:  
How to Compete

Odyssey  
Academy

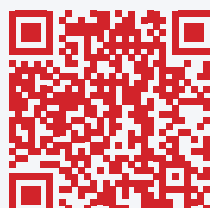


Lesson 14:  
Understanding  
Judge Scores

Program  
Guide



Member  
Resources



Spontaneous  
Practice





# World Finals



For more than 40 years, World Finals has been the culmination of a year's worth of hard work for the millions of students across the world who have participated in Odyssey of the Mind. Held in late May, World Finals is a multi-day event where over 750 teams, as well as their coaches, parents, family, and friends to come and enjoy five days of creative craziness! With over 15,000 people in attendance, World Finals is truly a special event.

At its core, World Finals is a competition: teams will compete in their Long-Term Problem and age division and Volunteer judges from all over the world score the teams, and the teams with the highest overall score become the world champions!

But, aside from the competition, World Finals is just a LOT of fun. With various activities running all week on campus, the annual Creativity Festival taking place, various special events like the International Festival and Odyssey Graduation, a Coaches' Competition where coaches finally

get to solve their own problem! There is always more to do than time allows. The best part is seeing parents and their children celebrating the latter's hard work and intellectual accomplishment in a fun, supportive way, not to mention all the friendships being made with new friends from all over the world. It may be a competition, yes, but more than anything World Finals shows the true spirit of Odyssey: teamwork, collaboration, solutions, positivity, and family.

Just like at the region or state level, teams will receive a Long-Term solution time and a Spontaneous solution time (sometimes on different days) that will take place between Thursday and Saturday. Otherwise, it is up to the team and you, the coach, what to do with your time. Pin trading, swimming, socializing, practicing, exploring the host university campus. Watching solutions at World Finals can be mesmerizing and inspiring. The students in this program are incredible and dream up such amazing solutions that you can't help but have hope!



## Fundraising

Fundraising should be happening throughout the season- not just during competition months. While some schools or institutions may be willing to pay the team's travel or tournament fees, many team's must raise money on their own. It is important that your team begins fundraising as early as possible.

There are many ways that a team can raise funds for the Odyssey Season. Here are some ideas that have worked for other teams, but make sure you have cleared these ideas with your school or the community group that you are representing:

- Sell bottled water or juice after school for students staying for an activity.
- Present your team's solution at a civic club or church and ask for donations.
- Sponsor a spaghetti supper (have students throughout the school bring in ingredients), and for entertainment have the team perform its long-term solution.
- For a fee team members can paint faces at the school's field day.
- Have a "Not Me" day. Have an ugly shirt, hat or sweater to put on someone. If you get it you must wear it until you put a dollar (or more) into a jar and

give it to someone else. Your team can creatively "up the ante" by thinking of a more unique, and less pleasant item as long as it is approved by your school.

- Sponsor a school dance and/or school fashion show and sell concessions.
- Host a dinner for the community.

Your team can also raise money in your neighborhood:

- Get the word out in the community. Start a Go Fund Me or similar account. The more publicity you can get – newspaper, TV, radio, etc., the more people will support the team. Then if you have a fundraiser, such as a barbecue at a local Fire Station, people will be more likely to support it.
- Write letters to local businesses asking for support. Use information about how Odyssey of the Mind fits into the corporate workplace to help businesses understand how they can benefit from sponsorship. If a team member or relative of a team member knows someone in the business, have that person sign the letter or write a personal letter to accompany the form letter.
- Get permission and sell cookies and soft drinks at a popular store on a Saturday.



Use the extra note pages  
as extended note sections  
for your meetings.  
A lot of ideas come from  
brainstorming, you'll need  
all the note space!









