

PES PTO Sponsored

# Odyssey of the Mind

*The international creative problem-solving competition for teams!*

## *What is Odyssey of the Mind?*

It's a cross between a drama festival and science fair where Creativity is King! It's an international program for children in kindergarten through college designed to keep kids thinking "**OUTSIDE OF THE BOX**"!

In a team of 5 to 7 members, students work together to select, and then solve, 1 of 5 pre-determined, competitive problems – in the most **UNIQUE** way they can.

Each year there is a vehicle problem that has teams building a large or small vehicle that must perform required tasks. Another offering is a structure problem that uses only balsa wood and glue to support as much weight as possible. There are three performance-based problems: one problem will have technical requirements, another is a creative twist on a classic piece of literature, and the last is a humorous performance with surprising quirks.

Teams work together from October through March to create every aspect of their unique solution. In March, teams from across the state meet at the Connecticut Odyssey of the Mind State Competition. Teams that place first or second in their division and problem category are then invited to attend the World Finals Competition in May! Over 8,000 kids and coaches from around the US and the world gather to show off their creativity! *Over 25 countries participate in the program.* Over 100 schools participate throughout Connecticut!

**PES TEAMS HAVE QUALIFIED TO ATTEND WORLD FINALS IN 2007, 2008 & 2009!**

## *What makes Odyssey of the Mind different?*

The OM problem is solved entirely by the kids—**every idea, design and prop must be created, produced and tested by the team.** Adult coaches serve merely to stimulate the thought process without influencing the team's thinking. (Adults can't DO anything!)

## *Who does well in OM?*

Just about everyone! Team members should have a desire to cooperate and work well with others in the group. **THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS IN ODYSSEY OF THE MIND, ONLY CREATIVE ONES!** OM is a team-oriented, **CREATIVE** problem solving activity; each person is encouraged to share their knowledge and learn from each other.

### ***How much time do Students and Coaches need to devote to OM?***

Each team will create it's own schedule. Generally, teams meet once a week and often expand to twice a week as the competition day gets closer. **Teams determine their own meeting day, time and place.** Because there are at most only 7 members, each person's participation is essential to the team's success; therefore it is important to attend the majority of meetings barring unforeseen circumstances.

### ***Who will be on my team?***

The teams are made up of students from PES and grouped by Grade Level whenever possible. *Students are encouraged to create their own team or partial team!* You can indicate on the Reservation Form if you want to be placed with a particular coach or group of students. Existing teams may not have openings as many teams stay together year after year. **New teams are formed on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to students whose parent (or other adult) has agreed to coach the team.**

### ***When do I sign up for OM?***

Formal sign up sheets are sent home with students in Mid-September, but *kids are encouraged to form their own team or partial team earlier.* The new problems for each year are posted in August on the OM website: [www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com). Sign up information is located at the bottom of this notice. **Registration Ends October 2<sup>nd</sup>!**

### ***How do students benefit from participating in OM?***

- Learn 'real world skills' of working with group dynamics.
- Learn to respect the ideas of others and work together as a team.
- Through trial-and-error, the creative-thinking process is actively encouraged and developed as a problem-solving tool.
- Students gain greater self-confidence and increased self-esteem along the way!

**For additional Information on Odyssey of the Mind, please go to:**  
**[www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com)** or the Connecticut OM site: **[www.ctom.org](http://www.ctom.org)**

**Every year students are turned away from the program because we do not have enough adult coaches for the teams! Please consider being a Coach or Co-Coach!**

**COACHES ARE NEEDED FOR THE TEAMS TO BE FORMED!**

***What does the Coach do?***

Odyssey is a “hands-on” activity for kids and “hands-off” for adults. The coach:

- offers guidance, encouragement, and teaches team members how to be open to new ideas, respect and listen to others, and evaluate solutions effectively.
- handles logistics like scheduling meetings, filling out paperwork, getting the team to competition, etc.
- gathers items for practicing **SPONTANEOUS** problems at each week’s meeting. (I.e. paper clips, toothpicks, ruler, paper, string, and plastic cups...now, build a bridge!!!) There are many internet sites that list problems the coach can copy and use.

***How many coaches are needed per team?***

Two Coaches are ideal, but not essential. Just as with the students, the coaches draw on each other’s strengths.

***What qualifications are needed to be a coach?***

None! (But, enthusiasm and patience are a plus!) Any adult can be a coach; teachers, parents, grandparents, etc! A ½ day training session for new coaches is offered in the fall by the Connecticut chapter of OM (CTOM). Coaches are given a copy of the official program guide and other resources. In addition, experienced coaches from RMS and PES are available through out the year to offer guidance. There will be a Coach the Coach workshop at the beginning of October to help all new coaches feel comfortable in their role and introduce them to the large amount of resources available on the Internet.

***How much time does it take to be a coach?***

Generally the coach will spend about ½ hour or less before each meeting gathering miscellaneous items for the spontaneous practice. Meeting times, location and length of meetings are determined by the team and coach.

## *What are the Problems for this year?*

### **Problem 1: Nature Trail'R**

This problem requires teams to design, build and drive a human-powered vehicle and camper that will go on a camping trip. When the vehicle arrives at the Campground, the camper will be disconnected and the vehicle will travel on a team-created Nature Trail. On the Nature Trail, the vehicle will overcome an obstacle, clean up the environment, encounter wildlife, and undergo a repair. The performance will include a character that is in or near the camper that explains the experience as part of its role. Sponsored by NASA.



**Sponsored by NASA.**

### **Problem 2: Return to The Gift of Flight**

Teams will make and operate a series of aircraft that will complete a variety of flight plans. The flight plans include flying straight, making a target spin, traveling slowly, dropping something into a target, touching down and taking off, and a mass launch of multiple aircraft. The aircraft in the solution will be made of a variety of materials and will have a variety of power sources. The testing of the aircraft will be presented in a team-created performance that will include a character that serves as a creative "air traffic controller."

### **Problem 3: Discovered Treasures**

Teams will create and present an original performance that includes the portrayal of the discovery of two archaeological treasures. One portrayal will be a team-created version of the discovery of an actual historical treasure. The other portrayal will be the team's depiction of a modern sculpture or structure that exists today but is discovered in the future. The performance will include an artistic representation of the two discovered treasures and characters that are part of the discovery teams.

### **Problem 4: Column Structure**

The problem is to design and build balsa wood columns that will function together to balance and support as much weight as possible. The columns must not be connected to each other in any way. The team will test its Column Structure by placing weights onto it. The team will add weight until its Column Structure breaks or time ends. Bonus score will be awarded for the number of columns used. The team will incorporate the testing of its columns in an original team-created performance.

### **Problem 5: Food Court**

The problem is to create and present a humorous performance where a food item is accused of being unhealthy and must defend itself among its food peers. All characters are food items and will include "the accused," "the accuser," a jury that is not portrayed by team members, and additional team-created characters. The jury will reveal its decision to the audience.

### **Primary: Surprise Party Grades K-2 only!**

The team is to create and present a humorous performance that includes a Surprise Party for a team-created character. The theme of the party is a surprise because it is being given for something that is not normally celebrated. Partygoers will give three gifts that help symbolize the theme of the party. The performance will also include an original party "noisemaker" that makes an unusual sound instead of a loud sound.

**Registration occurs in September. The following information must be sent to the PES OM Coordinator, Marge Skinger, at [marge@skinger.net](mailto:marge@skinger.net), by calling 264-3902, or Turn this form into the School Office or Home Room by October 2, 2009.**

## Odyssey of the Mind Registration Form

**TURN THIS FORM INTO THE SCHOOL OFFICE or HOME ROOM BY OCTOBER 2, 2009. Or contact Marge Skinger at [marge@skinger.net](mailto:marge@skinger.net), or 264-3902.**

**Yes! I would like my child to participate on a PES Odyssey of the Mind team.** (If enough students apply and adults can be found to coach, a team will be formed. You will be contacted either way.)

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Birth day** \_\_\_\_\_

(for competition registration)

**Mother's Name (or Guardian)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Father's Name (or Guardian)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_

**I'm willing to be a head coach. (Remember: **No coaches = no teams**)**

**I'm willing to be an assistant coach.**

**Please contact me to discuss the possibility of coaching.**

**If possible, please place my child on the team with this coach, (optional):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**If possible, please place my child on a team with the following students. (Optional. Teams cannot exceed 7 people.)**

**List other student's name(s) here:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For more Information: [www.odysseyofthemind.org](http://www.odysseyofthemind.org) or [www.ctom.org](http://www.ctom.org)**