

## NEWCOMERS:

- If you have additional questions *AFTER* reading the below, please email me.
- See #8 for coaches training tentative dates. If you are a new coach, or have coached only once or twice, **PLEASE** come to the training!
- If you need additional info regarding teams in your area, please reply with your name, school name, school district, City, and Zip code - I will try to help make connections when possible.
- Each school site needs a coordinator. This is very minimal effort but really helps everyone - mostly distributing info that I provide, and being a cheerleader for the program. Please step up and let me know!



## *Odyssey of the Mind* Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Odyssey of the Mind?
2. What are the benefits?
3. Who may participate?
4. How are teams formed?
5. Who may coach?
6. What is the role of a coach? What is the time commitment?
7. What is the teacher's role?
8. Is there training for coaches?
9. What are the Odyssey of the Mind problems?
10. How are the teams scored at the tournaments?
11. When and where are the state and world competitions?
12. What are the costs?

1. Odyssey of the Mind (OotM) is the largest worldwide creative problem-solving competition for children from Kindergarten through college. The program begins anew with each school year, when five "problems" are delivered to the mailboxes of eagerly waiting, creatively juiced kids. OotM's mission is to foster the development of creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Importantly, OotM teaches that great minds don't necessarily think alike – and often march to different drummers; that there are no right answers; that creative solutions come from teamwork, cooperation and risk-taking.

### 2. Benefits include:

- Develop creative thinking abilities and divergent problem-solving skills.
- Increase student ability to apply known principles and facts to "hands-on" situations;
- Improve communication skills.
- Learn to plan, organize and set long-range goals.
- Learn how to use a creative problem solving process while being encouraged to take risks.

- Develop and utilize skills of all team members; gain sensitivity and experience with group dynamics.
- Develop and use local resources.
- Develop and use research skills.
- Exercise and use the higher order thinking and critical thinking skills, especially analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- Have fun while learning all of these very important skills

Learning to take risks allows the students to become more self-confident and independent thus making successes and defeats easier to place in perspective. Experiences with OotM problems prepare students to solve real-life problems using specific skills and behaviors.

3. Teams of children from kindergarten through college-age participate. All receive the same problems; however, their solutions vary – not simply because of age grouping but mostly due to the innovation and imagination of the creators.

4. There are many ways for teams to form. Often teams are formed in their classrooms; teachers can assist in assembling teams. Also, problems can be posted and students sign up for the problem they find most interesting, thus creating teams who want to solve the same problem, not necessarily classmates or friends. While most members are individual schools, home schoolers and community-based programs also participate.

5. Each team must have a coach, who may be a parent, teacher, teacher aid, administrator or other interested adult (18 or older).

6. Coaches facilitate the team's needs (meeting place, transportation, review of program rules, etc), but the students do all the work! The coach keeps the team on task, encourages them to be creative and work as a team, but does not provide assistance to the solution of the problem. More detailed guidance will be sent as part of the membership package and program guide once the national membership dues are paid. Please also see #8 below. As a coach, you will be honored and entertained while keeping your team on track. Teams tend to meet a couple of hours once every 1 or 2 weeks in the fall, then may increase the time or frequency as the tournament nears.

7. Teachers are sometimes coaches, co-coaches, campus coordinators, or simply “cheerleaders” of the program. They may donate classroom time, or just the classroom, for team meetings.

8. Training for coaches occurs in most regions, usually 2 times each season. **CAPITAL GOLD REGION Coaches Training tentative dates are Sat October 11th and Wed Oct 15th.** Confirmation on dates, times and location will be posted on capitalgoldregion.org and emailed out at least a week in advance.

9. All participating teams are given the choice of the same five **long term** problems to solve though these problems change from year to year. Part of the long term problem includes **style** which enhances the solution through costumes, props scenery, drama, etc. The problems usually include a “vehicle” problem, a mechanical problem, a “classics” problem, a balsa wood structure problem and a strictly dramatic problem.

The team of seven members selects from the five given problems and after working for several months on the solution, presents it at the local regional tournament. At this time, the students will compete against other teams solving the same problem in their age division. The teams are also given **spontaneous** problems to solve the day of the tournament. These problems also foster creativity and teamwork. Their solution involves a form of brainstorming. Though teams may practice for this segment, they do not know the problem ahead of time.

#### 10. Long Term Portion

The long-term portion of an OotM problem is always open-ended yet with specific design specifications and monetary limitations. It affords the student with the opportunity to brainstorm, research, plan, create and evaluate. This portion of the problem is solved during a two to three month period prior to the presentation at the state tournament. **It is worth 200 out of the total 350 points.**

### **Style Portion**

The style portion of an OotM problem encourages students to develop unique presentations for their long-term solutions. Style is designed as a creative addition or elaboration to the presentation of the problem's solution, which elates to, but is not required to solve the problem. Examples include art work, costumes, props, songs, acting, dancing, scenery and elaborate school signs. **It is worth 50 out of the total 350 points.**

### **Spontaneous Portion**

Spontaneous problems are based on the concept of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in thinking. Quantity of responses is important and unusual ideas are encouraged. Spontaneous problems are given to teams on the day of the tournament to challenge the teams' ability to "think on their feet". Some require verbal responses to a given question, some require hands-on solutions and some combine both. **It is worth 100 out of the total 350 points.**

11. Regional and State tournaments are held in the spring of each year, and the Odyssey of the Mind year culminates with World Finals, where the best of the best match wits, imaginations and personalities to become world champions. **CAPITAL GOLD REGION 2009 tournament is scheduled for Sat. Feb 28<sup>th</sup> at Natomas High School in Sacramento.**

12. The costs for this program are very minimal – the program is staffed and run by volunteers. International memberships are \$135 (a membership is typically an individual school). Each school can then have 1 team per problem per division. California State fee is \$65 per membership. Each Region has a regional tournament fee which varies by region, and is per TEAM (not per membership). CALOMER.org has a good breakdown of these fees. Other costs include materials for solving the problem. Each problem has a maximum dollar value of what can be included at time of competition (between \$125 and \$150). Again, this is described in detail in the membership packet and Program Guide.

FOR EVEN MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING A SHORT VIDEO THAT CAN BE VIEWED ON LINE, PLEASE GO TO:

[www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com)

Please also visit our regional website:

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

Thank you for your interest!  
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