



An International Creativity Competition Southern California



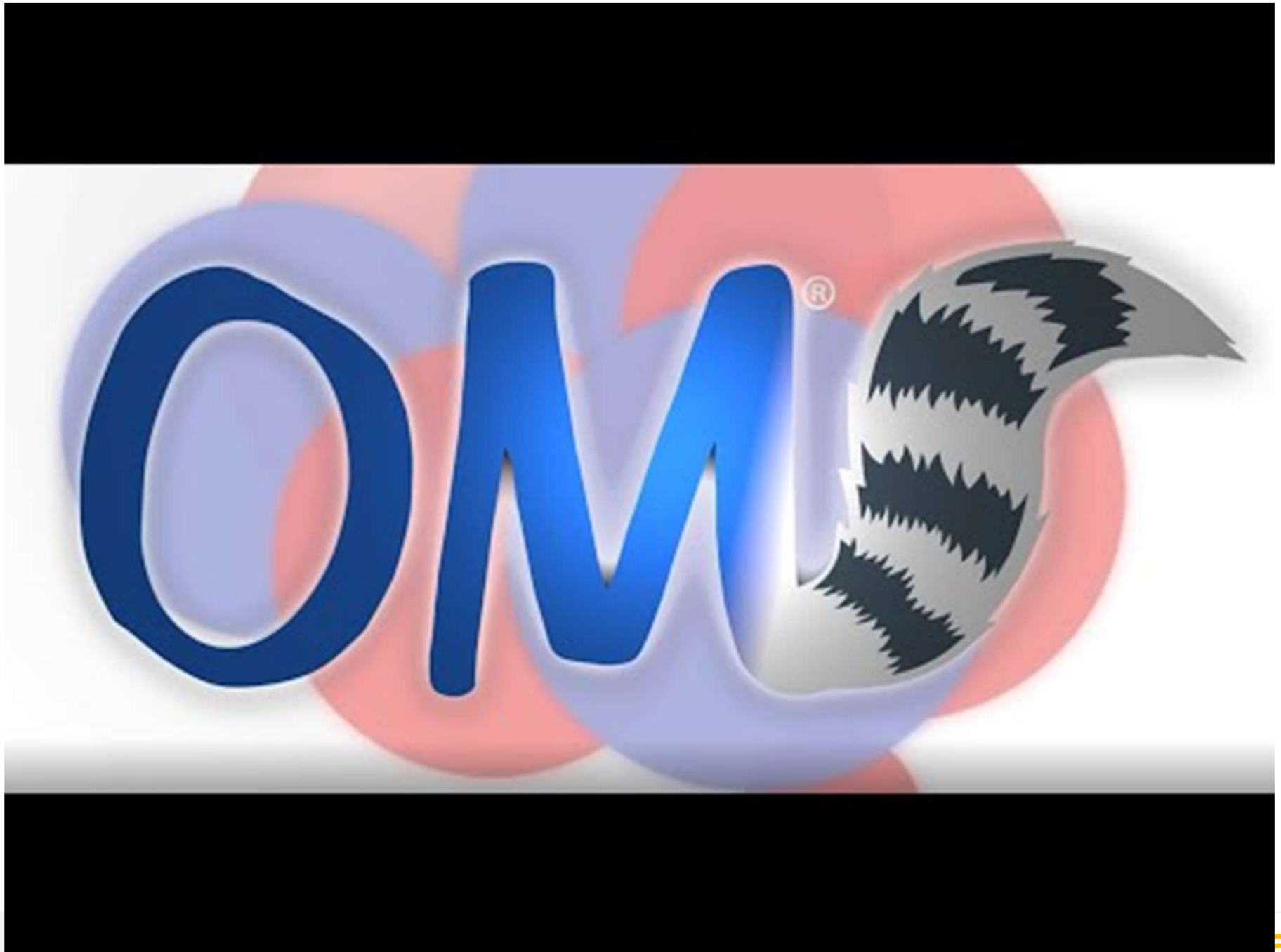
Student Achievement • Safe Schools • Positive School Climate
Humility • Civility • Service



Odyssey of the Mind®

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What is Odyssey of the Mind?



What is Odyssey of the Mind?

- **Creativity-Based Problem-Solving Competition**
 - Student-created theater with a creative problem-solving twist!
 - Teams choose a long-term problem and develop an 8-minute performance to address the problem requirements
 - Practice solving spontaneous/on the spot problems
 - On the day of the competition, teams perform their solution and solve a spontaneous problem in front of judges
- Participants are rewarded for how they **apply** their imagination, creativity, knowledge, skills, and NOT for coming up with a “right” answer (there are no right answers!!)



What is Odyssey of the Mind?

- Sample Odyssey of the Mind performances
 - [High School Division](#)
 - [Middle School Division](#)
 - [Primary division](#)



What do students learn and develop?

- Teamwork, cooperation, and respect for others
- Decision-making
- Creative & spontaneous problem solving
- Critical thinking skills
- Creative writing
- Visual & Performing Arts



- Budgeting
- Engineering, building AND, they learn that... Process is more important than the end result and thinking “outside the box” is rewarded
- Looks GREAT on college applications!
- Students learn how to talk through their thinking with adults after their performance – judges ask them to explain their process. Students gain poise and confidence!!!

One SoCal OM Team's Journey



Teams and Problems

- Teams are made up 5-7 students grouped by grade level
 - Primary: Kindergarten - Grade 2
 - Division 1: Grades 3, 4, 5
 - Division 2: Grades 6, 7, 8
 - Division 3: Grades 9-12
 - Division 4: Post-secondary
- For divisions 1-4, five problems are developed each year for teams to choose from
 - Problem 1 - Vehicle
 - Problem 2 - Technical
 - Problem 3 - Classics
 - Problem 4 - Balsa Structure
 - Problem 5 - Performance
- Primary teams have their own problem



Odyssey Problems

- Teams take several months to interpret the problem and develop a solution
 - The coach is a facilitator for the process - everything in the solution is created by the students!
- Some problems are more technical in nature, while others are artistic or performance-based (or both!).
- Each long-term problem has a low-cost limit for all items involved in the solution, which encourages creativity in the use of materials. [this is a team responsibility]
- Each long-term problem rewards "Style" in the interpretation. This helps teach students that they should not simply try to solve problems but take the next step of enhancing their solutions with creativity.



What is involved?

- Teams create their own script, props, scenery, costumes, and any required technical elements for their 8-minute performance.
- Coaches and parents can provide general information about how to do things, but the entire solution must be completely created only by the team members.



Tournament Day!

- On the day of the competition, teams perform their 8-minute solution for a panel of trained judges and talk through their process with the judges.
- They then go to a separate location and the team is asked to solve a problem on the spot (spontaneous!). This problem could be verbal, hands-on, or verbal-hands on.
- The teams with the highest combined long term and spontaneous scores advance to the next tournament.



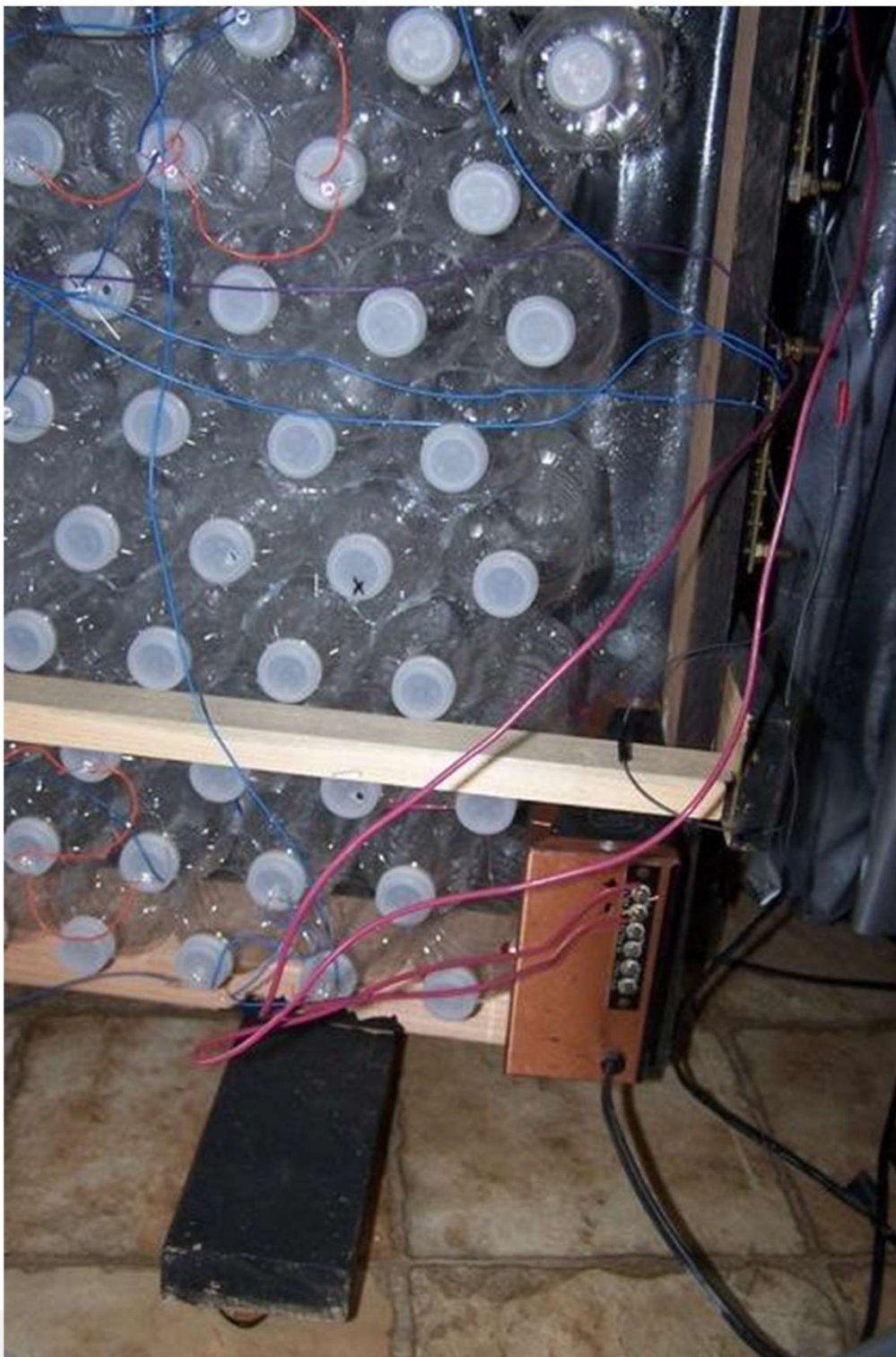
Sample Team costumes and scenery



Example of technical work on scenery



This is a piece of scenery created for a play. Behind the shower curtain scenery was a wall of individual lights that lit up different parts of each scene. The team decorated three shower curtains with different scenes.



Each water bottle was individually wired to light up different patterns during the play. This was a scored element of the play. A requirements was for something to change 3 times then change back to the original form.

Spontaneous



Sample challenges

- At the competition, team members are also asked to solve an “on the spot” problem in front of a panel of judges. There are 3 types of spontaneous problems:
- **Verbal:** If you could order anything ever created, what would you order, and who would you send it to?
- **Verbal hands-on:** You are trapped in a cave with only a plastic spoon, a piece of paper, and a paper cup. One will help you escape. Explain how in a 3-minute performance.
- **Hands-on:** Students are asked to figure out how to suspend a wooden block above the surface of the table using the materials provided.

2024-2025

LONG-TERM PROBLEM SYNOPSSES



Problem 1
Vehicle

The OM-Mazing Race

Ready, set, go! In this problem teams will design, build, and operate an all-terrain vehicle that transports riders on a race for a prize. The performance will include a race to three original, team-created destinations and each leg of the race will include an obstacle that the rider and vehicle must overcome. The performance will include a host that narrates the action and it will conclude with the realization that the prize for finishing the race was not as exciting as the Odyssey they took along the way.



Problem 2
Technical

Mech-Animal Sidekick

The saying goes "dog is man's best friend" but this year OMers get the chance to invent their own bestie! In this problem, team will design, build, and operate an original robotic animal that has the ability to make people happy. In the performance, the Mech-Animal will perform various tricks that cheer people up. When it suddenly goes missing, the people search for it and find the Mech-Animal in a very unusual place. The performance will also include live music, a toy for the Mech-Animal, and a trainer character that explains the tricks.



Problem 3
Classics

Classics... Cooking with Books

Classic cooking takes on a new meaning as teams create a performance about an original chef character that is inspired by fictional literary characters and events. Teams will choose from selected classic literature and create a gourmet meal based on their chosen book. The performance will include a setting from the book that inspired the meal, a team-created cooking gadget, and a dinner party featuring the meal that includes a character from the book.



Problem 4
Structure

Save Me Structure

OMers to the rescue! In this problem, teams will create a performance about an unusual animal rescue character that needs to find homes for balsa wood and glue animals. Two animals will represent actual living animal species and another will be team-created. The animal rescue character will test if a home is safe by balancing and holding as much weight as possible. The performance will also include one animal getting a check-up, a humorous veterinarian character, and the creative use of Arm & Hammer Baking Soda.



Problem 5
Performance

AstronOMical Odyssey!

OMers always shoot for the stars, and this problem is no different! Many civilizations have used stories, myths, and legends to explain the stars in the sky and their patterns. In this problem, teams will create a humorous performance set in a team-created "historical" civilization that presents constellations and original stories explaining each one. The performance will also include a humorous astronomer character with a "stellar" costume, a lighting effect, and a shooting star!



Primary

It's a Wonderful World!

Travel back in time as OMers explore the Wonders of the World. In this problem, teams will create a performance about the Seven Wonders and create an original wonder that celebrates an achievement in our modern time. A time traveler character will take an architect on a trip to the past to find inspiration for this new creation. The performance will include an ancient setting, original artwork depicting a Wonder, and a creative time machine.

Typical OM practices

- Start with practicing a few spontaneous problems
- Then do long term problem work
 - Brainstorming, writing and improving script, practicing the play, building props/scenery, making costumes
- Team building activities
- End with another spontaneous
 - Talk about how to come up with creative responses and what are creative vs. common responses



Commitment Required



- **Practices:**

- held weekly from team starting time through December - at a time convenient for all team members
- Practices last as long as the team decides and is appropriate for their age/grade
- January through May practices are usually twice per week
- A model for a 10-week plan to be prepared for the regional tournament is being developed by the state.
- **Students must fulfill their assigned roles and responsibilities**



Commitment Required (cont.)

- Household items for spontaneous
- Items for props/scenery/costumes
- Fundraising – travel costs



- Expertise – Brain Power!
- Each team must provide volunteer judges for the competitions (they must attend training)
- ***Commitment for the entire season!!***

Parental/Coach Involvement

- Strict rules about “outside assistance” - only the team’s minds and hands can contribute to their performances
- There are many things parents can help with: teach a skill, bring snacks, provide items from home, encourage commitment, fundraising, finding volunteers, trips to thrift stores, visit venues for ideas



Important Dates

- **Coaches' Training**
 - Complete online training
 - In Person training TBD
- **CVUSD Coaches Meeting**
 - November 13, 6:00 pm @ Cattle
- **CVUSD Spontaneous Practices (whole team events)**
 - December 10, 6:30 pm @ Cattle
 - January 15, 6:30 pm @ Cattle
- **Inland Empire Regional Tournament [must attend]**
 - Location/date TBD (Feb/Mar?)
- **SoCal State Tournament – Location/date TBD (April?)**
- **World Finals, May 21-24, 2025, Michigan State University**



Perspectives

- **As a Coach**
 - Rewarding
 - Wrangling Cats
 - Learn patience
 - Learn to be hands off
 - Help with problem-solving
 - Experience the students' excitement
- **As a Parent**
 - Maturity
 - People skills
 - Independence
 - Problem-solving
 - Ingenuity



Starting a Team!

- **Complete the online CVUSD Interest and Application Form (see the last slide of this presentation)**
- **Gather friends to create your own team, find a coach**
- **OR: wait to be placed on a district team as coaches become available (teams formed by grade level, interest, available coach)**
- **Have coach complete required training**
- **Get your problem instructions and team number from Mr. Buss**
- **All membership fees are paid for by CVUSD**
- **Parents/teachers - get involved as a volunteer – being a judge/official really helps you understand the program and makes you a better coach 😊**

Useful Resources

- **National Odyssey of the Mind website**
 - www.odysseyofthemind.com
- **SoCal Odyssey website**
 - www.socalodyssey.org
 - Lots of helpful resources for teams, coaches, and volunteers
 - Regional Contact information
- **Inland Empire OotM website**
 - www.ieodyssey.org

Tip: Check out OM performances: search for Odyssey of the Mind World Finals on YouTube.



Important Contact Information

- Steve Buss – Howard Cattle Principal
 - steve_buss@chino.k12.ca.us
 - 909-591-2755
- Website (CVUSD – Elementary Curriculum)
 - www.chino.k12.ca.us/Page/54361
 - Visit this page for more information or to sign up
- Beverly Lockman – Elementary Curriculum office
 - beverly_lockman@chino.k12.ca.us
 - 909-628-1201, ext. 1335



All interested students/parents MUST scan this QR code to sign up on the OotM Interest and Application

