

So you want to start an Odyssey of the Mind Program....

Great! You only need two things: knowledge and action.



Knowledge:

1) Know your resources:

National Organization - Odyssey of the Mind Program
c/o Creative Competitions, Inc. (CCI)
406 Ganttown Road
Sewell, NJ 08080
www.odysseyofthemind.com



Local - Gulf Coast Odyssey of the Mind
Freda Abercrombie, Regional Director
fabercro@pasco.k12.fl.us
(813) 924-0850, cell
www.gcodyyssey.com

2) Know your terminology:

Membership - A school or community organization may purchase a national membership. The membership will allow the school to field one team in each long term problem for each division the school covers. The exception to this rule is the primary division (K-2) in which a membership can field multiple teams. Most elementary schools are Division 1, middle schools are Division 2, and high schools are division 3.

Long Term Problem - Each year Odyssey of the Mind publishes six long term problems. These are open-ended and challenging problems that allow for a wide range of responses.

Outside Assistance - The primary emphasis in the Odyssey of the Mind program is “the kids do it all.” No adult or child not on the team is allowed to offer any help or advice in solving the long term problem. The hardest part of coaching is keeping your mouth shut. Teams are penalized if outside assistance is suspected.

Spontaneous Problem - On the day of a tournament, each team will enter a room and face a creative challenge never seen before. They are judged according to the creativity of their answers and their teamwork.

Style - The final area in which a team is judged is style. It is the “extra” touches they put into their presentation of their long term solution.

Teams - A team is five to seven students working on a particular long term problem. Teams are formed by division according to age and grade, and teams compete against others within the same division in the same problem. The oldest member on a team defines the division in which the team must compete.

Tournaments - The first competition a team faces is at the regional level, usually held from mid February to mid March. If they do well, they may advance to the state competition held in April. Each team that places first or second in their long term problem in each division at the state tournament will make it to the world finals which occur at the end of May.

3) **Know the costs:**

National Organization - \$135.00 per membership

State registration - \$75.00 per team (\$20.00 per primary (K-2) team)

Regional registration- \$75.00 per team (\$40 per primary team)

State Tournament Fee - \$50.00 only for those teams competing at state level

Team expenses - Each team will incur expenses for supplies. Each long term problem has a cost limit. For budget purposes, you can expect a team to need approximately \$100.00.

Action:

- 1) **Choose a coordinator:** This is the person who will communicate with the regional director, register the membership with national and state, and distribute information to the teams.
- 2) **See it firsthand:** If possible, visit a tournament or volunteer at one. There's no better way to see for yourself what creative things kids can do.
- 3) **Advertise the program to the kids and parents:** Start early in the school year. Talk it up. Send home a flyer. Hold an information meeting. Secure adults who are willing to coach.
- 4) **Form teams:** There are a variety of ways to do this. Kids can sign up for the problem in which they're most interested or a membership can hold a creative competition to select team members. Remember no more than seven kids can be on a team, and no member can be replaced if he/she leaves the team, so choose carefully.
- 5) **Send your coaches to training:** A trained coach is a necessity for a successful team. Trainings are held in the fall.
- 6) **Have fun!**

STEM
How Odyssey of the Mind Fulfills STEM Objectives
Fern Brown & Cindy Byars



STEM Core Concepts

21st Century Knowledge and Skills

- Communications
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Information Technology Applications
- Systems Thinking
- Safety, Health, and Environment
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Ethics and Legal Responsibilities
- Creativity, Invention, and Ingenuity

Improved STEM Programs can Create Individuals Capable of New Solutions and Better Decisions

- Increased Science and Math Capability is Not Enough
- Experiences Centered on Design, Innovation, Engineering, and Technology Will Increase Creativity, Inventiveness, Ingenuity, and Imagination Capabilities
- These Characteristics are Fostered in STEM Centered Learning Experiences

Engineering Design Process

GOAL Identify the need/problem.

ASK Identify all known facts related to the need or problem. Identify information that is not known but essential to the situation. Identify what is happening now in relation to the need or problem. Explore other options via the internet, library, interviews, etc.

IMAGINE Brainstorm possible solutions. Draw on mathematics and science. Choose the best solution for action by using a list of selected criteria.

PLAN Create a list of necessary materials. Determine the steps in the process of creating the solution. Draw a diagram to match the steps. Troubleshoot to avoid possible problems.

CREATE Construct the prototype. Follow the plan to implement the solution. Test it!

IMPROVE Evaluate the solution. Redesign the prototype after each trial to gain maximum success.



What Should Be the Function of a K-12 STEM Education?

Problem-solvers – able to define questions and problems, design investigations to gather data, collect and organize data, draw conclusions, and then apply understandings to new and novel situations.

Innovators - creatively use science, mathematics, and technology concepts and principles by applying them to the engineering design process.

Inventors - recognizes the needs of the world and creatively design, test, redesign, and then implement solutions (engineering process).

Self-reliant - able to use initiative and self-motivation to set agendas, develop and gain self-confidence, and work within specific time frames.

Logical Thinkers – able to apply rational and logical thought process of science, mathematics, and engineering design to innovation and invention.

Technologically Literate – understand and explain the nature of technology, develop the skills needed, and apply technology appropriately.

What do the Participants Tell Us?



"One of the most important lessons I learned in Odyssey of the Mind is to think outside the box. Going into a field of research I have to be able to think outside the box to think of new possibilities of ways to solve the problem in front of me. The curiosity and creativity needed in Odyssey drove me into my passion for science and wanting to be able to solve problems that require outside the box thinking." Morgan Powers, 2017 graduate, WRHS, 12 years of experience with Odyssey of the Mind

"Odyssey of the Mind will stick with you for life, whether it's through the skills you'll acquire or the potential life-long friends you'll make. You don't have to be smart; you don't have to be bold. When I started Odyssey, I was a shy and soft-spoken third-grader. Now, I'll be whatever I need to be to get my point across, even if that means being the loudest person in the room. Odyssey of the Mind gave me courage, and it can give you so much more." Jackie Freitas, 2016 graduate JWMHS, 9 years of experience with Odyssey of the Mind

"I learned many things from Odyssey of the Mind. Above all, though, I learned how to be who I am. Every single person has something that makes them unique, and in Odyssey, the team will not function without every person expressing themselves to the fullest. This is what makes Odyssey one of the best things to take part in. In no other club or sport can you be your complete self around a family of 5-7 people, and excel as a team the more you express yourself." Joseph Licari, 2015 graduate, homeschool, 10 years of experience with Odyssey of the Mind

"Probably my biggest regret in OM would be that I didn't start in middle school when my gifted teacher asked me to join. I'd always heard about Odyssey of the Mind, but never pursued the idea until my friends practically forced me in my sophomore year. It is one of the most fun activities you'll participate in. You will look forward to the day long-term problems are released, and the time between the end of competition and the award ceremonies will be the longest time period of the year. But if you choose to join a team, just remember, Odyssey of the Mind is a competition, and it is not worth ruining friendships over. The fun comes from the creativity of the activities, and spending time with your friends, not winning or the competition." Emily Crouch, 2014 graduate, GHS, 3 years of experience with Odyssey of the Mind

"While working on a television set, I was in the middle of actors and actresses who had stopped a scene because they could not figure out who should stand here, who should stand there, and who was blocking whom. Usually, children are escorted off the set when this happens, but they kept me there. Then the director asked me, 'Son, where do you want to be? What works for you?' and I said, 'Whatever works best for the shot?' In my mind I was saying, 'Where did that come from?' It was then I realized the biggest lesson that Odyssey of the Mind has taught me. It is not about me and what works for me; it is not about how this will benefit me; it is about us working together to produce an end product that we are all going to be proud of. So, I waited in silence and thought, 'This is it. I am fired.' Then, everyone started asking, 'Kid, where did you learn to talk and think like that?' and I told them, 'Odyssey of the Mind.'" Brandon Mauro 2008 graduate, RRHS, 8 years of experience with Odyssey of the Mind