

Odyssey Day 2026 Coach Training B

January 10, 2026
9am-12pm
Bethel Middle School
600 Whittlesey Dr.
Bethel, CT 06801

Registration Opens Soon!

TEAM TIPS

(ESPECIALLY for NEW coaches)

Planning Team Meetings

Review OM and CTOM provided resources. The YouTube series, "Odyssey Academy" and our own CTOM 8-Unit curriculum will provide a roadmap for bringing your team from their first meeting to a successful competition day.

Create a simple agenda for team meetings. Select activities for each meeting:

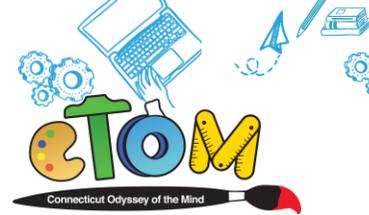
1. Teach the team useful skills -sewing, painting, cutting balsa, acting, etc.
2. Do at least one spontaneous problem.
3. Include a fun (silly) activity or snack time for team bonding.
4. Brainstorm solutions to parts of the Long-Term problem - keep paper and pencil handy for ideas and doodles.
5. Assign homework for independent progress on specific items (script, costumes, props, etc.)

Celebrate Along the Way

Recognize work being accomplished and reward the team for meeting each goal.

Be a Role Model

A strong team is grounded in a strong coach. Encourage respect, understanding, and compassion among your team members.



Coaches' Corner

November 2025

RESOURCES



8-Unit Curriculum



DePaul University offers a FREE 15-episode step-by-step [VIDEO TUTORIAL](#).

Evaluate and Improve

At the conclusion of each meeting, lead the team through a brief evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses:

- What issues did you encounter today?
- What came easily for each team member?
- What did you do well?
- Where could you improve?
- Is there a skill or concept that the team needs to review / learn?



CTOM is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to Odyssey of the Mind in CT

www.ctom.org



Spon Spotlight

The Spontaneous portion of the competition (worth up to 100 points) requires that the team solve a problem they have never seen, before a team of judges.

Helping your team learn one another's skills and developing a collaborative spirit are critical for teams to perform well under pressure.

Spontaneous Challenges teach your team to think on their feet, work collaboratively and become mindful of their time management. Unlike the Long-Term Solution, where there is NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE ALLOWED, spontaneous skills can be taught.

Speaking and Presentation Skills

Help your team to develop their public speaking skills, avoid filler words in their spontaneous answers, learn about each other, PLUS identify skills that may be vital as they develop their long-term solution.

The Ah, Um Game

Sit the team in a circle and ask for a volunteer to go first. The team member must talk to their group about themselves for two full minutes without saying the following taboo words: "Ah", "Um", "Like", or "You Know", or pausing for 5 seconds.

As soon as a taboo word is said, the person sits down, and the clock is reset. Then the next team member stands and begins.

As the team improves, ask them to talk about their teammates and what unique skill they can use in OM. Help students to see and recognize the ability of each team member and capitalize on the strengths of ALL! You can also use the same game to help develop plots, characters and brainstorm solutions! What do you know about Arm & Hammer Baking Soda?



Rules of Engagement

Empower the team to make a clear set of rules that will be followed during team meetings and work sessions. Giving the team ownership of the rules will promote their following the rules by choice. It also begins teaching them that in OM they are encouraged – required, actually – to do all of the work themselves!

Suggest RULE #1: All ideas should be allowed and never criticized!





How to Avoid Outside Assistance!

Students learn best when they complete tasks on their own, and they develop a sense of pride and increased self-esteem when they go beyond what is expected. Although no one may assist the team members in solving the problem, it is not Outside Assistance to teach the team HOW to DO something.

Parents and other supporters may act as tutors or instructors, but they must not make suggestions on how to solve the problem. For example, a parent may teach the members how to sew if they ask but cannot sew and/or design a costume for the team's solution.

Teaching *the Art of Storytelling*

Every good OM long-term solution involves a good story - a plot that leads the judges and audience through the solution while introducing interesting characters and evoking emotions like humor. Developing a theme, plot and ultimately script can be challenging for some teams. As a coach, help your team by breaking the process into manageable tasks. Here is one way you could go about it.

Brainstorm Themes

Use a spontaneous challenge or team building exercise to brainstorm themes. Vote on 2-3 favorites. Next have the team revisit those themes. Can it be easily adapted to the selected problem? How can it be represented in costumes or props? How can it be enhanced?

Define Characters

Everyone on the team needs to be a part of the solution. Do you have a student who does not want a speaking role? What type of character can be created that contributes to the plot, but does not require lines?

Develop a storyline

Every good script will have an introduction, an action leading up to the climax and then additional action leading to the conclusion. How will the team integrate drama, humor or the all-important team STYLE into their plot? Start simple and allow the team to add layers and interest. Encourage one or two students to write a first draft and then work with the group to adjust and improve. Don't forget to be flexible. Remember that many teams will continue to improve and adjust their solution until the day of the competition!





KEY DATES

January 10
COACH TRAINING B
ODYSSEY DAY

January 15
Tournament Registration Deadline
Fee: \$225
Late registration fee \$50

January 31
Tournament Registration Closes
Judge and Volunteer Registration
Deadline
"No Judge" Waiver - \$250
"No Volunteer" Waiver - \$100

March 14
JUDGE TRAINING

March 28
CTOM STATE
TOURNAMENT

Events for the CTOM 2025-26
season are hosted at
Bethel Middle School
Bethel, CT