



# ODYSSEY DAY & COACH TRAINING B 2026

January 10, 9AM-12PM

Bethel Middle School

[Click here to register](#)

We are excited to share that we are refreshing the event format this year. Odyssey Day student workshops will run simultaneously with Coach Training sessions, creating a lively, action-packed morning for all.

Check-in begins at 8:30AM in entrance lobby. Tell your student participants to ask for blind bag of Odyssey of the Mind trading pins (while supplies last).

### ODYSSEY DAY

Three interactive student workshops at 9:00AM, 10:00AM and 11:00AM. Each team **must have at least one adult chaperone** attend the Odyssey Day workshops, while coaches participate in their assigned training sessions.

### 2026 WORKSHOPS --SPONTANEOUS--

*Take part in a mock competition, solving spontaneous problems, and acting as judges for peers. Helpful feedback to get you ready for the real competition.*

*Facilitators: Yolanda and Catherine Preysner*

**ACTING** - *Learn to bring characters to life using voice projection, movement and emotion, and explore character motivation.*

*Facilitator: Eileen O'Brian* **COSTUMES AND SET DESIGN** - *Learn about materials and explore how to create amazing, low-cost set and costume pieces that pop. Practical tips for turning ideas into reality with kid-friendly tools and tricks.*

*Facilitator: Stacy Gifford*

### COACH TRAINING B

Designed to support both new and experienced Odyssey of the Mind coaches. Sessions will cover key topics, including Spontaneous, understanding and guiding Style, navigating team dynamics, and clarifying what is considered appropriate coach and parent support, including the use of AI tools. Coaches will also have the opportunity to meet their Problem Captains and gain a high-level overview of the long-term problems and season flow. Each session focuses on building confidence, clarity, and strong coaching practices while staying aligned with OM rules and expectations.



## Coaches' Corner December 2025

### TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION

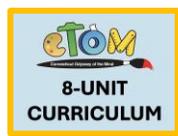
Log in to your Odyssey of the Mind Member Area to register teams for the

**CTOM 2026  
STATE TOURNAMENT  
Sat, March 28**

[OOTM  
Member Area](#)

Register by Jan 15 to avoid late fees Registrations close Jan 31

### RESOURCES



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

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



## Use the Holiday Break to Your Advantage

It can be difficult to have Odyssey enthusiasm amid the chaos of holiday schedules and stress. Remember to breathe (it will all get done). Take advantage of the school break and encourage team members to do independent and small group work. Not limited to, but some ideas to work out during this time may be:

### Developing Characters

“Assign” a member or two to brainstorm characters, create a list of puns that support the theme or work on the script. Ask if one of the team families who are not traveling will host a costume ‘work session’ during school break.



### Adapting a Screenplay

To make the story into an OM solution, break it into scenes. Visually describe the setting, characters, and actions of each. Develop dialogue. Create transitions between scenes: a set change, the entry of a new character, a song. Each scene progresses the story toward the resolution. Encourage your team to use technology and collaborate to keep the story developing while traveling or at home.

### Words AND Actions

To bring it to life the team uses words, music, movement and more to tell the story. A character can communicate emotion through a facial expression. A prop can make someone laugh. The team solution is an interaction between the team and the audience. When a team tells a good story the audience will relate, smile, laugh or cry along with the team on stage. Encourage your team to practice their acting skills with various family members during the break.



**Clarifications may be submitted until mid-February!**

Long-Term Problems provide just enough guidance for teams to solve the problem without limiting creativity. Occasionally additional guidance is required from Odyssey of the Mind HQ or teams may have questions regarding their interpretations of the Long-Term Problem limitations and the rules, as stated in the [Program Guide](#). Clarifications are submitted by logging into the [Team Area](#).

There are three types of clarifications: General, Team-Specific and Judges Only.

**General Clarifications** amend or further explain a Long-Term problem’s limitations. They take precedence over the limitations listed in the problem and the rules in the Program Guide. Teams should check in and stay current on general clarifications issued throughout the year.

**Team-Specific Clarifications** allow teams to submit a clarification request that asks if its ideas for a solution are allowed or if they meet the problem’s requirements. These clarifications are kept confidential.





**CTOM is run entirely by volunteers.**

Every team is required to provide both a judge and a volunteer to help at the tournament. The roles are quite different, so please start thinking of potential candidates well before the January 31st registration deadline. Judges and volunteers must be 18+ years on tournament day.

**Recruiting a Judge**

**Who would make a great judge?** Anyone who loves seeing creativity on display, can follow instructions, and can make a two-day time commitment would be an excellent judge. No prior Odyssey knowledge is needed.



Our judges often find the opportunity both fun and inspiring. Judges must attend training on Saturday, March 15, 8:30am –1:00pm and attend the tournament on Saturday, March 29 for the duration of the competition they are assigned to judge (between 7:00am– 4:00 pm). For a fair competition, the judging team for a problem must be consistent throughout the day. Judges are not allowed to leave their posts to watch other teams compete in other problems. For this reason, we recommend that you do not ask parents to judge, but parents can amplify your efforts by tapping their networks. Creative teams have also recruited from senior centers, honor societies, civic groups, churches, and former Odyssey teams with great success.



Register team judges and volunteers in [QOTM Member Area](#)

**Finding a Volunteer**

Team parents make good tournament volunteers. Tournament day is long. The team is often with the coach, leaving a parent free to work a shift of 3–4 hours. No special training is needed. Volunteer jobs include easy but necessary tasks such as door holding, running errands, selling merchandise, and giving directions. Job shifts can be scheduled around the team's performance.



One volunteer must work the entire volunteer shift. Parents cannot split one shift among themselves. There are also a limited number of volunteer openings on Friday, March 28, helping to set up for the tournament. For some parents, this may be more convenient. Of course, other adults may serve as the team-provided volunteer as well.





## Go Broad, Go Narrow

OM teams can take a page from the corporate world. Encourage your team to apply the Design Thinking method to develop innovative and creative solutions. To generate lots of ideas (Go Broad), use spontaneous challenges to generate multiple options to solve a specific problem. Next narrow your options through detailed planning, experiments and prototypes (Go Narrow).

Design Thinking encourages your team to try new things, reflect on their success and make the adjustments necessary for the next attempt.

## What is Outside Assistance?

### ***And, how to avoid it.***

Students learn best when they complete tasks on their own, and they develop a sense of ownership, pride, and self-esteem.

#### **Teaching not Assisting**

Although no one may assist the team members in solving the problem, it is not Outside Assistance to teach the team to DO something. Coaches, parents and other supporters may act as tutors or instructors, but they must not make-specific suggestions. For example, an adult may teach the members how to sew but cannot sew and/or design a costume for the team's solution. An art teacher can illustrate painting techniques and teach a team how to use different tools and materials but cannot tell them how to use them in their solution.

#### **Use Common Sense**

To avoid Outside Assistance, be sure that all team members, as well as *their families, have a clear* understanding of what members can (and cannot) do.

#### **What is allowed?**

It is not Outside Assistance to use something that was created by someone who is not on the team as-long-as it was not created to help solve the problem in any way or is being considered for score. Items created by others will be judged as commercially produced and should be included on the cost form accordingly. If the materials were created by the members of the current team, they will be considered team-created.





## KEY DATES

JANUARY 10  
Odyssey Day & Coach Training B

JANUARY 15  
**Tournament Registration deadline Reg  
Fee: \$225**  
After this date, late fee of \$50 applies

JANUARY 31  
**Tournament Registration CLOSSES  
AND  
Judge/Volunteer Registration CLOSSES**  
After this date, automatic waiver fees apply:  
\$250 no judge, \$100 no volunteer

date TBD (February)  
Trumbull Spon Scrimmage

MARCH 14  
Judge Training

MARCH 28  
**CTOM STATE  
TOURNAMENT**

2025-26 CTOM events hosted by  
**BETHEL MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
CTOM problem captains and team are here to  
support.

Email to: [assndir@ctom.org](mailto:assndir@ctom.org)

