



Show the Judges your Team's STYLE!

What IS Style?

In the dictionary, STYLE is defined as “a manner of doing something” or “a distinct appearance, typically determined by the principles according to which it is designed.” According to the Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide, STYLE is “that which is added to the problem’s solution and relates to the theme of the problem or the solution but is not scored under the long-term problem.”

Simply put, Style is what makes a particular performance really shine! Style showcases a team’s strengths and talents:

- artistic design, music, songs, choreography
- construction, creative use of materials
- humor, rhyme, acting

What is NOT Style?

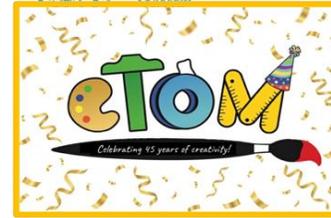
Required scored elements cannot be scored twice, so these elements cannot be scored under Style (unless you separate the technical features from the creative presentation).

How Does a Team Find its Style?

Identify required Style elements and prioritize these (i.e. creativity of a costume/artistic quality of a prop). Now look at the rest of your long-term solution: is there an element that is particularly creative, but is not being scored? Is there a way to add an element to reinforce the theme or creativity?

Prioritize the Paragraph

Long-term problems have 2 mandatory and 2 “free choice of team” Style elements. In addition, the team must write a paragraph that explains how well the 4 Style elements fit together and enhance the solution. The paragraph is an opportunity to describe the Style theme, why it was chosen, and where it appears in the solution! Remember, a judge only has a few minutes to review the Style form, so keep it short, simple, specific! Each element receives a score of 1-10, with a total potential of 50!



Coaches' Corner

February 2026

RESOURCES



Heading into the final stretch, CTOM is holding two virtual Q&A sessions.

Login to Microsoft Teams

[Microsoft Team Meeting](#)

**MONDAY February 23
& March 16
7-8PM**



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

www.ctom.org



Have FUN with SPONTANEOUS!!!

The CTOM Competition is just under a month away!!! While the focus on the long-term solution heats up, spend a little time each meeting improving your spontaneous responses.

Spontaneous Top 10

1. Introduce yourselves to the judges in a memorable way.
2. Select a captain / leader.
3. READ the problem as a group, then re-read the problem.
4. Where do you get the MOST POINTS?
5. Keep track of TIME.
6. ASK QUESTIONS.
7. Work as a TEAM. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck. Plan ways to help each other out!
8. LOOK at all the options and ASK for clarification.
9. STAND UP and be PROUD.
10. BE CREATIVE!!!!



Verbal – Hands-on – Scary Stuff

Give each team member a piece of paper and some crayons. You have 2 minutes to draw a picture of something that is very scary. During phase 2, you will have 3 minutes to take turns describing your (or a teammate's picture).



Common Response: "an octopus"

Creative Response: "my mother's hair in the morning"

ALTERNATE CHALLENGE:

Give each team member a dice. On each turn, have the team member roll the dice. If the number rolled is odd (1, 3, or 5), give a word or phrase containing the word "DAY." If the number rolled is even (2, 4, or 6), give a word or phrase containing the word "NIGHT."

Verbal – Night & Day

You may have heard the expression "different as night and day."

Your problem is to tell things that might be associated with NIGHT or things that might be associated with DAY. You must say the word "Day" or "Night" when giving your answer.

Common Responses:

Things that happen, such as "the moon shines at night," "I go to school during the day," "my parents go to work all day"

Creative Responses:

Answers that incorporate unusual ideas, for example, singing "Hard Day's Night" by the Beatles, "I am a member of the "Knights of the Roundtable," "My favorite book is "Good Night Moon"





Is Everyone Happy with the Team's Choices?

Updates and revisions often fall to the very bottom of the to-do list. Frequently, in the chaos of preparing for the State Competition, Odyssey teams will slip into the danger zone of “it is good enough.” Encourage the team to revisit elements of the solution. Do they need to be rebuilt for durability? Could they use additional creativity? Is there one area of our set or a specific costume that does not look as good as the rest? Probing questions can ensure that the team feels confident, comfortable and proud of the work when they share with the judges. If your team set goals at the beginning of the year, be sure to revisit them. Are they on track to reach them? If not, that’s okay. The team needs to establish goals that are achievable. However, do not mistake this for aiming low. A team should always think big—big enough to get a little uncomfortable, but realistic enough that it can be achieved through hard work. As your team’s solution comes together, encourage them to read and re-read the problem. Review the to-do list one more time. Take the opportunity to praise and recognize their successes and accomplishments. Continue to encourage them to show their creativity and present their best solution!



Don't Forget the Set Up

By late February teams should have a completed script and begin to run lines and rehearse their skit. The first few run-throughs may be rough but stay positive and encouraging. As a reminder, the skit must be completed in less than EIGHT MINUTES, including setting up time starting from the staging area. Time your practice performances. Practice moving from the staging area to the performance zone from both the left and right side because you will not know the final setup until the day of the performance.



Have the kids determine how they will set up their props, etc. in the staging area and how they can assure success. Lastly, make sure you take time to practice all parts of the solution: staging, skit and talking to the judges. Encourage the team to be prepared for ANYTHING!

PHOTOBOMB CTOM!

To be included in the
2025 CTOM video montage
email your team pictures to
photos@ctom.org





Get your team parents involved! Ask them to attend rehearsals and provide ongoing encouragement or a team dinner to celebrate accomplishments. Create unique awards – best use of duct tape / most creative spontaneous response. Most importantly, stay positive. Continue to encourage the kids. They will amaze you in the end!

Provide a Positive Environment and Foster Creativity

As the competition nears, anxieties may begin to emerge. Please remember to keep practices fun!!! Odyssey is about learning to think on their feet, and team members should see this as a fun challenge, not a stressful situation!

At the tournament, the most successful teams are the ones who are having a lot of fun, are enjoying their skit and who see spontaneous as an opportunity to show off their creativity. The coach often sets the tone for this attitude, so if you're feeling stressed, mix up the routine to lower the stress!



Remember that bringing a group of like-minded (or perhaps not-so-like-minded) individuals together can be a challenge; especially as the pressures and reality of preparing for a competition come to bear. Channel that nervous energy for the positive. Build your team's self-confidence by encouraging their imagination and introducing them to tricks associated with a great production. Encourage them to experiment with what it means to be 'over dramatic.' Help them to understand the importance of a stage presence. Spend part of a team meeting watching a movie or TV clips. How do the actors use sound, light or action to communicate with the audience?

Don't Forget the TEAM SIGN

To ensure that the judges score the correct team, every team must have a membership sign that is legible from 25 feet away and visible throughout the presentation of the long-term solution. The sign must be created by the team and must include the official name of the membership they are competing under. Many teams also include their division and problem number.

Beyond the above required elements, the team may add to its membership sign as it wishes. A sign can be used to establish a setting, enhance a performance through movement or illustrate traits of a character or community.





Celebrate with us at
the Tournament as
CTOM turns 45!

KEY DATES

March 14

JUDGE TRAINING

Bethel Middle School

March 28

CTOM State Tournament

Bethel Middle School

CTOM is here to provide you with any information or guidance you may need as you proceed along your coaching odyssey. Reach out to assndir@ctom.org

