



## Brainstorming – Theme, Characters and Storyline

[Spontaneous Resources](#)

[Creativity Practice Activities](#)

### Suggested Materials:

Paper

Colored Pencils



Unit 4 of 8

Time	Activity
10 min	<p><b>Opening Discussion</b></p> <p>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. Today's meeting will show you one-way that students can embrace the creative process. Teams can use this process to write a story, create characters, develop engineering solutions and more.</p> <p>Lead a brief discussion about what it means to create? Who is a creator? An artist creates a painting. A musician creates a song. Along the way the creator adjusts, revises and improves upon their creation. Sometimes they start completely over from the beginning, learning from the mistakes or challenges that they encountered in the previous version. Odyssey of the Mind is about your team coming together to create their own, unique creation... their solution to their chosen problem.</p> <p><b>Rules for brainstorming:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No judgement, anything goes!</li> <li>• Piggybacking is allowed</li> <li>• Goal is to have as many ideas as possible</li> </ul>
30 min	<p><b>Creativity Activity</b></p> <p>During this week's meeting, your team will use a series of spontaneous challenges to develop a story, including a theme, characters and a plot. A good story will have an introduction, action leading up to the climax and then additional action leading to the conclusion. Encourage the team to combine ideas and build on the suggestion of others. Today's meeting is themed around brainstorming, but it is also an excellent opportunity to develop teamwork skills.</p>





Time	Activity
10 min	<p><b><u>Create a Theme</u></b> Start with a theme ... spend 3-5 minutes discussing and brainstorming. What movies have they seen lately? What books are they reading in school?</p> <p>Ask everyone for suggestions... combine 2-3 to create a crazy theme (i.e. we're at an underwater casino on the planet Zuthron). <u>This theme / world will be the location for today's creative activity.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give each team member a paper and some crayons / markers.</li><li>• Read the following Spontaneous Challenge, and allow the team 5 minutes to complete their response.</li></ul>
	<p><b><u>SPONTANEOUS CHALLENGE:</u></b> <i>Tomorrow is the grand opening of a brand new school in Connecticut. The school is based on your theme (repeat the theme). The Governor of Connecticut has asked YOU to create a display that transports visitors to (your theme). Use your best Odyssey of the Mind talents!</i></p> <p><i>Your challenge is to draw something that makes the audience think of your theme. You can draw something that you would build, design a costume or develop a plot... write a song... ANYTHING that will transport the audience to your theme.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give each team member 30 seconds to present their answers.</li><li>• Discuss the various answers and BRAINSTORM ways to transport an audience into the theme:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did a team member draw a set piece?</li></ul></li><li>• Building materials / stability / practicality of transport / size / visual impact<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did a team member create a prop that highlights the team's unique style?</li></ul></li><li>• What about a song, poem or dance?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did a team member create someone or something that belongs in the setting?</li></ul></li></ul>





Time	Activity
10 min	<p><b><u>Develop Characters</u></b>            Build on your theme ... spend 3-5 minutes discussing and brainstorming what types of creatures could live in your theme. Are they human, animal, alien... something else?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each team member a tablet and some crayons / markers.</li> <li>• Read the following Spontaneous Challenge and allow the team 3 minutes to complete their response.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>SPONTANEOUS CHALLENGE:</i></b>  <b><i>Each team has 3 minutes to draw a character that lives in your theme.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each team member 30 seconds to present their character.</li> <li>• Discuss the various answers and BRAINSTORM ways to further develop the characters that live in this world.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can you bring the characters to life?                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costumes / acting / makeup</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do any characters have particularly interesting traits or style?</li> <li>• Can you combine characters to make an even more interesting creature that lives in this world?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10 min	<p><b><u>Telling a Story</u></b>            So now you have a setting and a few characters. What happens in the story? How can you make the audience laugh, or cry or cheer for one of the characters? How does it end?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold up a kitchen gadget (Wisk, spatula, garlic press... whatever is easily accessible). Read the following Spontaneous Challenge, and allow the team 1 minute to think, and 3 minutes to respond.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>SPONTANEOUS CHALLENGE:</i></b>  <b><i>Welcome to the Connecticut schools' museum. Our archeologists have just discovered this (hold up kitchen gadget), an unknown object from (insert your team's theme / world from above spontaneous). Your challenge is to explain what is it, which character uses it and what they use it for.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a timer for 3 minutes. Once you hit start, have each team member share their response, in order. Team members can take multiple turns and share multiple responses until time runs out.</li> <li>• Discuss the various solutions and BRAINSTORM ways to combine the answers into a story. Can the team create a beginning, middle and end?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow 2-3 team members to share a brief version of their story. Start simple and allow the team to add layers and interest.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





Time	Activity
10 min	<p><b>A Note About Spontaneous Challenges</b>            CTOM believes that all team members should experience all sorts of Spontaneous problems. Kids surprise everyone, including themselves, by how much better they get over the course of the season.</p> <p>For each of the following problems give teams 1 minute to think, 3 minutes to respond. Team members will respond in order. For beginners, allow each team member one PASS card that they can use to skip one turn if they are really stuck. As team members become more experienced and skilled, you can take away the PASS cards.</p> <p><i>Encourage students to consider ALL the meanings of a word and its homophones. Always encourage kids to think of alternate meanings for words and respond with less obvious definitions.</i></p>
	<p><b>1. Name things that are round.</b>  <u>Common:</u> balls, the sun, a circle  <u>Creative:</u> A round of golf – this is a better answer because it is not a physical thing. The circle of life – this is a better answer than ‘a circle’ because it is very specific, and it is an idea, not an actual circle. The best answers are well-delivered, clever responses.</p> <p><b>2. Name things that are red.</b>  <u>Common:</u> apples, fire engines, Coke cans  <u>Creative:</u> Books, encyclopedias and other reading materials / Ideas and emotions associated with the color red like anger and war.</p>
10 min	<p><b>CLOSING DISCUSSION</b>            Often during the creative process, we can take one good idea and let others flow from it. While the team may have started with a simple theme at the beginning of the meeting, by combining ideas and adding layers of characters and plot details, the creation became more developed and more interesting. The brainstorming process helped the team to transform a simple idea into a complete story. Within the Odyssey of the Mind environment, brainstorming long-term and Spontaneous together often leads to a more detailed, sophisticated solution.</p> <p>Ask the team a few closing questions. What did they do well? Was there one task in today’s meeting on which they can improve? Celebrate positive moments and creative ideas. Recognize each team member for their contributions.</p>

