



TEAM TIPS (ESPECIALLY for NEW coaches)

Planning Team Meetings

Review OM and CTOM provided resources. Rules are detailed in the official Program Guide, and the educator developed CTOM 8-Unit curriculum provides a roadmap for bringing your team from their first meeting to a successful competition day.

Create a simple agenda for each team meeting:

1. Teach the team a skill - sewing, painting, cutting balsa, acting.
2. Do at least one spontaneous problem.
3. Include a fun (silly) activity or snack time. Non-work time is when a team truly starts to come together.
4. Brainstorm solutions to parts of the Long-Term problem -- keep paper and pencil handy for ideas.
5. Work on Long-Term problem requirements and assign homework for independent progress on specific items (script, costumes, props, etc.)

Celebrate Along the Way

Be sure to recognize the work being accomplished and reward the team for meeting each simple goal (special treat, a half-hour of outdoor fun time, or an extra 'hands-on' activity).

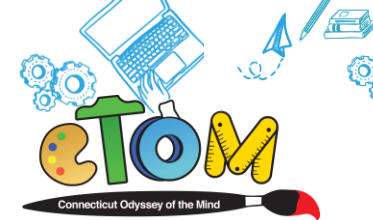
Be a Role Model

A strong team is grounded in a strong coach. Be sure to model good behavior for your team members, and always encourage respect, understanding and compassion.

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?



Coaches' Corner

October 2026

RESOURCES:

Read the official Odyssey of the Mind program guide for the 2026-2027 program year.



[OM PROGRAM GUIDE](#)



NEW 8-Unit Curriculum is AVAILABLE NOW!

[CTOM CURRICULUM](#)



Become the best OMer you can be with Odyssey Academy! Dr. Jim Mourey— OM alum, long-time volunteer, and professor at DePaul University— offers a FREE 15-episode step-by-step video tutorial.

[ODYSSEY ACADEMY](#)



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

www.ctom.org



THE CTOM PROGRAM

Odyssey of the Mind reinforces Mastery-Based Learning and aligns with CT State Department of Education guidelines, including:

- Next Generation Science Standards (K–12)
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (K–12) in speaking and learning
- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Through participation, students learn to:

- Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information from multiple sources
- Define problems, develop models, and evaluate solutions
- Analyze, compute, and interpret data

Odyssey of the Mind has been successfully used in Connecticut school districts to create interactive, hands-on learning experiences that complement classroom instruction.

What is Odyssey of The Mind?

THREE COMPONENTS OF COMPETITION

**LONG-TERM
PROBLEM
SOLUTION:**
200 Points
Specific rules
Open ended
question
8-minute
presentation



STYLE:
Creativity
Team Selected
Elements
50 Points
Enhancement/Elaboration of long-term problem
Pizzazz



SPONTANEOUS:
5-10 minutes
On-the-spot
challenge
100 Points
Three categories:
Verbal
Hands-On
Verbal/Hands-On



Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving program for kids K-12. Registration is simple—one registration can cover up to 15 teams (grades 3–12) plus unlimited K-2 teams. Ask your school if they participate or can start a team. If not, PTOs, libraries, churches, or other community groups can sponsor teams too!





1. START OR JOIN A MEMBERSHIP

Every Odyssey of the Mind team must be part of a national membership. This can be set up by a school, PTO, library, community group, or even a private organization if no local program exists. One membership can cover multiple teams—up to 15 in grades 3–12, plus unlimited K–2 teams. If more teams are needed, additional memberships can be purchased. Ask your child’s school if they already have a membership or explore starting one in your community.



Sign up for a membership at:
[ODYSSEYOFTHEMIND.COM](https://www.odysseyofthemind.com)



2. FORM TEAMS

Teams are made up of up to 7 students, guided by 1–2 coaches (often parents). Together, they work on solving a long-term creative problem. Teams set their own meeting times and locations, making the schedule flexible for families.

Teams compete in the division based on the oldest member of the team:

- Primary** – K – 2nd Grade
- Division I** – 3rd – 5th Grade
- Division II** – 6th – 8th Grade
- Division III** – 9th – 12th Grade



Team-Only Solutions

All solutions must come entirely from the team. Outside assistance is not allowed—parents and coaches may guide with questions, but they cannot provide answers or create solutions for the team.

3. INDIVIDUAL TEAMS REGISTER FOR STATE TOURNAMENT

In the Odyssey of the Mind [TEAM PORTAL](#)

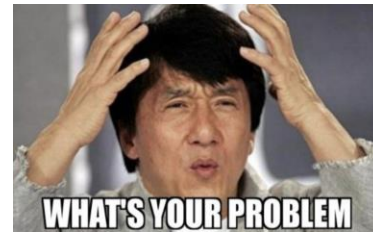
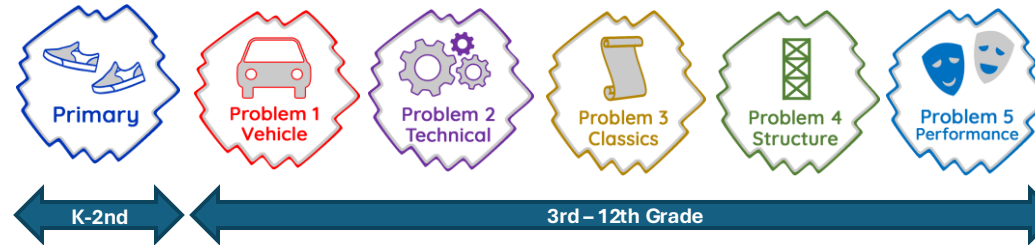
Questions about memberships, forming teams, or program details, email **CTOM** at AssnDir@ctom.org





LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

Are you builders? Tinkerers? Writers? Performers?
Teams pick a problem and find their passion!



Find 2026-27 Long-Term
Problem Synopses
[HERE](#)

2025-26 CTOM Problem Captains/Asst. Problem Captains



PRIMARY
[John Ehlinger](#)
[Gretchen Briggs](#)

PROBLEM 1
[Josh Young](#)
[Sharon Huynh](#)

PROBLEM 2
[Carley Heck](#)
[Rudy Chiti](#)

PROBLEM 3
[Sam Heck](#)
[Katie Pelkey](#)

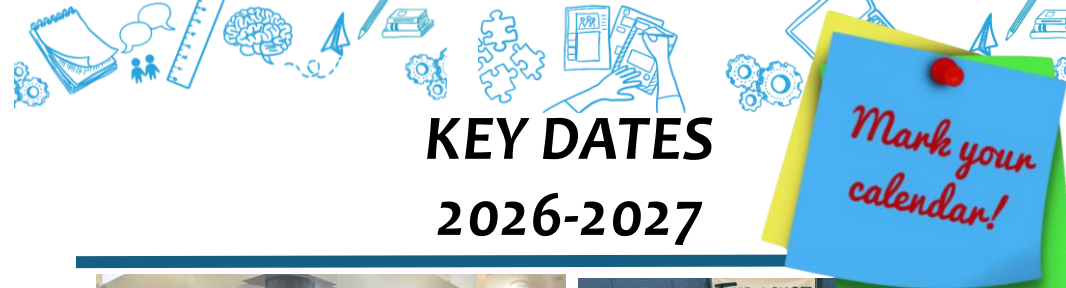
PROBLEM 4
[Amy Zinser](#)
[Sherri Martin](#)

PROBLEM 5
[Ashley Mrdelja](#)
[Hannah Leibowitz](#)



SPONTANEOUS
[Dave Schaller](#)
[Kyra Briggs](#)





KEY DATES 2026-2027



January 9

Coach Training B / CTOM Odyssey Day

(in person)

Feb 27

Date TBD – Judge Training

(virtual)

**March 13
CTOM
STATE TOURNAMENT**

Bethel Middle School

*welcomes CTOdyssey of the Mind
back to Bethel, CT!*

