

Fact Sheet

Odyssey of the Mind[®]

What is Odyssey of the Mind?

The Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program whose mission is to provide creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Through solving open-ended problems, students develop creative-thinking skills that can be applied to real-life situations. Teams from throughout the U.S. and more than 20 other countries participate in the program.

How does it work?

Schools or community groups purchase a membership and form teams of up to seven students. Each team chooses one of five competitive problems to solve. The problems appeal to a wide range of interests; some are technical in nature, while others are artistic or performance-oriented. Under the guidance of an adult coach, teams work on their solutions throughout the school year and, if they choose, present them in organized competitions in the spring. The friendly competitive aspect encourages students to be the best that they can be.

What are the competition levels?

In the U.S., the first level of competition is usually within a region of a state. Teams who place are invited to compete at the state level. These championship teams are then invited to participate in the annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, where they compete with teams from countries around the world, including Canada, China, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Poland, Singapore, and Uzbekistan. New countries join the program each year.

How are teams judged in competition?

Thousands of volunteers from around the world judge the competitions and serve in various positions to help make the tournaments a success. Teams are scored for their **long-term** problem solution, how well they solve a **spontaneous** problem on the spot, and **style**-- the elaboration of their long-term problem solution.

Who runs the Odyssey of the Mind?

Not-for-profit organizations administer the Odyssey of the Mind program in each participating U.S. state and country. Each organization is run by a local Association Director. The organizations are licensed by Creative Competitions, Inc. (CCI), which provides all of the problems and materials necessary to run training sessions and tournaments.

How did Odyssey of the Mind get its start?

Odyssey of the Mind was created by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus, Professor Emeritus at Rowan University in New Jersey. In 1978, 28 New Jersey schools participated in the very first creative problem-solving competition ever. "Dr. Sam" still develops all problems for the program, along with his son, Sammy, President of CCI.