

# What is Odyssey of the Mind?

The Odyssey of the Mind program fosters creative thinking and problem-solving skills among kindergarten through college level students around the world. It features annual competitions at the local, state, and international levels. Teams of seven students form and work to solve one of a number of long-term problems. These problems can vary from being more technical in nature (building mechanical devices and creating balsa wood structures), while others are artistic or performance based (creating a unique interpretation of a literary classic). On the day of competition, teams are also given a spontaneous problem, which allows the team members to use one of the most important skills they will learn in this program – TEAMWORK. The spontaneous problem also allows the team members to develop the ability to “think on their feet.” Students learn lifelong skills – working with others as a team, evaluating ideas, making decisions, and thinking creatively – all the while developing self-confidence and making new friends. Students will also learn there is more than one way to solve a problem and the process is more important than the end result. Being part of an Odyssey of the Mind team is a commitment that demands time and hard work. But it gives back fun, personal growth, and one-of-a-kind experiences.

## Why Odyssey of the Mind is Good for Kids?

- Students learn to examine problems and to identify the real challenge without limiting the possible solutions and their potential success.
- The creative-thinking process is nurtured and developed as a problem-solving tool.
- By providing open-ended problems in a wide range of subjects, students of all types will find something that will appeal to them.
- Each year, five new long-term problems are presented for the teams to solve.
- Team members are free to express their ideas and suggestions without fear of criticism.
- The creative problem-solving process rewards thinking “outside of the box.”
- Students learn skills that will provide them with the ability to solve problems – great and small – for a lifetime.
- Students are rewarded more for how they apply their knowledge, skills and talents, and not for coming up with the right answer.
- In Odyssey of the Mind problems, the sky is the limit when it comes to finding solutions!