Odyssey of the Mind Long Term Problems Categories

Long-Term Problems are the engine that propels Odyssey of the Mind. Teams select their problem when they join the program and spend weeks or months to create and develop their solution. Each team member will find a role to play in the many stages of problem-solving including brainstorming, artwork, set design, technical design, writing sketches and much more! The solutions are presented in a live performance.
Long Term problems are different every year but they fall into general categories:

① Vehicle

Problem #1 — Traveling through creative courses, hitting targets, delivering parts, and carrying teammates "across the sky or "under the seas" are some of the tasks completed by original team-made "vehicles. Teams use unusual sources of energy and original engineering to create vehicles that often don't look or move like a vehicle. OMers perform an original skit that usually includes characters and special effects but the emphasis is on the running and testing of the vehicle.

② Technical

Problem #2 – Creating a robotic pet, a Not-So-Haunted pop-up House, and rubber band powered devices are technical problems our teams have solved. The level of technology is up to the team and ranges from basic engineering and electronics to more advanced robotics. Technical devices have served purposes that include producing special effects, delivering mail, and improving the lives of people in need. OMers test their devices in performances that are often hilarious.

③ Classics

Problem #3 – Imagine turning the story of Pandora's Box into a video game or creating an original Lost Labor of Heracles! In our Classics problem Teams write and perform original theatrical performances based on a work from classical literature, artwork, music, culture, or history. Subjects range from bringing the past to life to revisiting and rewriting history, all while OMers learn about world history. Solutions often reflect upon the majesty and sophistication of humanity's most impactful and enduring creations.

④ Structure

Problem #4 – Picture a 15-gram (½ ounce) structure made of balsa wood holding and balancing a stack of weights while getting rammed, twisted, or even broken apart. Each year a new problem requires an original structure to withstand a new test of strength as it holds weight until it breaks. It's not uncommon for experienced teams to hold over 1,000 pounds. OMers create and present performances ranging from comical to extravagant where testing their structures is part of the action.

⑤ Performance

Problem #5 – Whether it is showing the world from the point of view of an animal, acting out a Food Court where all of the characters in a courtroom are food, or showing social outcasts saving the planet, you can be sure that our performance problem will be fun and unexpected. In their solutions teams integrate stage and drama elements from lighting effects to puppetry to elaborate set changes. Original characters and unusual situations give OMers plenty of opportunity to show off their creativity.

⑥ Primary (K-2)

Primary Problem –Teams present their solutions at tournaments in a non-competitive showcase where they interact with judges who provide feedback. Primary problems are designed to provide younger OMers with a comprehensive, fun, and instructional experience that helps introduce them to Odyssey of the Mind.