



Creative Problem Solving + Teamwork = Odyssey of the Mind



What is Odyssey of the Mind?

1. Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides students **creative problem-solving** opportunities in a **team** environment
2. An after-school academic enrichment program that teaches lifelong creative problem solving skills and teamwork
3. The **Anti-SOL**. Odyssey of the Mind problems stress multiple responses to the same question. In Odyssey of the Mind, there is NEVER only one right answer.
4. A lot of **FUN!**

What do Odyssey teams do?

During the season, which typically runs from October to March, Odyssey teams:

1. Practice **spontaneous and team-building problems** that build communication and intra-personal skills
2. Work toward creating a solution in **skit form** for one of **six long-term problems** (problem synopses are online at www.odysseyofthemind.org)
3. Participate in regional (Western Loudoun County) **competition** in March to show off their solutions to their problems



Who can participate?

1. Odyssey teams are geared toward gifted students of all abilities -- not just those who are academically gifted. Odyssey problems allow for expression of a student's strengths and abilities whatever they may be. **Artistic, verbal, musical, spatial - there's a place for all types of creativity in Odyssey!**
2. The program is open to all RHES students in **grades K-5**.
3. Students are grouped into **teams of no more than 7 members** each; the small size encourages participation from all members
4. **Teams are grouped by grade level**. Students in K-2 are on "primary" teams; students in grades 3-5 are "Division 1."
5. Each team **MUST** have **one adult coach**; having an assistant or co-coach is encouraged.



Who are the coaches and what do they do?

1. Any adult in the community may coach a team, but the coach is generally the **parent(s) of a team member**
2. Coaches must attend regional **training**, prepare and run meetings, and attend regional competition with the team
3. Coaches **help the team learn** to work together effectively and are facilitators for teams as they solve their problems.
4. Coaches **may not help the team solve the problem**. Odyssey solutions must come from the minds and hands of the team members themselves, not from any outside assistance.

What does it take to be a good coach?

Odyssey coaches do not have to be "creative." Instead coaches should have:

1. Organizational skills
2. Patience
3. Time to let the team work
4. Ability to "bite your tongue" and let team members solve the problem entirely on their own

Why coach?

1. It's the only way to **guarantee there is a team** for your child
2. Coaches set the meeting time and place, so by coaching you **guarantee that the meetings fit your schedule**.
3. **It's amazing** to watch kids come together and see what they can come up with on their own.
4. Your child will **thank you** for it (maybe not now, but certainly later!)

How do I learn more/get involved?

1. Attend the school's parent information night.
2. Visit www.odysseyofthemind.com.
3. Email RHES coordinator Kim Ramsey at kramsey@alumni.virginia.edu.

