

# ***Odyssey of the Mind***

is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and World level. Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

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

The Odyssey of the Mind teaches students to learn creative problem-solving methods while having fun in the process. For more than twenty five years, this unique program has helped teachers generate excitement in their students. By tapping into creativity, and through encouraging imaginative paths to problem-solving, students learn skills that will provide them with the ability to solve problems -- great and small -- for a lifetime. The Odyssey of the Mind teaches students how to think divergently by providing open-ended problems that appeal to a wide range of interests. Students learn how to identify challenges and to think creatively to solve those problems. They are free to express their ideas and suggestions without fear of criticism. The creative problem-solving process rewards thinking "outside of the box." While conventional thinking has an important place in a well-rounded education, students need to learn how to think creatively and productively.

## **In the Odyssey of the Mind . . .**

- Students develop team-building skills by working in groups of as many as seven students per team.
- 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.
- Students of all types will find something that will appeal to them.
- The fun of participation leads to an elevated interest in regular classroom curricula.
- Teachers have a program to further provide students with a well-rounded education.

## **Who Participates?**

Millions of students from kindergarten through college have participated in the Odyssey of the Mind. Since the Odyssey of the Mind eliminates the fear of criticism, even shy students are afforded the opportunity to open up and express themselves. Students learn to work in teams. Each year, five new competitive problems are presented for the teams to solve. These long-term problems are solved over weeks and months. Some of the problems are more technical in nature, while others are artistic or performance based. Each long-term problem rewards "Style" in the solution. This helps teach students that they should not simply try to solve problems but take the next step of enhancing their solutions. The teams are invited to participate in competition and present their solution with other teams. At the competition, the teams are given an on-the-spot "spontaneous" problem to solve. The combination of long-term problem-solving, Style, and spontaneous problem-solving produces a confident, able student.

**Please turn in sign-up sheets by September 29, 2017 so**  
**coaches can get the teams set and started on their**  
**problems!**