

Tropical Region Odyssey of the Mind

Intro Package
2011-2012



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<http://tropicalodyssey.org>



Introduction

The Florida Odyssey of the Mind organization invites K–12 and college students to participate in the Odyssey of the Mind program. In 1978, Odyssey of the Mind helped pioneer the idea of creative problem solving as an educational tool. From our modest beginnings as a local organization we have grown to one positively impacting the lives of millions of students around the world. Odyssey provides learning opportunities that encourage students to apply their talents and strengths to solving “problems” that develop their divergent thinking skills. Educators like the program because it brings creative problem solving into the school environment, offering opportunities to extend lessons beyond the classroom. More than being a learning tool, the benefits of participation are innumerable.

Odyssey of the Mind:

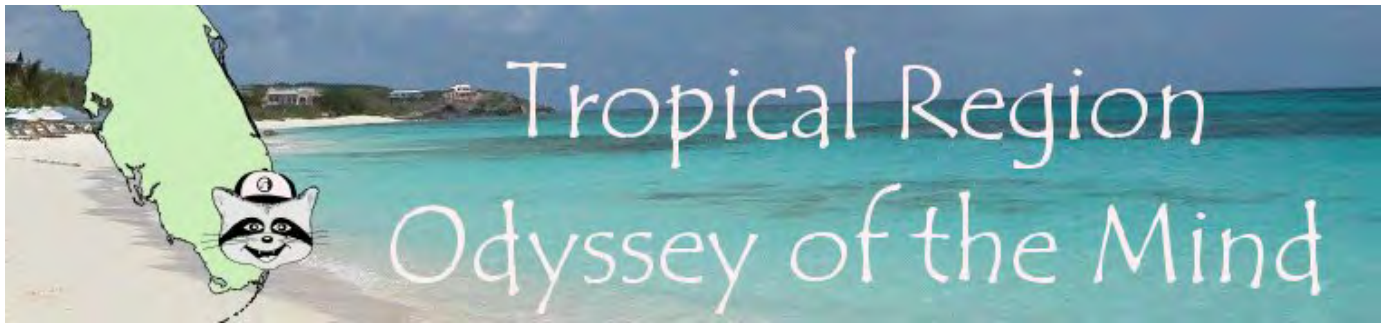
- Improves brainstorming and critical thinking skills.
- Builds teamwork skills such as cooperation and creative problem solving.
- Builds confidence and self-reliance leading to increased self-esteem.
- Develops respect for individual’s strengths
- Provides an environment where students can learn to express and implement their ideas in a collaborative setting.
- Challenges students to become more detail-oriented and inclined to do their best.
- Leads to unique, unforgettable experiences that will serve them in every aspect of their lives now and in the future.

Over 500 schools in Florida are already taking advantage of the learning opportunities provided by our program. While it is common for Gifted and Talented programs to integrate Odyssey of the Mind problem solving into their curriculum, we believe that all students can benefit from participation. In this time of budget cuts for many districts, you can retain arts education, technology, and other subjects by incorporating them into Odyssey of the Mind problem solutions.

The Odyssey of the Mind conforms to National educational standards as well as those of the State of Florida.

The cost of only \$135 per year allows you to have as many students participate as you wish, and to send teams to competition if you choose. For regional competition there is a \$75 registration fee per team for Divisions I – III and a \$20 per Primary team registration fee. This fits easily into almost any budget. Often, parents’ associations are more than willing to support the program once they learn how it can benefit their children.

It is the perfect time to join for the 2011 - 2012 school year. For more information, go to the international Web site, www.odysseyofthemind.com, or visit our regional website at www.tropicalodyssey.org. Please visit our website to sign-up for our e-mail newsletter and to obtain additional information about Odyssey of the Mind in Miami-Dade County.



ABOUT ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

Things To Know for Your Odyssey

Competing teams participate in both a Long-Term and Spontaneous problem.

Teams of five to seven students develop solutions to one of six Long-Term Problems over several months, while also practicing for a Spontaneous Problem.

In the Long Term Problem teams develop a theatrical and engineering solution to a situational problem over several months. Just as much fun, are the Spontaneous Problems where the students develop brainstorming skills to solve problems given at the competition.

Teams, problems and competitions are organized into five divisions by age groups (Primary, I, II, III, IV). The Primary division problem is a demonstration problem that is not judged competitively.

In Florida we have Regional competitions where teams advance to State Finals. Top teams from the State Finals go on to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

The Florida Odyssey of the Mind program is made possible by the participation of volunteers. Volunteers include teachers, parents and other community members who serve as Coaches, Coordinators, Judges, Tournament Assistants, Trainers, Problem Captains and Board Members.

For more information, visit our websites at:

Tropical Region:

<http://tropicalodyssey.org>

Florida Odyssey:

<http://www.floridaodysseyofthemind.org>

National Organization:

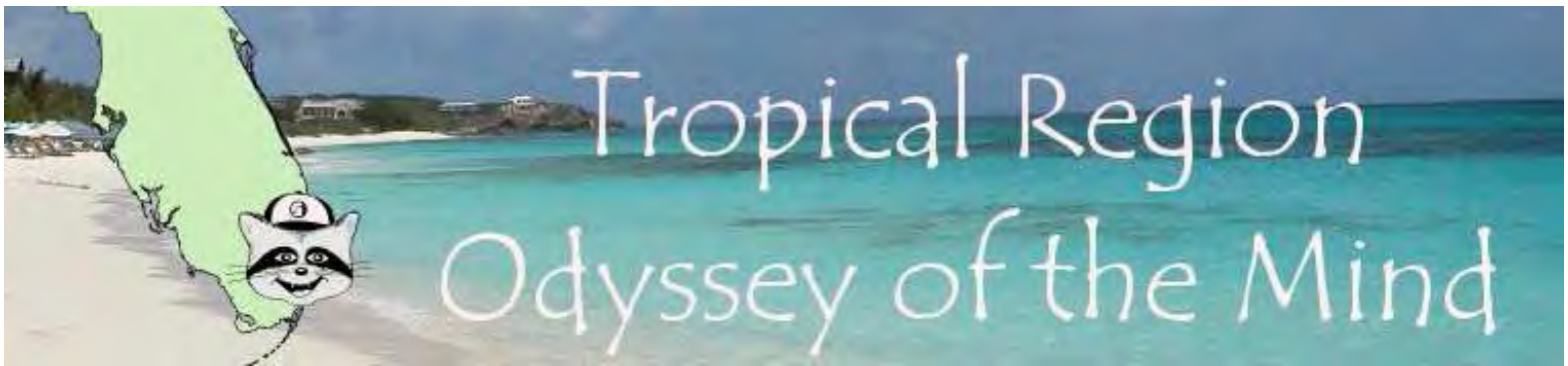
<http://www.odysseyofthemind.com>

Odyssey of the Mind Division Table

K-12 School System		Other International (Non K-12)	
Grade	Division	Age	Division
1st Grade	I	3-7 yrs	I
2nd Grade	I	8 yrs	I
3rd Grade	I	9 yrs	I
4th Grade	I	10 yrs	I
5th Grade	I	11 yrs	I
6th Grade	II	12 yrs	II
7th Grade	II	13 yrs	II
8th Grade	II	14 yrs	II
9th Grade	III	15 yrs	III
10th Grade	III	16 yrs	III
11th Grade	III	17 yrs	III
12th Grade	III	18 yrs	III
Grade on May 1, 2012		Age on May 1, 2012	

Note: Primary teams consist of Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students.

Division IV- Collegiate: All team members must have a high school diploma or its equivalent and be enrolled in at least one course at a two-or four-year college or university.



Calendar of Events and Important Dates

November 19, 2011

Spontaneous Fair and Coach's Training

Team members will have the opportunity to try a variety of sample problems to become familiar with the Spontaneous portion of the competition. Coaches will meet with the region director to get important information.

December 15, 2011

Deadline for team registration.

January 28, 2012

Advanced Coach's Training

Coaches will get more information about the tournament and competition venue.

March 3, 2012

Regional Tournament

Miami Springs Senior High

April 14, 2012

State Finals Tournament

University of Central Florida

May 23-27, 2012

World Finals Tournament

Iowa State University

2011-12 Long-Term Problem Synopses*

**Tentative as of April 15, 2011. All problems have an 8-minute time limit.*

Problem 1: Ooh-Motional Vehicle

The problem requires teams to design, build, and drive a vehicle that will travel a course where it will encounter three different situations. The vehicle will display a different human emotion for each encounter and one will cause it to travel in reverse. The team will create a theme for the presentation that incorporates the vehicle and the different emotions. The emphases will be on the technical risk-taking and creativity of the vehicle's engineering for travel, and change of emotional appearance.

Divisions: I, II & III. Cost limit: \$145.

Problem 2: Weird Science

The team will create and present a performance about a team of scientists on an expedition to uncover the cause of mysterious events. The team will select the location of the expedition from NASA Earth Observatory Photographs to be posted at http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/odysseyofthemind/event_selector.php. The scientists will collect two samples and will report on their findings. The performance will also include a technical representation of the mysterious events, a moving backdrop that helps portray traveling, and a team-created device that the scientists use on the expedition.

Sponsored by NASA.



Divisions: I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$145.

Problem 3: Classics . . . To Be or Not To Be

In this Classics problem, teams will put a musical theatre spin on one of William Shakespeare's most famous lines: "To Be Or Not To Be." Hamlet, the title character, ponders this question and realizes that the easy way out is not always the correct choice. An original "Hamlet" character will face a team-created dilemma. Unlike Shakespeare's Hamlet, the team's character will take the easy way out only to discover that it was the wrong choice. Teams will also incorporate a character that portrays Hamlet's conscience, a creative scene change, a creative costume change, and use of a "trap door." A portion of the performance will include musical theatre elements.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$125.

Problem 4: You Make the Call

For this problem, teams will design and build a structure made of only balsa wood and glue that will balance and support as much weight as possible. The structure may have a maximum weight of 9 grams and will receive 2 times the weight held, or 12 grams and receive 1 ½ times the weight held, or 15 grams and receive the actual weight held. The testing of the structure will be presented in a performance that includes mathematics in its theme.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$145.

Problem 5: Odyssey Angels

The team will create and present a performance where a group of students travel throughout one or more team-created places where they encounter negative situations. These "Odyssey Angels" change what they find and turn them into positive situations. On their journey, they help two individuals with different problems and help save an entire community from a bad situation. One Odyssey Angel cannot speak, and another has a special team-created power.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$125.

Primary Problem: Hide and Peek

The team is to create a device that uncovers three surprise objects by lifting a team-decorated container off of each of them from 5, 8, and 10 feet away. The containers may be raised at any time, in any order, and may be raised simultaneously. The demonstration of the solution will be presented during a performance that integrates raising the containers and the surprise objects in its theme. There will be a narrator character and a setting.

Grades K-2. Cost limit: \$125.



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.

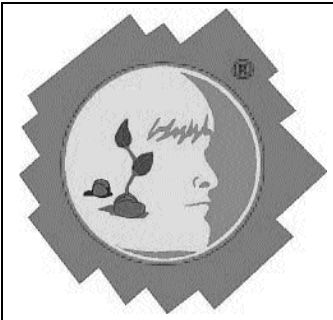
Who runs the Odyssey of the Mind?

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.





Biography

Dr. C. Samuel Micklus, Founder



Fast facts about "Dr. Sam:"

- *Born in 1934 and raised in Southern New Jersey.*
- *Currently resides in Bradenton, Florida.*
- *Taught in the Technology Department of Rowan University from 1968-1991.*
- *Has made Odyssey of the Mind a family effort: wife Carole is World Finals Tournament Director and son Sammy is Program Director.*
- *Along with Sammy, writes 6 long-term and more than 30 spontaneous problems each year.*
- *Favorite sayings:
"There's a problem in there somewhere."
"There's no such thing as a bad idea -- but there's always a better one."
"Creativity can be taught!"*

Dr. C. Samuel Micklus is the Founder of the Odyssey of the Mind program and a Professor Emeritus at Rowan University (formerly Glassboro State College) in New Jersey, where he taught technology courses from 1968 to 1991.

In his early years at Rowan, Professor Micklus experimented with creative problem-solving activities in his industrial design classes. He wrote challenging problems to set a creative framework for the course, oftentimes rewarding the risk-takers whose solutions may not have worked, but whose ideas were feasible and innovative.

Dr. Micklus' classes at Rowan grew in popularity, and before long his creative activities received media attention. High school students became interested in Dr. Micklus' "challenges" and, in 1978, teams from 28 New Jersey junior and senior high schools participated in the first creative problem-solving competition. Since then, millions of students around the world have solved problems written by Dr. Micklus.

"Dr. Sam," as the kids call him, loves watching teams solve his problems. He says, "Odyssey of the Mind teaches young people to think, create different possible solutions to problems, evaluate ideas, and then carry them out. The problems must be challenging and, at the same time, make learning fun."

Dr. Micklus earned his Ed.D. in 1975 at New York University, an M.A. in Education in 1968 from Trenton State College, and a B.S. in Industrial Design in 1966 from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

A recognized pioneer in bringing creative problem-solving into the classroom, Dr. Micklus has received many awards for his achievements. In 1997, he was presented with the NJ Association for Gifted Children's Hall of Fame Award. He and his wife Carole were also recipients of New Jersey's Pioneer Award. In 1985, Dr. Micklus was presented with Rowan University's Management Institute Leadership Award and, in 2000, received the University of the Arts' Silver Star Alumni Award for his work with Odyssey of the Mind.

Dr. Micklus has spoken at conferences about gifted education, and technology and curriculum development in nearly every U.S. state, Washington, D.C., Australia, Canada, Belgium, China, England, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland and Russia. He has also spoken at corporate meetings for Intel, Pepsi-Cola, and IBM, where he was a featured speaker at their prestigious Golden Circle. He has appeared on numerous radio and television newscasts, talk shows and documentaries; and he has written many books, articles and teachers' manuals on industrial design and creative problem solving.

This article was written by a long-time educator and Odyssey of the Mind director.
It first appeared in the Spring 2003 issue of the Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter.

Educational Standards? They Don't Come Higher Than In Odyssey of the Mind

by Joanne Rompel, Illinois Association Director and Educator of Gifted & Talented

In preparing to meet and exceed each student's needs to the best of our abilities, educators look at learning styles, standards, and student performance. Leaving no child behind is a national decree. "If it's not standard based it's not happening during our class time," is the cry. Educators have found that using Odyssey of the Mind is a way to extend creative experiences in a real work-world environment while aligning with national, state, and school standards.

The Odyssey of the Mind program is able to meld the state and national learning standards while extending academic challenges that employ the processing of thinking skills. Students are required to solve real-world problems in a creative venue designed to fulfill the requirements of the long-term problems offered each year.

The problems encompass the academic skills required by state and national curricula; they are cognizant of the academically talented and challenge students in a variety of genres. Without having to "learn through the seat of their pants," students learn by doing, moving, and sharing. They practice social skills through working in teams, negotiation through validating their ideas, and assessment through the use of their own and problem rubrics.

Educators delight in the thought that they can capture students' *aha!* as they discover new ideas, formulate hypotheses, test many solutions, and, as a team, decide on a final product based on an evaluation that keeps the target in focus.

Many school districts are experiencing seri-

ous cutbacks in fine arts and other classes for their special populations — both remedial and challenge groups. Odyssey of the Mind provides standard-based, goal-oriented curriculum experiences that are educationally solid in all subject areas while immersing students at various levels in the learning process.

Students are consumers of education. They are developing not only academically but also socially and skillfully. Specific tasks designed to practice their newly acquired skills are measurable; growth is observable and can be accurately

'Odyssey of the Mind provides standard-based, goal-oriented curriculum experiences that are educationally solid in all subject areas . . . '

reported through the use of rubric (evaluation). Students learn the real work-world skills of defining the problem, developing many possible solutions, and establishing criteria to evaluate the process. They then decide, as a group, how to implement their solution in a creative way. Not only do they learn what is

required, they learn to budget time, resources, and materials to complete and "market" their "product" (solution).

While students across many grade levels receive the same long-term problems, the end product is always unique, and age and academically appropriate. The application of standard-based learning at each age and skill level validates the educational value of the Odyssey of the Mind's creative, social, and interactive learning. Bringing standards to this program or bringing this program to the standards isn't the issue. In standards-based education we have goals. In Odyssey of the Mind, we have fun while learning and meeting those goals.



Reflections of a First-Time Coach

How Odyssey of the Mind Helped to Put My Life In Perspective

As I entered into my first coaching experience with Odyssey of the Mind, I often asked myself what I could possibly have been thinking . . . I had a team that consisted of:

- Three children with parents who spoke no English (Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish)
- One child with severe ADHD
- One child who broke down in tears during EVERY practice
- Two children who were so painfully shy I did not hear their voices for one month
- Two children in the struggles of a bitter divorce
- One child who had a parent diagnosed with a life-threatening illness two days before a competition

Plus, my team fought non-stop for eight weeks. I did not know what I could possibly accomplish with these kids.

Well, the day of the competition, they pulled it all together and took 7th out of 14 teams. (They would have scored higher if it had not been for my misinterpreting part of the problem. Of course, that made me feel even worse!) I left the competition feeling pretty blue but thankful that it was over.

I always heard the little voice in the back of my head saying, "It's the process, not the outcome." It is hard for a coach to keep that in perspective. On the surface, I did not notice very much in the way of greatness during the process, and the outcome seemed disappointing. But, as I met with the kids at school on Monday and I looked back over the past three months I realized that the following had happened:

- The kids whose parents did not speak English (and had not lived in the country very long) were picked up by the coaches and were transported to the performance to watch their kids - we broke down a lot of cultural barriers trying to communicate with each other.
- The child with ADHD learned to interact with a team.
- The child who cried at every performance gained confidence and performed beautifully.
- The painfully shy kids were running around the competition laughing and interacting with other children.
- The parents going through the bitter divorces were at the competition enjoying their children's performance - as a family.
- The child who had an ill parent spent the day with us and was thankful it took his mind off troubles at home.

The best part of the whole experience: On Monday morning, one of my shy kids asked, "Is this the end of Odyssey of the Mind? Am I really going to go the rest of the year without seeing you?"

I realized then that Odyssey of the Mind had made a huge impact. It was not the scores, it was not the performance, it was the process of getting there. It was the POSITIVE changes that I saw in all the kids. It put my life in perspective.

Theresa Lundy
Sherwood Park Ele, MI

HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN ODYSSEY OF THE MIND
HELP DEVELOP SKILLS NECESSARY IN REAL LIFE?

<u>Future Role</u>	<u>How Odyssey Teams Practice for This Role</u>
1. Information Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpret a complex set of problem specifications & rubrics.• Identify & research appropriate resources.• Interpret and evaluate that research.• Synthesize research and resources from many areas to design the solution and presentation.
2. Effective Communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use visual, symbolic, dramatic & literary elements.• Include creative style components.• Communicate the solution within a specific time limit.• Assure absolute clarity in the explanation of the solution.• Include original elements such as dialogue, music, poetry and art in various media.• Prepare & submit written descriptions of the solution.
3. Numeric Problem Solvers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All problems require teams to budget materials and money and solutions must be created within designated cost limits.• In the structure problem:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use technology, data, measurement and advanced concepts of physics and motion.○ Construct balsa wood and glue towers to support weight and to meet a physical requirement that is changed annually,○ Comply with impact, torque, weight and specific design limitations.• In the vehicle problem analyze data about the design of specified propulsion systems and execute intricate courses and tasks.• In the technical problem develop and execute mechanical systems that will trigger a set of reactions and complete specified tasks.
4. Critical and Creative Thinkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generate imaginative and original strategies for designing a solution.• Exchange and evaluate various options in terms of their uniqueness and creativity.• Develop the most unusual and innovative solution possible in addition to assuring technical accuracy.• Devise creative presentation elements to gain judging credit for Style.• Predict and plan for what to do when the solution presentation does <i>not</i> go according to plan.
5. Ethical and Responsible Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven-member teams cannot be changed once work on the problem has begun.• No outside assistance is permitted from anyone not officially listed as a team member.• Assign each member's role and tasks based on an evaluation of his/her strengths and limitations.

- Set personal goals, follow-through on tasks, complete action plans and meet all deadlines.
- Practice open and respectful exchange of ideas and opinions among all individual members.

6. Resource Managers

- Observe the problem-specific cost limitations.
- Maintain records to verify all expenditures.
- Locate, obtain and allocate materials used.
- Manage time and personnel resources economically.
- Locate space to work and ways to store and preserve a project-in-progress over several months.
- Arrange for transporting presentation materials to competition sites, including breakdown, packaging and re-assembling the parts.

7. Systems Managers

- Analyze different systems with their parts and functions.
- Design or modify a system to solve the problem such as propulsion systems in a vehicle problem or communication systems in a theatrical problem.
- Analyze complex scoring systems to set priorities and time-lines for meeting the goals.

8. Cooperative Workers

- Individually contribute to team goals; motivate/energize each other; constantly work to improve group processes.
- Demonstrate teamwork, not only when the solution goes according to plan, but especially when it does not.
- Develop such effective group awareness that members can work together almost intuitively.
- Display consistent dedication to “the good of the group.”
- Exceed personal expectations by harnessing the power of the team.

9. Effective Leaders

- Use initiative and demonstrate leadership in fulfilling one’s individual role.
- Share personal ideas, beliefs, feelings and values with other team members and encourage them to do the same.
- Listen effectively to all ideas.
- Explore and negotiate resolution to team conflicts.
- Strive to bring out the best each team member has to offer.

10. Culturally Sensitive Learners

- Recognize that **Long-Term Problems** are written from diverse perspectives to include a variety of cultural, social and academic influences.
- Participate on teams composed of students from different cultural, social, academic, ethnic and economic backgrounds.
- Respect the ideas and contributions of each person.
- Interact with and appreciate the talents of students from other regions, states and countries at various levels of *Odyssey* competition.





ODYSSEY OF THE MIND® 2011-12 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Questions? Email info@odysseyofthemind.com or call 856.256.2797.

For new memberships or renewals, complete this form and return it with a check, purchase order, or credit card information (see below).

Check one:

Divisions I, II and III:

- _____ **Individual school:** Must register in the school name. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.
- _____ **Two or more schools:** Must share the same principal to be under the same membership. Use school district name on application. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.
- _____ **Home-schooled students:** Must include at least four home-schooled students. May also include up to three members from **one** school. May enter one team per problem in competition.
- _____ **Community Group:** May enter one team per problem in competition. May not be an organization established solely for the purpose of participating in Odyssey of the Mind. Please submit by-laws if this is a new membership.

Division IV: _____ All team members must be high school graduates and registered for at least one class at a college or university. They do not have to attend the same institution. May enter one team per problem. May proceed directly to World Finals.

Membership name _____ Membership number (for renewal, if known) _____

Grades covered by membership _____ School district _____ County _____

Contact person (may be a coach) _____

Mailing address (for newsletter delivery and correspondence) _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Daytime phone _____ FAX _____ Email _____

Each individual membership costs \$135, but you will receive discounts if you purchase more than one membership. For each membership purchased, you get five competitive **long-term problems, one **primary problem**, one copy of the **Program Guide**, one **newsletter subscription**, and more!*

- _____ **Individual 2011-2012 Odyssey of the Mind membership @ \$135**.....
- _____ **Additional membership(s) for the same school or community group @ \$100**.....
- _____ **6-10 memberships for the same school district (registered at the same time) @ \$120**.....
- _____ **11 or more memberships from the same school district (registered at the same time) @ \$100**.....

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND SUPPORT MATERIALS

- _____ **A Creative Experience** — Odyssey of the Mind promotional video DVD @ \$9.95
- _____ ***Lots of Problems . . And Tips to Make You More Creative @ \$17** tips on problem-solving
- _____ ****Creative Interaction @ \$17** Discusses the importance of interaction between students.....
- _____ ****Applying Your Creativity @ \$15** Discusses different types of human creativity
- _____ ****The Spirit of Creativity @ \$15** Anecdotes about OotM written by Dr. Sam.
- _____ **Spontaneous Combustion @ \$7.50** Booklet of problems and tips
- _____ **Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ \$7.50** (one is included with membership)
- _____ **Coaches Training Video @ \$20** DVD with tips and techniques for coaches.....
- _____ packs of **Balsa Wood** (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ \$20 per 50 pieces.....

** Spend \$40 or more and get free Shipping & Handling. Orders under \$40, add \$7.50 Shipping & Handling.
Contact CCI for S & H outside of the U.S.*

***There are no Shipping & Handling charges for membership packets.**

***These books are a collection of long-term and spontaneous problems from past competition years.*

Subtotal _____
S & H _____
Total _____

Payment Method:

- **U.S. Mail:** Send this completed form along with a check, money order or purchase order, **payable to CCI**, or with your credit card info to:
CCI, 406 Ganttown Road, Sewell, NJ, 08080
- **FAX:** Send this form along with a copy of your purchase order, or include your credit card information and fax to **856.256.2798**
- **On-line:** If paying by credit card, go to **www.odysseyofthemind.com**
____ VISA ____ MasterCard ____ American Express ____ Discover

Acct. no. _____

Exp. _____ CVV (security) Code _____

Signature of cardholder _____

SHIPPING ADDRESS (For UPS Delivery)

Is this a residence? _____ yes _____ no

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____

Zip _____ Country _____