

NEWS

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Thousands of Creative Kids Compete in Michigan

East Lansing M.I. – Over 20,000 students and supporters from around the world will travel to Michigan for the 36th annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals from May 20 – 23 at Michigan State University. Students from different cultures and widely varying economic backgrounds will prove that creativity is universal by coming together for this event. They will demonstrate their creative solution to an Odyssey of the Mind problem while appreciating the creativity of others.

The teams have worked throughout the school year solving an OotM problem and were judged as the most creative in a series of rigorous state and national competitions. At MSU, the teams will represent their state and country in hopes to prove that they are the world's most creative problem-solvers. Odyssey of the Mind has teams competing from throughout the United States and in 16 other countries including Canada, China, South Korea, India, Japan, Russia, Poland, Germany, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Moldova, Togo, the United Kingdom, and Mexico.

They will come with interesting costumes, original stage sets, and innovative inventions — all part of solving an Odyssey problem. This year's choice of problems include:

- *Runaway "Train"*: Teams stretch their engineering skills as they design and build three different vehicles that travel on tracks and overcome various obstacles—moving uphill, towing something, and more. Once the vehicle reaches its final destination it will display a flag or banner during a victory lap!
- *Experiencing Technical Difficulties*: Teams create inventions powered by rubber bands that help to solve an engineering problem. These devices must perform various tasks including: ring a bell, change the wording on something, sound an alarm, move an object, etc. There will also be a mysterious engineer character in the performance!
- *Classics. . . Pandora's Box*: teams put a video game spin on the story of Pandora's Box. In the performance, a gamer character will take on this game inspired by the Greek myth. It will include a prologue depicting the original story of Pandora's Box, three characters representing evils that escaped the box, and more. To beat the game, the player will release hope into the world.
- *Lose Your Marbles*: Eighteen grams of balsa wood and glue are designed into structures that have been known to hold thousands of pounds. This year the structure must break apart so marbles can be released from inside — all while holding weights!
- *Silent Movie*: In this humorous problem teams depict a Director character that produces a silent movie featuring a humorous villain that commits three silly acts of "villainy." Characters may not speak as part of the presentation. Instead, like classic silent films, the team will use music played on a team-created instrument and creatively displayed subtitles to convey its story.

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These problems are judged on creativity and risk-taking. The students learn to apply their creativity to problem solving. Teams also learn how to manage time and money, how to share ideas and negotiate with one another, and to perform in front of an audience. Because the problems provide for divergent solutions students incorporate their knowledge and interests into their solutions such as math, history, art, music, science, acrobatics, athletics, robotics, and anything else a child can imagine and enjoy.

Although this is a competition to become a world champion, kids will form life-long friendships with their teammates and opponents. These friendships span the globe! Through Odyssey, they learn to communicate and appreciate different cultures. The Odyssey of the Mind “family” is made up of many different cultures, personalities, and ages. There will be 847 teams participating that were considered the best of the best.

There are also many other events at World Finals, such as the Creativity Festival. Booths from each Odyssey state or country will challenge attendees with creative games. NASA, our sponsor, will have a booth at the festival handing out informational materials. Entry to the competitions and festival are free and open to the public.

The competition will conclude with an Awards Ceremony, where over 18,000 people will gather to see the World Champions of Creativity announced.

Like most kids, Odyssey of the Mind team members will exceed expectations when given the opportunity to express themselves. OotM Found Dr. Sam Micklus says, “Odyssey of the Mind students have the best minds in the world.”

Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program for students from K-college. Founded in 1978, it is the oldest and largest creative problem-solving competition in the world. Learn more at www.odysseyofthemind.com. Visit our World Finals page and find teams from your town! Simply click “competition schedule” and enter your area.

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