

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Odyssey of the Mind Kids Take Over Iowa!

Ames, I.A. – Over 6,500 creative students from around the world will be competing in the 30th annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals from May 27 – 30 at Iowa State University. Students from different cultures and widely varying economic backgrounds will prove that creativity is universal. They will all demonstrate their unique 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 ISU, 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 throughout the United States and in more than 15 other countries including China, South Korea, Poland, Germany, Singapore, and Mexico.

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

- *Earth Trek*: Teams designed and built vehicles that appear to travel around the globe visiting its many unique environments. They also put their creative ideas to good use by solving a potential problem facing the planet.
- *Teach Yer Creature*: Teams built mechanical “creatures” that learn and mimic human behaviors with humorous results.
- *Classics. . . The Lost Labor of Heracles*: Teams learned about Greek mythology and created a “lost” labor for Heracles. They also recreated ancient Greek art and costume.
- *Shockwaves*: 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 withstand “shockwaves” from falling objects all while continuing to hold weight.
- *Superstition*: Teams invent their own superstition and recreate how it came to be. They incorporate that into a humorous performance complete with dancing, singing, and fun costumes.

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 Odyssey such as math, history, art, music, science, acrobatics, athletics, robotics, and anything else a child can imagine and enjoy. This prepares them for the future as well as gives them a fun outlet to express their creativity.

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Although this is a competition to be 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 750 teams of “kids” between the ages of eight and 80!

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, OotM sponsor, will have a booth at the festival handing out informational materials. Entry to the competitions and festival are free.

The competition will conclude with an Awards Ceremony, where over 16,000 people will gather to see the World Champions of Creativity announced. During this ceremony, an Odyssey of the Mind Creativity Award will also be given out to a group who has made a positive difference in society using creativity. This year’s award will go to Canstruction® for its innovative ways it helps feed hunger with creative sculptures made out of canned goods. A representative will be there to accept the award and to show a special video about the company.

Like most kids, Odyssey of the Mind team members will exceed expectations when given the opportunity to express themselves. At World Finals, few will become World Champions, but every team that solved their problem is a winner.

Odyssey founder, 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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