



Odyssey of the Mind[®]
The beyond the box experience.

Spontaneous Coaching Guide

Spontaneous Coaching Guide

Thank you so much for taking this training! The spontaneous portion of the competition can be intimidating, but with practice your team will gain confidence in their creative problem-solving abilities. After this training, be sure to check out the Program Guide for more information.

An **INTRODUCTION** and **REMINDER**



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Spontaneous Basics

What is Spontaneous?

- The portion of the competition where teams show up, are given a problem, and solve it within a limited amount of time.
- Team members learn to “think on their feet”
- This portion of the competition is worth up to 100 points.



Types of Spontaneous Problems

- **Verbal:** A problem where teams give oral responses.
- **Verbal/Hands-On:** A verbal problem that will require the manipulation of or interaction with objects in solving the problem.
- **Hands-on:** A problem where teams are asked to build something, manipulate objects and much more.

NOTE: Each team solves **one** spontaneous problem in competition, it will fall under one of these three categories.



Competition Details

- **ALL** team members (up to 7) are allowed and encouraged to participate in all types of Spontaneous problems.
- The **type of problem** will not be revealed until the team enters the spontaneous competition room.
- Team members will be given a **Team Copy** of the problem to follow along as the judge reads it out loud.



Listen Carefully!

- For ALL TYPES of problems, team members should listen closely to the directions for their specific problem.
- Remember, the nature of Spontaneous is that you never know what you'll get! Problems and procedures may vary.



Time Limit

All problems have a time limit (usually no more than 8 minutes).

- **Verbal Problems:** Teams are usually given think time and then additional time to give responses.
- **Verbal/Hands-on Problems:** Teams may be given time for discussion and/or manipulation of objects.
- **Hands-on Problems:** Teams are given time to strategize, practice, and solve the problem.
- **ALL Problems:** Team members may ask the judges questions, but time continues.



Teamwork

- Working well together **enhances** team solutions and often helps lead to success.
- Some spontaneous problems specifically award points for teamwork.
- Team members **are allowed** to talk to each other during spontaneous unless the problem states otherwise.



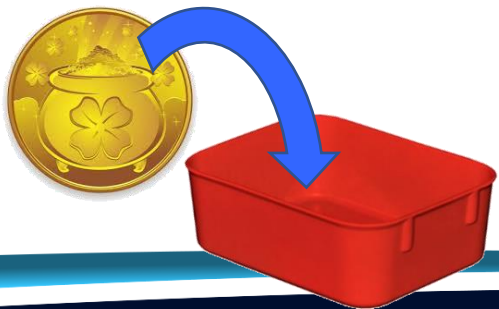
Limited Responses in Verbal Problems

- The team will be given a **limited number** of responses.
- Responses are tracked by using **items** that are randomly scattered in front of the team to start the problem.
- Response items could be tokens, plastic discs, poker chips, coins, etc.



Giving Verbal Responses

- When a team member is ready to give a response: select an item, place it in a container, and give a response.
- Team members may respond in any order.
- Individual team members may give as many or as few responses as the team wishes.
- It's a good idea to practice this procedure to work on teamwork and taking turns– this makes best use of the time limit!



An Example of a Verbal Problem

➤ How are a **cat** and a **lion** different?

Responses are scored as Creative or Common based on the creativity of each response.

- **A Common Response:** The cat is small.
- **A Creative Response:** The cat tells the truth and the other one is a lion.



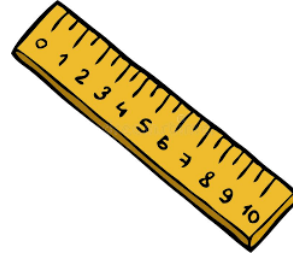
OM[®] 

What Makes a Response Creative?

- Remember, creativity is the **subjective opinion** of the judge. Consider this when responding. For example, an inside joke between team members may be funny, but the judge may not get it. Remember your audience!
- Examples of techniques that **may** enhance the response to make it more creative include (but are not limited to):
 - ✓ Use of rhyme.
 - ✓ Interesting or humorous connections to something else- a different use, a famous character in a movie or play, using the same word with a different meaning, etc.
 - ✓ A funny or unusual twist to something common.
 - ✓ Statements that build off a previous response.



An Example of a Verbal/Hands-On Problem

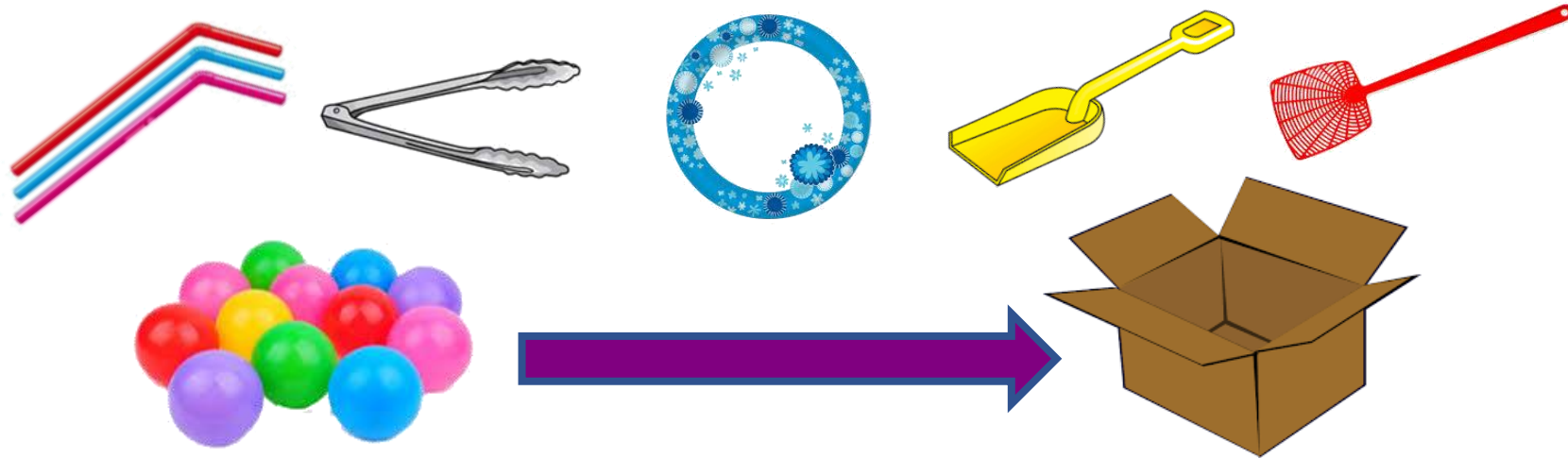


- Imagine you were hired to create a sales pitch for these items. Your problem is to improvise with one or more of the items and say why someone should buy it.

Responses are scored based on creativity

Additional points may be awarded for creative improvisation of the objects

An Example of a Hands-On Problem



- Use these items to move as many balls as possible into the box. You are not allowed to directly touch the balls or box, you must use the items.

Problems have different scoring elements based on what's required.

Additional points may be awarded for teamwork and creativity of the team's solution.

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Role of The Coach

Schedule Practice

- Practice brings confidence! Include Spontaneous practice as part of your regular OM team meeting.
- Increase the amount of time designated for spontaneous as the tournament gets closer.
- For more practice, some school districts, regions, and associations hold spontaneous workshops. [Check with your local OM association.](#)



Practice Brainstorming!

Start a group discussion about a topic with the goal to generate as many ideas as possible with the following guidelines:

- ALL responses are accepted: Common, Creative, Outrageous.
- No limits on time or ideas – be ridiculous!
- Try piggy backing: Allow one response to lead to another, and another, etc.
- Use a warm up technique – jump around, yell, say “go team!”
- No criticism or judgement.



Brainstorming Example:



“How do you shorten a skirt?”




Suspenders

Cutting




Sewing



Duct Tape



Staples



Glue



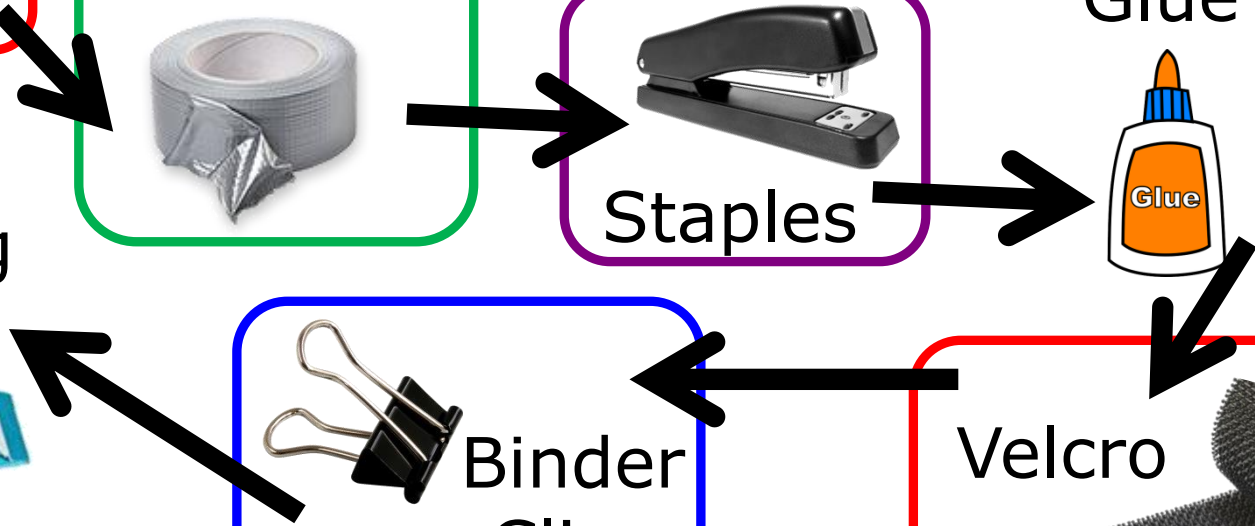
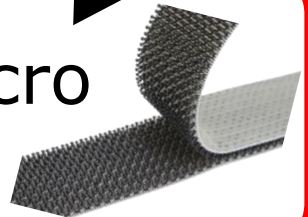
Chewing Gum



Binder Clips

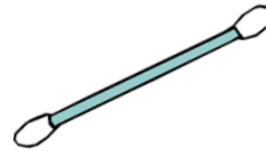


Velcro



Brainstorming for Hands-On and Verbal/Hands-On

- During practice, give the team everyday items to experiment with.



- How many ways can you put these same items together for: height? Length? Strength?
- What other purpose could they serve? (Cup could be a hat)
- Improvise with them and say what you are doing. (Hold cup to your ear and say, “I’m listening for creative responses!”)

Provide a Variety of Problems

- Because teams don't know what type of problem they will get in competition, practice all types of problems.
- Create variety by changing one thing about a problem you do have. In verbal problems, change the objective, or turn it into an opposite. Or in Hands-On, change the materials or one thing that is scored. For example:

How are a cat and a lion ~~different~~ the same?



Common: They both have fur.



Creative: They are both kings of their houses.

Have a Team Discussion:

Once you have completed your practice problem, discuss the team's solution.

- ✓ What was the intent of the problem?
- ✓ Did your solution meet the intent?
- ✓ What went well?
- ✓ What could you have done differently to be more successful?

Note: Try repeating a problem you have used before and discuss the different solutions...What worked better and why?



What's the Hardest Part of Coaching?

Staying Quiet!

- Team members need to be allowed to figure things out on their own...Individually and as a team.
- Ask the team questions, show them items, and allow them to explore until they figure it out! It's all part of the learning process.



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Tips for Practice

Tips for Verbal Problems:

- Remind the team to **listen** carefully as every problem has its own set of requirements. For example:
 - Are team members allowed to talk to each other?
 - Can team members write down their responses to help them prioritize and remember?
- Practice using “think time” and wait for the judge to say “begin” before giving responses to be prepared for competition.
- Team members should **actively listen** to each other’s responses. This provides opportunity to build on a previous response (*creative*) and avoids repeating the same or similar response (*common*).



Tips for Hands-On Problems

- Be sure team members understand the scoring elements.
- Take note of any rules regarding boundary lines, touching items, retrieving dropped items, etc.
- Be aware of time remaining. Some problems have time warnings built in. Team members may ask for “time remaining.”



Tips for All Problems

- If you don't understand, **ASK!!!** The judges want teams to be successful.
- Judges **WILL** answer questions related to the process of solving the problem but cannot answer a question that is specific to a solution. For example:

Your problem is: Make a chain as long as possible and connect it to the wall.

Team Member: "Does it need to connect to the wall?" **Judge:** "Yes"

OR

Team Member: "Do I need to attach it with the clay?" **Judge:** "That is a team decision."



Tips for All Problems

- If the problem allows, team members **should** talk to each other to develop a team strategy. No need to whisper!
- Practice time management! Your team should allow itself time to think, ask questions, discuss, and solve the problem.
 - Set a countdown timer during practice and warn the team when 2 minutes and 1 minute remain.



How do I get the team to the 'wow' solutions?

*The SCAMPER
Technique!*

Substitute

Combine

Adapt

Modify

Put to another use

Eliminate

Reverse



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Competition Information

Where and When



- Your local OM Association will give you the date or dates, location and times of your tournament.
- This will include the time for your Spontaneous Competition.

What to expect on Tournament Day

- Check into the spontaneous area – **ARRIVE EARLY!** Team members and 1 coach will enter the spontaneous check-in area.
- When it is time to compete, a judge will check the team's membership name, number, long-term problem, and division before escorting the team to the competition room.
- The coach will head to a designated area and wait.



Tournament Day continued

- Upon entering the competition room, the team will be told what type of problem they will be solving.
- A judge will then direct the team where to sit or stand and the spontaneous problem will be read to the team.
- The team will follow the directions and solve the problem.



After Spontaneous

- After the team has solved the problem, the judge will remind them to not discuss the problem with ANYONE, even their coach, until after World Finals.
- The team will follow the judges' directions and quietly exit the spontaneous area.
- The coach and supporters will be ready to congratulate the team as they exit the spontaneous area.

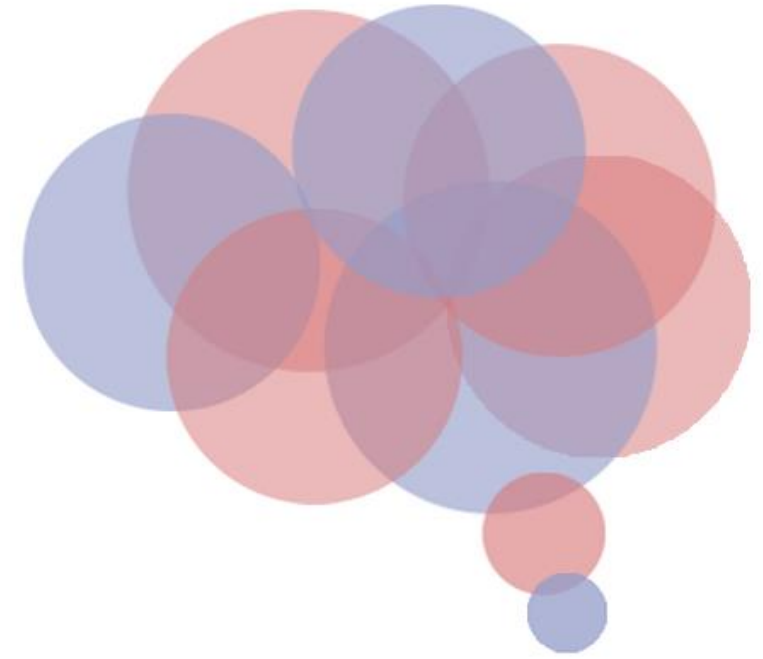


Remember...

Practice, Practice, PRACTICE!!!

the MORE
YOU PRACTICE
THE PRACTICE
BETTER
YOU GET





If you have additional questions regarding spontaneous, please contact us at:

spontaneous@odysseyofthemind.com





Thank you for coaching an OM team! We appreciate everything you do to help your team be successful, not only in Odyssey but also in life!

