



THE CURIOUS MIND



Odyssey of the Mind[®]



Welcome!

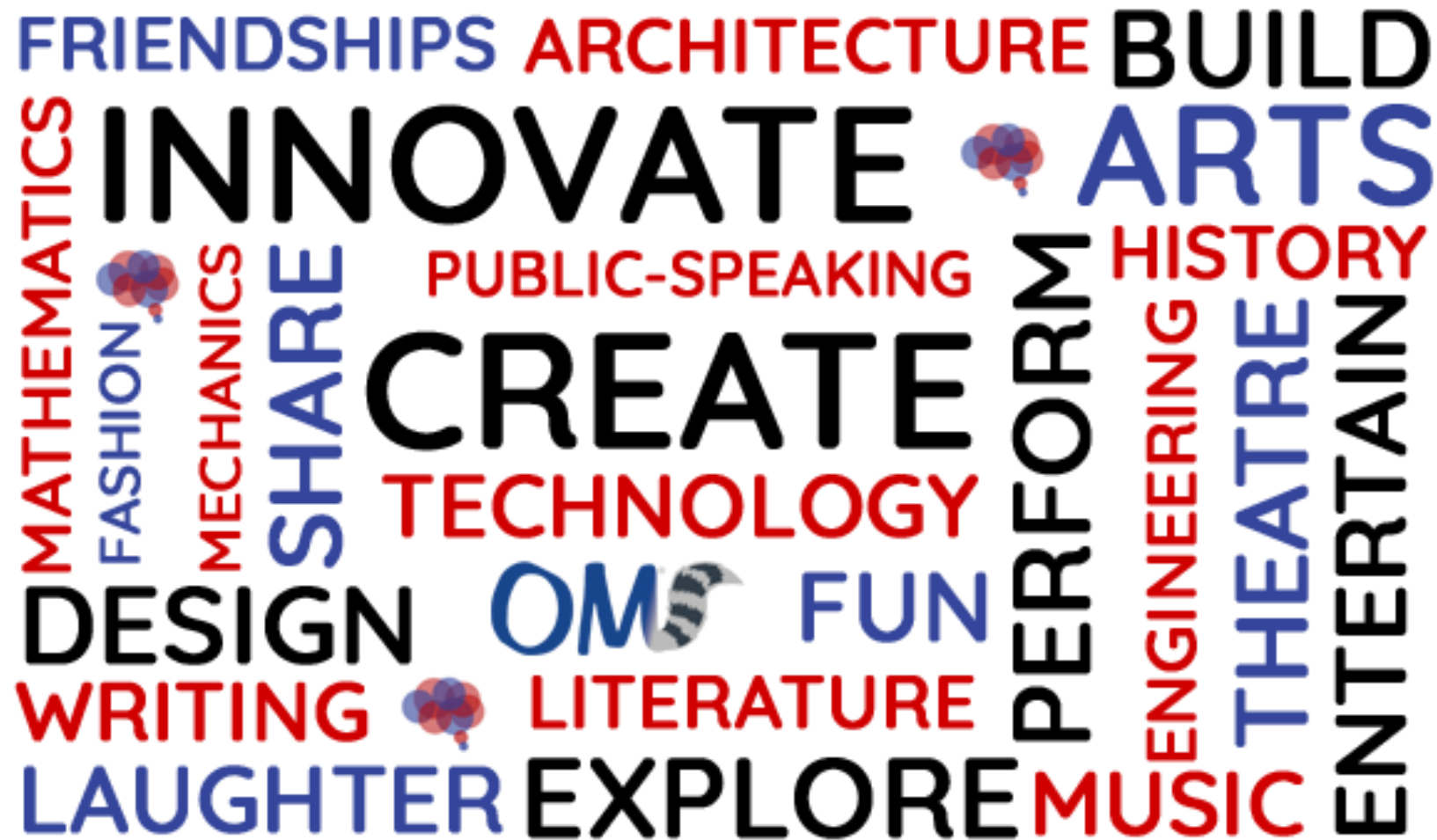
Today we are diving into Odyssey of the Mind (OM), an international creative problem-solving program that helps people think outside the box.



In schools, OM runs as an extracurricular competition where kindergarten through college students work in teams to solve complex (and fun) performance and engineering challenges.



OM is all about teamwork, risk-taking, and finding unexpected solutions to unique challenges.



Brainstorming is good for you!



Ignites your imagination

Breaks mental ruts

Overcomes perfectionism

Strengthens listening skills

Encourages teamwork

Odyssey of the Mind has Long-Term Problems...



Go to <https://odysseyofthemind.com/problems/> for more info on these!



... and Spontaneous Problems



Verbal: Teams are given a prompt and must brainstorm as many creative, funny, or unique spoken responses as they can.

Verbal/Hands-on: Teams are given physical materials to manipulate or build with, but they must also give quick-fire spoken responses to score points.

Hands-on: Teams are given a random assortment of everyday materials (like paperclips, straws, or rubber bands) to build a structure or complete a physical task.

Let's Give



It A Try!



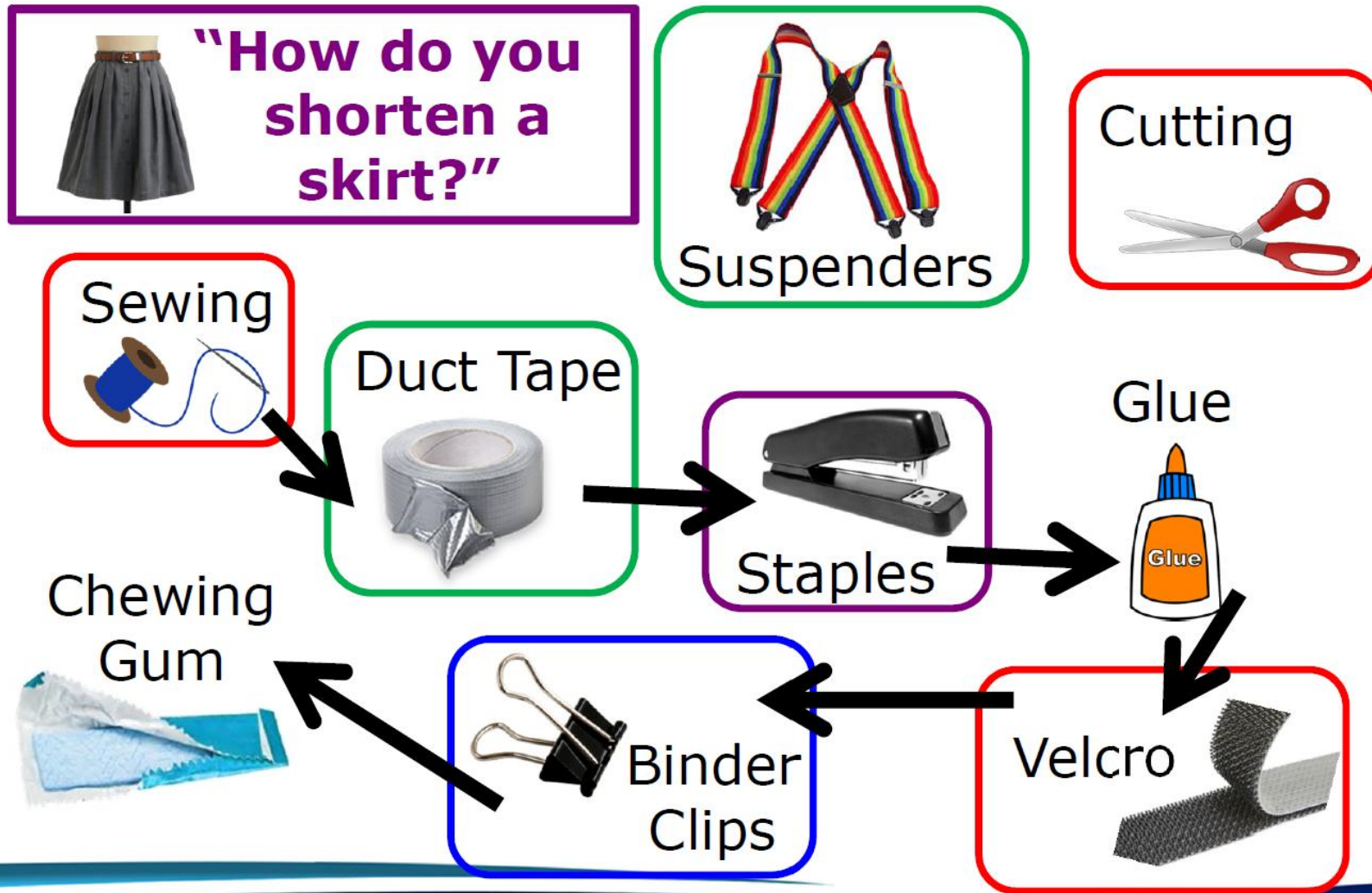
Brainstorming Example:



**"How do you
shorten a
skirt?"**



Brainstorming Example:

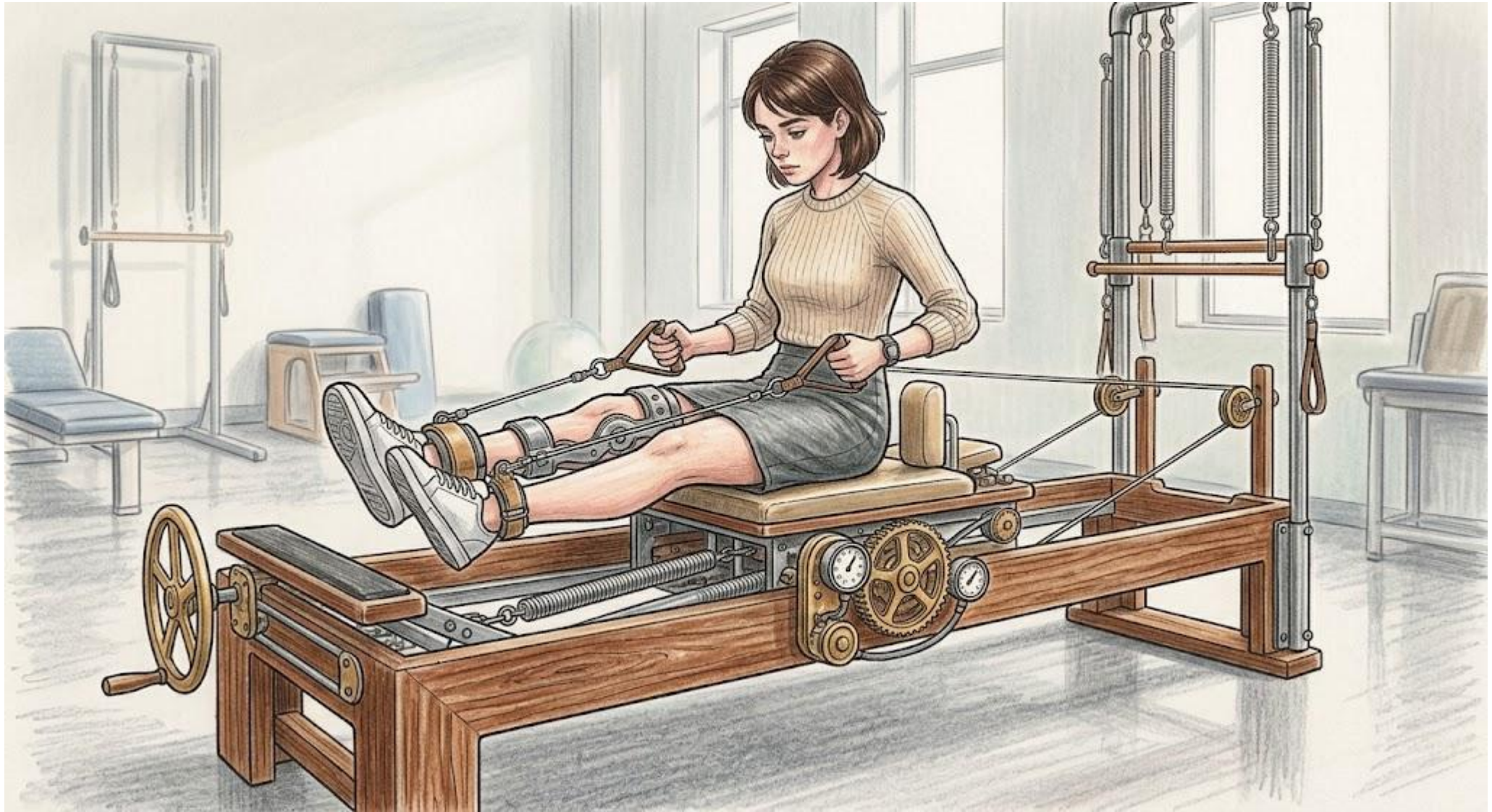




Rolling it



Tearing or ripping it



Lengthening your legs

Anything is possible!

The more creative the better!!

Let's Give



It A Try!





**VERBAL /
HANDS-ON
PROBLEMS**

Warm Up: *The Mystery Object*

- I am going to pass around a common household object.
- When you are holding the object, **your goal is to demonstrate a completely new, creative use for it without naming what the object actually is.** You cannot use the object for its real purpose.
- Example responses using a plastic funnel:
 - **Common:** Holding it to their ear like a megaphone or a hearing aid.
 - **Creative:** Flipping it upside down on their head and saying, "It's an upscale party hat for a very small wizard," or holding it like a ice cream cone and saying, "It's a giant waffle cone, but I already ate the scoop."

Tips for Verbal/Hands-On Problems

In the verbal rounds, **common** answers get 1 point, but **highly creative** answers get 5 points.

- **The Object is Your Prompt:** Look closely at the materials in your hands. Let the texture, shape, or weight of the item inspire your spoken answers. Wave it, bend it, look through it, use it – anything is fair game.
- **Quick Hand-Offs:** Pass the physical object around the circle quickly. The faster you hand the item off, the more chances your team has to score.
- **Say the First Thing, Even If It's Simple:** Giving a quick common 1-point answer is sometimes better than taking the time to find a perfect 5-point answer.
- **Listen to Your Teammates:** Piggyback on a teammate's idea by expanding on it or offering a funny contrast.
- **The "Look Around the Room" Trick:** If your brain freezes when the object lands in your hands, look up. Pick the first random item you see in the room (a clock, a window, a coffee mug) and try to connect it to the prompt. It breaks the mental loop instantly.

Alien Visitor (Verbal / Hands-On Problem)

Backstory: An alien visits Earth and the first thing they see is this common item.

Prompt: What are ways they think this item could be used?

Rules: We will pass the item around in a circle. Each time it is your turn, give one answer. You may not repeat an answer that has already been said.

Timing: You will have 3 minutes to respond.



VERBAL PROBLEMS

Warm-Up: *Silver Lining*

- I am going to name a common, frustrating daily situation. We will go around the circle, and your goal is to find a creative, funny, or unique 'silver lining'—a positive reason why that annoying thing is actually a good thing!
- Our situation is: **You just found out that the local grocery store (or local coffee shop) is completely out of coffee.**
- Example responses:
 - **Common:** 'Well, at least I will save five dollars today.'
 - **Creative:** 'Great, now my spouse can finally see what my real personality looks like in the morning,' or 'Perfect, now I have a valid excuse to take a three-hour afternoon nap.'

Tips for Verbal Problems

In the verbal rounds, **common** answers get 1 point, but **highly creative** answers get 5 points. Here is how to chase those 5-point answers:

- **Change the Context:** If the prompt is about rain, don't just think of weather. Think of "raining cats and dogs" or a "brainstorm."
- **Play with Words:** Use puns, idioms, double meanings, or popular phrases.
- **Be Specific:** Instead of saying "a heavy book," say "a 500-page encyclopedia." Specific details automatically sound more unique.
- **Use Humor:** Funny, witty, or slightly ridiculous answers almost always score as highly creative.
- **Don't Judge Yourself:** In the 1-minute thinking time, write down *every* idea that pops into your head. The weirdest idea is usually the best one.

Unexpected Rain (Verbal Problem)

Timing: You will have 1 minute to think and 3 minutes to respond.

Rules: We will go in a circle. Each time it is your turn, give one answer. You may not repeat an answer that has already been said.

Prompt: Name things you can use to stay dry if you get caught in a sudden rainstorm and do not have an umbrella. For example, a common answer is 'A newspaper.' A creative answer might be 'A giant plastic trash bag with arm holes.'



HANDS-ON PROBLEMS

Warm-Up: *Tower Above*

Goal: Build the tallest possible structure.

Materials: 4 index cards, 4 paper cups

Rules:

- **Part 1:** Your team will plan the construction of the tower. You will have **2 minutes** to discuss how you will use the materials. The team may handle the materials during planning time but may not change them in any way.
- **Part 2:** Your team will execute the plan. You will have **3 minutes** to carry out the planned construction of the tower. Materials may be changed during Part 2.
- **Important:** The structure must stay standing unassisted for 10 seconds.

Tips for Hands-on Problems

In the hands-on rounds, teams are generally scored on their ability to **complete the task**, the **creativity of their design**, and their **ability to work together as a team**.

- **Read the Rules First:** Make sure you know exactly what the goal is. Don't waste time building something that violates a rule.
- **Listen to Everyone:** The best idea might come from the quietest person on the team. Share your thoughts out loud.
- **Simplicity Wins:** Complex designs usually fall apart under pressure. Lean toward simple, sturdy solutions.
- **Test as You Go:** If you are building a bridge, don't wait until the last second to see if it holds weight. Test it gently along the way.
- **Assign Roles:** If someone has a steady hand, let them do the delicate building. If someone is good at keeping time, let them watch the clock.

The Canyon Crane (Hands-on Problem)

Backstory: A delivery truck needs to drop off a critical supply box across a deep, narrow canyon where the bridge has washed out. The crew needs to build an extension arm from their side of the canyon to reach across safely.

Goal: Build a device that rests on one book and extends as far horizontally out over the edge as possible, holding a paper clip (the supply box) at the very end. You will have 1 minute to think silently and 5 minutes to discuss and build.

Materials: 15 strands of uncooked spaghetti, 8 marshmallows, and 1 paper clip

Rules:

- The base of your device must sit entirely on top of the book. No part of the structure can touch the table below the book.
- One team member may place a single hand on the base of the device to anchor it to the book, but you cannot hold up the extension arm.
- The paperclip must stay suspended over the edge for at least 10 seconds.
- **Important Note:** You may manipulate your materials however you like! You can break, cut, peel, or squish your ingredients to make them work for you.