



Odyssey of the Mind

Problem No. 5:

Gibberish or Not



Gibberish or Not

Problem No. 5: Divisions: I, II, III & IV

Introduction

In every known language there are examples of short statements that are not supposed to be taken literally. These statements provide information in a brief and recognizable way but have nothing to do with their literal interpretation.

For example, if you are a “Dark Horse” you are an unknown contender thought to be a longshot but competed impressively. Can you imagine what it was like when these commonly known statements were first used metaphorically? How about trying something new and being the “Guinea Pig?” Or you tell your friend a story and they say, “Stop Pulling My Leg!”

Teams will show what might take place when a gibberish statement is “twisted and turned” until meaning is given to it.

A. The Problem

In this problem, teams will create and perform a story about how statements that make no literal sense can be given meaning. A Gibberish Character will make three gibberish statements that no one understands. A Champion Character will then talk with others and announce the true meaning of the statements where they become meaningful, making the Gibberish Character appear to be very wise. The masses accept these gibberish statements as wisdom, but a Child understands that the “true meanings” don’t have anything to do with the gibberish statements. As the masses revel in the wisdom of the Gibberish Character, there is a celebration. The Child sees that the gibberish statements are helping the community and decides not to tell the masses that the statements were just gibberish.

The **Creative Emphases** of the problem are on the performance, the Gibberish Character, how the Gibberish statements are transformed into something wise, the Champion and Child Characters, the portrayal of the masses, and the celebration.

The **Spirit of the Problem** is to create an original humorous performance about a Gibberish Character that makes three gibberish statements that cause people to try to figure out what each means. A Champion Character will present the “true meaning” of the statements as wise knowledge and the masses are happy. A Child Character knows the true meanings have nothing to do with the gibberish statements, but sees they are making the masses happy as they celebrate with song and decides to keep it a secret.

B. Limitations

1. **General Rules:** Read the *2019-20 Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*. This manual is updated each year and includes important rules for solving Odyssey of the Mind problems and forms required for competition. This problem cannot be solved without referring to the **Program Rules** section of the guide.
2. **Problem Clarifications:** The *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide* explains the types of questions that will be clarified and how to submit them. Problem clarifications can be submitted and accessed at www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications. **The deadline for submission is February 15, 2020.** CCI may find it necessary to issue clarifications after that date, so continue to check for them after February 15 and before each competition.
3. The **time limit** for this problem is 8 minutes. This starts when the Timekeeper says, “Team begin,” and includes setup, Style, and the presentation of the solution. A one-minute overtime is allowed for this problem but penalty E6 will be assessed.
4. The **cost limit** for this problem is \$125 (U.S.). The combined value of all materials used during the presentation of

the solution, including Style, cannot exceed this amount. The Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide explains the cost limit and how to determine the value of the materials used.

5. The team will create an original humorous performance that includes:
 - a. a Gibberish Character and at least three Gibberish statements.
 - b. a Champion Character and its interpretations of the gibberish statements.
 - c. a Child Character and its reason to not expose the statements as originally being gibberish.
 - d. Masses (what is or appears to be a group of individuals).
 - e. a celebration that includes an original song.
 - f. five Style elements including two that are chosen by the team.
6. The **Gibberish Character**:
 - a. may be portrayed using *any method the team wishes*.
 - b. must be portrayed as an original, human character. It must not portray or represent a recognizable imitation of a known character or person.
 - c. will make three required statements that are interpreted by others.
7. The **three gibberish statements**:
 - a. must be presented live in the performance. There can be additional statements, but only three will be scored.
 - b. will be interpreted by the Champion in a way that makes them seem wise and helpful.
 - c. will be interpreted in a way that gives them an original true meaning that brings happiness to the masses.
8. The **Champion Character**:
 - a. may be portrayed using any method the team wishes.
 - b. must be portrayed as an original, human character. It must not portray or represent a recognizable imitation of a known character or person.
 - c. will interpret the Gibberish Character's statements and give them value and meaning that brings happiness to the masses.
9. The **Child Character**:
 - a. must be portrayed as a human child but may be portrayed using any method the team wishes.
 - b. makes the judges and audience aware that it knows the statements were originally gibberish.
 - c. will let the judges and audience know why it is not revealing the truth about the Gibberish Character's statements and lets everyone accept their "true meaning."
10. The **Masses**:
 - a. must portray humans any way the team wishes.
 - b. must visually and/or audibly indicate that the gibberish statements make them feel happy.
11. The **Celebration**:
 - a. may be presented any way the team wishes.
 - b. must include the three required characters and all or part of the masses.
 - c. must include an original song (music and words) presented live.
12. The team should present the Staging Area Judge with four copies of the Team List Form found in the forms section

at www.odysseyofthemind.com/members or four copies of a list on one side of one or two sheets of 8 ½" x 11" or A4 paper. This list can be hand-printed, typed, or computer generated. It is for reference only. This list must include:

- a. the team's membership name and number, the problem and division.
- b. a brief description of the Gibberish Character.
- c. a brief description of the Champion Character.
- d. the three gibberish statements to be scored in D5.
- e. a brief description of the Child Character.
- f. brief description of the portrayal of the masses.
- g. a brief description of the celebration.
- h. the signal the team will use to indicate it has finished its performance.

C. Site, Setup and Competition

1. A stage or floor area a minimum 7' x 10' (2.1m x 3m) will be used, but a larger area is desirable. This will not be marked. Teams must be prepared to perform in a 7' x 10' area. If space permits, the team may perform and/or place equipment, props, etc. outside the 7' x 10' area. If a drop-off exists beyond the 7' x 10' dimensions, a caution line may be taped 30" (76.2 cm) from the edge of the drop-off. This will serve as a warning, not a boundary.
2. A three-prong electrical outlet will be available at the performance area. Teams must bring their own extension cords and adapters, if needed.
3. The team members should report to the competition site with all items for the presentation of their solution at least 15 minutes before they are scheduled to compete.
4. It is the team's responsibility to complete its problem solution within the 8-minute time limit. When the team is finished, it must signal the judges. An overtime penalty will be assessed if the team takes more than 8 minutes, and the Timekeeper will stop the team after one minute of overtime.
5. Teams should bring cleaning utensils to clean up any mess. Should a team take an unreasonable amount of time to clean the site, or leave a mess, the judges will assess an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty. Others not on the team's roster can help the team clear the site and remove the team's props. The competition area must be left clean and dry for the next competing team.

D. Scoring

1. Creativity of the overall performance (originality, effectiveness)..... 1 to 15 points
2. Overall quality of the presentation 1 to 15 points
3. Gibberish Character 4 to 30 points
 - a. creativity (all aspects including appearance and behavior)2 to 15 points
 - b. effectiveness in the performance2 to 10 points
 - c. makes three gibberish statements..... 0 or 5 points
4. The Champion Character 4 to 30 points
 - a. creativity (all aspects including appearance and behavior)2 to 15 points
 - b. effectiveness in the performance2 to 10 points
 - c. interprets three gibberish statements 0 or 5 points

5. The gibberish statements 8 to 40 points
 - a. how well they appear to be nonsense2 to 10 points
 - b. creativity of how each one transforms from a gibberish statement to a wise saying (3@ 1 – 5 points).....3 to 15 points
 - c. originality of their “true meaning” (3@ 1 – 5 points)3 to 15 points
6. The Child Character 2 to 20 points
 - a. effectiveness in the performance2 to 15 points
 - b. presents a reason for not exposing the statements as gibberish 0 or 5 points
7. The Masses 2 to 15 points
 - a. creativity of their portrayal.....2 to 10 points
 - b. indicate they are happy because of the required gibberish statements 0 or 5 points
8. The Celebration 3 to 20 points
 - a. creativity of its portrayal 1 to 5 points
 - b. effectiveness of its original song2 to 10 points
 - c. includes the required characters..... 0 or 5 points
9. Overall Humor 4 to 15 points
Maximum possible: 200 points

E. Penalties

1. “Spirit of the Problem” violation (each offense)-1 to -100 points
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct (each offense)-1 to -100 points
3. Incorrect or missing membership sign.....-1 to -15 points
4. Outside assistance (each offense)-1 to -25 points
5. Over cost limit.....-1 to -100 points
6. Over time limit:-5 points for every 10 seconds or fraction thereof over 8 minutes
 (For example: 27 seconds = -15 points) maximum -30 points

Teams that don't present a scored element of the problem will not receive a penalty, they will receive a zero score for that category.

F. Style (Elaboration of the problem solution; use four copies of the Style Form from the 2019-20 Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide)

1. Creativity in how one costume transforms into another appearance..... 1 to 10 points
2. Artistic quality of all or part of the portrayal of the masses 1 to 10 points
3. (Free choice of team) 1 to 10 points
4. (Free choice of team) 1 to 10 points
5. Overall effect of the four Style elements in the performance..... 1 to 10 points
Maximum possible: 50 points

G. Tournament Director Will Provide

1. 7' x 10' (2.1m x 3m) presentation area (larger, if possible).
2. A three-prong electrical outlet at the performance area.
3. A judging team and materials necessary to judge this problem.

NOTE: Contact your Tournament Director for site specifications, such as actual dimensions, floor surface, etc. Do not submit a clarification request for this information.

H. The Team Must Provide

1. Four copies of its Style Form, one Cost Form, one Outside Assistance Form, and all team-specific clarifications.
2. Four copies of the Team List. This list is to assist the judges. If the team fails to provide the list, there will be no penalty; however, it benefits the team to have the lists because without them the judges might miss a scored aspect of the performance.
3. Any necessary extension cords or outlet adapters.
4. Cleanup materials as needed.

I. Problem Glossary (Italicized terms that are not in this Glossary can be found in the *2019-20 Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*.)

Any method the team wishes—All required characters may be presented in any way the team wishes, but must be a *character* as described in the Program Guide glossary and be presented live during the performance.

Problem by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus and Samuel W. Micklus © 2019 — Creative Competitions, Inc.

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