



What to Do Before the Coaches Training

If you are a NEW Coach, you do not have to wait until after you attend a live Coach Training to get started on your journey called Odyssey of the Mind.

Read There is a LOT of material to read. The first thing to read is [The Program Guide](#) - especially Chapter 1-which talks about coaching a team and Chapter 5 which are Rules and Possible Penalties. The biggest penalty to avoid is [Outside Assistance](#)-which is anyone outside of the team members giving the team help in solving the problem (everything from suggesting ideas, to helping construct a costume, to where to stand during their performance). Understanding what is and isn't Outside Assistance is key to being a GREAT coach. Odyssey HQ has a 48-minute [Coaches Training video](#) on YouTube, if you have the time.

Figure Out Your Schedule As the coach, you set team meetings around your schedule. Most OM teams start off meeting once a week on a set day of the week for 1-2 hours. The most convenient meeting time and location is at the team's school soon after dismissal. Ask the office manager about using a space for your meetings or ask one of the team members' teachers to use their classroom. Many OM teams meet at the coach's or one of the team member's house, later in the afternoon or early evening. As you get closer to the tournament you will want to schedule longer Build Sessions, possibly on weekends.

Snacks - Set a rotating snack schedule or collect \$\$\$ for snacks and supplies from team families. Snack will quickly become the team's favorite part of the meeting. You decide when to have it. Some teams start with snack and check in, have a discussion while they eat. Some have snack in the middle as a break. Some have snack at the end to reward the team for hard work.

Get to Know Each Other Team Builders and Hands-on Spontaneous Activities should be part of your first team gatherings. You can also be direct and ask team members what they like to do outside of school, what collections they have, what are some of their favorite things. [Paper Bag STEM Challenges](#) offer simple hands-on activities that are perfect for those first meetings.

Hold Off on Discussing the Problem Depending on when you are reading this, you do not need to discuss the Long-Term Problem right away. Once the team starts discussing their ideas for solving the problem, they are considered part of the total number of team members, even if they drop off the team. When you do discuss the problem, break it up into smaller parts. See [Coaching Tip #1](#) for more information about your First Meetings.

Good luck! And remember to **HAVE FUN!**