

# Style

New coaches are often confused by the Style component of Odyssey of the Mind. Style is the “Icing on the Cake”, so to speak. It is the extra things the team has made or done that fit together (“Overall Effect”) to make their solution unlike anyone else’s. It adds the wow factor to the team’s solution to the Long-Term problem. It is the opportunity for the team to display their talents and skills. Interesting style elements influence the overall appearance and “mood” of the performance.

## What Can Be Scored for Style?

Style can be any of many elements. Each problem identifies two elements that are mandatory for that problem. (Example: “How well the membership sign enhances the presentation” or “creativity of use of materials in one costume”).

Then, the team also gets to pick two other elements, remembering that these cannot be already being scored in the long term. (Note that the team must pick the style items, not the coach, even if the coach thinks a different item would score higher).

Example items include: [membership sign](#), rhyming throughout script, humor, appearance of character(s), the way a prop looks of functions, creative use of materials, song, artwork, or choreography.



## What Makes a Good Style Item?

Here are a few different ways in which a style item could receive a higher score:

- **Creative:** A good style item is not a straightforward solution to a problem. What is the goal of the style item? What other ways could you use to present it? Think about different materials, building techniques, sizes, lighting, technology, level of detail, mechanics, human components, and human skills.
- **Original:** Judges have seen many kinds of style items – show them something they have never seen before. Take your first idea and tweak it, you might come up with something totally new.
  - Items often seen: “regular” trash, bottle caps, tin foil, singing, playing instruments, paintings, backdrops, costumes
  - However, if an “unoriginal” idea is done very well, it doesn’t matter too much that it has been thought of or used extensively before. A painting can score well if it seems exceptionally lifelike or realistic and created by a team member.
- **Visible effort put in:** Style items should have more than a few hours of effort; put several days of work into creating something special. Think, build, critique, and repeat. Judges love detail.
- Well described and limited in **forms:** Don’t make the scope of the style item too big – limit the item to its strongest aspect. If the team has a costume made from creative materials, don’t score “The costume of character X”, score “The creative use of materials in the costume of X”.

## How to Choose Free Choice Style Items

There are two basic approaches for choosing style items:

1. Develop over time: While the theme and skit are developing in early stages (or perhaps even beforehand), the team can pick an idea to create to fulfill a style item. With this approach, the team would, for example, specifically build a back drop to score as a style item. Teams might find this approach difficult as there is little structure to frame an idea but can result in magnificent style items because of how much attention and time was put into creating them.
2. Choose from existing items: Sometimes the tournament is not far off and the team has not decided on all their style choices. The team could make a list of all the elements of their solution which would be eligible to score as free choice. Narrow down the list, then make a team decision on what enhances the solution the most.  
NOTE: coaches cannot decide style items for teams!

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## Questions to Consider When Choosing Style Items

- How is this related to your long-term problem?
- Do you think any other team will think of this solution?
- How does this enhance your solution?
- If you were judging this problem, how would you score your solution?

## Scoring Style

Each problem has two required “STYLE ELEMENT” which every team must have [scored](#). In addition, each team may choose 2 other elements to have scored. Each of the 4 elements is worth up to 10 points, and the “overall effect” of these elements is also worth 10 points. Thus, the Style Score’s possible maximum is 50 points, which makes a huge difference in the total possible points when Long term sores and spontaneous scores are all tabulated.

**The primary thing to remember is that anything scored in the Long-Term portion of the problem may NOT be chosen to be scored for style.**

“Section F” of each problem outlines the mandatory style elements for each problem. For example, if the propulsion of a vehicle is scored in long term scoring, the “creativity of the vehicle” could not be scored as a free choice - the team would have to distinguish a specific characteristic like materials used or artistic quality of the vehicle.

## Three Items of Information:

1. Only the Style judges see the [style form](#). Writing something for the long-term judges will not be helpful.
2. Style judges have only a few minutes to read the Style Form. Write enough to give the general idea of what is wonderful about the team’s style, and intrigue the judges, but don’t expect the officials to be able to absorb too many details. Look on this as an advertisement for what they are about to see. And remember, only Style judges will read this.
3. Style scores are 100% subjective. What one group of judges on one day really likes, another group of judges on another day might not like as much. The team can only control how THEY feel about their style elements... If they are proud of what they did, that is what counts, always! Style scores cannot be debated or argued... The judges' decision is final (and the more judges that are recruited for judging, the more styles scores can be averaged together).



Thanks to Missouri for the information contained in this document. [Style from MissouriOdyssey.org](http://Style.from.MissouriOdyssey.org)