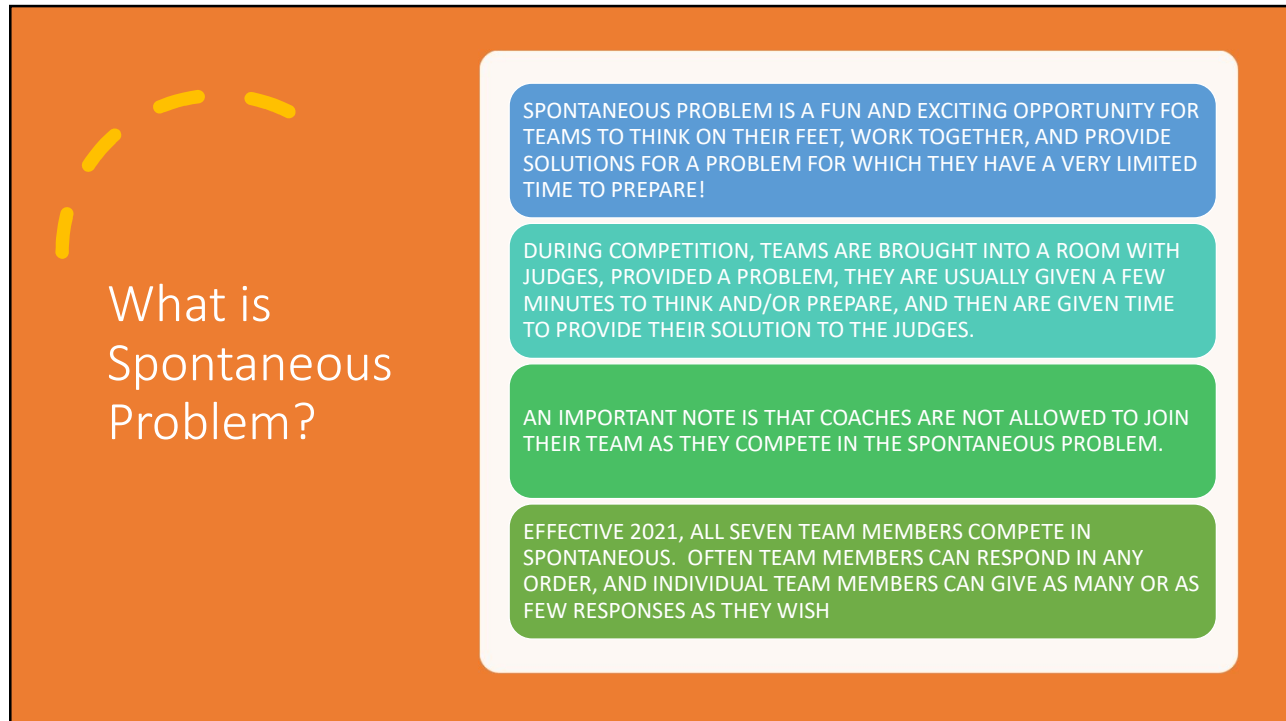




1



2



What is Spontaneous Problem?

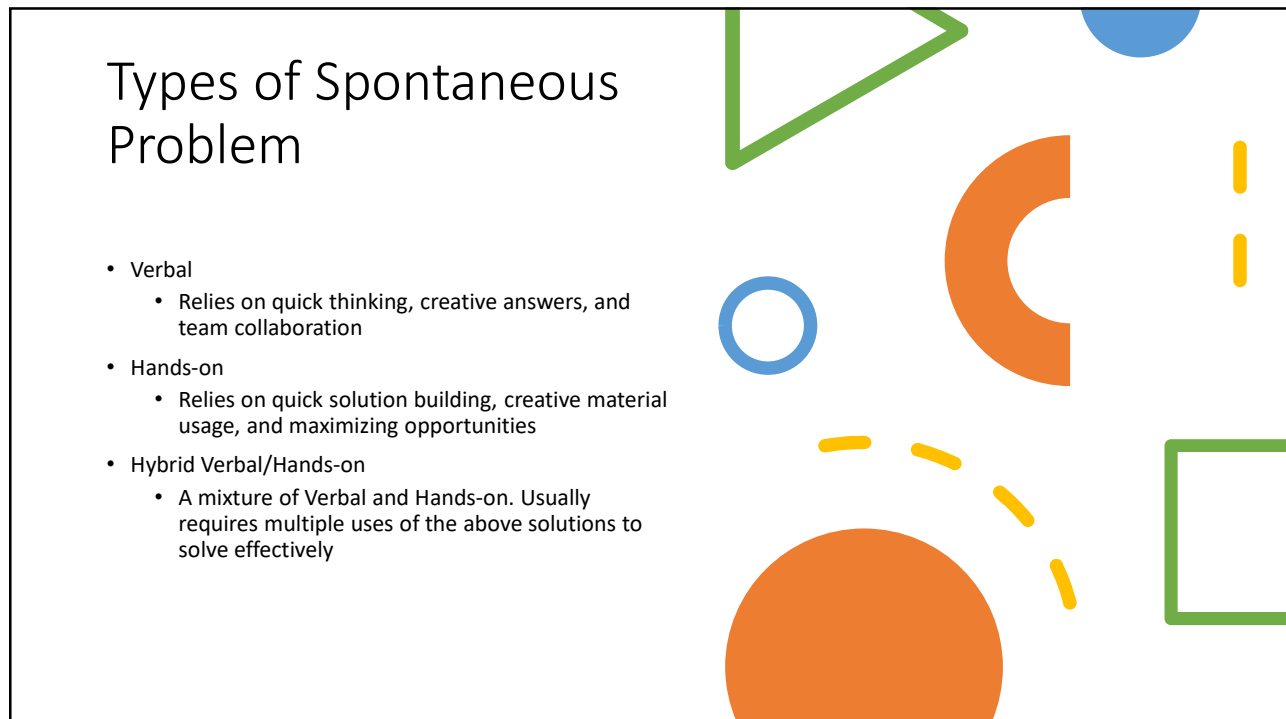
SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM IS A FUN AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR TEAMS TO THINK ON THEIR FEET, WORK TOGETHER, AND PROVIDE SOLUTIONS FOR A PROBLEM FOR WHICH THEY HAVE A VERY LIMITED TIME TO PREPARE!

DURING COMPETITION, TEAMS ARE BROUGHT INTO A ROOM WITH JUDGES, PROVIDED A PROBLEM, THEY ARE USUALLY GIVEN A FEW MINUTES TO THINK AND/OR PREPARE, AND THEN ARE GIVEN TIME TO PROVIDE THEIR SOLUTION TO THE JUDGES.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE IS THAT COACHES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO JOIN THEIR TEAM AS THEY COMPETE IN THE SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM.

EFFECTIVE 2021, ALL SEVEN TEAM MEMBERS COMPETE IN SPONTANEOUS. OFTEN TEAM MEMBERS CAN RESPOND IN ANY ORDER, AND INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS CAN GIVE AS MANY OR AS FEW RESPONSES AS THEY WISH

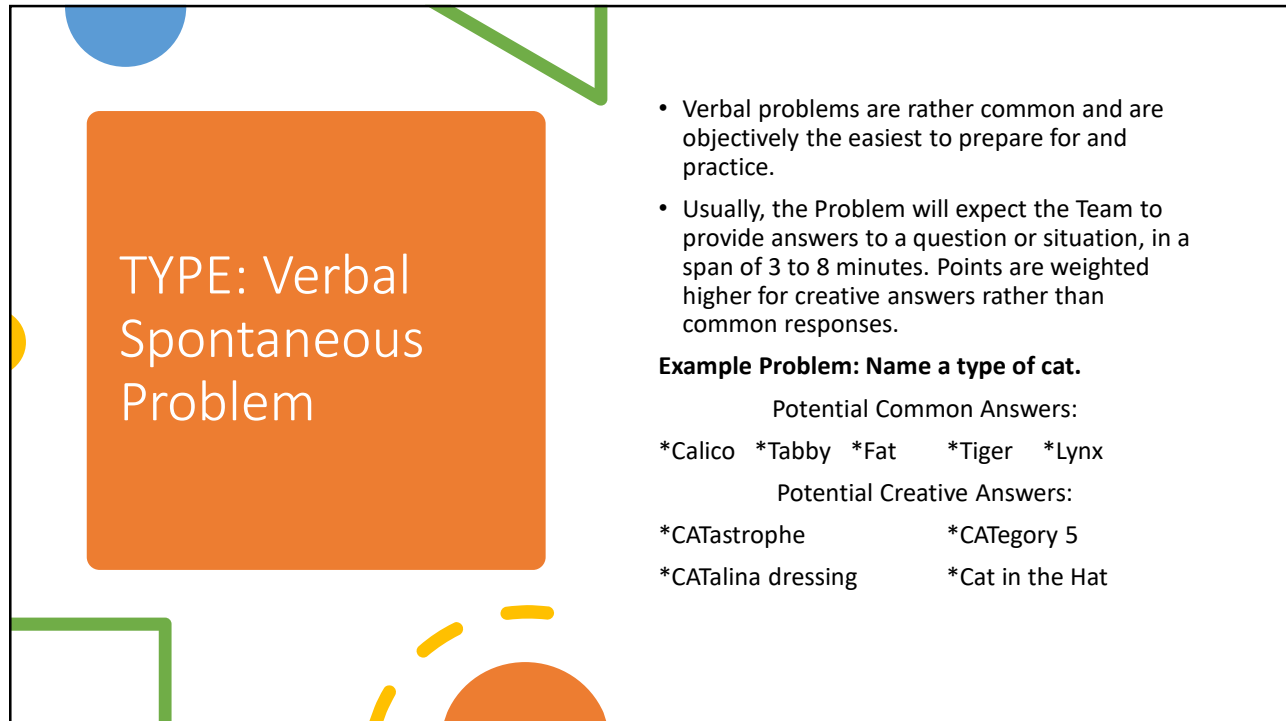
3



Types of Spontaneous Problem

- Verbal
 - Relies on quick thinking, creative answers, and team collaboration
- Hands-on
 - Relies on quick solution building, creative material usage, and maximizing opportunities
- Hybrid Verbal/Hands-on
 - A mixture of Verbal and Hands-on. Usually requires multiple uses of the above solutions to solve effectively

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TYPE: Verbal Spontaneous Problem

- Verbal problems are rather common and are objectively the easiest to prepare for and practice.
- Usually, the Problem will expect the Team to provide answers to a question or situation, in a span of 3 to 8 minutes. Points are weighted higher for creative answers rather than common responses.

Example Problem: Name a type of cat.

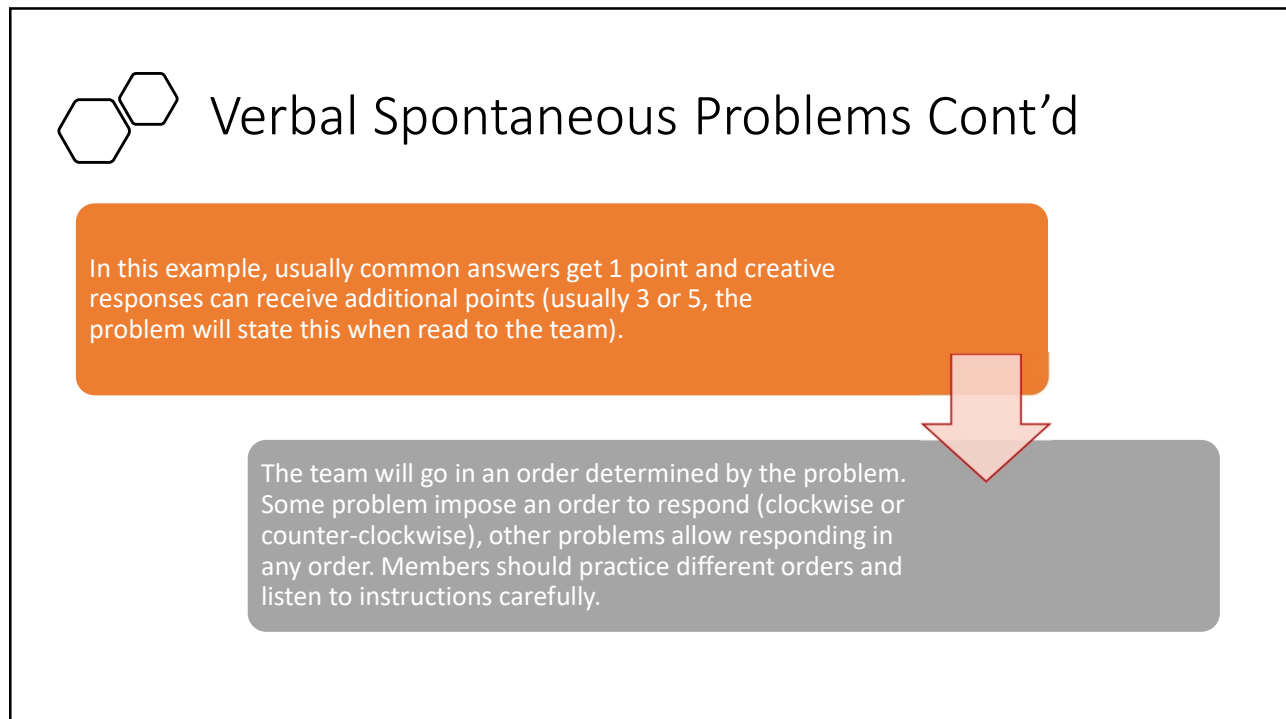
Potential Common Answers:

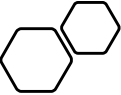
*Calico *Tabby *Fat *Tiger *Lynx

Potential Creative Answers:

*CATastrophe *CATegory 5
*CATalina dressing *Cat in the Hat

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Verbal Spontaneous Problems Cont'd

In this example, usually common answers get 1 point and creative responses can receive additional points (usually 3 or 5, the problem will state this when read to the team).

The team will go in an order determined by the problem. Some problem impose an order to respond (clockwise or counter-clockwise), other problems allow responding in any order. Members should practice different orders and listen to instructions carefully.

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Coaching Tips - Verbal



Coaches can get examples of Verbal problems at the end of the Program Guide.



With predefined order, each Team Member will give an answer on their turn. If they do not have an answer, the team will only be able to give responses on their turn. If one Member is stuck, the team is stuck, so getting any answer is better than the team being stuck. .



When Members are instructed to use some token in order to “claim a turn”, they need to be mindful that they can run out of tokens.



Exercises that encourage a play on words, outside-the-box thinking, and having fun benefit the team in training for Verbal Spontaneous Problems!

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TYPE: Hands-On Spontaneous Problem

- Hands-On Problems are relatively common and require the use of materials in order to practice.
- The problem will usually require using materials in an effective, creative way to get objects moved from one point to another, build the tallest structure, or to suspend an object above a table.
- The problem usually allows distinct time for the team to discuss the solution and then implement it. The total time varies between 7 and 12 minutes.
- During these types of problems points are usually assigned for items like these:
 - *Creative use of materials
 - *Use of difficult materials
 - *Solution height or length
 - *Teamwork

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Coaching Tips – Hands- On

- Coaches can get examples of Hands-On Problems at the end of the Program Guide.
- Teams need to be aware of each other's responses. Judges notice if any team members are left out of the solution or if certain team members don't listen to the rest of their teammates.
- Exercises that benefit in Hands-On solutions include watching online videos of materials used in different ways and asking your team to identify uncommon uses for common items such as pipe cleaners, paper plates, paperclips, paper cups, construction paper, masking tape, ping pong balls, string, rubber bands, golf balls, cotton balls, and plastic straws. These are all very common Hands-On Spontaneous materials.

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TYPE: Hybrid (or Combo or Verbal/Hands-On)

- Hybrid Problems are when a team is giving verbal responses as well as utilizing materials provided by the judges, in 4 to 10 minutes' time.
- The problem will usually have two sections. The first will be utilizing, creating, or identifying materials in front of them as the problem suggests. The second is verbal portion commenting on the materials or creations done in section one.
- Scoring rubrics will typically include the scoring portions from both Verbal and Hands-On problems discussed earlier.

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Format of Spontaneous Problems

When the judges read the spontaneous problem to the team, the instructions always include the following items – which vary by problem:

- What type of problem it is
- If, and when, teams are allowed to talk to each other
- If there is some thinking or brainstorming time before presenting the solution(s)
- For verbal or hybrid: How the teams are expected to answer – specific order or random order
- How the solution will be scored

A printed copy of the problem is also provided on the table for reference

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Can the Coach Help?

- ABSOLUTELY!
- Not only the coach *can* help but, the coach *must* help!
- The coach must organize regular spontaneous practice at every meeting (a parent or co-coach can help provide the practice problems and materials)
- There is no “Outside Assistance” limitation in Spontaneous because you practice on other problems and the coach is not present at competition.
- The coach is encouraged to provide feedback and discuss how to focus on different aspects at a time in order to hone their skills: (listening to instructions, understanding the problem, teamwork, taking turns, strategies...).

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Why are Coaches not allowed in the tournament room?



The point of Odyssey of the Mind is to train future generations to think for themselves and be able to perform their solutions to the best of their ability independently.



Coaches are not allowed to participate, assist, or help the Team in the solution of the problem. As such, keeping the temptation from doing so is easily achieved by separating the team from the coach.



Coaches are welcome to reach out to their regional team if they would like additional help or understanding Spontaneous problem and how to adequately prepare their team.

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Competition Calculations for Spontaneous Problem

- Spontaneous Problem will count for up to 100 points of the team's score at competition.
 - This score will be on a sliding scale depending on how well teams perform for each problem in their division.
 - The team with the highest score (within their division and long-term problem), will get 100 points for Spontaneous. All other teams will see a point adjustment equal to the adjustment the top team received
- Spontaneous is an important part of the competition and can mean the difference between an advancing team, and one that does not move on in competition.

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Responsibilities for Teams after Competition

- It's a Secret!
- Spontaneous problems SHOULD NOT be shared with anyone, not friend, not parents.
 - Because the problems may be performed at other competitions before the next level, sharing your problem publicly may give unfair advantages to other teams.
 - Your team is welcome to share their problem and solution *with the coach only* as soon as you are done with competition, and you can review any opportunities for improvement at that time.
 - Many teams choose to maintain full secret and that's OK too.

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Resources for Practice

- At the end of the Program Guide, there is an Appendix with "Official and Structured" Spontaneous Problem. They give you an idea how they are presented at tournament.
- A file of spontaneous problems is often available under then Member-Area, Download section.
- You should google "Odyssey of the Mind practice spontaneous problems". There are several sites that offer lists of variants for practice problems.
- Local Spontaneous workshops officially organized by Odyssey of the Mind or local fundraisers.

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