

VERBAL SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM: In MY Back Yard?

By : Don Desrosiers

- A. *When the team enters the room, tell them, "This is a verbal problem. You have 1 minute to select the team members who will compete. The other team members must sit in these chairs and watch (indicate seats) or may leave the room. They may not participate in any way. (Allow the team 1 minute to decide.)*
- B. JUDGE READS TO TEAM:
 - (1) You will have one minute to think and four minutes to respond. You may ask the judges questions, however time will continue. You may not talk to each other at any time.
 - (2) You will receive 1 point for each common response, 3 points for each creative response, and 5 points for each highly creative response. The level of creativity of an individual answer is the decision of the judge and as we all know, the decision of the judge is final.
 - (3) There is a numbered card in front of each of you. After the think time but before the response time, the judge will roll the die to choose one person to start. AFTER you give your answer, roll the die to see who will answer next. If a 6 is rolled, roll again. You may not pass. If one person is stuck, the whole team is stuck.
 - (4) There is a woolly mammoth in the back yard (Trust me, there really is.) Unfortunately, the wooly mammoth is in a hole and we need to get it out of the hole. **Your problem is to tell how you would get a woolly mammoth out of the hole. For example, you could say, "I would use a piece of rope and pull it out of the hole."**

(Judge repeats the bold section of #4, beginning by saying, "I repeat ..." Then begin the one minute think time. At the end of one minute, reset the timer, roll the die, and begin the four minute response time.

FOR JUDGES ONLY:

- (1) You will need one six sided die and 5 cards numbered 1 through 5. If you do not have cards, indicate to the team who is what number.
- (2) Make sure the individual team member waits until after giving an answer before rolling the die. This admittedly takes away some of the individual think time. By the same token, this takes away some of the individual think time.
- (3) A woolly mammoth is an extinct animal that looked somewhat like an elephant. Do not tell the team this unless they ask. If they don't ask (and don't already know), this should be an item for later discussion.
- (4) In real life, extinct animals would be dead (by definition). However, the team may presume this particular mammoth is still alive if they wish. Do not tell them this unless they ask. If they don't ask, this should be an item for later discussion.

- (5) We are dealing with an extinct pre-historic creature weighing better than a ton that is probably encased in ice, so the answers could be anywhere.

Examples of common responses: Responses that simply get to the issue of getting the mammoth out of the hole without regard to the animal itself or to the size of the beast. With a mammoth lifter. Use a shovel, Get a ladder.

Examples of creative responses: Responses a bit unexpected. “Magic!”, Working with the word “woolly” (knitting a ladder out of woolly mammoth wool?) “Woolly mammoths are just like dogs. If I threaten to give him a bath, he’s outta here.”

Examples of highly creative responses: Things fairly off the wall. Lift it out using one of the ski lifts from the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (in CA). In English, the phrase “in a hole” can also mean in a bad situation or in debt. (This might only be creative for a Div 3 team. Your call.) “Oh, the phone is ringing? Hello. Yo, Mammoth, it’s for you.” (May require a bit of overacting for full points)