

## Spontaneous Problem: "Once Upon a Time"

- A. When the team enters the room, tell them, "This is a Verbal problem. In an actual tournament you would have one minute to select five team members to compete. The others would leave or stay to watch but could not assist and must sit in seats away from the table. If they stayed in the room, they could not assist in solving the problem and could not talk at ANY time."

*Note To Judge: All team members can participate in the Spontaneous Fair.*

### B. JUDGE READS TO TEAM:

1. You will have 1 minute to think, and 4 minutes to respond. You may ask questions at any time, but the clock will continue.
2. Your team is to take turns in sequence. You may not skip your turn or repeat.
3. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat a response, to clarify, or to give another response, time will continue. Speak loudly and clearly.
4. **Your problem is to continue telling a fairy tale.** The first team member will say "Once Upon a Time" and the next person will add to the fairy tale. For example, you might say, "A king lived in a castle." Each person will continue to add to the fairy tale.
5. You will receive 1 point for each common response. Creative or humorous responses will receive 4 points. If you cannot think of a way to add to the fairy tale you may say "Once Upon A Time" and the next team member will begin a new fairy tale. You will receive NO points for saying "Once Upon a Time."

You will receive an additional 1-15 points for the overall creativity of your story(ies).

6. Once again, your problem is to continue telling a fairy tale

### C. FOR JUDGES ONLY

1. Examples of common responses might include:  
"There was a beautiful princess."  
"The king ate breakfast."
2. Examples of creative responses might include:  
"The princess fell into the pond and turned into a clown fish and was chased by 3 sharks."

## Team Copy

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## Notes for Coaches Only

This problem may alternatively be done without the one minute initial think time. It changes the dynamic of the problem.

These are some of the important items from the discussion periods following this problem at the 2004 Spontaneous Fair.

1. Why is it important to think during the minute of think time? How do you think about a story when it is so dependent on what others say? Perhaps you could think about a character, setting, or dilemma to introduce.
2. To prepare for this sort of story-building problem, you could define roles within your team. Have people specialize at doing one of the following:
  - Develop the story's main character.
  - Develop secondary character(s).
  - Figure out the setting for the story.
  - Develop the major plot elements.
 What other roles can you think of?
3. How do you handle a team member who always says the same thing, e.g. "I'm going to get a coke!" no matter what the situation is? Can you make them an asset, rather than a detriment? Turn that into the story's "refrain," as it were?
4. Be able to realize when you're slowing down and have hit a dull spot - you might want to go off on a tangent, or it might be better to just start a new story. Being able to say "Once Upon a Time" and start a new story is like having a "Pass" card for when you get stuck. Don't do this too soon or too often, though.
5. Always be prepared for the person in front of you to say "Once Upon a Time", and have the germ of another story in the back of your mind. To get highest points for overall creativity, eventually tie your new story back in to the original one.
6. Try to limit your use of very popular devices like "The wizard came and brought them back to life." "The wizard turned them into frogs." "The wizard magically opened the door from them." etc., or "They got caught." "They escaped." "They got caught." "They escaped." etc. These are likely to be considered common.
7. Should you let a main character die? It may be good for dramatic effect, but what does it do to the guy next to you? Will it stump him for too long?
8. Be aware of the elements that make a good story:
  - It should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
  - There should be some problem to resolve, or crisis situation.
  - The end should resolve the problem, and tie back in to the beginning.
 What else makes a good story?