

Style Pointers

Successful Style Will:

- Be interesting to watch
- Be understandable
- Appeal to the senses
- Entertain the audience
- Add details that enhance basic ideas
- Tie in with the long-term problem goals

Questions You Can Ask (to elicit good style design):

- How is this related to the long-term problem?
- Can you use the long-term solution to draw attention to your style?
- What do you mean by _____ ?
- How does this improve your solution?
- Are there other possible ways to do this?
- How could you accomplish this?
- What materials do you already have that you could use in a new way for this?
- What new materials could you use?
- Can you explain how this idea will work?
- Can several people's ideas be combined in a useful way?
- What other details could you add?
- Will the judges understand that?

Coaching Tips for Successful Style:

- Use what you have! Have the team list talents before beginning to design for style.
- Check outfits and language for appropriateness.
- Use videotape or part-group performance so team can critique themselves.
- Make contingency plans, so that Style can work even if long-term solution does not.
- Encourage the team to prepare and bring an Emergency Tool Kit.
- Try to practice at least once in the smallest possible performance area, and in a very large performance area.
- Encourage loud, slow, clear speech!
- Practice the timing of your solution. Try to leave a minute or so of spare time for Style and for the unexpected.
- If the team is having **fun**, Style is enhanced.

Filling Out the Style Form

Specified Style Areas

Most problems specify at least one area of style that will be judged for all teams – for example, the creativity of the costume of a specific character. Be sure the team checks for what is required by the problem, and write or type it (word for word) on the style form in the appropriate area.

Free Choice of Team

All problems give the team at least one (and sometimes more) area of style that is the “free choice” of the team to pick. This can be almost anything; take advantage of that!

- Encourage the team to pick the aspect of their solution that they are most proud of.
- Don't wait until the last minute to decide, BUT
- Don't choose the free choice while the solution is still changing; the team's best feature might change as their solution develops.
- Be specific. Have the team describe exactly the part of the solution that they want the judges to focus on. Vague descriptions get vague scores.
- Choose areas that clearly stand out
- Remember that style is not talent or ability, but rather how those talents and abilities are put to use.

If your team is most proud of the cat's costume, is it the ENTIRE costume? Or just the face? Or just the makeup on the face? The team should focus in on EXACTLY what they think is most creative and stylish. (If it's the overall impersonation of a cat, that's fine too – but it's the team's choice!)

Many problems have long-term scoring categories that are “style-like” – they involved the creativity of a design, or the effectiveness of a presentation. These items may not be listed as “free choice of team”. Have the team double-check their choices to make sure there are no overlaps with any scored long-term area. The Staging Judge will ask the team to choose something else if there is overlap – and just before going on stage is a bad time to be trying to think clearly.

Overall Effect

All problems are also scored in Style for “overall effect”. This includes:

- The general impression the team leaves on the judges
- How the four specific style elements of the solution fit together and complement each other
- The smoothness and ‘polish’ of the presentation – it takes practice!
- How well the judges understood what the team was doing.