

Team Choice Elements

"The problem solution is the engine and drive train on a car - very utilitarian and necessary, but not entertaining to look at. Team Choice Elements are the body of the car - they should be an integral part of the solution and should surround the solution in a classy, creative shell. They wrap around the solution and do more than just enhance it -- they "sell" it, just like the body of a car lures people into buying the engine and drive train."

Bill Allen

SUGGESTIONS ON SELECTING Team Choice Element CHOICES:

- Whatever you choose, the appraisers must be able to see and recognize it!
- The more unique and creative the more likely it is to be remembered by the appraisers!
- The more elaborate - the more noticed!
- Unexpected things will be remembered, surprise is usually well scored!
- Do not include items evaluated as ANY part of the Team Challenge!
- Ask to be scored on your strengths. Many teams have very creative parts to their presentation but don't list them to be scored! This is unfortunate and frustrating to the appraisers who may not give points for these strengths unless you help them! Ask your team "ARE ALL YOUR STRENGTHS RECEIVING POINTS SOMEWHERE?"
- A Team should never settle for a one-dimensional element. Team Choice Elements, or elaboration, involve injecting as much of themselves into the solution as possible. If a team sings a popular tune (karaoke style), their performance can represent an element, but it will be a subtle, one-dimensional effect. If they make up new words to the song, they've injected a bit more of themselves into the presentation -- but it's still a pretty obvious approach. If they invent their own instruments, write both the music and the words and then perform it live during the presentation; they've created something nobody else would likely duplicate. Moreover, the sheer volume of creative energy involved can't help but make an impression. The point is there is no limit to how involved a solution can become.

Team Choice Element FORM HINTS:

- Be sure to focus the Appraisers attention on the VERY BEST elements of the Team's solution. If there are 3 costumes and one is clearly better, they should specify the specific costume rather than just "costumes" on the required form. Appraisers WON'T automatically make this adjustment
- Try to give the appraisers some of the background WHY the solution the kids have chosen is special, and how it relates to real life skills.
- Appraisers continue to formulate their opinions about scoring during the discussions that go on with the Team after the performance. The kids should be excited about their solution and seek out the appraisers to tell them why what they did was special -- instead of passively answering the questions the appraisers ask.
- Appraisers have only a few minutes to evaluate the Team's solution. Appraisers WANT to give the kids all the points they are entitled to. Make it easy for the Appraisers to understand and appreciate the solution by providing well-focused, easily understood descriptions.
- The Team Choice Element form offers almost no space for describing each element. It is important that the TM question the team through the editing process to make sure that the description is concise but thorough!
- Understand that Appraisers are not experts in all areas. If the Team is asking a subtle or technically complex aspect of their solution to be evaluated as a Team Choice Element, the Appraisers will need substantial background information to appreciate it fully.
- UNFOCUSED FORMS ARE A COMMON ERROR FOR NEW TEAMS.

Scoring on Team Choice Elements is subjective

However, consider these as questions you can use to help your team think about Team Choice Elements for their solution:

1. Surprise
2. Humor
3. Creative use of materials - using and combining materials in unexpected ways
4. Integrating all elements into an overall theme of the skit
5. Adding a dynamic quality to typically static elements (an accent, a mechanized prop, set one part of skit apart with rhyme or rhythm)
6. Creating a solution others will not have considered - unusual theme, characters, interactions, unexpected ending...
7. Props that transform or are used in different ways at different times
8. Artistic quality of artwork or acting or performance of a song or dance
9. Making the elements as "rich" in the team's *personality* as possible
10. Center theme around the challenge (but in a new and different way)
11. Focus in on one aspect and draw all eyes or ears to THAT
12. Using different materials (instead of only paint, use paper, fabric & wood)
13. Assign someone the role of adding additional dimensions to props/costumes
14. Maybe something with a literary or historical reference?