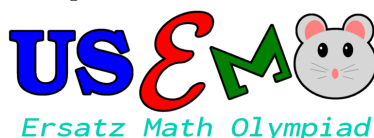


# USEMO Mission Statement

UNITED STATES ERSATZ MATH OLYMPIAD

Last updated 29 December 2025



The **US Ersatz Math Olympiad** is a proof-based competition open to all US middle and high school students.

## §1 Philosophy

Like many competitions, its goals are to stimulate interest in mathematics, and to develop (rather than simply measure) mathematical ability. However, the organizers of the USEMO fulfill the following special purposes:

1. The USEMO is one of few **proof-based olympiads open to all high school students**. The largest other such proof-based competition we are aware of is the USA Mathematical Talent Search, but the USEMO aims to be closer in format and difficulty to the IMO.

Currently, not many students have the opportunity to take a timed proof-based contest. In the USA, the first experience is often the USA Math Olympiad, which is to say the least not a gentle introduction. We believe the USEMO can help with providing a proof-based competition experience at an earlier stage than is currently done, in a low-stakes environment, but without watering down the difficulty.

2. Moreover, we aim to **provide feedback (rather than just score)** to participants. We aim for transparency in evaluating students' work. We hope that this gives students a rare chance to have their proofs evaluated by past IMO veterans.
3. We believe the USEMO serves as a **creative outlet for problem authors** who have graduated from high school. For security reasons, most prestigious competitions have some gate-keeping in determining who is eligible to propose problems. The USEMO is relatively low-stakes, and therefore has fewer constraints. This also gives more flexibility in the types of problems which could appear on the USEMO.
4. The prize structure involves a donation (in addition to personal winning). We want to **encourage our brightest young students to think about how they can give back**, so we think encouraging them to decide pick a charity or non-profit to give a bit of support is a great step in the right direction.

## §2 Disclosures and notes

- The Director for the USEMO is Evan Chen. You can contact the Director at `usemo@evanchen.cc`.
- The USEMO is largely organized by volunteers. In 2024 and 2025, problem captains and the director received payment via a generous sponsorship from CoRE Lab, Institute of Artificial Intelligence, Peking University.
- *The USEMO is not sponsored by, affiliated with, or endorsed by the Mathematical Association of America, which is the organizing body for the USA Math Olympiad. It is not intended to represent the nation's main mathematical olympiad (hence the deliberate choice of "Ersatz" in the name), and is not part of the path to the USA team for the International Math Olympiad.*