

DOK OVERVIEW INFORMATION

What is DOK?

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) is an element of the Webb Alignment Tool developed by Dr. Norman Webb, from the University of Wisconsin, to align standards with assessments. DOK focuses on the content standard in order to successfully complete an assessment/standard task. It is descriptive, not a taxonomy. It is also not the same as difficulty, rather about the complexity of the task.

The depth of knowledge is not determined by the verb, but the context in which the verb is used and the depth of thinking required to complete the assignment/task. Depth of Knowledge is represented by four levels of cognitive complexity; each describing the kind of thinking involved at that level.

A greater DOK level requires greater conceptual understanding and cognitive processing by the student. Students who are exposed to and reach greater DOK levels (complexity of thinking) will have increased student achievement. The following are the definitions used by Webb to describe the four levels of depth of knowledge:

The Four Levels of Depth of Knowledge

- **DOK 1: (recall) *Recall and Reproduction*** — recall or recognition of a fact, information (*definitions, terms, dates, etc.*), concept, or procedure.
- **DOK 2: (skill/concept) *Basic application of Skills and Concepts*** — use of information, conceptual knowledge, following or selecting appropriate procedures, two or more steps with decision points along the way, routine problems, organizing/displaying data. This level requires mental skills, concepts, or processing beyond a habitual response; students must make some decisions about how to approach a problem or activity.
- **DOK 3: (strategic thinking) *Strategic Thinking*** — requires reasoning, developing a plan or sequence of steps to approach a problem, some decision making and justification, abstract and complex thinking. DOK 3 items often have more than one possible answer (*generally taking less than 10 minutes to do*).
- **DOK 4: (extended thinking) *Extended Thinking*** — an investigation or application to real work; requires time to research, think, and process multiple conditions of the problem or task. This would include no routine manipulations across disciplines/content areas/multiple sources (*requires*

complex reasoning, planning, developing, and thinking, most likely over an extended time, and requiring more than 10 minutes to do non-routine manipulations).

Depth of knowledge levels describe the process of thinking involved in while considering the complexity of the task, **not** the likelihood that the task will be completed correctly. DOK levels can be cumulative; an item written to DOK 3 often contains DOK 1 and DOK 2 level demands, however, DOK levels are not additive. You cannot create a DOK level 2 activity with only DOK 1 demands, (i.e., a DOK 1 + DOK 1 does not equal a DOK 2).