Depth & Complexity Icon Chart

Depth	Icon	Definition	Example	Writing	Key Questions	Thinking Skills
Language of the Discipline		What vocabulary terms are specific to the content or discipline?	Tools Jargon Icons Acronyms Special phrases Terms Slang Abbreviations	What are its attributes? What features characterize this? What specific elements define this? What distinguishes this from other things?	What terms or words are specific to the work of? What tools does the use?	Categorize Identify
Details		What are the defining features or characteristics? Find examples and evidence to support opinions and ideas.	Parts Factors Attributes Variables Distinguishing Traits	Describe it: (physically, using the 5 senses, if applicable) How would you describe this issue/topic? If it's a concept, think "out of the box" and gives it a color, taste, smell, etc.	What are its attributes? What features characterize this? What specific elements define this? What distinguishes this from other things?	Identify traits Describe Differentiate Compare/contrast Prove with evidence Observe
Patterns		What elements reoccur? What is the sequence or order of events? Make predictions based on past events.	Predictability Repetition	Expository writing: Create (planning), Remembering (listing, describing, naming) Understanding (categorizing, explaining) Analyzing (How are the components organized?)	What are the reoccurring events? What elements, events, ideas, are repeated over time? What was the order of events? How can we predict what will come next?	Determine relevant versus irrelevant Summarize Make analogies Discriminate between same & different Relate
Unanswered Questions	???	What information is unclear, missing, or unavailable? What evidence do you need? What has not yet been proven?	Missing Parts Incomplete Ideas Discrepancies Unresolved issues Ambiguity	What do people who work in this discipline still need to find out? What don't they know?	What do experts in the field still not understand about this area/topic/study/discipline? What is yet unknown about this area/topic/study/discipline? In what ways is the information incomplete or lacking in explanation?	Prioritize Determine cause and effect Predict Relate Formulate questions Hypothesize
Rules		What structure underlies this subject? What guidelines or regulations affect it? What hierarchy or ordering principle is at work?	Structure Order Reasons- "Because" Organization Explanation Classification	Analyze it-How is this used, in real life or metaphorical? How does it help you understand other topics/issues? Who uses it? Who doesn't use it but should? Who needs it understand it well?	How is this structured? What are the stated and unstated causes related to the description or explanation of what we are studying?	Generalize Predict Judge credibility
Trends		Note factors (Social, Economic, Political, Scientific, Artistic, Geographic) that cause events to occur. Identify patterns of change over time.	Influence Forces Direction Course of Action Compare, Contrast and Forecast	Compare-What is this similar to? Different from? What does it remind you of?	What ongoing factors have influenced this study? What factors have contributed to this study?	Judge with criteria Determine bias

Depth & Complexity Icon Chart (continued)

Depth	Icon	Definition	Example	Writing	Key Questions	Thinking Skills
Ethics		What moral principles are involved in this subject? What controversies exist? What arguments could emerge from a study of this topic?	Values Morals Pro and Con Bias Discrimination Prejudice Judging Differing Opinions Point of View Right and Wrong Wisdom	Argue for/against: Why would you support this? Why would you argue against it? Who should be in favor of it? Who should be against it? Why?	What dilemmas or controversies are involved in this? What area/topic/study/discipline? What elements can be identified that reflect bias, prejudice, discrimination?	 Recognize fallacies Note ambiguity Distinguish fact from fiction & opinion Formulate questions Problem solve Identify missing information Test assumptions
Big Ideas		What theory or general statement applies to these ideas? How do these ideas relate to broad concepts such as change, systems, chaos vs. order, etc? What is the main idea?	Draw conclusions based on evidence Make generalizations Summarize Theory Principle	List the most important ideas about this discipline.	What overarching statement best describes what is being studied? What general statement includes what is being studied?	Support with evidence Generalize Identify the main idea
Complexity	Icon	Definition	Example	Writing	Key Questions	Resources
Across the Disciplines		Relate the area of study to other subjects within, between, and across disciplines.	Connect Associate Integrate Lind Ideas Cross-Curricular study	Associate it- What does this remind you of? Does the topic connect to other issues/subjects? Do you have memories or experiences related to it that it makes you think of?	Apply it (tell how it can be used)— How does it help you understand other subjects, branches of learning, fields of study, professions, jobs?	
Changes over Time	The state of the s	How are elements related in terms of the past, present, and future? How and why do things change? What doesn't change?	Connecting points in time Examining a time period Compare and Contrast	Make a time-line of the important events in this discipline.	How are the ideas related between the past, present, future? How are these ideas related within or during a particular time period? How has time affected the information? How and why do things change or remain the same?	Time lines Text Biographies Autobiographies Historical documents
Different Perspectives		How would others see the situation differently?	Different roles and knowledge Opposing viewpoints	Apply it- How is this used, in real life or metaphorically? How does it help you understand other topics/issues? Who uses it? Who doesn't use it but should? Who needs to understand it well?	What are the opposing viewpoints? How do different people and characters see this event or situation?	Biographies Autobiographies Mythologies, Legends vs. nonfiction accounts Debates