



The ABC of NLP

A Glossary of Terms connected with
Neuro Linguistic Programming

Compiled by

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With grateful thanks to the many sources
and the work of so many great NLP Trainers



Introduction

Over the years that I've been studying, working with and teaching NLP I have constantly been asked, "what does this word mean?" and "why so many fancy names for everything?"

Today, participants in any of my NLP training programmes receive a Glossary of Terms to help them understand the various references and titles and to provide a single source of information.

In this booklet I have shared that Glossary with you. I don't lay claim to it being complete by any means and I'm sure the keen reader and student can find others to add. However, I can bear witness to how useful my students and friends have found it. So, with an outcome of understanding in mind, I share it with you. Should you wish to add anything, please do feel free to contact me by e-mail to info@ralphwatson.com and I will be delighted to add your suggested entry so that others may benefit from your wisdom. In this way, the spirit of NLP will help the booklet AND future readers grow.

Once you have read it, please also feel free to visit my website at www.ralphwatson.com where you will find other useful texts as well as details of my programmes around the world.

I wish you much happiness with your NLP

Ralph Watson

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The ABC of NLP

Accessing Cues	External signs that give us information about how we think.
Analogue	Analogue distinctions have continuous variation, as in size. This is as opposed to <i>Digital</i> .
Analogue Marking	Using a verbal or non-verbal cue to mark out words in a sentence.
Anchoring	The process by which any representation, internal or external (the stimulus), gets connected and linked to and triggers a subsequent string of representations and responses (the response). Anchors can be naturally occurring or set up deliberately.
As-If Frame	This is "acting as if" something were true, such as adopting the physiology of somebody who has a specific quality that you want to have.
Associated	The relationship you have with the memory of an experience. As if seen through your own eyes, totally immersed IN that experience
Auditory (A)	The <i>Representational System</i> dealing with hearing. It can be internal or external. Also known as Auditory Tonal (At).
Auditory Digital (Ad)	The <i>Representational System</i> dealing with logic and the way we talk to ourselves.
Backtrack	To go back and summarise, review or contemplate what was previously covered, as in a meeting.
Behaviour	An external, verifiable activity we produce or engage in.
Being At Cause	Taking responsibility for the results of one's actions.
Beliefs	<i>Generalisations</i> we make about the world and our opinions about it. They form the rules about what we can and cannot do.
Break State	Using a movement or distraction to change an emotional state.
Calibration	The ability to notice and measure changes with respect to a standard. Usually involves the comparison between two different sets of external, non-verbal cues. By comparing, we can notice the difference between persons, places, things, states and behaviours. Calibrating depends on refined <i>Sensory Acuity</i> .
Chaining	Sequencing a series of states.

Chunking	Changing a perception by moving a "chunk", or a group of bits of information, in the direction of a <i>Deductive</i> or <i>Inductive</i> conclusion through the use of language.
Circle of Excellence	Using an imaginary circle on the floor as a spatial anchor to install new or additional resources relative to a situation where different behaviour or thinking is wished.
Complex Equivalence	This occurs when (1) you attach meaning to something specific and (2) when two statements, one behavioural and one capability, are considered to mean the same. (See <i>Meta Model</i>)
Confusion to Understanding	Original pattern developed by Richard Bandler using <i>Submodalities</i> to change the meaning of your <i>Internal Representations</i> and is the basis of "Like to Dislike."
Congruence	When behaviour (words, tonality, physiology, etc.) matches the words a person says.
Conscious	That of which we are currently aware.
Conscious-Unconscious Integration	When our thoughts and behaviours are integrated at the conscious and unconscious levels.
Content	The details of a story. The history of the client.
Content Reframe	Giving another meaning to a statement by recovering more content, which changes the focus. (Also called a <i>Meaning Reframe</i>).
Context	The particular setting or situation in which the content occurs.
Context Reframing	Giving another meaning to a statement by changing the context.
Contrastive Analysis	This is a process of analysing two sets of <i>Submodalities</i> to discover the <i>Critical Submodalities</i> . What makes the two sets different.
Convincer	Something that convinces the client's conscious mind that their unconscious mind can do something.
Convincer Strategy	The filter used in becoming certain or confident that something is okay.
Criteria	The NLP word for values. <i>Values</i> are what is important to you and determine how you spend your time.

Critical Submodality	In <i>Submodalities</i> , Critical Submodalities are the difference that makes the difference. Discovered through the process of <i>Contrastive Analysis</i> , Critical Submodalities account for the difference between two different internal representations. When Submodalities are compared through contrastive analysis, the Critical Submodalities are the Submodalities that are different.
Cross Over Matching	<i>Matching</i> one aspect of a person's external behaviour or physiology with a different physiological movement.
Deductive	Reasoning from the general to the specific. To chunk down.
Deep Structure	The unconscious basis for the surface structure of a statement. Much of the deep structure is out of awareness. The deeper underlying root cause, or meaning of a spoken word.
Deletion	One of the three major processes (including <i>Distortion</i> and <i>Generalisation</i>) on which the <i>Meta Model</i> is based. Deletion occurs when we leave out a portion of our experience as we make our <i>Internal Representations</i> .
Derivation	Obtain from the <i>Deep Structure</i> to create the spoken word.
Digital	Digital distinctions have distinct variations of meaning as in a digital watch, or an on/off switch. This is as opposed to <i>Analogue</i> .
Dissociated	The relationship you have with the memory of an experience. As if seeing your whole body in the picture.
Distortion	One of the three major processes (including <i>Deletion</i> and <i>Generalisation</i>) on which the <i>Meta Model</i> is based. Distortion occurs when something is mistaken for that which it is not, when things are incorrectly included in our <i>Internal Representations</i> .
Double Binds	Questions that give a client a "free choice" among two or more comparable alternatives. They are based on the notion of multilevel communication.
Downtime	Having all sensory inputs focussed inward. There will therefore be no attention available for outward attention.

Drivers	The <i>Submodality</i> that makes the most difference in our meaning of an experience. It is so important that it carries all the other submodality <i>differences</i> , the <i>Critical Submodalities</i> , when we change it.
Ecology	The study of the consequences or results or impact of any change that occurs on the wider system.
Elicitation	Inducing a state in a client, or gathering information by asking questions or observing the client's behaviour. See <i>Accessing Cues</i> .
Embedded Command	A command that is inside a longer sentence marked out by voice tone or gesture.
Embedded Question	A question that is inside a longer sentence marked out by voice tone or gesture.
Eye Accessing Cues	Movements of the eyes in certain directions that indicate visual, auditory or kinaesthetic thinking.
Feedback	The results of your actions to influence your next step.
First Position	This is one of the <i>Perceptual Positions</i> . First Position is when you are associated, looking through your own eyes, and in touch with only your own inner <i>Model of the World</i> .
Fractionation	Repeating the induction of trance which deepens trance.
Frame	The <i>context</i> or particular point of view around a specific experience
Future Pace	Mentally rehearsing a future result so that the desired outcome automatically occurs.
Generalisation	One of the three major processes (including <i>Distortion</i> and <i>Deletion</i>) on which the <i>Meta Model</i> is based. Generalisation occurs when one specific experience represents a whole class of experiences. Generalisation also occurs when one experience is generalised to the whole.
Gestalt	A collection of memories around a certain topic.
Gustatory (G)	The <i>Representational System</i> dealing with taste.
Hallucination	Sensory experience of something that does not exist.
Hypnotism	A relaxed state induced in a person so change work can be done at the subconscious or unconscious level.
Incongruence	When the external, verifiable behaviour of a person does not match the words the person says.

Inductive	Drawing a general conclusion (abstract) from specific facts - Chunking up.
Intent	The desired outcome of a behaviour.
Internal Representations	The content of our thinking or the confirmation of information which includes Pictures, Sounds, Feelings, Tastes, Smells, and Self Talk.
In Time	An In Time person will prefer to code their memories from front to back, up to down, in a 'V' or any arrangement where part of the past, present or future is behind or inside them.
Kinaesthetic (K)	The <i>Representational System</i> dealing with feelings and sensations. It can be internal or external.
Law of Dominant Effect	A suggestion is more effective when it is experienced simultaneously with a strong emotion.
Law of Requisite Variety	In a given physical system, that part of the system with the greatest flexibility of behaviour will, ultimately, control the system.
Leading	Changing your own behaviour with enough rapport so another person will follow.
Lead System	The <i>Representational System</i> used to access stored information and lead it from the <i>Unconscious Mind</i> to the Conscious Mind. Watching <i>Eye Accessing Cues</i> discovers the Lead System. We look where the eyes go when someone accesses information.
Limiting Belief	Beliefs or decisions we make about ourselves and/or our model of the world that limit the way we live.
Limiting Decision	The decision that preceded the adoption of a <i>Limiting Belief</i> .
Logical Level	The level of specificity or abstraction. Think of logical levels as going up or down from Abstract at the top to Specific at the bottom.
Mapping Across	Following <i>Contrastive Analysis</i> , Mapping Across is the <i>Submodality</i> process of actually changing the set of Submodalities of a certain <i>Internal Representation</i> to change its meaning.
Matching	Doing the same, copying or adopting the behaviour of the client or replicating exactly some aspect of a person's physiology.
Meaning Reframe	Giving another meaning to a statement by recovering more content, which changes the focus. (Sometimes called a <i>Content Reframe</i> .)

Meta	(From the Greek "meta" – over or higher than) Something is meta to another if it is at a higher level.
Meta Model	A model of language, derived from Virginia Satir that gives us an "over" view of language. It allows us to recognise <i>deletions</i> , <i>generalisations</i> and <i>distortions</i> in our language, and gives us questions to clarify imprecise language and gain specificity.
Metaphor	A story which is symbolic and which allows us to bypass the conscious resistance of the client and to have the client make connections at a deeper level.
Meta Position	A location outside a situation enabling you to view the situation in a more objective way. A dissociated position not involved with the content of the event or the person. Very similar to <i>Third Position</i> .
Meta Programs	These are unconscious, content-free programs we run which filter our experiences.
Milton Model	The Milton Model is designed to produce trance or agreement. It is a series of abstract language patterns, which are ambiguous so as to match the client's experience and assist in accessing unconscious resources. The Milton Model has the opposite intent of <i>the Meta Model</i> .
Mirroring	Reflecting the behaviour or physiology of the client as if looking into a mirror.
Mismatching	Using different patterns or contradictory responses regarding behaviour or words to interrupt communication.
Modalities	Refers to our internal representations, which relate to the five senses (<i>Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory</i>) plus our internal dialogue.
Modal Operators	Modal Operator of Necessity relates to words, which form the rules in our lives (should, must, have to, etc.). Modal Operator of Possibility relates to words that denote that which is considered possible (can, cannot, etc.).
Model of the World	A person's values, beliefs and attitudes as well as their internal representations, states and physiology, that all relate to and create their belief system of how the world operates.
Model	In NLP, a Model is a description of a concept or behaviour, which can be adopted easily.

Modelling	Modelling is the process by which all of NLP was created. In Modelling we elicit the Strategies, Filter Patterns (Beliefs and Values) and the Physiology that allows someone to produce a certain behaviour. Then we codify these in a series of steps designed to make the behaviour easy to reproduce.
Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP)	NLP is the study of excellence, which describes how the language of our mind produces our behaviour, and allows us to model excellence and to reproduce that excellent behaviour.
Nominalization	A noun describing a state of being which exists in name only. Not a tangible item. Can be a verb or another process word that has been formed into an abstract noun.
Olfactory (O)	The representational system dealing with smell.
Outcome Orientation	Having a specific, sensory-based, desired result for the client. Having an end and an aim in mind.
Overlapping Representational System	Moving from the <i>Preferred Representational System</i> to another <i>Representational System</i> .
Pacing	Gaining and maintaining rapport with another person over a period of time by joining them in their model of the world by <i>Matching</i> or <i>Mirroring</i> their external behaviour.
Parts	Parts are a portion of the unconscious mind, often having conflicting beliefs and values that are different from the whole of the system.
Parts Integration	A technique, which allows us to integrate parts at the unconscious level by assisting each one to traverse logical levels by chunking up and to go beyond the boundaries of each to find a higher level of intention and wholeness.
Pattern Interrupt	Changing a person's state. Can be abrupt. See <i>Break State</i> .
Perceptual Position	Describes our point of view in a specific situation: First Position is our own point of view. Second Position is usually someone else's point of view. Third position is the point of view of a dissociated observer-much like an overview or meta-position.
Personal Edit	See <i>Self Edit</i> .

Phobia	A severe, associated, unwanted response of fear regarding some person or event in the past. These are often totally irrational.
Phonological Ambiguity	This occurs when there are two words which sound the same but have different meanings.
Physiology of Excellence	<i>Modelling</i> excellence in others and utilising it in yourself and others.
Post-Hypnotic Suggestion	A hypnotic suggestion that activates and operates at a time after the induction of trance.
Precision Model	Derived by John Grinder from the <i>Meta Model</i> as a series of five pointers to greater understanding.
Predicates	Words and phrases (primarily verbs, adverbs and adjectives) that often presuppose one of the <i>Representational Systems</i> .
Preferred Rep System	This is the representational system that someone most often uses to think, and to organise his or her experiences. This is the representational system that we commonly and most easily employ.
Presuppositions	The assumptions that a client makes to support their model of the world. Presuppositions are what are necessarily true for the client's belief systems to make sense and have meaning to the client.
Primary Rep System	This is how we represent our internal processing externally. Most people tend to favour one <i>Representational System</i> over another and process most communication in that manner.
Presuppositions of NLP	Assumptions or convenient beliefs, which are not necessarily "true," but which if accepted and believed will change our thinking and improve our results.
Projection	To attribute one's ideas or feelings to other people or to another model of the world.
Punctuation Ambiguity	An ambiguity, which is created by changing the punctuation of a sentence by pausing in the wrong place, or by running on two sentences.
Quotes	This is a Linguistic Pattern in which your message is expressed as if by someone else.
Rapport	The process of responsiveness, at the unconscious level. The ability to relate to others in a way that creates a climate of trust and understanding.
Reference System	The base against what we calibrate. How we organise information so that we know what we know.

Referential Index Shift	Finding someone else who has a way of thinking or a resource you wish to model (their Reference System), entering their model of the world and noting from their perspective and in all modalities the process and results of their thinking and/or action. Also making a change in the referential index (subject) of a sentence to create overload at the conscious level.
Reframing	The process of making a shift in the nature of a problem or changing the structure or context of a statement to give it another meaning.
Representation	A thought in the mind which can be comprised of <i>Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory, Gustatory, and Auditory Digital</i> (Self Talk).
Representational System	This is the way we code sensory information and experience our world. There is a representational system for each of our senses.
Resources	Resources are the means to create change within oneself or to accomplish an outcome. Resources may include certain states, adopting specific physiology, new strategies, beliefs, values or attitudes, even specific behaviour.
Resourceful State	This refers to any state where a person has positive, helpful emotions and strategies available to him or her, and is operating from them behaviourally. Obviously the state implies a successful outcome.
Search Anchor	An anchor used to identify the source of a problem or issue. See <i>Trace Anchor</i> .
Secondary Gain	The reason/reward the client has or receives for not changing from a presenting problem or outside source.
Second Position	Relating to a <i>Perceptual Position</i> : Second Position describes our point of view in a specific situation. Second Position is usually someone else's point of view.
Self Edit	Accessing your personal resources & making a change.
Self Inventory	A <i>Sensory Based</i> internal scan.
Sensory Acuity	The ability to notice and gain awareness of another person's conscious and unconscious responses through their physiology.
Sensory-Based Description	Is describing someone's verifiable external behaviour in a way that does not include any evaluations or assumptions, but in a way that just relates the specific physiology.

State	Relates to our internal emotional condition. In NLP we believe that the state determines our results, and so we are careful to be in states of excellence. In NLP, our <i>Internal Representations</i> , plus our <i>State</i> , and our physiology results in our <i>Behaviour</i> .
Strategy	A specific, repeatable and anchored sequence of internal and external representations that leads to a particular outcome.
Submodalities	These are fine distinctions (or the subsets of the <i>Modalities V, A, K, O, G, and Ad</i>) that are part of each representational system that encode and give meaning to our experiences.
Surface Structure	This is a linguistic term relating to the organisation of the spoken level of our communication, which generally leaves out the totality of the <i>Deep Structure</i> . The way we leave out the deep structure is by <i>Deletion, Generalisation</i> and <i>Distortion</i> .
Synaesthesia	A two-step strategy, between <i>Modalities</i> , where the two steps are linked together with one usually out of awareness.
Syntactic Ambiguity	Where it is impossible to tell from the syntax of a sentence the meaning of a certain word.
Third Position	Relating to a <i>Perceptual Positions</i> . Third Position, or <i>Meta Position</i> , is the point of view of a dissociated observer, an over view.
Through Time	Through Time people will store their memories left to right or right to left or in any other way so that all time is in front of them. Time is a continuous and uninterrupted.
Time Code	The way we store our memories into the Past, Present and Future.
Time Line	A way in which we store our memories of the past, the present and the future making each person's time line metaphorically unique to them.
Trace Anchor	See <i>Search Anchor</i> .
Trance	Any altered state. In hypnosis it is usually characterised by inward, one-pointed focus.

Transderivational Search	Part of <i>Eye Accessing Cues</i> . Looking through several or all of the <i>Representational Systems</i> for the same piece of information.
Transformation	A series of <i>Derivations</i> which connect the <i>Deep Structure</i> to the <i>Surface Structure</i> .
Trigger	The external event or internal belief that starts a behaviour or response.
Triple Description	See <i>Perceptual Positions</i> .
Unconscious	That of which you are not conscious, or which is out of conscious awareness.
Unconscious Mind	The part of your mind that you are not conscious of.
Universal	An experience that is so well known that it is assumed.
Universal Quantifiers	Words that are universal generalisations and have no referential index. Includes words such as "all", "every", and "never".
Uptime	Having all sensory inputs focussed outward, leaving no attention available for inward attention.
Utilisation	Pacing someone's reality by simply describing their ongoing sensory experience of what they must be feeling, hearing, or seeing.
Values	High-level <i>Generalisations</i> that describe that which is important to you. In NLP sometimes called criteria.
Visual (V)	The Representational System dealing with the sense of sight. It can be internal or external.
Visual Squash	An NLP technique which allows us to integrate parts at the unconscious level by assisting each one to traverse logical levels (by chunking up) and to go beyond the boundaries of each to find a higher level of wholeness. Now called <i>Parts Integration</i> .
Well Formedness Conditions	The Well Formedness Conditions allow us to specify outcomes that are more achievable, because the language conforms to certain rules.