Semantic primes are the vocabulary of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage. The chart displays the English words for the primes and some of their combinatorial possibilities, according to NSM grammar. More complex combinations are also possible. In some languages, two primes e.g. FEEL and HEAR, and SOME and PART, may be expressed by the same word. In some languages a prime can have two or more exponents (allolexes), e.g. English other and else. Sometimes a combination of two or more primes, e.g. LIKE THIS, can be expressed by a single portmanteau word. [c.goddard@griffith.edu.au]

### Chart of NSM Semantic Primes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I-ME</th>
<th>WANT</th>
<th>SEE</th>
<th>SOMEONE</th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>THINK</th>
<th>SET OF</th>
<th>MOVE</th>
<th>TOUCH</th>
<th>INSIDE</th>
<th>PLACE-WHERE-SOMEBODY</th>
<th>HERE</th>
<th>ON ONE SIDE</th>
<th>NEAR</th>
<th>FAR</th>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to do/what/see something</td>
<td>someone wants something</td>
<td>someone sees something</td>
<td>someone else</td>
<td>someone knows/refers to someone</td>
<td>someone thinks</td>
<td>someone has set of</td>
<td>someone moves</td>
<td>someone touches</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>some where/where someone is</td>
<td>something is happening now</td>
<td>to this place</td>
<td>in/on this side</td>
<td>near</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Definitions

**I-ME**
- I want to do/what/see something
- I want this
- I want something bad/happens

**WANT**
- someone wants something
- someone wants to do something
- someone wants to have something
- someone wants to be something

**SEE**
- someone sees something
- someone sees to someone
- someone sees something to someone

**SOMEONE**
- someone else
- someone else does something
- someone else wants something
- someone else feels something

**KNOW**
- someone knows
- someone knows of something
- someone knows that someone

**THINK**
- someone thinks
- someone thinks of something
- someone thinks that someone

**SET OF**
- someone has set
- someone has set of
- someone has set of something

**MOVE**
- someone moves
- someone moves to
- someone moves to someone

**TOUCH**
- someone touches
- someone touches something

**INSIDE**
- someone is inside
- someone is inside of

**PLACE-WHERE-SOMEBODY**
- some where/where someone is
- some where/where someone is

**HERE**
- something is happening now
- this place

**ON ONE SIDE**
- on the side
- on the side of

**NEAR**
- near this place
- near someone

**FAR**
- far from this place

**BEFORE**
- before this time
- before someone

**AFTER**
- after this time
- after someone

### Additional Notes

- Using NSM in explanations:
  - Don't include any complex English-specific words, no matter how common and meaningly basic; e.g. and, or, etc.
  - Ensure that you use semantic primes only in allowable syntactic frames. Do not resort to non-NSM syntax even if English grammar allows it. For example, avoid doing something about it and feel good about something; semantic primes co and rest do not have any "about" valency.
  - Avoid the following non-universal constructions: relative clauses (e.g. someone who did this), comparative (e.g. better than, more), indirect speech (e.g. this someone said that...). Whenever possible, explicates should be composed entirely in semantic primes; but some explicates require use of semantic molecules in addition to primes. Semantic molecules are a well-defined set of non-primitive meanings that function as units in the meanings of more complex concepts.

### Key References

- Wierzbicka, A. 2006. English: Meanings and Culture. OUP.