

Guide to Understanding Your Astrological Chart

Planetary Portraits

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“I think astrology, at its best, is about opening up the imagination, opening up the possibilities, by getting you to play with visions of what’s possible. It’s not a belief system; it’s not a religion; it’s not a science. It’s a language of the archetypes that you can play with and thereby get a read on the biggest possibilities that are available to you.”

-Astrologer Rob Brezsky

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Preface

A friend recently told me that, although she is extremely interested in learning more about her sun sign, she hesitates because there seems to be so much “fluff” out there. The conversation made me think of a line from Dante’s Paradise:

*“... the mind of one who listens will not heed nor fix its faith
on an example that has its roots in things unknown or hidden
or some other proof not clearly shown.”*

People sense that astrology can be a useful tool, but many shy away from it for the exact same reason they find themselves attracted to it in the first place- because of its mysteriousness. Too much mystery opens the door to superstition on the one hand, and to skepticism on the other. Both of these avenues veer away from the bigger picture of what astrology really has to offer: a unique opportunity for open-minded self-exploration.

I started Planetary Portraits with the idea of showcasing what can ultimately be an intensely valuable and simultaneously beautiful tool. Astrology charts can drum up curiosity not only for the art of astrology but also for layered complexity of one’s individuality as well as for all of mankind. We are an extraordinary organism made up of diverse souls. Exploring your astrology chart offers regular occasions to ask “who am I?” and “who are we?”. With enough reflection a great paradox will appear quite clearly; you are identical to every human who has ever existed and yet you are at the same time an individual with your own unique personality working in the world.

You will discover that the absolute value of astrology doesn’t lie in simply finding answers about yourself. *The true value is in asking yourself more questions.* Your birth chart reveals a totally unique web of questions specifically there for *you* to untangle. These questions concern your innate desires, life experiences, attitudes, hopes and fears. Your gaze will be directed into your past and your future. Like the ancients who peered into a sky and somehow made sense of a billion points of light, with enough careful observation and self-reflection you too can extract meaning and order out of what may at first seem like randomness and chaos.

Perhaps you have never seen an astrology chart before. Maybe you have never even imagined what one looks like. Far beyond the broad strokes of a sun sign horoscope, your astrology chart is a personalized map that can speak directly to you if you allow it. This guide will help you learn the layout of your chart and its basic components by offering you some foundational information to start the process of chart interpretation. No matter what your previous experience with astrology has been, remember that every new examination of your chart can yield fresh and rewarding insights. There is no limit to self-knowledge so keep on searching!

-Kirsten S.

2022

Part I: Overview

“The grand points of human nature are the same today as they were a thousand years ago. The only variability in them is in the expression, not in feature.” -Herman Melville

What is Astrology?

The art of astrology began with humble origins and high aims; with the most rudimentary technology, the ancients scanned dark skies teeming with billions of tiny moving stars in search of answers. The patterns found were often considered divine omens that, when correctly interpreted, promised to offer insight and guidance on how to live and how to act. Eventually the sky could be read like a clock so that the seasons could be marked out with a precision that allowed men to labor and live with greater yield and efficiency. Even at its earliest stages, astrology reflected how the exercise of sifting out order from apparent chaos is a key in increasing the probability of favorable results.

Over time humanity’s curious eyes inevitably turned from the sky to the earth. As record keeping became more comprehensive and human history continued to compound, the data began to point to cyclical patterns that were not only pervasive in the natural environment but also in the affairs of men. On the simplest order it became apparent that societies organize themselves around times and seasons: citizens spring to life in springtime, play in summer, are diligent in fall and hunker down for winter. On a daily basis individuals wake at dawn, are active throughout the day, and come home to rest in the evening. On the scale of the human lifespan, one springs to life at birth, plays and toils in his or her prime, reaps life’s harvests at retirement, and experiences fading strength at the twilight of life just before coming to a complete rest.

Astrology as an overarching ideology pronounces that chaos is neither the ruling principle of the sky nor of the earth, nor of the bodies that inhabit these realms. The natural law of the cosmos, on the macro and micro level- “as above, so below”- is generally one of order, particularly of a cyclical variety.

Over time astrology has evolved into a tool for analyzing the traits and trajectories of individuals. It is currently known in popular culture for

connecting the positions of planets with specific human personality traits, particularly through sun sign horoscopes. It might appear superficial, but the broad categorizations of zodiac traits and fates often found in the back pages of magazines are actually the result of thousands of years' worth of probing the cyclical and orderly essence of natural law.

Some people still believe that astrology offers a window into the future and can be used for prognostication, which can be difficult for many modern thinkers to swallow at face value. It can be argued, however, that it is in essence the individual desires, thoughts, decisions and actions that carry each person down life's winding path. Gaining a greater understanding of who you are, how you are in the world, what you want most in life and how you tend to go about getting it undoubtedly creates a clearer picture of one's likely future. Self-knowledge allows you to create a more accurate vision of your future. Greek philosopher Heraclitus perhaps summarized this dynamic best when he said "character is destiny". Who you are and how you act in the world are linked to where you are headed in life.

For millennia humans have looked to the skies in search for answers. Astrology originated as one of man's first attempts to "hack the system" by catching the ordered codes hidden amid a large field of variables. Today it has become a methodical way to explore one's own inner order, and for observing the mental nuances and behavioral patterns that spring from those roots.

What is an Astrology Chart?

Astrology charts map particular planets, celestial bodies and other traditionally significant points at specific moments in time. They are commonly used today to create horoscopes based on an individual's birth date, time and place. These are often referred to as birth charts or natal charts.

For centuries Astrologers have used birth charts to examine an individual's personality traits, preferences, strengths, limitations and opportunities. A Planetary Portraits astrology chart is the same basic chart that an astrologer would use for performing an astrological reading.

Whether or not you have ever seen one before, you can easily appreciate an astrology chart's inherent beauty. It is a beauty that resides

both in the visual aesthetic as well as in the implied content. These charts embody thousands of years of human tradition, observation and contemplation, and yet at the same time they feature subjects that are always unique and specific.

Do I Need an Astrologer?

Astrology may not be a science, but these days it is, to a large extent, possible to take a formulaic approach chart interpretation. In this way it is easily accessible to the average person. Much can be learned by using information that is already circulating in the public domain. Thanks to the internet you can simply type “Libra traits” or “sun conjunct mars” into a web browser and you will find tons of insightful analysis on the subject. Exploring your chart on your own isn’t difficult and promises to be a rewarding exercise.

With that said, a formulaic approach does yield limited results. Astrology charts can look a bit like spider webs, which is a great analogy for the art of astrology as a whole. Astrology is, in essence, a complex, interconnected web of observation, association, connotation, subtle impressions, and even intuition. A good astrologer has been immersed in the language and themes of astrology for many years and has synthesized vast quantities of information and personal experience on the subject. Many of the best astrologers have exceptional intuitive powers, with a knack for extracting what is most relevant to an individual at a particular point in time, and for expressing that information in a clear, meaningful and constructive way. If, after scratching the surface of your chart by yourself, you feel like diving even deeper into your chart would be helpful, consulting an experienced astrologer could be the right choice for you.

Part II: Basic Chart Structure

The following section will give an overview of the basic components of an astrology chart: the zodiac, the planets, aspects, and houses. Later sections of this book will go into the meaning of these components in more detail.

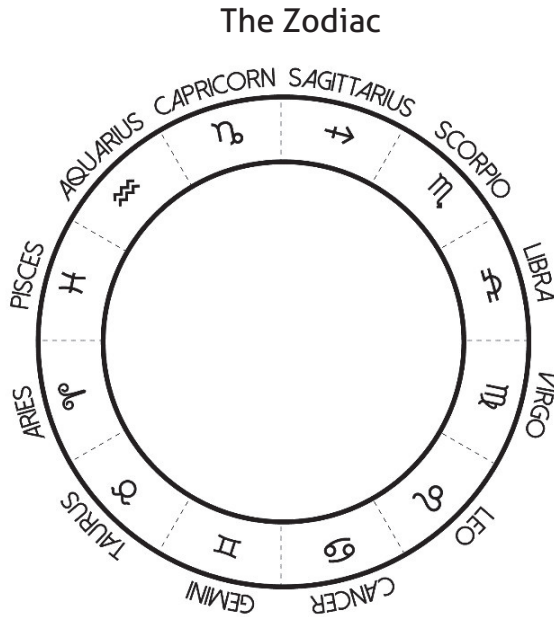


Figure 1: The zodiac wheel features the 12 symbols representing the western zodiac.

The 12 signs of the western zodiac are situated around the perimeter of the chart circle. Each sign represents a particular seasonal period of the year. For this reason, the signs always appear arranged in the following order running counterclockwise around the chart: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The zodiac as a whole unit appears oriented differently from chart to chart. The exact positioning of the zodiac wheel depends on the time of birth/event on which the chart is based.

Degrees

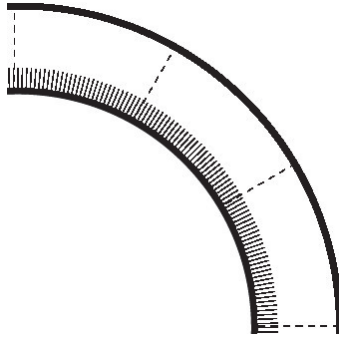


Figure 2: Degree points around the chart wheel

A chart is divided into 360 degree points. Each zodiac sign spans 30 degrees that are counted in a counter-clockwise direction on the zodiac wheel. Planets are referenced using the degree of the zodiac sign in which they are located.

Horizon, Meridian, AC, DC, MC, IC

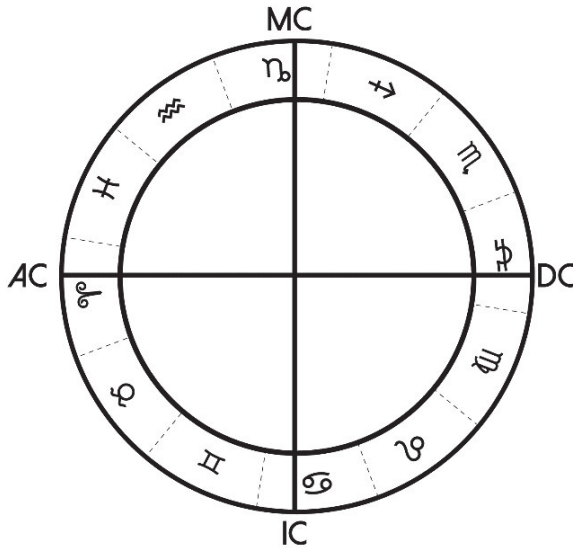


Figure 3: Horizon, Meridian, Quadrants

Charts are divided horizontally and vertically along a horizon line and the meridian.

The AC (or ascendant), is at the left point of the horizon line and marks the degree of the sign rising on the Eastern horizon at the time of birth. For this reason, the ascendant is also known as “the rising sign”. In the figure above the AC or “Rising Sign” is Aries.

The DC (descendant) is always situated directly across from the AC on the chart.

The meridian line bisects the horizon line and together these lines reveal the cross-quarter points of a chart. The MC (Medium Coeli) is at the top point of the meridian. The IC (Imum Coeli) is near the bottom of the chart, always directly across from the MC. The significance of these points is described later in this guide.

Depending on the house system used when creating a chart, these lines may or may not be perfectly perpendicular and the quarter sections even or uneven in area. Planetary Portraits charts feature a traditional Equal House System so that the horizon and meridian are perpendicular and the quarter regions are of equal size.

The Houses

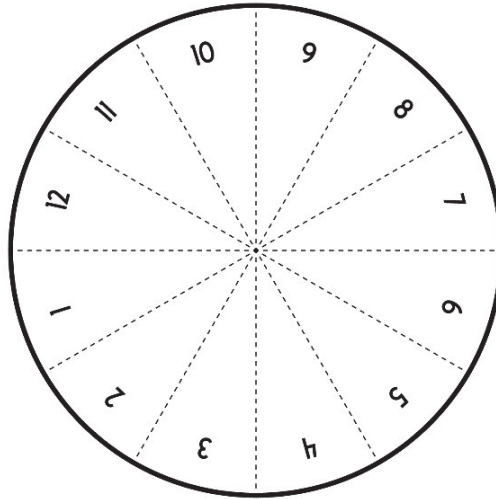


Figure 4: The twelve houses

Each chart is divided into 12 houses. The houses run counter clockwise beginning with house one (9 o'clock position) and ending with house twelve (10 o'clock position). Individual house sizes may vary depending on the house system calculation used. All Planetary Portraits charts feature the traditional Equal House System, which yields 12 equally sized segments around the chart.

Part III: The Chart in Detail

Zodiac Overview

“[A] Mason may reckon his life to be the life of a man, and to compute his months, not by the course of the sun but by the zodiac...”

-Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry

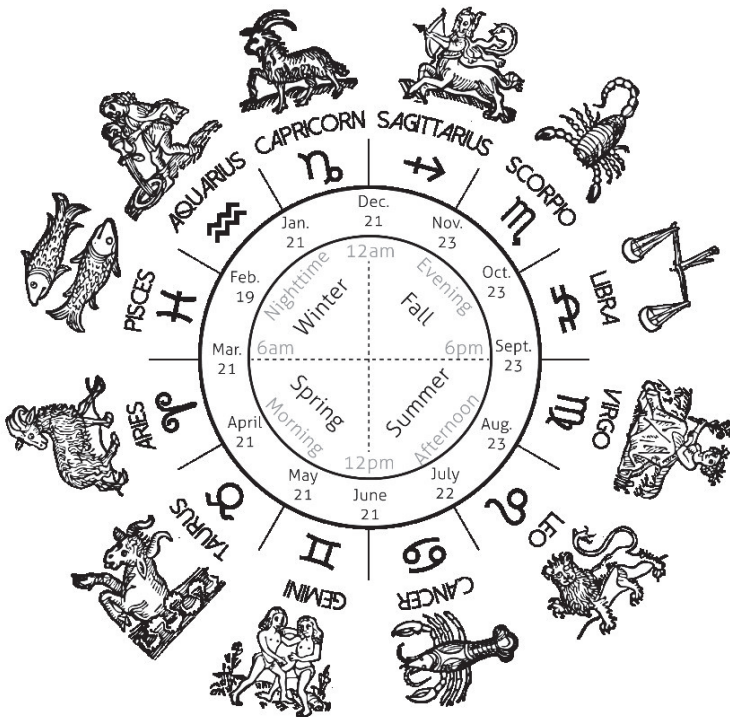


Figure 5: The zodiac as a cycle of development and change

What is the Zodiac?

Over the course of a year the sun appears to trace a path across twelve constellations in the sky. These constellations make up the zodiac we've become familiar with through modern-day sun sign horoscopes. On all astrology charts the twelve signs of the zodiac appear in the same fixed order, though that wheel will appear to rotate based on a time of birth given. Signs are traditionally associated with their own character traits, inclinations, leanings, motivations, etc.

Each individual zodiac sign presents an archetype, a character chosen for its timeless and universal symbolic nature. In this way, ancient and modern humans would have the same intuitive understanding of the themes and characteristics that each sign represents.

As a whole, the zodiac presents a picture of what it is to be human and stands as a mosaic of the human experience from birth (Aries) to death (Pisces). Just as the signs carve out twelve stages of nature's seasonal cycle, the signs do the same for the twelve stages of the human life cycle.

Throughout the life-journey from birth to death one's sensitivities and desires evolve in order to cope with a predictable litany of life's changing physical, intellectual, social and emotional demands. The main feelings and motives behind these experiential stages have been sifted out to form the basis of each zodiac sign's traditional associations and personality traits. Because evolution has equipped each human being to follow the same general life progression, the themes represented by each sign will be found to some degree within each and every individual. Still, astrology holds that each individual also enters the world with what amounts to innate "presets" that cause some traits to manifest more strongly than others.

Categorizing the Zodiac: Elements and Modalities

Astrology breaks the zodiac signs into two categories that can make them easier to understand. Getting familiar with these basic categorizations from the start will be vastly helpful in grasping the fundamental concepts behind each sign and planet. It will also offer more clarity when learning about the other core components of your chart.

Each zodiac sign belongs to one of **four elements** – **Air, Fire, Water and Earth**, and also to one of **three modalities** – **Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable**. The elements can be said to describe a pattern or flavor of energy, whereas the modalities describe *how* that energy flows through an individual. Together they help to paint a clearer picture of the personality types associated with each astrological sign.

A detailed version of a Planetary Portraits astrology chart features an Elements and Modalities Table located in the bottom right corner. The elements run down the left column and the modalities run along the top row. This table helps to get a clearer overview of any particular elements or modalities that may play a more significant role in your personality. An abundance or lack of objects in any particular element or modality can indicate temperamental qualities or life themes that stand out either because they are over- or under- represented.

Elements: Air, Fire, Earth and Water

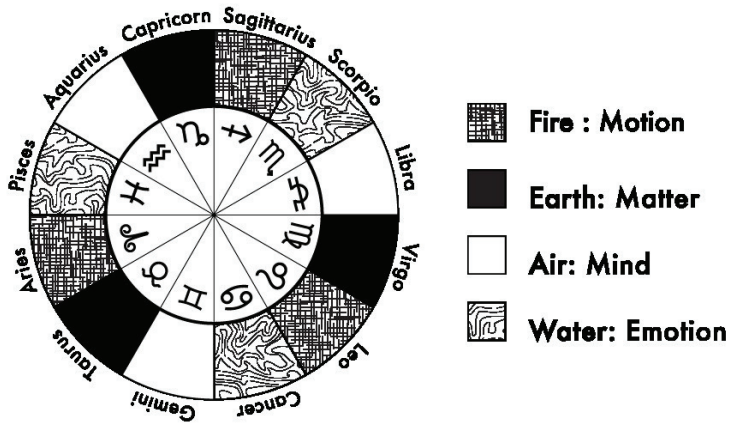


Figure 6: The zodiac signs and their associated elements. Each element is traditionally connected to a core aspect of human nature.

The Proactive Elements: Air & Fire

Traditionally, fire and air are said to cover the more active, self-expressive characteristics of the human personality. Antiquity identified heat as the shared quality of these elements, which connects both to a sense of rising, expansion and liveliness. Air is traditionally associated with intellectual action and fire to physical action and willpower (the power the mind wields over the body or physical world).

Cast in a modern light, the fire and air signs can be associated with the more recently evolved structures of the brain such as logic and higher reasoning functions, future planning and abstract visualization. They may also be connected with certain social developments of the brain that are often highly visible aspects of the personality. The development of language, goal setting and strategizing (consciously and unconsciously) fall under this umbrella.

The Reactive Elements: Earth & Water

In contrast to the proactive elements, earth and water signs are traditionally seen as reactive in nature, and tend to manifest as passive and receptive human qualities. They are deeply connected to the unconscious aspects of the personality. Antiquity focused on coolness as the shared quality of earth and water, which connects these elements to ideas of sinking, contraction, and a natural physical reaction to consolidate and conserve. Earth is traditionally associated with physical and material concerns and water is associated with emotional roots.

Today these elements can be connected to the ancient structures of the brain in which the most primal urges are rooted. These urges have been, and still are, crucial for the survival of the species, and for that reason earth and water impulses are said to run exceptionally strong and deep. They form the foundation of the unconscious, the backdrop of the personality and underlie one's most intense and passionate feelings surrounding security, both on physical and emotional levels. Selfpreservation and self-propagation, the common threads linking us with all life on earth, are the currents at the core of these two elements.

Modalities: Cardinal, Fixed, Mutable

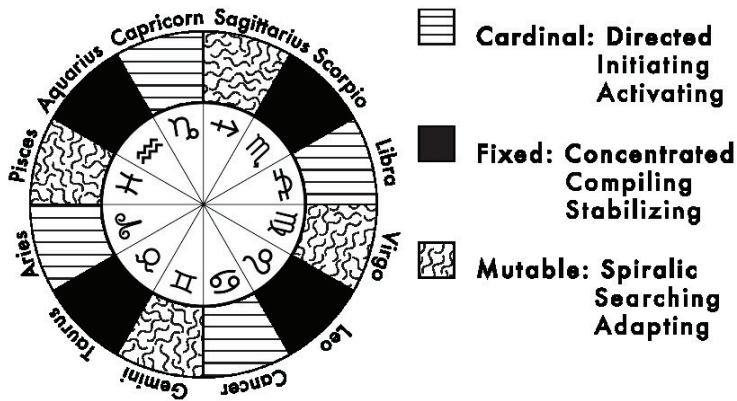


Figure 7: The zodiac signs and their associated modalities, cardinal, fixed and mutable.

Whereas the elements can be seen as flavors and patterns of energy, modalities indicate the way that the energy flows through that sign. Modalities give clues as to how zodiac traits may be expressed. There are three categories of modality: cardinal, fixed and mutable. Each modality contains four signs.

CARDINAL

Signs: Aries, Cancer, Leo, and Capricorn

Key Word: Initiating

Highly charged, targeted energy.

FIXED

Signs: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius

Key Word: Compiling

Concentrated energy radiating inward or outward.

Maintaining, stabilizing and establishing a center.

MUTABLE

Signs: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces

Key Word: Searching

Circulating, spiraling energy. Multi-directional, flexible and adaptable on its paths.

The Zodiac Sign by Sign

Each zodiac sign represents a traditional set of qualities drawn from a sign's element and modality classification (see previous sections) and from the area of life experience represented by its associated house (see section on *The 12 Houses*).

The zodiac signs in which the sun and moon appear in a birth chart are generally considered to be two key elements in one's personality, however an in-depth birth chart analysis takes into consideration the sign placements of all ten planets and some additional points of significance.

The following sections about the zodiac will give a quick overview of the themes, character traits, planets and houses that are traditionally associated with each of the zodiac signs. Note that some of the dates given below for the zodiac signs may vary slightly from year to year by just a day. Also, people born on or near the cusp of two signs (the end date of one and the beginning of another) are believed to possess traits of both signs.

For an even more comprehensive understanding of these traits and their roots, it will be helpful to visit the section in this book on *The 12 Houses*.

THE FIRE SIGNS: Aries, Leo and Sagittarius

The fire signs, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, are characterized by an excitable, future-oriented energy. The fire element represents the active and vibrant life force. Fire personalities tend to be active, aspirational, future-focused, and driven to exercises both physical power and willpower. The term “burning desire” is fitting for these signs as they feel very deeply the need to take action and are often in “hot pursuit” of visions and goals.

Fire signs are also connected to the hierarchical orders that naturally arise in human groups. A certain burning for recognition, elevation and accomplishment lies at their core. Often much self-improvement results from a motivated and competitive spirit.

For fiery personalities, powerful figures can be particularly intimidating or inspirational forces - sometimes both. Often with these idolized figures in mind, they prefer to direct energy towards improving or distinguishing themselves, or to work towards future visions they have created. Their drive and momentum in this direction can be difficult to extinguish. These personalities may project a natural air of confidence and strength, whether or not those traits are genuine or just posturing.

Fire radiates warmth, which often translates in the human personality as natural friendliness or a glowing, larger-than-life persona. Fiery personalities can be particularly impatient for progress and deeply frustrated when hindered, challenged or slighted. Intentionally or not, these types can help to bring out the best in others, though a certain potential for brutality simmers under the surface. Their intense drive and high expectations can lead them to become harsh and unforgiving masters, especially to themselves.

Aries (March 21-April 19)



The Ram

Key Word: Potential

Associations: Fire, Cardinal, ruling planet Mars, 1st House

Tarot: #5 Emperor

Themes: Courage, determination, confidence, vigor and passion, honor, anxiety, adrenaline, vulnerability and volatility, aggression and impulsive action.

The Aries persona is generally inclined towards leadership roles, physical challenges, individual sports, and opportunities to prove one's self.

The Aries persona tends to dislike inactivity, delays and setbacks, work that does not suit one's talents, and being at or near last place. They may be particularly sensitive to feelings of inferiority or vulnerability in the self and in others.

Leo (July 23-August 22)



The Lion

Key Word: Refinement

Associations: Fire, Fixed, ruling planet Sun, 5th House

Tarot: #8 Strength

Themes: Creativity, passion, generosity, warmth, cheerfulness, humor, leisure, playfulness, honor and nobility, arrogance, stubbornness, egocentricity, rigidity, independence, testing.

The Leo persona is generally inclined towards theatrics and spectacles, seeking admiration and elevation, conspicuous accessorizing, a personal style that tends to radiate confidence and/or refinement, fun with friends, and recreational and leisurely enjoyment.

The Leo persona tends to dislike being overlooked or underestimated, facing challenges that seem personally insurmountable, being looked down upon or treated with disrespect. Leo can be particularly sensitive to things deemed crude or unrefined, particularly within or around the self.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)



The Archer

Key Word: Expansion

Associations: Fire, Mutable, ruling planet Jupiter, 9th House

Tarot: #14 Temperance

Themes: Idealism, benevolence, humor, novelty, risks and rewards, expanding horizons, vigor and passion, searches for answers and opportunities to seize, uncensored thought and expression, ambition, high expectations, high ideals and big promises, righteousness.

The Sagittarian persona is generally inclined towards being unconfined (particularly through travel and in relationships), exploring ideologies, crossing boundaries (including accepted norms), venturing into unfamiliar territory, taking risks and seizing opportunities, taking up positions of authority, authoritative ideas, and idolizing certain ideas and figures.

The Sagittarian persona trends away from needy or dependent people, submissive roles, constraints and conditions, and details that bog down action (red tape). The ultimate sweet spot for the pure Sagittarian spirit would be wielding authority or influence without surrendering personal autonomy.

THE AIR SIGNS: Gemini, Libra and Aquarius

Air is traditionally associated with the human intellect. Air signs are characterized by a warm, vaporous energy. Personalities heavily weighted with air tend to possess a longing to rise above the mundane demands of the daily grind, preferring to reside in the realm of ideas, reflection and creative visions. They feed on information of all varieties and use it for various purposes.

Generally, air people tend to find thought exercises highly stimulating. This can mean examining interesting personalities or topics, tackling complex legal clauses and mathematical puzzles, or playing with theoretical or philosophical propositions. Air signs can get utterly worked up about ideas and ideals. They may find interactions that are not particularly rich with new information or that involve predictable personalities and perspectives to be bland and dull. For this reason, they may at times appear distant, aloof or superficial. Air personalities may conceptualize and articulate amazing visions, but they might also wander a labyrinth of thought without ever reaching solid conclusions.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



The Twins

Key Word: Learn

Associations: Air, Mutable, ruling planet Mercury, 3rd House

Tarot: #6 Lovers

Themes: Curiosity, amicability, adaptability, learning and exchanging information, ephemerality, excitability, inconsistency and indecision, multi-directional attention.

The Gemini persona is generally inclined towards music, books, news, media and conversation for the value of information output. It is also particularly stimulated by attention-catching topics, intriguing personalities, short excursions into areas of interest, short periods and/or distances of travel. Gemini attention can be extremely focused but exceptionally fleeting.

The Gemini persona trends away from any conditions that may limit contact with novel information or engaging experiences, such as isolation and confinement, repetition and routine, but Geminis also enjoy time alone in order to sift through new information and ideas.

Libra (September 23-October 22)



The Scales

Key Word: Assess

Associations: Air, Cardinal, ruling planet Venus, 7th House

Tarot: #11 Justice

Themes: Cooperation, diplomacy, graciousness, judiciousness, cohesion of ideas and ideals, value judgments and decision making, personal responsibility and accountability, confrontations, ethics, judgement, extending vengeance or mercy.

The Libra persona is generally inclined to keep interactions between friends harmonious, to share with others, and to weigh and debate ideas. Libra be particularly sensitive to natural and man-made beauty, virtuous thoughts and actions (according to personal definitions of virtue) and can be prone to judgmental opinions.

The Libra persona tends to dislike violence, injustice, tactless or offensive speech and behavior, conformity for the sake of conformity, but also ideas and activity that threatens the bonds between individuals or more generally frays the social fabric.

Aquarius (January 20 to February 18)



The Water Bearer

Key Word: Coalesce

Associations: Air, Fixed, ruling planet Uranus, 11th House

Tarot: #17 Star

Themes: Idealism, altruism, freedom of information, pooling and disseminating information, ideological subscriptions, belief in inexorable truths (personally held), desire for change, posterity, visions of and intuition about the future

The Aquarian persona tends to closely identify with communities that share an interest or belief, and to participate in activities or movements that is believed to help others or will contribute to an improved vision of the future. Aquarius generally appreciates intellectual conversation and often acts in some way as conduits of information and knowledge dissemination.

The Aquarian personality tends to dislike limitations, yet can be particularly disturbed by broken commitments. The Aquarian also tends to dislike being “out of the loop”, though may avoid superficial conversation, preferring to deal in information relating to issues they consider more important. Although this sign may be open to hearing about an array of theories and ideas, tolerance for opposing ideologies is usually low.

THE EARTH SIGNS: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

In the zodiac the earth element highlights the material demands of incarnation, and the maintenance of the physical vessels that carry the life force. Earth not only stands for the physical body of the individual, but also social bodies comprised of many individuals, as well as the terrestrial body of “mother earth” that houses all forms of life. All of these entities benefit from responsible management. Individually and collectively, humans gather and manage resources in order to maintain and improve conditions for the self and descendants.

Self-preservation is a core theme of the earth signs, Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn. Earth contains a natural awareness of the inevitability of change. Humans constantly adapt their bodies, lifestyles, physical energies, and material goals to meet the changes that are known and imagined to lie ahead. Ultimately the legacies of material wealth and power accumulated over a lifetime are used not only to shore up one’s own life, but also the lives of those surrounding that person, and even the lives that live on after that individual’s death. In this light, earth is an engineering force, forever fortifying life against the winds of change.

Earth signs are generally characterized by attention paid to the physical and material aspects of life. Earth is a pragmatic spirit, often following a path that bends towards a secure, comfortable (and in the best case pleasurable) lifestyle. Earth signs are cultivators working with an eye towards the harvest. Their strength is in transforming basic ingredients into useful or valuable material, and yielding returns on investment. Earth personalities readily take advantage of the resources put at their disposal. When times get rough or the bounty is threatened, these types get down to business. Earth derives great pleasure from the material world, but can be prone to covet this pleasure too greatly. Change is often perceived as a wildcard and so is often met with resistance.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)



The Bull

Key Word: Indulge

Associations: Earth, Fixed, ruling planet Venus, 2nd House

Tarot: #5 Hierophant

Themes: Taking stock, loyalty and devotion, consumption, appreciation of beauty and blessings, taking what is available or given, assigning value (particularly material), stubbornness and insatiability, possessiveness, physical security and insecurity.

The Taurus persona is generally inclined towards domestic or leisurely pleasures such as gardening, cooking, pampering oneself (or, even better, being pampered), and more generally indulging in the beauty and blessings that are on offer. They trend towards objects and experiences that create pleasant physical sensations such as music, good food, romance, quality clothes and accessories, the arts and crafted goods. Possessions tend to be equated with both power and security, so a Taurus spirit can be an avid consumer that, despite being generally discriminating and economical, is prone to splurge.

The Taurus persona tends to be sensitive to sudden changes, complications that bring insecurity of any kind, perceived losses, negative physical sensations resulting from ugliness, (foul odors, low-quality work and goods, etc.) and/or deprivation (hunger, tiredness, lacking money or means, status, etc.)

Virgo (August 23-September 22)



The Maiden

Key Word: Sow

Associations: Earth, Mutable, ruling planet Mercury, 6th House

Tarot: #9 Hermit

Themes: Fecundity, stewardship, process and creation, pragmatism, work and productivity, home economics, security, distribution of duties, engineering & ingenuity, the physical body, health and nutrition, beautification.

The Virgo persona is generally inclined to be discerning when it comes to food. They tend to like books, nature and animals, cleanliness, order, efficiency, objects with a functional value or design, systems and plans that run smoothly, solving problems, work that produces clear and visible results, and generally making improvements.

The Virgo persona tends to dislike feeling dependent or being unable to solve a problem alone, and things that are poorly planned or designed. They can be particularly sensitive to disorder, waste and inefficiency, conspicuous or rude behavior, people they perceive as slackers, including the parts of themselves that they consider to be slacking off.

Capricorn (December 22-January19)



The Goat

Key Words: Reap

Associations: Earth, Cardinal, ruling planet Saturn, 10th House

Tarot: #15 Devil

Themes: Discipline, duty and responsibility, self-preservation, selfcontrol, control and management of people and resources, insecurity, status anxiety, power and possessions, risk aversion, conservation and distribution of gains, status-quo, legacy building, endurance.

The Capricorn persona is generally disposed towards family and tradition, investing in the future, security and good insurance, taking advantage of status, wealth and authority, distributing and investing resources, sensitivity to change, quality craftsmanship, products, and relationships, and ideas and beliefs that appear durable and stable.

The Capricorn persona is prone to dislike almost anything that threatens security, stability and resources, or a balance of power that is personally favorable. Capricorn may be particularly sensitive to freeloading, waste and outside threats. Part of the Capricorn persona is prone to rigidity, self-preservation, self-absorption, and a fear of future changes resulting in defensive measures that can be both strengthening and yet sometimes counterproductive.

THE WATER SIGNS: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

In the zodiac, the element of water largely represents the workings of the unconscious mind and is traditionally connected to emotions. Water energy resides in positive and negative psychic tides that swirl under the radar of conscious awareness. As these tides swell, they are registered in the physical body as the sensations we call “feelings”. Feelings are then expressed outwardly as emotions. Emotions are a reflection of internal states and parts of the self that are otherwise inaccessible.

Examined more deeply, water represents the bonding energy of the life force. The need to connect originated with the first organisms adrift in primordial oceans, and has long been an essential component in the proliferation of genes- the very heart of life. On the human level, this need for connection is manifested in the emotion of love. This deep yearning to bond includes the feelings of relief and satisfaction gained from successful connections, as well as the grief and despair born of broken connections.

Comedian Mel Brooks once said, “everything we do in life is based on fear, especially love”. The water signs intentionally feature the most primitive creatures (crab, scorpion and fish) in order to underscore a long-known connection between the water element and our most primal urges: to live and to love, and our most primal fear: death. To live is to love life, and, particularly for socially-oriented humans, the absence of love does, in a very real sense, equate to death. Some examples of this are the case of a mother rejecting an infant, a community casting out member into the wilderness, a love affair ending without genes being passed on, or an individual without support during a health or financial crisis. Also consider modern studies that show measurable links between loneliness and premature death. All of these instances show how “love connections” sustain the life-force and how non-connections threaten to dissolve it.

This love, life and death dynamic is deeply engrained in the human psyche, and was closely examined in ancient times. The Greeks, carefully classified the diverse range of the love feeling: *eros* for exotic love, *storge* for love between parent and child, *xenia* for brotherly love, *agape* for self-love, and *philia* for love of god. The connection with love and the water element can be seen most clearly in Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, procreation, pleasure and beauty, who was born from the sea.

Water signs are sensitive to emotional stimulus and possess an underlying need for emotional security and tranquility. They are particularly attuned to joy and suffering, which gives them a great capacity for empathy and compassion, but this also leaves them vulnerable to despair. Chasing fleeting sensations of happiness, wholeness and ecstasy may lead them down darker paths at times. Water personalities can be naturals at camouflaging their emotionality. This stems from an innate sense that the depth of connection they seek also opens them up to potentially debilitating pain. They are often willing to make great sacrifices for the sake of giving or receiving the kind of love they desire. A general sense of well-being stems from faith in a strongly felt bond between the self and another person, group or even in a higher presence.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)



The Crab

Key Word: Love

Associations: Water, Cardinal, ruling planet Moon, 4th House

Tarot: #7 Chariot

Themes: The unconscious, loyalty and devotion, sympathy, vulnerability, protection and shelter, mother, home and family, love and acceptance.

The Cancer persona is generally inclined towards home-based activity, family life and family ties, helping loved ones, patriotism, holidays and traditions that reaffirm bonds, signs of loyalty and affection, and bodies of water.

The Cancer persona is prone to be wary of strangers and revealing details about private life or airing family secrets. Cancer tends to dislike any outside critique of or threats to mother or the family.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)



The Scorpion

Key Word: Passion

Associations: Water, Fixed, ruling planets Pluto & Mars, 8th House

Tarot: #13 Death

Themes: Ecstasy and anxiety, death and transformation, passions and poisons, proliferation, unbreakable bonds, loved ones, trust and distrust, jealousy, secrecy, violence, desperation, courage, defense, resourcefulness, devotion.

The Scorpio persona trends towards finding the truth, gathering facts, being right, assured and secure, taking precautions for self and loved ones, teasing and humor (often dark), grand passions, loyal partners and longtime friends.

The Scorpio persona is prone to particularly dislike dishonesty, revealing personal secrets, being without a partner or uncoupling. Scorpio may be extra sensitive to feelings of vulnerability, and to experiences surrounding sex and death.

Pisces (February 19 to March 20)



The Fish

Key Word: Compassion

Associations: Water, Mutable, ruling planet Neptune, 12th House

Tarot: #18 Moon

Themes: Compassion, communion, surrender, self-sacrifice, service, solitude and seclusion, emotional tranquility, wisdom, expanding circle of love, communal spirit, awe, fear and wonder, religious feeling, victimhood and martyrdom, submission, surrender, passion and passivity, debilitation, dissolution.

The Pisces persona tends to like alone time, sleeping and repose, daydreaming and imaginative play, art, music and visual media, romance and things that pull at heartstrings, swimming, spiritual themes, collective joys and communal efforts.

The Pisces persona is prone to be particularly sensitive to cruelty and suffering, and personal criticism. Rejection, abandonment or involuntary loneliness can be particularly frightening, so sometimes self-imposed exile or self-sabotage removes Pisces from this possible scenario. Pisces is susceptible to being haunted by the past.

The Planets and Other Points

*Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself, (I
am large, I contain multitudes.) -
Walt Whitman*

The planets and other celestial bodies are the most dynamic part of an astrology chart. If tracked in real-time, the planets would appear to move around the chart wheel respectively, some quickly and some slowly, counterclockwise and at times clockwise (retrograde). It is the snapshot of these planetary positions that most poignantly differentiates one astrology chart from another.

The inner planets, sometimes called the personal planets, are the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars. They are generally the first an astrologer examines to get a read of a person's defining personality traits.

The Outer planets are Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. They move slowly through a chart and are similarly positioned on charts for people born in the same era. For this reason, the outer planets are generally understood to define characteristics common among entire generations of people. Nevertheless, depending on their relationship to other planets, as well as the weight of the elements (earth, water, air, and fire) in a chart, these outer planets may still be considered to play a significant role in the individual psyche.

Each of the ten planets can be viewed as representing a specific set of urges and desires. These urges are derived from the broader themes of the zodiac sign with which the planet is traditionally associated (traditional zodiac/planet associations are listed in the following sections). An astrology chart is a snapshot of how these motives are arranged within the individual. Unique arrangements explain why, in certain people, particular desires and traits seem to manifest more strongly than others.

Astrology borrows from the ancients, who anthropomorphized natural urges, using mythological characters and allegorical scenarios to describe the dynamic powers playing out within the human soul and in the world at large. An astrology chart features these characters as planets, and their dramas unfold on private, inner stages. The show they create for the world to see is that of the unique, human personality.

Then & Now

*“Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth” -Pablo
-Picasso*

*Science explains feelings, while art transmits it”
-Biologist Edward O. Wilson*

The idea of using different “characters” to describe the human experience is something that modern thought has largely come to embrace, particularly in the genre of popular science. The Sigmund Freud’s sectioning of the psyche into the Id, Ego and Superego in the early 20th century was a precursor to more colorfully explicit characterizations of human behavior to come. Freud’s well-known protégé, Carl Jung, who also studied astrology closely, developed the concept of twelve primary human archetypes, which include the self, the sage, the child, the Hero etc. Following this, the Meyers Briggs Type Indicator Test, still widely used, was also developed based on a belief in 16 representative personality characters such as the realist, the nurturer, the scientist, the protector etc.

Perhaps most interesting is how the contemporary hard sciences have also caught onto the ancient way of thinking. Popular Neuroscientist David Eagleman describes the brain as “a team of rivals, a competition among different neural populations.” In modern anthropology, leading anthropologist Helen Fisher is exploring the diverse cast of brain chemicals that underlie each of her biology-based personality types. Astrology’s planetary cast can be seen as an early predecessor to all of these contemporary, theoretical systems.

Reading the Planets

Each planet is traditionally designated the “ruling planet” of a particular zodiac sign. Ruling planets can be said to closely represent the themes of their sign. When interpreting a chart, an astrologer considers each planet as the dynamic extensions of their associated zodiac sign’s themes.

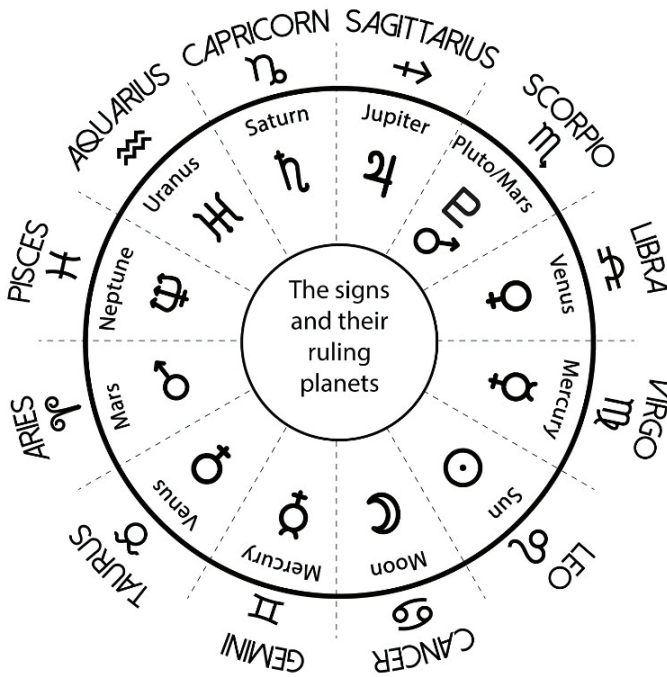


Figure 8: The zodiac signs and their ruling planets- a modern classification.

An astrologer will look at the zodiac sign in which each planet is situated to learn more about how those urges may find expression in one's personality and behavior. He or she will examine the house in which each planet is located to indicate the area of life experience wherein that planet's themes are operating. Finally, the relationships between planets (indicated by aspect lines) are taken into consideration, which also involves paying close attention to each planet's traditional associations and how they are traditionally known to interact (compatible or contrasting themes).

It is useful to know that planets are also "exalted" in certain houses according to tradition. This means that each planet is thought to be wellplaced in a particular house or houses. The "fall" or "depression" is the opposite concept, whereby planets situated in certain houses are traditionally believed to be in positions of weakness. A list of these classifications can be found in the *Glossary of Terms* in this book under *Exaltation*.

There are dozens books and articles dedicated to exploring in detail each planet and point listed here. Below is only a brief overview of some basic concepts that will assist in examining your chart. Planetary Portraits encourages you to explore more about each planet and its meaning. You can find a list of recommended, unaffiliated titles in the *Suggestions for Further Reading* section at the end of this guide.

How to read this section:

The Planet: The planet in context/ the sign, element and house with which it is associated.

Key Word(s): Simplified definition

Tarot: The tarot symbol traditionally associated with the planet.

Planet's Sphere: The basic themes represented by the planet. The planet's sphere of representation.

Planet Urges: The primal human urges and innate desires that are represented by the planet.

Planet in Signs: How an astrologer might interpret a planet based on the particular zodiac sign in which that planet is situated.

Planet in Houses: How an astrologer might interpret a planet based on the house in which that planet is situated.

Domicile, Detriment, Exaltation and Fall (See *Glossary of Terms* for more detailed information about the meaning of this section)

Sun



The Sun is the ruling planet of Leo, a fire sign associated with the 5th house.

Key Words: Burning potential

Tarot: #19 Sun

Sun's Sphere: The core of one's identity and sense-of-self. The focal point of being and becoming. The seat of the Ego.

Sun Urges: To self-express and self-actualize. To be recognized and accepted. To self-improve. To shine, to become, and to bask in individual glory.

Sun in Signs: The sign that the sun is in may show how you see yourself and how you wish to be seen. It reveals the nature of the personal qualities you tend to emphasize both in private and in public. It reflects something about the nature of your ego and how you approach gaining recognition, pursuing self-improvement or a future vision of self.

Sun in Houses: The sun's house indicates the area of life wherein one best connects with inner strength, talent and power, and the area of life wherein one wishes to shine. It is the area that vitalizes and provides a sense of well-being, where one acts creatively and may focus energy on self-improvement. It is also where one may be naturally competitive.

Domicile in Leo, detriment in Aquarius, exaltation in Aries, fall in Libra.

Moon



The Moon is the ruling planet of Cancer, a water sign associated with the 4th house.

Key Word: Bond

Tarot: #2 High Priestess

Moon's Sphere: The seat of subconscious. The source of feeling and thus, of emotional reactions expressing those feelings. The unconscious memory bank, particularly hidden early memories of the relationship with one's mother figure, of one's primary caretakers, and family life in early childhood.

Moon Urges: To bond. To be loved and to belong. To find security and love in relationship.

Moon in the Signs: The sign that the moon is in may reveal how you tend to react emotionally as well as the nature of your affection and/or how you tend to react to the affection of others.

Moon in the Houses: The house in which the moon is found may indicate the area of life in which one looks for emotional security, fulfillment and comfort. In this area of life, one may seek or feel a sense of stability and belonging.

Domicile in Cancer, detriment in Capricorn, exaltation in Taurus, fall in Scorpio.

Mercury



Mercury is the ruling planet of Gemini, an air sign associated with the 3rd house. It is also the ruling planet of Virgo, an earth sign associated with the 6th house.

Key Word: Connect

Tarot: #1 Magician

Mercury's Sphere: The seat of consciousness, awareness and attention. Learning and creativity. Expression of ideas and communicating with others.

Mercury Urges: To collect and connect information (to learn). To communicate and connect with others. To play with ideas and create with the mind.

Mercury in the Signs: Mercury's sign position may reveal something about the way one processes information and the nature of things that may catch one's attention or stimulate the intellect. It can also indicate how one tends to express one's self or how one connects ideas.

Mercury in the Houses: The house in which Mercury is found indicates the sphere of experience wherein the intellect is particularly active. This is an area of life where communication or intellectual collaboration with others is critical for gaining insight and clarity.

Domicile in Gemini and Virgo, detriment in Sagittarius and Pisces, exaltation in Virgo, fall in Pisces.

Mars



Mars is the ruling planet of Aries, a fire sign associated with the 1st house. It was also the traditional ruling planet of Scorpio (before Pluto was discovered), a water sign associated with the 8th house.

Key Word: Raw Power

Tarot: #16 Tower

Mars's Sphere: Raw energy, willpower and motivation. Drive and active impulses. Response to threat and fear (fight or flight). Defensive and aggressive impulses. Sex and domination. The seat of the Id.

Mars Urges: To act, both impulsively and deliberately. To engage or retreat. To exercise physical power and willpower.

Mars in the Signs: The sign that Mars is in may reveal how one exerts energy and the way one channels willpower. It may also indicate how one processes fear and threat, and the way one seeks to feel empowered.

Mars in the Houses: The house in which Mars is found indicates where one's energy is readily released, and the field of life that is important for maintaining physical energy and health. Being active in this house may also stimulate one's motivation and sense of strength, courage and assertiveness. The house Mars is found in may also indicate an area of life that may be tinged with a sense of urgency or where one may be impatient for results.

Domicile in Aries and Scorpio, detriment in Libra and Taurus, exaltation in Capricorn, fall in Cancer.

Venus



Venus is the ruling planet of Taurus, an earth sign associated with the 2nd house. It is also the ruling planet of Libra, an air sign associated with the 7th house.

Key Word: Attraction

Tarot: #3 Empress

Venus' Sphere: Sensitivity to beauty, balance, goodness. Fecundity, both material and intellectual.

Venus Urges: To create and preserve the beauty in the world to which one is personally attuned. To be generative and productive. To appreciate, savor and pursue one's own perception of "goodness".

Venus in the Signs: The sign in which Venus resides indicates the nature or qualities of your attraction as well as suggests specific qualities of the people and things you may find attractive or "good". It also points to the nature of your creative process.

Venus in the Houses: The house in which Venus is found indicates the area of life where one naturally seeks pleasure, happiness and contentment. Venus also points to the area of experience where one is likely to share affection more easily with others.

Domicile in Taurus and Libra, detriment in Scorpio and Aries, exaltation in Pisces, fall in Virgo.

Jupiter

4

Jupiter is the ruling planet of Sagittarius, a fire sign associated with the 9th house.

Key Word: Expand

Tarot: #10 Wheel of Fortune

Jupiter's Sphere: The seat of idols and aspirations. Admirable authorities and the wish to embody them. Targeted desires. Opportunities and turns of fortune. Success and silver linings. Seat of the Super-ego.

Jupiter Urges: To expand in influence and power. To expand domain and horizons. To journey, migrate, explore and adventure. To lead or become an authority or hold sway. To conquer, master, meet or exceed expectations. To take risks and seize opportunities.

Jupiter in the Signs: Jupiter's sign can shed light on the nature of opportunities one is attuned to. It also suggests the nature of one's ambition, or how one might seek to master, conquer or become authoritative. It can hint at the difficulty or ease with which one takes risks.

Jupiter in the Houses: The house in which Jupiter is found indicates the area of experience wherein one may be ambitious and pursue an improved version of the self, or where one may attempt to fulfill grand visions. It also indicates the life area in which one may most readily have faith, trust and optimism in the future.

Domicile in Sagittarius, detriment in Gemini, exaltation in Cancer, fall in Capricorn.

Saturn



Saturn is the ruling planet of Capricorn, an earth sign associated with the 10th house.

Key Word: Conserve

Tarot: #21 The World

Saturn's Sphere: Self-preservation. Conservation and allocation of resources. Material and physical security. Legacy, authority, wealth and power.

Saturn Urges: To put in effort and reap rewards. To prevent losses. To Maintain status, wealth and power. Sense of duty and responsibility. To guard against destabilizing changes. To construct, restrict, & solidify.

Saturn in the Signs: Saturn's sign may indicate how one seeks to establish and protect one's self, and the nature of how one plans for the future and applies effort.

Saturn in the Houses: The house in which Saturn is found may indicate the area of life experience in which one will find a rewarding sense of structure and security. Saturn's house reveals an area that is innately important to a person, and where a sense of pressure and responsibility has the potential to shape and strengthen character.

Domicile in Capricorn, detriment in Cancer, exaltation in Libra, fall in Aries.

Neptune



Neptune is the ruling planet of Pisces, a water sign associated with the 12th house.

Key Word: Dissolve

Tarot: #12 Hanged Man

Neptune's Sphere: The inner sea of churning emotion. Existential awareness. Sense of mortality, chaos, and separateness. The seat of awe (a combination of fear and wonder), humility, religious/spiritual passion. The absence of self.

Neptune Urges: To find emotional calm and security. To ease existential angst. To find tranquility through communion or seclusion. To seek ways of coping with chaos, suffering, despair, loneliness and mortality. To surrender, sacrifice or subjugate self. To give or receive unconditional love. To surrender self. To dissolve.

Neptune in the Signs: Neptune's sign position is more indicative of a general, generational attitude. In an individual chart this planet's aspects and house placement are of more importance.

Neptune in the Houses: The house in which Neptune is found may indicate where one most easily connects with the imagination, and transcendent, inspirational mystical feelings. Neptune's house can indicate the area of experience where one may habitually try to escape from the demands of daily life or occasionally get lost in a sense of despair. It may suggest where one may be excessively idealistic and can reveal where one has potential to experience spiritual refinement, or where one will naturally be of service to others.

Domicile in Pisces, detriment in Virgo, exaltation in Leo, fall in Aquarius.

Uranus



Uranus is the ruling planet of Aquarius, an air sign associated with the 11th house.

Key Word: Liberate

Tarot: #0 Fool

Uranus's Sphere: Freedom, knowledge, wisdom and change. Transformation and transfer of ideas. synthesizing information. Ideas for posterity. Abstract ideation and intuitive knowledge. Philosophy, science and technology. Idealism. Innovation. Epiphany. Serendipity. Vacillating waves of chaos and order.

Uranus Urges: To change and/or be a conduit of change. To be free, to free ideas and to support them. To reorder. To subscribe to beliefs. To philosophize. To detach from physical demands and material realities. To unlock potentials. To improve society.

Uranus in the Signs: Like Neptune and Pluto, Uranus's sign position is more indicative of a general, generational attitude. In an individual chart this planet's aspects and house placement are of more importance.

Uranus in the Houses: The house in which Uranus is found can indicate the area of life in which one can express one's self freely. It is where one can act spontaneously and can most immediately experience one's own uniqueness, genius, or flow. Uranus's house also indicates fertile ground for experimentation and inventiveness, and where intuition can be strong. It indicates areas of life wherein sudden, novel connections may surface from the unconscious. This is also where one may cultivate personal visions for a better world and future.

Domicile in Aquarius, detriment in Leo, exaltation in Scorpio, fall in Taurus.

Pluto

P

Pluto is the ruling planet of Scorpio, a water sign associated with the 8th house.

Key Word: Transformation

Tarot: #20 Judgement

Pluto's Sphere: Brushes with death and destruction. Insecurity. Awareness of pain and fear, particularly caused by broken bonds. Awareness (conscious and unconscious) of mortality. Self-preservation. Procreation. Emotional passion: Ecstasy and pain. Silver linings, hedonic pitfalls, awakenings and salvation.

Pluto Urges: To live and live on through others. To seize emotional and physical security through relationships. To pursue physical pleasure and ecstasy. In an individual chart, based on aspects and placement, Pluto is often associated with external shocks, or encounters that can be considered perspective-altering and potentially transformative. In this way Pluto can be viewed as a buffer against pain, particularly of broken bonds, loss of life or any sudden insecurity.

Pluto in the Signs: Like Uranus and Neptune, this planet's sign position is more indicative of a generational attitude. In an individual chart this planet's aspects and house placement are of more importance.

Pluto in the Houses: The house in which Pluto is found may indicate the area of life experience in which one is confronted with fears and hard truths, that, when confronted, can lead to a transformation of consciousness, and a shedding of compulsive patterns of thought and behavior. It may also indicate the area where one is particularly sensitive to emotional turmoil.

Domicile in Scorpio, detriment in Taurus, exaltation in Aries, fall in Libra.

Ascendant (AC)

The Ascendant is not a celestial body but rather a point marking the sign and degree rising on the eastern horizon at the moment of birth. It varies by hour and minute, and is believed to reveal much about how one's personality is expressed.

The ascendant is often described as a mask worn for the outside world, or as the way one interacts with the world when acting naturally and spontaneously. It is reflexive to interact with others through the energy of one's ascendant sign. This helps to explain why there is such great variation among the personalities of people born under the same sun sign, and why it is unwise to pigeonhole personalities based only on brief, superficial interactions. The AC is something like the personality's outer layer, playing a key role in public life, but often acting as a cover for what lies beneath.

“[The AC] can be the face a man wears whilst he projects himself into his business and social activities, concealing much of his true character that only his intimates- and often not even they- know exists”

– Astrologer Jeff Mayo

Descendant (DC)

The descendant is a point on the chart directly across from the ascendant. The zodiac sign in which the descendant falls traditionally indicates the types of people and personalities that one is attracted to and that one tends to form relationships with. It is also indicative of the nature of the relationships one prefers to build.

Another interpretation of this point juxtaposes it with the ascendant, which represents the half of the personality on display. In this contrast, the descendant reveals a person's “other half”, or a significant half of the personality that is kept private rather than expressed openly and immediately.

Medium Coeli (MC)

The MC is the point at which meridian intersects with the zodiac. Today the MC is often associated with one's career, but it is perhaps better to view the MC as marking a particular momentum and trajectory on life's open plane. Medium Coeli literally means 'middle of the sky', and it is just as fitting to describe the middle, or zenith of one's life. The MC's zodiac sign can suggest certain qualities that one is moving towards as he or she matures. It hints at how one can eventually contribute to the world, and how one may realize mastery and authority, but only after time, experience and effort are applied. The potential to find one's "calling" is helped when one learns to express the qualities of the MC's zodiac sign.

Imum Coeli (IC)

The Imum Coeli is a point at the bottom of a chart, directly across from the Medium Coeli. It is commonly associated with one's roots, familial origins, and the subconscious foundations that were laid by one's parents. Its position marks the start of the fourth house that is traditionally related to family and home, so the IC marks a point of origins. Some astrologers also see the IC as indicative of the circumstances one may encounter at the end of life.

Pars Fortuna or Part of Fortune



The Pars Fortuna, also called the Part of Fortune, is a mathematical point showing where the Sun, the Moon and the Ascendant come together in the most congruent way. The Sun represents one's potential and conscious objectives; the Moon represents unconscious reactions originating in the past; The Ascendant is a layer of being that is pivotal in how the identity finds outward expression. The part of fortune is where these three points overlap. The house in which the Part of Fortune is located indicates a potential sweet spot in life that may offer a great sense of joy.

The North Node (and South Node)



The north node is not a celestial body but a mathematical point. Its sign and house suggest an area of life that falls outside of one's comfort zone, but that also promises a great sense of fulfillment and spiritual satisfaction. If one has the courage and invests enough effort in expanding into the north node's uncharted, possibly uncomfortable waters, one can be greatly rewarded.

The south node is a point directly opposite the north node on the chart (though it is not charted on a Planetary Portraits astrology chart). The zodiac sign in which the south node resides may indicate the nature of one's innate gifts, aspects of life that come easy, and one's comfort zone. The south node reveals an area of innate strength, but also of potential complacency. This point can serve as a reminder that, in some areas, excellence and comfort can actually stunt growth by lessening the motivation to respond to new challenges. In this way, the IC may represent the places one most readily follows paths of least resistance.

Chiron



Chiron is an asteroid representing one's wounding, usually from childhood. Chiron's position on a chart may indicate an area in which you feel held back or limited due to either an early childhood experience or from an innate source of fear or pain.

Aspects

The planets move across the sky, changing positions on a minute-by-minute basis. When captured as a static snapshot on an astrology chart, the planets form special geometric relationships with other planets and points around the chart circle. Astrologers take note of any special angles formed between two planets, which are called aspects, to assess how the objects in relationship may influence or moderate each other's expression.

Aspect Categories: Major & Minor, Soft & Hard

Notable angles are sorted into two basic categories: **major** or **minor** and **soft** or **hard**.

The major and minor categorization simply defines which angles are considered more meaningful. **Major aspects** are seen as having more significance and **minor angles** less so. The five most important major aspects are the conjunction (0-8 degrees apart), square (90 degrees apart), trine (120 degrees apart), opposition (180 degrees apart), and sextile (60 degrees apart). All of the major aspects listed above are charted for the inner outer planets of a Planetary Portrait.

Astrologers carefully look at aspects to gain insight into areas of tension and flow in one's personality and experience. The soft and hard categorization is concerned with the quality of the relationship between two planets. **Soft aspects** indicate planetary urges that are considered harmonious and flow easily without resistance. **Hard aspects** depict the opposite relationship, characterizing natural tension and conflict between planet energies. On a Planetary Portraits chart soft aspects are represented by solid lines and hard aspects by dashed lines.

Although it is nice to have a chart filled with harmonious aspects, it's useful to note that conflict and tension can be a critical force for positive psychological development. It is often this tension that drives a person out of his or her comfort zone, and that ultimately motivates him or her to search for new opportunities and experiences that may be greatly enriching.

Below is a brief description of each major aspect and its traditional meaning.

Conjunction 0 degrees (soft)



Planets that are conjunct most often appear in the same zodiac sign (though in some cases they may be on the cusp of two signs). The conjunction is generally considered to show a harmonious relationship between two planets. The overall significance of this aspect depends on how close the aspect is as well as the planets involved. Although this is a positive aspect, in some instances very tight conjunctions (distances less than a few degrees apart) are considered less favorable. For example, planets in very close conjunction with the sun are said to be “in combustion”, thereby losing some of their force.

Opposition 180 degrees (hard)



Planets in opposition appear six zodiac signs apart. The opposition traditionally represents tension between the themes and urges of the two planets involved. The significance of the aspect depends on the planets involved, and on what one makes of it. On the whole, an opposition between two planets creates tension between them, but can often yield positive results despite that tension.

Square 90 degrees (hard)



Planets in a square appear three zodiac signs apart. The square is considered a disharmonious aspect in which the energies of planets involved are arrested and pull one in opposite directions. Square aspects are believed to manifest as reoccurring issues in life that involve conflicting urges and desires.

Trine 120 degrees (soft)



Planets in a trine appear four zodiac signs apart, so that both planets reside in the same element (both in either air, fire, earth or water). The trine is considered a positive aspect in which the planets involved enhance one another. Trines are believed to reveal sources of natural flow, though this positive potential may not necessarily be recognized or fully exploited by the individual in possession of it.

Sextile 60 degrees (soft)



The sextile appears two zodiac signs apart and is considered a less significant major aspect. This aspect involves two planets that are in compatible zodiac signs (either air and fire, or water and earth). Depending on the planets involved, this configuration suggests a free and comfortable flow between planetary energies that “speak the same language”, so to speak.

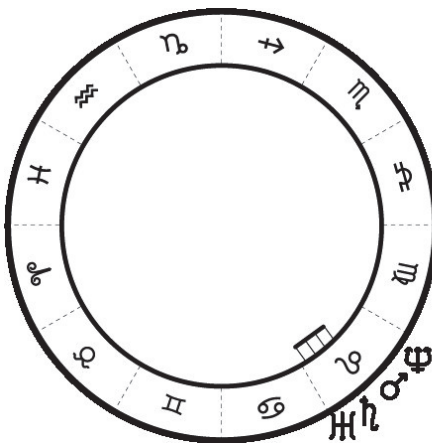
Orbs

It is common that planets do not form perfect angles with one another. For example, two planets might fall short of forming a perfect square aspect with one another by being 93 degrees apart rather than exactly 90 degrees. Despite this difference, a square aspect may still appear on the chart to indicate a relationship between the two planets.

An orb is the number of degrees a planet is allowed to deviate from forming an exact angle with other planets. There is a general consensus on acceptable orb ranges in modern chart generation. Still, because there is no definitive standard, and also because there are several different ways to calculate orbs, charted aspects may vary slightly for the same birth data given depending on the generation systems used. Additionally, professional astrologers adjust orb settings to match their own personal preferences when creating charts for readings. In any case, the general rule is that the more exact the aspect, the more significant is the connection between planets.

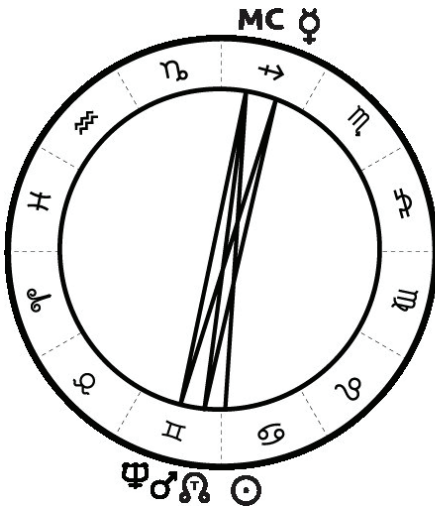
Patterns

Aspect patterns are configurations of three or more planets that are traditionally considered consequential. Below are four visual examples of significant aspect patterns, though there are many more to explore including the T-Square, Grand Cross, Grand Trine, Kite, Multi-Planet Square, Castle, Star of David, Cradle, and Rectangle. These patterns can be complex to interpret, and so beginners are advised to consult with a professional for clarification on how they may work in one's chart.



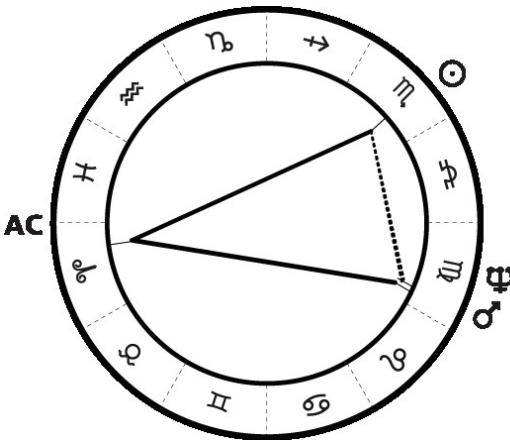
Neptune 9° Leo
Mars 7° Leo
Saturn 0° Leo
Uranus 1° Leo

Figure 9: Example of a stellium: configuration: formed when a cluster of planets are conjunct or nearly conjunct.



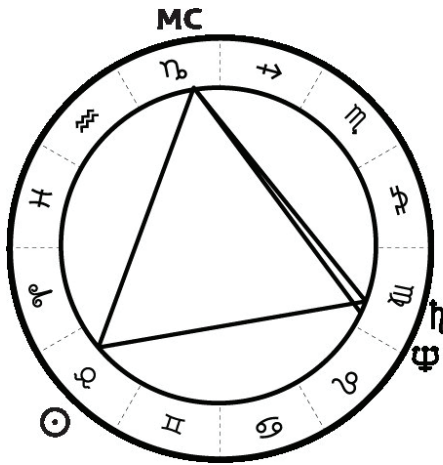
MC 26° Sagittarius
 Mercury 18° Sagittarius
 Neptune 13° Gemini
 Mars 13° Gemini
 North Node 20° Gemini
 Sun 1° Cancer

Figure 10: Example of a multi-planet opposition configuration: occurs when a group of planets cluster at one or both end of a single opposition.



Ascendant 12° Aries
 Sun 13° Scorpio
 Mars 7° Virgo
 Neptune 9° Virgo

Figure 11: Example of a Yod configuration: An aspect pattern that has 2 quincunx (150 degrees) and 1 sextile (60 degrees) forming a narrow triangle. It is also called the "Finger of God".



MC 15° Capricorn
 Moon 15° Taurus
 Neptune 9° Virgo
 Saturn 7° Virgo

Figure 12: Example of a Grand Trine, which is made of three trine aspects, forming a triangle with 60° angles.

The 12 Houses

Astrology charts are divided into twelve segments called houses. The AC determines the starting position of the first house and the following houses run counterclockwise around the chart circle.

The houses present an outline of human experience through the average lifecycle. By noting the placement of planets in the houses an astrologer determines which areas of experience deserve special attention in a person's life. The more planets there are in a house, the more significant the area of life represented by that house.

Planets in a house point to the area of life wherein one naturally seeks to fulfill the needs represented by that planet. Planets or signs in a house also suggest the most natural way to experience one's destiny in the area of life that the house represents. Additionally, how planets are aspected in each house (soft or hard) may also indicate whether particular desires or experiences in that area of life are more likely to be met with positive or negative feelings.

It is also useful to note that certain house/planet combinations are traditionally considered to be more compatible than others. This means that in certain houses particular drives (represented by planets) are more easily expressed and more readily encountered than others.

Framing The Houses:

Below are figures depicting several ways the that 12 houses are grouped and categorized.

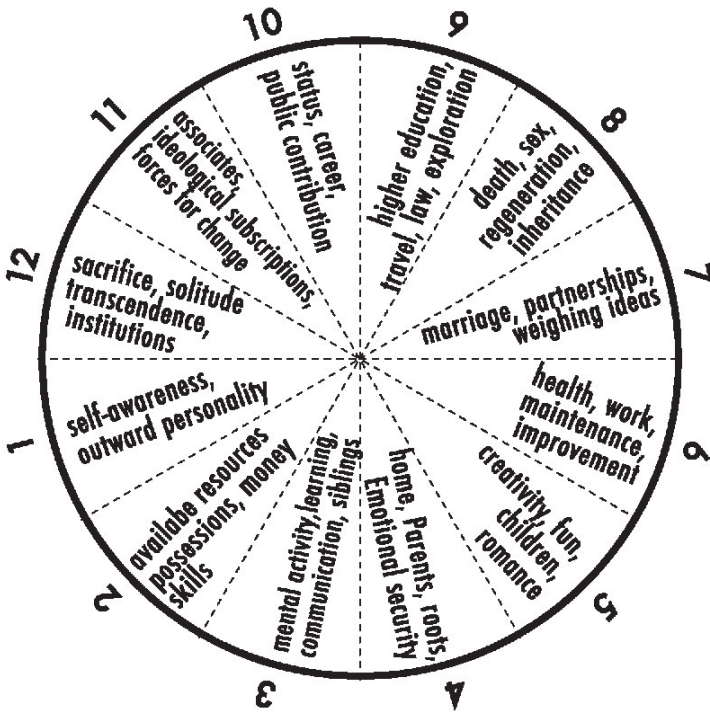


Figure 13: Traditional house division. Each house represents themes connected to a particular area of life experience.

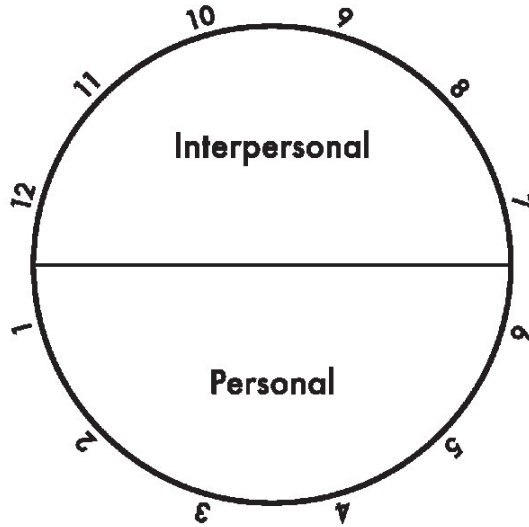


Figure 14: A broader view of house division. Houses 1-6 are oriented towards personal experiences, or inner development. Houses 7-12 oriented towards interpersonal experiences, or experiences that involve external contacts and developments.

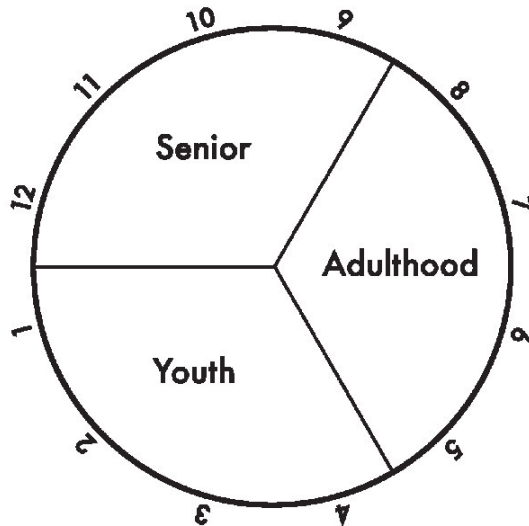


Figure 15: Houses divided into three phases of life experience. Houses 1-4 concerning youth-related themes, houses 5-8 concerning adult-related themes, and houses 9-12 concerning senior-related themes.

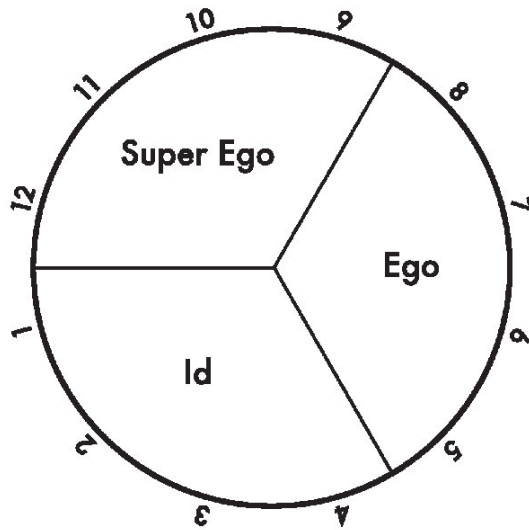


Figure 16: House division based on Freud's model of the psyche. Houses 1-4 relate to the id (inherited, innate, impulsive qualities), houses 5-8 relate to the ego (a zone bridging the self-interested, impulse-based qualities of the id and the selfless, cultivated qualities of the super-ego), and houses 9-12 relate to the super-ego (cultivated qualities that are generally more selfless in nature; conscience; thought and behavior based on internalized authoritative sources such as parental demands, social norms, collective beliefs etc.)

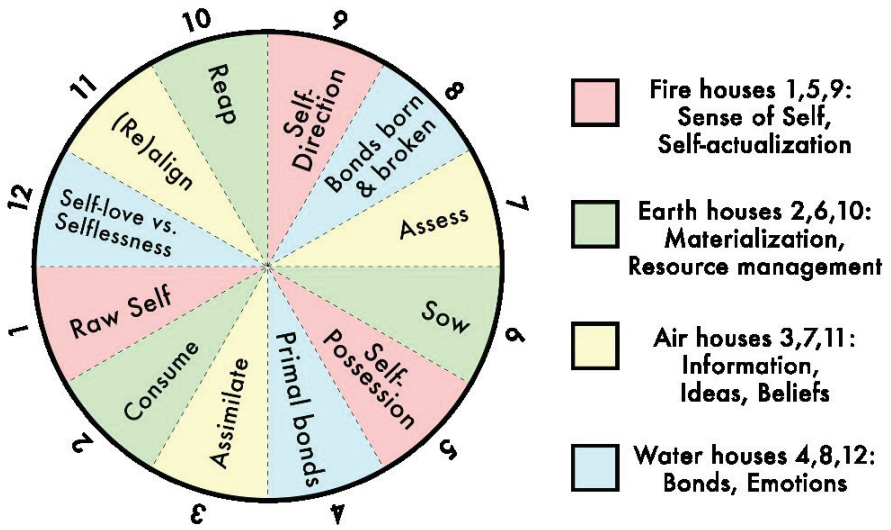


Figure 17: Houses defined by associated elemental qualities.

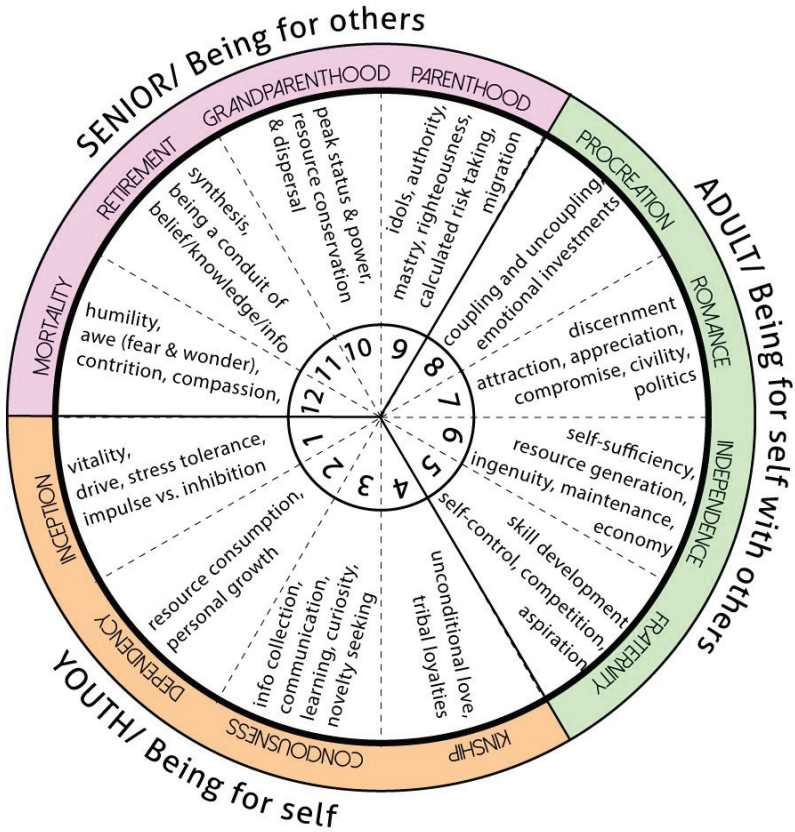


Figure 18: An extensive, modular view of house division, in which each house represents areas that have specifically evolved to meet the changing physical and psychological demands of different developmental stages. In this model, the human lifecycle flows from birth in house 1 to death in house 12.

The following section briefly describes each of the twelve houses by presenting some of their traditional associations and offering some context to each house by showcasing some of the myths and characters behind them. Though this will be necessarily limited in scope, it will help to add some depth and understanding to the themes featured in each house. As each house is traditionally associated with a particular zodiac sign and planet, this section will also shed additional light on some of astrology's zodiac and planet symbols.

To learn more about the meaning of particular planets in each house, see the section in this guide on *The Planets and Other Points*.

1st House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Aries (fire), Mars

Life Phase: Childhood/ Birth

House Themes: Self-perception and appearance, attitude towards life and default perceptions of the world and others, self-expression and how others perceive you.

Area of Experience:

*“Life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends to grow,
to be expressed, to be lived.”*

-Erich Fromm

The first house encompasses the birth experience and how one’s first interactions with the world may color his or her general attitude towards life. It is also where the impressions we make, as well as the impressions others make on us, leave their mark and contribute to the forging of one’s own individual identity.

This house encapsulates the newness of the infant, who, though helpless and vulnerable, brings with it a future full of potential. It is the seat of Freud’s Id, which is described in *An Outline of Psycho-analysis* as the part of a person that “contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, is laid down in the constitution—above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organization, and which find a first psychical expression here (in the id) in forms unknown to us.” The long-sacred, spiral shape of the ram’s horn represents the expanding seed of life that unfurls from a single point. As one of the first domesticated animals, the ram also represents how the collaboration between both nature and nurture ultimately forms the basis of one’s life trajectory.

Associated with the Aries ram, this house contains all of the fiery intensity of pent-up (and penned in) desire that is yet to be released over an entire lifetime. At the core of that tension are visions of the future self along with the raw power necessary to charge forward towards that ideal. It is also a place of pressure and frustration because the future lies eternally just beyond one’s grasp.

The first house represents a place where we express individuality and assert ourselves, just as the ram's grand horns make him stand out in a flock of sheep. This house's connection with self-identity is also closely tied not only to individual identity, but also group identity. A ram is a sheep, a gregarious creature that seeks safety in numbers- and rightly so! This is a vulnerable breed in which outliers are culled and outcasts fall prey. In this way, this house reminds us that in the seed of individuality a certain measure of both pride and fear exists. As the seed- of-self expands, it is shaped by the competing urges to both blend in and stand out- to lead and to be led. In the first house, comfort-zone boundaries are constructed by both ourselves and the group with which we identify. Early on in life it generally behooves us not to go too far astray from surrounding norms and this invisible social pressure shapes one's entire sense of being. Here we can ask ourselves whether we tend to embrace or revolt against that pressure.

Traditionally the figure of Mars (Greek Ares), who is associated with this house, has two faces. Whereas the Romans recognized the god as a seasoned, courageous, honorable and skilled warrior, the earlier Greek depiction was that of a young, energy-filled, erratic and destructive figure often lacking in self-control. In Homer's Iliad Ares is appears similar to a tantrum-throwing toddler, who is perhaps simply frustrated by his own lack of authority and experience, especially when standing in the shadow of his regal and accomplished father Zeus. The first house brings to light an innate eagerness to realize great potentials (Mars the warrior) while also highlighting the inner tension caused by unfulfilled desires and the unripe skills that only time can remedy (Ares the child).

Finally, some people are born with pep in their step. They are bursting with energy, eager for action and with a need to impose themselves on the world. Others are relaxed, passive, patient and naturally go with the flow. The sign and planets in the first house can say something about one's innate vitality- the force and energy with which one begins in life and how one tends to move through the world.

See Aries (page 27) and Mars (page 50)

2nd House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Taurus (earth), Venus

Life Phase: Childhood/ Infancy

House Themes: Possessions, available resources, values and valuables, money and material security (or insecurity), attitude towards wealth and the potential for acquiring more of it, self-esteem (how you value yourself), silver spoons and inherited or inherent gifts.

Area of Experience:

“Wealth is what Nature gives us and what a reasonable man can make out of the gifts of Nature for his reasonable use.”

- William Morris

The second house is associated with the earth sign Taurus and embodies the developmental stage in which a child’s physical needs are fully provided for by others, most notably the mother figure. Taurus embodies the proverbial “land of milk and honey”, and in the second house the child is doted upon, yet never loses his or her voraciousness. This is the house of the insatiable infant reminding us that in the midst of plenty insecurity still lurks.

The second house features the mother figure as a provider of life-sustaining nourishment and care for the physical body. More broadly, this house speaks to the benevolence and mercy not only of mother, but also of Mother Nature and Mother Earth. Ancient Egyptians saw Taurus, the zodiac sign associated with this house, as the Goddess Hathor, who represented beauty, love, happiness, and all of the wealth and nourishment cattle provide mankind. Featured here are the joys of existence and the abundant fruits of the world that we are invited to appreciate and take advantage of.

With that said, the third house bull also points to the consumption and innate insatiability that is an inseparable part of physical incarnation. In the oldest recorded text, the Sumerian Epic Gilgamesh, the goddess of fertility, love, war and sex brings down the “Bull of heaven”, who *“devoured the pasture, and drank the water of the river in great slurps. With each slurp it used up one mile of the river, but its thirst was not*

satisfied. It devoured the pasture and stripped the land bare. It broke up the palm trees [...], as it bent them to fit them into its mouth...". The second house bull as a symbol of both bounty and greed represents the physical body's absolute dependency upon available resources and their timely use.

See Taurus (page 35) and Venus (page 51)

3rd House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Gemini (air), Mercury

Life Phase: Childhood/ Toddlerhood

House Themes: Communication (speaking, reading, writing, messages, deliveries, gossip), Information collection, siblings, neighbors, short journeys, intellect and the lower mind (handling basic information and details as opposed to the higher mind of the 9th house), thinking patterns, early education.

Area of Experience:

*"Man is a plant which bears thoughts, just as a rose-tree
bears roses and an apple-tree bears apples."*

-Antoine Fabre D'Olivet

The third house captures the excitement and curiosity of a toddler who is learning about the world for the first time. He plays with words and information like he plays with toys. This house characterizes man's natural impulse to delight at encountering new information, much as a toddler stops to marvel at every stone and twig, but quickly drops it in favor of the next amusement along the path.

Exposure to worldly information begins at the moment of birth. Children soak up that information and integrate it into a vast mental library. As a child grows, her brain parses bits of information in an attempt to make sense of the world and to enable her to act in it. Over time, for each individual, certain information will begin to resonate while other information will fade into the background. As one's exposure to new objects and activities increases, personal preferences and aversions begin to emerge. This process of learning and then leaning towards information is one of the personality's earliest cornerstones.

The Gemini twins associated with this house can be seen to represent internal conversations between disparate parts of the self. These parts, when combined, ultimately produce a single, unified personality. The conversations between the left and right brain, the conscious and subconscious, the masculine and feminine traits, the passionate and the

passive impulses, the ego and the id, the past memories and future plans, etc., all manifest as a person's inward thoughts and outward expressions.

The Gemini twins can also represent information exchange with other minds. The third house is connected to the stage in life when language is acquired and when we start to communicate with others. The words we learn give form to ethereal data. Nicely packaged information is quickly retrievable in the mind, and easily transmittable to other minds. Again, the symbol of the twins points to the significance not only of an inner dialogue, but also of two or more separate minds connecting.

The third house also pertains to one's social identity. This house's association with Gemini puts it in contact with the god Mercury, the designated "divine trickster" who possesses a childlike cunning. This trickery is showcased in the mask that we begin to construct for ourselves early in childhood. Self-identity begins to form perhaps at the point when a baby first recognizes the reflection in a mirror as "me"- a person that is both separate and the same. When we begin to formulate a distinct identity, we also begin to utilize it like a tool in the world that connects us with others and gets us the things we want. This persona is groomed early on, and over time we fully become the character we've constructed. In this way, the third house is where find ourselves acting as both the puppet and the puppeteer.

See Gemini (page 31) and Mercury (page 49)

4th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Cancer (water), Moon

Life Phase: Childhood/ Youth (dependent)

House Themes: Parents (particularly maternal), roots, family, home, subconscious emotional reactions.

Area of Experience:

The fourth house captures the experience of the first bonds between parent (traditionally maternal) and child, and more broadly between a child and his closest kin. This house is associated with the water sign Cancer, which has the crab as its representative symbol. The crab's hard shell highlights the natural boundaries and borders in which we feel we belong, and relationships that we have a natural desire to defend. This symbol particularly emphasizes the solid unit of a nuclear family with a bond that is staked out in blood.

The fifth house's association with the crab symbol also represents the experience of a baby entering into a world of divisions; just as the crab washes up on random shores, so too do babies emerge from the womb as strangers, soon accepted into a foreign community. This theme is reoccurring in ancient storytelling, for example in the rescue of baby Moses from the river or the hero Odysseus emerging from the "oinops pontos" or "wine-dark sea". Both of these characters are foreigners mercifully saved and adopted by princesses at the head of great dynasties.

At birth, mothers are traditionally the first to make contact and bond with a child. They become the gatekeepers to that child's closest relationships, first by introducing it into the family, and second, by laying emotional foundations that, like long piles driven deep into the seabed, will stand firm for a lifetime. The fourth house showcases the area where, in a very real sense, the mother's (or maternal parent's) way of relating to her child greatly influences a person's emotional development for a lifetime.

The fourth house is associated with the moon through Cancer. The Greek goddess Artemis was venerated as goddess of the moon, childbirth, and midwives, among other things. One origin myth states that directly after being born Artemis transformed into a midwife and helped to deliver

her twin brother, the sun god Apollo. This story is full of meaning and significance, but broadly speaking it underlines the fourth house theme of close bonds with, and a sense of duty to the people who welcome us into the world.

See Cancer (page 40) and Moon (page 48)

5th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Leo (fire), Sun

Life Phase: Adulthood/ Adolescence (early independence)

House Themes: Creativity, children, romance, recreation, self-improvement/ self-refinement.

Area of Experience:

Whereas the first four houses encompass childhood experience, the fifth house features the first forays into adulthood. In this house the Leo lion is representative of immature, animal impulses being tamed and raw energies being refined. Childhood experience has finally yielded the necessary competency to start seriously honing talents, setting goals, broadening social circles and playing in the “real world”. This house is connected with the sun through Leo, and thus represents where one basks in the glory of becoming.

The fifth house can be seen as the seat of Freud’s Ego, a set of conscious and unconscious executive functions such as judgment, tolerance, reality testing, memory, control, planning, pro-active maneuvering, synthesis of information, and intellectual cognition. Freud in his work *The Ego and the Id, On Metapsychology* defines the ego as representing “what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions...in its relation to the id [the ego] is like a person on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with their own strength, while the ego uses borrowed forces.” These borrowed forces largely refer to skills (physical, intellectual, and social) that have been learned and exercised to the point at which one can move through the world with greater independence, intention and precision.

In the fifth house area of experience we can speak of the lion’s pride, firstly in the sense of what one is proud to have already accomplished and what one aims to accomplish in the future (note that the sun god Apollo was god of archery, literally setting his sights on distant targets). Secondly, we can speak of a lion’s pride in the sense of a group of allies; the fifth house is one of youthful fraternity, in which friendships serve as the mental and physical playground for playful competition and flirtatious

activity. In this arena of camaraderie peers measure themselves against one another and gauge talents. These diverse interactions are, in fact, a means by which the young individual focuses energy on creating a personal vision of self.

The fifth house is also the house of children, which can certainly refer to one's progeny (a self-created playgroup and cheering section in one's own home). More broadly, however, it speaks to the natural pleasure of playing in the world like a child: possessing a certain fearlessness, being challenged, focusing energy, honing skills, acting creatively, having fun and basking in the thrill of becoming.

See Leo (page 28) and Sun (page 47)

6th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Virgo (earth), Mercury

Life Phase: Adulthood/ Early adulthood

House Themes: Service, employment, work, domestic duties, homesteads and home economy, health, nutrition, upkeep and improvement of the physical body and world.

Area of Experience:

The sixth house is the second earth house and features the time in life when we take responsibility for our physical well-being. This differs from the first earth house (see the second house) in which one's needs are met by outside forces. In this house we pull up our shirtsleeves and become stewards of our own lives.

The sixth house is associated with Virgo, often depicted as a virgin figure greatly reminiscent of Venus (Greek Aphrodite) though Demeter, Persephone and Venus are all mythological figures closely connected to themes of growth and fecundity that fall within this house's scope. The Virgo house is where the immaculate child transforms into the fertile maiden, the fountainhead of the material world who is pregnant with all future potential.

Perhaps the most fitting mythological figure to represent this house experience is Persephone, whose name in Greek, Kore, literally means "the maiden". In the myth Persephone is raped and abducted by Pluto (Greek Hades), who makes her his wife and thus queen of his underworld kingdom. Persephone's mother Demeter (goddess of the harvest and fertility among other things) suffers greatly at the loss of her daughter, and her sadness causes the world to go cold and barren. Demeter pleads with her husband, Zeus, to free their daughter. For the sake of the world, (and perhaps with the understanding his daughter's transformation was inevitable and irreversible), Zeus allows Persephone to emerge for half of the year under the condition that she always return to the underworld to carry out her duties as wife and queen.

The story of Persephone features lost virginity, duty, separation, pain and compromise, capturing the sixth house experience of childhood innocence that is surrendered to the hard demands of adulthood. It

illustrates how, innate within each person is the strength to make this transition, and marks the point when parents (often reluctantly) release us into a great, big world that is as beautiful as it is terrifying. In the Persephone myth Pluto symbolizes not only the inescapable and forceful demands of adulthood, but also, as he is king of the underworld, the eternal threat of physical death and decay that will fully reign in the case that we do not readily assume certain responsibilities. It is only in working side-by-side with this dark and threatening force that a balanced, functional and life-sustaining world comes into being.

In his book *The Inevitable*, author Kevin Kelly sums up an important sixth house dynamic when he says that “[e]xistence, it seems, is chiefly maintenance.” He goes on to point out a uniquely human trait: that, unlike other animals, it is part the human condition to be discontent with mere survival. Humans, he says, “...have been incredibly busy making up new itches that we have to scratch, creating new desires that we’ve never had before. This discontent is the trigger for our ingenuity and growth.” The sixth house can’t be simply pigeonholed as a place of dutiful tedium, concerned only with cooking dinner, doing the dishes and bringing home a paycheck. It is also a place where we happily create new ways to improve and beautify the life experience. This is pursued through many avenues such as tackling humble homestead projects, creating pieces of art, developing skills of craftsmanship, or inventing new gadgets, systems and technologies that solve problems and increase comfort and joy. Mercury’s association with this house through Virgo underlines this point. Mercury is a planet representing curiosity, creativity and wiliness. That, combined with Virgo earthiness (practicality) makes the sixth house an area where good ideas and beautiful visions can be birthed into the physical world. It is a place for practicing the skills that eventually go into making dreams into tangible realities.

In the sixth house the individual becomes self-sustaining, resourceful and generative. Energy is channeled into the health, stability and multiplication of fortune and family. The growth and preservation of the physical world depends on shouldering the effort, and also on accepting the discomfort that often accompanies this great responsibility. Beyond that this house is a realm of immaculate conceptions, wherein miraculous somethings of substance come into being seemingly from thin air.

See Virgo (page 36) and Mercury (page 49)

7th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Libra (air), Venus

Life Phase: Adulthood/ Full Adulthood

House Themes: Partnerships, relationships, conflicts and cooperation, social contracts, mores, laws and justice, personal responsibility and public accountability.

Area of Experience:

The seventh house marks the experiential phase in which we sort our friends and closest associates based on compatibility, and where the broader boundaries between “us” and “them” are drawn. It is home of the moral sense, and the standards against which one measures information, ideas, others and ourselves.

The seventh house is associated with Libra, the second air sign in the Zodiac circle. Here, influential dichotomies that are either innately felt or placed by others in childhood (like good/bad, and right/wrong) heavily influence thought and behavior in adulthood. This house also marks a point when minds weigh ideas and beliefs against those of others. From a combination of one-on-one encounters, broader social codes of conduct and an inner sense of righteousness, the individual naturally self-aligns and self-regulates in a community.

Seventh house Libra is represented by scales, an ancient symbol pointing to Themis, the Greek Titaness of good council, divine order, customs and fairness. The earlier Egyptian Goddess Ma’at, a close equivalent, additionally counted harmony, truth and balance within her dominion. In the underworld Ma’at weighed the souls of the dead against “the feather of Ma’at”- something representative of eternal, divine truth- to determine whether or not one was worthy of heaven. With this in mind, the seventh house can be seen as the seat of the conscience, a force that directs behavior not through any direct physical coercion, but rather through mental pressures, or “moral sensations”, which stem from both innate sentiments as well as learned social norms.

In the seventh house childhood innocence fades as one transforms into a self-regulating citizen. Philosopher Alan Watts defines morality as “the art of living together” and “the working of love in human relations”. A

moral code is defined by communal customs and civil laws, as well as an inner sense of fairness and compassion that is both partially innate and partially cultivated. Moral codes are what enable relationships to form with “the other” and are the foundation upon which entire societies emerge. The seventh house points to the social glue that, starting on an individual-to-individual basis, keeps the broader social fabric intact.

See Libra (page 32) and Venus (page 51)

8th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Scorpio (water), Pluto and Mars

Life Phase: Senior/ Midlife

House Themes: Death and renewal, sex and procreation, peak emotional experiences, loss and enrichment, inheritance, awakenings and change.

Area of Experience:

“There is advantage in the wisdom won from pain”
- Aeschylus

The eighth house features pent-up tensions concerning love and love lost that are unavoidable parts of the life experience. It is associated with Scorpio, a water sign traditionally ruled by the fiery planet Mars though in modern times with icy Pluto, and the joining of fire and ice sums up this house’s explosive passion and tension. The image of the zodiac scorpion’s pending strike characterizes the often painful and anxious emotions that reside in this house.

Emotions, bonding, and the feeling of love are the headlining themes of water signs. Good feelings signify security on a most primal level. The painful feeling of absent love sets off primal alarm bells. And evolutionarily speaking, loneliness is a life-threatening condition; As social animals we rely heavily on the cooperation and support of others for survival, and, more broadly, as living creatures we depend on physical bonding to ensure that our genes are passed on. The deep connection we feel with family members, lovers, and friends all reflect this dynamic.

Unfortunately, death and change are an unavoidable part of life. Parents die, love affairs fall through, friends move away, etc. When these bonds are inevitably broken, one’s vulnerability is exposed. The traditional association between the fiery planet Mars (see section on the *1st House*) and the eighth house speaks to both the anxiety and defensive impulses that naturally emerge from life and death experiences.

Pluto is the modern ruler of Scorpio. The myth surrounding the rape and abduction of Persephone (see myth story in the section on the *6th*

House) embodies all of the inner violence and desperation that is stirred up by both the strong desire to bond (Pluto the sexual abductor) and the shock and pain of broken bonds (Persephone's separation from her mother and home, as well as her stolen youth).

Yet this myth of trauma hints at the great potential of the eighth house's destructive forces. In this house we turn our attention towards the fact that Pluto is not only the nefarious King of the Underworld but also the benevolent God of Buried Treasure. This is often taken in a very literal sense when a birth chart is examined: eighth house activity is often predicted to manifest as inherited wealth. In a different sense, Pluto presents the potential treasure of a renewed and awakened soul. Often, the pain of lost love is the only thing that triggers the deepest soul searching. This, in turn, unearths previously hidden strength and potential. The adage "what doesn't kill me only makes me stronger" is the perfect motto for this house. In the 8th house, if one can avoid spinning out of control, the greatest salvation is possible. Here you may pass through the fire and emerge enlightened, renewed, stronger and better than before.

See Scorpio (page 41), Mars (page 50) and Pluto (page 56)

9th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Sagittarius (fire), Jupiter

Life Phase: Senior/ Late midlife

House Themes: Journeys, opportunity, authority, idols and aspirations, exploring and experimenting with ideologies (religious, spiritual, and philosophical), search for meaning, law and enforcement.

Area of Experience:

“Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore”

-Lord Chesterfield

The ninth house captures our highest aspirations. It is the first house entering into the seniority portion of the zodiac and is traditionally associated with Sagittarius. As the final fire house in the zodiac wheel, the Sagittarian archer takes aim at the future, keeping visions of conquest and keeping a meeting with destiny in sight.

The ninth house can be said to contain the seat of Sigmund Freud’s Super Ego, or “the conscience” which acts as an individual’s personal, internalized authority figure. The super-ego strives to act in a socially appropriate manner and is largely the source of inhibition and self-control. Freud says that the Super Ego can be seen “a successful instance of identification with the parental agency,...” and that it is what “takes on the influence of those who have stepped into the place of parents — educators, teachers, people chosen as ideal models”. This matches exactly to this house’s traditional association with authority figures, idols and the exploration of authoritative ideologies. The ninth house is not only where one can see and pursue what one wants to become, but where we feel we finally have the strength, experience and power to be successful in that quest. This house contains visions of the ideal self, and it points towards the targets we strive to meet.

Although Freud's controlling inner-master may seem to contradict the willful, roaming, Sagittarian spirit that is associated with the fifth house, it is important to note that exercising self-control is a key component in directing one's energy towards any chosen course of action. There is a certain amount of ruthless strong-arming required when striking out on the path towards one's desires. Personalities lacking in vision and self-control risk going adrift or spinning out. The ninth house super-ego is about making decisions, setting a course, and having the command over one's self that is necessary to move forward on a path.

The ruling planet of Sagittarius is Jupiter, whose chart symbol shape brings to mind ancient Greek warships. Though these notorious vessels dominated the Mediterranean for centuries with their speed and agility, they were nevertheless full of risk to operate; only able to carry two gallons of water for each crew member at a time, they were susceptible to unpredictable changes in weather that could sink them outright or throw them far off course without sufficient rations to return. This imagery sums up the ninth house very well; it is a house representing a developmental phase filled with a sense both of great risk and great reward, and where the wheel of fortune spins out twists of fate and new destinations (a term meaningfully close to "destiny"). In this life-phase one is equipped to take giant leaps of faith, to seize fleeting opportunities, and to journey forward in the hope of expanding one's horizons. It is where one wrestles with fate, and is confronted with the fact that many things are beyond one's control.

Fire is about power, authority and control, and this holds for the ninth house. Brute, physical force is one way to seize control, but the power of ideas cannot be underestimated. The ninth house is particularly associated with intellectual authority: higher education, religion, and philosophy. It features the ultimate authority figure, Jupiter (Zeus in Greek), who was paterfamilias of the Greek pantheon and the idolized figurehead of a hugely successful ancient religion. Here in the ninth house one pursues powerful ideas perhaps not only to show them deference, but also out of an unconscious sense that, if we can make contact with those ideas, then some of their power may rub off on us.

See Sagittarius (page 29) and Jupiter (page 52)

10th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Capricorn (earth), Saturn

Life Phase: Senior/ Retirement

House Themes: Worldly achievements, career or influence in the world, legacy building, public life, status, power and authority attainment, conservation.

Area of Experience:

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.’ Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring.”

- James 4:13

The tenth house represents the area experience in which one reaches peak status, both in terms of power and possessions. The ninth and tenth houses traditionally straddle an astrology chart’s zenith, a position equitable to the zenith of a human life. Today the tenth house is often specifically connected to career, but a broader description paints this house more generally as where one climbs within society, and how one is positioned to pour one’s self and accumulated resources back into the world.

The tenth house is associated with Capricorn, which is the final earth house in the senior segment of the Zodiac wheel. Capricorn is sometimes depicted as a simple goat, sometimes as a mythical sea-goat creature. There are several different goat-related myths that shed light on tenth house themes. A particularly compelling one features the she-goat Amaltheia, a Greek name meaning “nourishing goddess”, who nursed infant Zeus while he was hiding from his father Saturn. During this time Zeus broke off one of Amaltheia’s horns, which had the divine power to provide unending nourishment. The cornucopia, also known as “the horn of plenty”, is a traditional symbol of harvest and bounty, and is drawn from this representation of the goat’s horn.

The Amaltheia myth points nicely to the role of earthly benefactor that one assumes in this house. All earth houses relate to physical and material resources; the second house concerns receiving resources and

the fifth house concerns generating and maintaining them. This cycle comes full circle in the tenth house where resources are multiplied and poured back into the world. It is important to note that there are endless ways in which we flow back into the world. It can be directly through wealth and power, but also in how we act in the world and influence others, or even in the everyday choices that we make.

It is also possible to give-of-self in well-meaning ways that may actually produce ambiguous results, good or bad, productive or counterproductive, depending on how you look at it. For example, a wealthy man may be unbelievably loving and generous to his family, yet perhaps this wealth is generated through the exploitation of natural resources and employees. In this case benevolence to a family equates to communal destruction. Another example is a soldier who kills in service of his country, or on the most basic level, even the sacrifice of an animal in order to feed the hungry is not ethically black and white. This gray area is what ties the tenth house goat symbol with a fallen angel, otherwise known as the devil. The tenth house is where things may be trickier than they appear, and where one can be blinded by self-interest, even when acting completely innocently.

Examining the goat outside of any mythological context also goes far in explaining tenth house themes. On the most superficial level, the bearded goat nicely represents seniority, and goats are also known for their eagerness to eat anything as well as their love of climbing, two traits that point directly to the common human desire for consumption and upward mobility. High-climbing goats and fallen-angel myths combine to underline another tenth house theme: anxiety and insecurity. The tenth house goat embodies the innate sense that what goes up must come down, that change is inevitable, and that time wears all things. Everything one has attained and achieved can be lost with any turn of circumstances. This is in stark contrast to the second house Taurus bull of youth, in which all of one's needs are met and a youthful ignorance shields one from such adult anxieties. The tenth house carries a real sense of being on one's own with no savior but ourselves. Self-reliance and self-interest play out big in this field.

The ancients surely noted that goats in captivity are, for the most part, imperfect team players. Often, when they climb up it is for the purpose of climbing out, and when there is nothing more to be eaten at home, they

will reach for food that grows beyond the fence. With this in mind the tenth house can be seen to highlight the anti-social and hoarding potential latent in all of us. It is easy to observe in our own times that, upon reaching a certain level of wealth, power and security, the temptation to eschew communal duties appears to grow.

The tenth house is connected to the planet Saturn via Capricorn. The mythical Saturn (Greek Cronus) is often depicted with a scythe, and was a figure commonly associated with the harvest. The tenth house is indeed very much about reaping rewards and bringing in earnings. But Saturn's scythe has another important connotation that should not be overlooked; it is the same tool with which he castrated his father, Uranus. Thereafter, Saturn swallowed his own children to prevent being himself succeeded. Despite this great effort, he was eventually overthrown by his son Zeus. Therefore, Saturn's scythe draws attention to several other important tenth house themes: resistance to change, clinging to status and power, generational conflict, and wrestling with control over fate.

Further, in astrology, the planet Saturn is particularly associated with limitations and order. In mythology Saturn's father, Uranus, represented primordial chaos, and his son, Zeus, represented a new order of divine perfection. The symbolism behind this lineage paints a picture of order emerging from chaos, particularly when boundaries and limitations are imposed. It also points to a tendency towards refinement over generations. This violent, tumultuous, story is in fact an outline of natural evolution; a force playing out in the physical world (tenth house is an earth house), and one which we see working out before our eyes in human affairs, both on large scales and in our own individual life experiences. The tenth house stands as a monument to the cyclical process of destruction, renewal and refinement that are constantly working on us, individually and as a collective body, and brings into focus the way one's relationship with the status quo generally evolves over the course of a lifetime.

Finally, in the tenth house our attention is brought to the fact that, in some cases boundaries and limitations are an incredibly constructive force (Saturn vs. Uranus), whereas in other cases they can be an outright impediment to progress (Saturn vs. Zeus). The key to this house lies in accepting that change is inevitable, and then in finding the sweet spot of saturnian moderation that will enable rather than inhibit positive development. See Capricorn (page 37) and Saturn (page 53)

11th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Aquarius (air), Uranus

Life Phase: Senior/ Full Senior

House Themes: Posterity and altruism, idealism, collective values and beliefs, friends, associations, political and religious affiliations, technology, the sciences, freedom and change

Area of Experience:

“I do not pretend to understand the moral universe. The arc is a long one. My eye reaches but little ways. I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by experience of sight. I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice.”

-Abolitionist Minister Theodor Parker

“All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow”
Ecclesiastes 7

The eleventh house is associated with Aquarius, the final air house in the zodiac circle. It captures the intellect at its most mature point, after it has collected and sorted baseline information in the third house (Gemini) and weighed it against other ideas as well as one's conscience in the seventh (Libra). The eleventh house is where information and ideas pool together, transforming into novel insights and coalescing into larger movements. Here is the source of intellectual innovations and cultural sea changes.

It may seem counterintuitive that a house associated with air uses the Aquarian water bearer as its representative symbol. But this house is all about the flow of ideas. Just as water flows from tiny streams into the ocean, and there joins currents that create big waves, so too do bits of information and ideas merge to become powerful movements of change. Sometimes these movements smash apart order; other times they simply

erode it over time. This phenomenon takes place both within the individual, as well as throughout entire cultures.

The eleventh house traditionally encompasses shared beliefs, clubs and associations, affiliations and subscriptions to groups or ideas. This house is about carefully developed theories and philosophies as well as sudden epiphanies. This is all a part of this house's pooling of information, and the power and momentum that the resulting ideas generate. Some thoughts barely make a ripple in the world while others become giant crashing waves (take Copernicus' idea for example!).

Uranus is the ruling planet of Aquarius, and in Greek mythology Uranus and Gaia were the two original, primordial Gods. Uranus represented sky and chaos, and Gaia represented earth and order. Their unity was believed to be the foundation of all existence. Uranus and Gaia had children that were horrible monsters. Eventually one of their children, Saturn, dethroned his father, and a generation later Saturn was overthrown by his own son, Zeus. In this myth, each tumultuous succession handed power to less primitive, more refined future generation (see *10th House*). These stories of succession relate to the eleventh house by featuring the turbulent process of order emerging from chaos, and the story of becoming, evolving and improving over time.

Whereas the tenth house focuses heavily on the evolution of physical world, the eleventh house speaks particularly to the evolution of the ethereal: knowledge, ideas, cultures, and technology. In a house that invites us to step back and look at the big picture, the eleventh encapsulates emergence theory- the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions- and the theory of spontaneous order- the spontaneous emergence of order out of seeming chaos, also known as "self-organization". The eleventh house spotlights where these natural laws play out intellectually in the life of the individual, and in societies at large.

Pop culture has drawn an association between "the age of Aquarius" and progressive ideology. Though the mythology behind this house does suggest that there is a general trajectory of improvement in human development, it also reminds us that the battle between chaos and order (some would say between good and evil) is constant, perpetual, and eternal. The alternation between progress and regression is all a part of

the forging process which no individual, in his or her short existence, can comprehend or predict. Each life is a single drop in an infinite, winding river of unfolding, and so absolutely everything experienced is grandly relative.

Greek philosopher Heraclitus said “Change is a pathway up and down, and this determines the birth of the world”. This depiction of change, of which we are a part, parallels the up-and-down wave-like symbol used to denote Aquarius in astrology. In the eleventh house you will find yourself, consciously and unconsciously, as an individual conduit of change. You are wise in your own way, and you play your part in the process of creation even without fully fathoming your role in the bigger picture.

See Aquarius (page 33) and Uranus (page 55)

12th House

Associated Sign, Element and Planet: Pisces (water), Neptune

Life Phase: Senior/ Last days of life ; Tomb and womb

House Themes: Self-transcendence, self-sacrifice, expanding circles of love, service and seclusion, religious/spiritual feeling, repressed or unacknowledged emotions, what is hidden, clandestine relationships, prisons and hospitals.

Area of Experience:

“What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes...”

- James 4:13

“Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another”

- Proverbs 27:19

The twelfth house is the final house, representing the end of the lifecycle. It is associated with Pisces and its ruling planet Neptune. Its area of experience encompasses the unique human awareness of mortality, particularly one's own, as well as the expansion of love and compassion beyond the self.

All of the water houses concern human bonds, and the feelings and emotions that have evolved to track the status of those bonds. For social creatures like humans, bonds are critical to survival, and the feeling of love serves as an internal signal of security and aliveness. Unfortunately, because of our unique ability to contemplate the future and the past, humans are confronted with an uncomfortable truth: that the only true certainty in life is death. We are each born with a natural love-of-life, and it is this love that is most certain to be lost. Awareness of this fact creates a background noise of emotional tension and anxiety in the human psyche. Buddhism calls this psychic anxiety “suffering”, and, according to that doctrine, to be human is to suffer. The twelfth house is where each individual finds his or her own way to cope with this burden.

Identical to the Western zodiac's Pisces fish symbol, the Gaur-matsya is a Sanskrit symbol of two gold fish circling. Rooted in ancient Buddhism, these fish symbolize a cultivated sense of calm and fearlessness while swimming in the "Ocean of Suffering". The ocean referred to is the cycle of life and death to which life in the material world is bound.

Empathy and compassion are the cornerstones of Buddhist philosophy, as well as of many other religions. The twelfth house is where we recognize suffering both in ourselves and as it is reflected in others. Buddhist texts assert that the Gaur-matsya's fearlessness enables it to help others walk "dry-shod to the other shore" and to "attain deliverance from death". In this light, the twelfth house is where one may help oneself and others to transcend pain and keep from sinking in an ocean of despair. This compassion manifests through formal service, explaining the traditional associations of the twelfth house with churches, hospitals and volunteer work. Here, one may find oneself serving or being served. Compassion may also take a less obvious form such as art, music, or any pleasantry or kindness that attempts to recognize and alleviate suffering.

The twelfth house confronts us with that fact that there are powers in the world much greater than one's self, and forces that are beyond one's control. In this house, facing death means confronting the vastness of time and space in which we find ourselves, and the infinity that lies beyond our own existence. Here one stands in awe- a combination of fear and wonder- and discovers that self-surrender is the only option. Some might react to this house's awesome emotional profundity by freezing up, drifting off, or by drowning in fear. Others find ways to keep afloat, sometimes through faith in an omnipotent presence, in some preeminent order, or in a sense of purpose and meaning behind one's actions.

In this house, faith, no matter its focus, can act as a savior.

Neptune (Greek Poseidon) is God of the water and seas, and protector of seafarers. He is able to call up great storms and calm the seas on command. Neptune's connection to the twelfth house points to human psychic abilities, particularly the powers to calm the mind and bring emotions under control so that one's perceptions are unclouded. Even so, it also points to where muddy waters can easily be stirred up, allowing past scars and future scares to surface and muddle one's thinking.

Finally, the water houses outline an expanding circle of love. That circle begins with the first love between child and mother (fourth house Cancer), advances to the love felt for partners and offspring (eighth house Scorpio) and ends in twelfth house Pisces with the expansion of love to those outside of our immediate circle. Sociobiology professor Robert Wright asserts in his book, *The Moral Animal*, that “[O]nce the vehicle that genes inhabit can’t transmit them to the next generation, they are well advised to direct all energies toward vehicles that can.” As the twelfth house categorizes the senior-most part of life, particularly when one is no longer fertile, it can be seen as the place where the self-love previously practiced via tending to our immediate genetic circle is redirected to the larger community surrounding and ultimately sustaining those genes.

The twelfth house presents the broadened scope of the web of life and the individual desire to see that life flourish beyond the boundaries of one’s own life. Though it is here where we most acutely feel the futility of life and love, the twelfth house is where we may discover psychic tranquility in the knowledge that it is indeed possible to pour ourselves into the sea of eternal life.

See Pisces (page42) and Neptune (page 54)

Part IV: 5-Step Chart Interpretation

A Note on the Approach to Interpretation

It is fun to dive into a chart but it can also sometimes seem like an overwhelming challenge. There are so many factors to take into consideration, so many ideas to synthesize, so many possible ways to interpret a symbol, and then real-life circumstances and experiences to overlay on top of all of the above! Sometimes it feels as if a chart is telling you both everything and nothing at all. As Stephen Arroyo asks in his Chart Interpretation Guidebook, “How could any of us ever sum up such a complex, infinite, and ever-changing mystery that is a human being?”

Looking at your chart with too wide of a perspective can yield ambiguous and confusing results. For this reason, it is advisable to approach your chart in sections, and then to look those sections with a specific topic or question in mind. This will help to stay focused and guide you to insights that are not only interesting but also practical.

Stephen Arroyo continues with this advice:

“The real aim of chart synthesis is not to understand the chart alone, but the person, and this involves tuning in on the major life themes of the person. The primary mode of synthesis is to learn to recognize those major themes of a birth chart which reflect the major themes of a person’s life” ...

... “The chart must always be related to specific issues, problems, decisions and questions that the person is involved in. One needs to focus on what is important for the person in order not to get lost in endless possibilities.”

There are many methods for interpreting a chart. You can study your own chart for years and still discover new details and connections that touch directly on your current life experience. It can be overwhelming facing such a complex web of possibilities, but every journey starts with baby steps. Most importantly remember that in this exercise it is the journey and not the destination that is most meaningful.

The following is a quick overview to help you get started exploring your chart. It suggests how to approach your chart for the first time, and

presents the main points that a professional would certainly look to when creating a first impression of you. The index of this book offers more helpful resources for beginner chart interpretation, so feel free to explore further.

Step 1: Main Players: Sun and Moon

The sun and moon are widely considered the most significant objects on a birth chart. Together they represent the core faces of the blossoming self, consisting of the conscious and unconscious. These two celestial bodies represent opposite yet complimentary shades of being: the reactive and the pro-active, the past-oriented and future-oriented, the fixed and the potential.

First look for the sun on your chart. You probably already know in which zodiac sign it resides. The sign in which the sun is located indicates how you envision yourself and how you wish to be seen by others. It also reveals the nature of the personal qualities you tend to emphasize both in private and in public. It reflects something about the nature of your ego and how you approach gaining recognition or pursuing self-improvement.

Now you can also study the house in which your sun resides. Check the section of this guide related to the twelve houses. The sun in the houses can tell you the area of life where you easily connect with your inner strength, talent and power. The sun's house should reveal the area of life that provides a sense of well-being, where you can act creatively and focus energy. You may be naturally competitive or over-eager in this area of life, but any tension here will probably be a vitalizing source of self-improvement.

Check if your sun is alone or situated in relationship to other planets (indicated by aspect lines. See section on *Aspects*). Observe whether these aspect lines are hard or soft (on a Planetary Portraits chart hard aspects are represented by broken lines, soft aspects by solid lines). Hard aspects indicate tension and soft aspects indicate flow. Planets connected in relationship with your sun suggest traits play a significant role in your personality. The urges that these connecting planets represent will merge into the expression of the sun.

The sun says something about how you are and where you're going. The moon says something about how you are and *where you are coming from*. The moon symbolizes the foundational pool of feeling from which all positive and negative emotions emerge. Physiologically speaking, the moon is an ancient representation of the chemical pathways that have been etched into the brain over a lifetime. These pathways, which were laid early in infancy and childhood, serve as the quickest routes for signals of pleasure and pain to flow. They result in one's reflexive emotional reactions to internal and external stimuli. The moon offers insight into one's history of feeling as well as the current nature of one's emotional reactions.

In astrology and other esoteric areas the moon is also traditionally associated with the mother figure. It reflects the early bonding period between mother and child, where the mother's reactions and emotions towards her child are internalized and integrated into the child's own emotional expression.

The moon does not produce any light of its own; the light we see is merely a reflection. In this way, the moon depicts a part of the self that is only visible upon reflection, and even then there remains a hidden, dark side that is never fully revealed. This points to deeply entrenched ways of being with sources that are hidden from view. Throughout life this emotional baggage may be forgotten, suppressed or ignored, but just like a satellite, it steadily follows us everywhere and can never be discarded.

Examine more closely the zodiac sign of your moon. This sign reveals something about how you tend to react emotionally. It can also suggest something about the nature of your affection and/or how you tend to react to the affection of others.

Next look at the house in which the moon is found. This suggests the area of life in which one looks for emotional security, fulfillment and comfort. In this area of life one may seek or feel a sense of stability and belonging.

Finally, check if your moon has soft or hard aspects connected to it in order to get a sense of whether there may be tension or flow connected to your emotional foundation. The planets at the end of these aspects each indicate a set of fundamental urges that can be brought into relationship with your emotional background.

Step 2: Distribution

You can learn a lot about your chart by taking it in from afar. Step back to view the full picture and observe whether a majority of planets are in the northern or southern hemisphere. Compare this to figure 14 in the *Framing the Houses* section of this guide. This will suggest whether you may be oriented more towards the personal life or public life.

Next, observe which houses and zodiac signs have clusters of planets in order to see which areas will deserve special attention. After you see where planets are concentrated, take note of where they are particularly absent. Voids of activity in your chart will direct you to areas of your personality that may be muted or out of focus.

Look at the Elements and Modality Table to get an idea of the specific elements (fire, air, earth and water) and modalities (cardinal, fixed and mutable) that may weigh heavily in your chart. You can find this table on the bottom right corner of a detailed Planetary Portraits chart, which you can create and view at www.Planetaryportraits.com. Make sure the detailed option is selected. On this chart observe whether there is an abundance or absence of objects in one of the four horizontal rows of elements, or in any of the three vertical modality columns. This feature reveals whether there is a balanced distribution of these qualities, or whether there might be certain areas that are over or under-represented in your personality. Is your chart heavily weighted with water or earth, or is it oriented more towards air and fire? Check how your major planets- sun, moon and ruling planet- fare in this balance. For example, is your watery moon in relationship with signs or planets that have compatible or conflicting elemental orientations? All of these connections can reveal qualities about your emotional experience and personality expression

Next, consider more closely the elemental qualities associated with your sun sign. Use the element table to compare how your personality is weighted relative to your sun sign. For example, if your sun is in Gemini (an air sign), yet your element table shows that a majority of other planets and points are in earth signs, you may find that earth themes play a much larger role in your life than expected, and thus deserve greater attention than you had previously given them.

Step 3: Aspects: Tension and Flow

The first thing that will jump out at you about your birth chart are the aspect lines that cross the chart and connect the planets. Soft aspects are said to depict planetary energies and urges that flow easily without much resistance. Hard aspects depict the opposite relationship characterized by a natural tension and discomfort. (On a Planetary Portraits chart soft aspects are represented by solid lines and hard aspects by dashed lines).

Look at the aspects and planets connected to your sun and moon. All of these planets represent integral parts of your personality, no matter whether they are “positively” or “negatively” aspected. Observe whether the planets in contact with your sun and moon are connected via hard or soft aspects. Planets connected to soft aspects suggest traits and themes that are smoothly integrated within you, whereas planets connected to hard aspects can suggest aspects of yourself that, though they may not feel ideal, are formative nonetheless.

Remember that if any part of your chart would be any other way, then you wouldn't be you! Luckily, knowledge is power. Study the planets connected to hard aspects more closely to learn about themes that may weigh heavily on you and present challenges. Awareness can relieve a lot of stress and guide you to traits and desires that need more thoughtful attention.

Step 4: AC & MC

Look at your rising sign by finding the zodiac sign in which the AC is located. The AC is something like the personality's outer layer- a reflexive, unmitigated way of being in the world. It can be seen as something like your second sun sign, in that it represents a core part of you that seeps through to the surface no matter how many additional layers of time, experience and personal-development are added on top. It may be apparent to you, but it is not uncommon for individuals to have “rising sign blindness”, in which case one is unaware of the way he or she is perceived by others. The rising sign sheds light on the type of “vibes” you give off. After you learn about your rising sign, practice thinking of your personality in terms of your rising sign rather than your sun sign.

Examine in what ways you may project that sign's characteristics to others.

The Midheaven (MC) is near the zenith of the chart, and it can be seen as representing the zenith of one's life. Today this point is often connected with "career", but it more broadly stands for maturity and ripeness, and marks where years of experience and development culminate in one's greatest potential and personal flourishing. Here one is primed to reap rewards for one's own use, but also to enrich the surrounding community and environment through contributions of power, resources, knowledge and skill.

Look at your Midheaven's zodiac sign for clues about which traits you might exercise and tap into for "success". Remember that MC success is not necessarily the kind served on a silver platter, and the zodiac traits may not come easily or naturally. The full potential of the MC is achieved through time and experience, and it may take concerted effort to express the traits of your MC's zodiac sign. If you do this you will reap the rewards.

Step 5: Ruling Planet

Your sun is the king of your chart, and the moon is queen, but there is another significant point to add to your high court. The ruling planet is an important actor to take note of in your inner drama. Find the ruling planet of your sun sign (see figure #8 in the *Planets and other Points* section of this guide). For example, if your sun is in Gemini, the ruling planet of Gemini is Mercury. Mercury is therefore a planet that is particularly worth studying in your chart. Observe where your ruling planet is on your chart and what relationships it has with other planets. Do the themes of those planets "mix" well? Are the aspects between them soft or hard?

Part V: Resources

Glossary of Astrology Terms

A

AFFLICTED: Planetary aspects that are considered unfavorable: Squares, Oppositions and Quincunxes.

AIR SIGNS: Signs possessing the qualities of the air element: intellect, thought process etc. Air signs are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.

ANGLES: The lines of the chart wheel which lie at 0 degrees (Ascendant), 90 degrees (I.C.), 180 degrees (Descendant), and 270 degrees (M.C.). These major points represent Cardinal Qualities.

AQUARIAN AGE: Beginning approximately at the new millennium, this is an 2000 year period considered to be influenced by or to encapsulate the qualities of Aquarius.

ARC: An angular measurement between two celestial planets or points. Any part of a circle, measured around its circumference.

ASCENDANT: Also known as the “Rising Sign” and often marked on a chart as AC or Asc. The ascendant marks the sign and degree rising on the eastern horizon at the moment of birth. The Ascendant represents the persona and image to the world.

ASCENSION: The vertical rising of a planet above the ecliptic, equator or horizon.

ASPECT: The angular distance, calculated in specific number of degrees, between two celestial points or planets. Aspects between planets indicate the nature of the relationship between planets and their themes.

B

BIRTH CHART: A diagram that depicts the exact positioning of the planets within the zodiac and in relation to one another at the moment of birth.

C

CARDINAL SIGNS: Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn. Cardinal signs are traditionally believed to represent an initiating energy or force.

COMPOSITE CHART: When two individual charts are merged to form a single chart. Composite charts show the nature of the relationship between two individuals.

CONFIGURATION: Aspect patterns that are composed of three or more planets.

CONJUNCTION: Two or more planets situated close to each other on a chart. A conjunction strengthens the energies of the planets involved.

CUSP: The dividing lines between houses. The midway point between the centers of two signs.

D

DECANATE: The division of each sign into three equal parts of 10 degrees each.

DECLINATION: The distance of a planet north or south of the celestial equator

DEGREE: 1/360 of the chart circle.

DEPRESSION See “Fall”

DESCENDANT: Also marked as the DC or Dsc on a chart. It is a point opposite the ascendant and marks the cusp of the 7th house. The descendant reveals how one tends to interact with others.

DETRIMENT When a planet is in the sign opposite the sign it rules (also called its domicile), it is said to be in detriment. This positioning is also sometimes called exile. Thus, its action is negative, misused, or nonexistent or weakened.

Mars detriment in Libra and Taurus (domicile in Aries and Scorpio)

Venus detriment in Scorpio and Aries (domicile in Taurus and Libra)

Mercury detriment in Sagittarius and Pisces (domicile in Gemini and Virgo)

The Sun detriment in Aquarius (domicile in Leo)

The Moon detriment in Capricorn (domicile in Cancer)

Saturn detriment in Cancer (domicile in Capricorn)

Jupiter detriment in Gemini (domicile in Sagittarius)

Pluto detriment in Taurus (domicile in Scorpio)

Uranus detriment in Leo (domicile in Aquarius)

Neptune detriment in Virgo (domicile in Pisces)

DOMICILE: Astrology traditionally considered the signs of the zodiac as the homes or dwelling places of the planets, and each planet was associated with a specific sign called its domicile. A planet is said to be the “ruler” or “ruling planet” of its domicile. See Detriment for Domicile positions.

E

EARTH SIGNS: Refer to signs belonging to the earth element: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn. These signs are generally associated with physical and material aspects of life and a practical mentality.

ELEMENTS: Four-way classification of the Zodiac into Fire, Earth, Air, Water. Signs of the same element share qualities of that element.

EPHEMERIS: Astrological almanac listing Zodiacal positions of the planets and other Astronomical data.

EQUATOR: The imaginary line drawn around the Earth, dividing it into the northern and southern hemispheres. When this line is extended into space, it is called the celestial equator.

EXALTATION: Each of the planets has its exaltation in one zodiac sign. These classifications are based on tradition. In modern, Western astrology, a planet is exalted when positioned in the house that is considered particularly favorable for it. Exaltations are as follows:

Mars is exalted in Capricorn (fall in Cancer)

Venus is exalted in Pisces (fall in Virgo)

Mercury is exalted in Virgo (fall in Pisces)

The Sun is exalted in Aries (fall in Libra)

The Moon is exalted in Taurus (fall in Scorpio)

Saturn is exalted in Libra (fall in Aries)

Jupiter is exalted in Cancer (fall in Capricorn)

Pluto is exalted in Aries or Pisces (fall in Libra or Virgo)

Uranus is exalted in Scorpio (fall in Taurus)

Neptune is exalted in Leo (fall in Aquarius)

According to Hellenistic sources, specific degrees are considered exact points of exaltation. They are as follows:

Saturn is exalted in the 21st degree of Libra.

Jupiter is exalted in the 15th degree of Cancer.

Mars is exalted in the 28th degree of Capricorn.

Venus is exalted in the 27th degree of Pisces.

Mercury is exalted in the 15th degree of Virgo.

The Sun is exalted in the 19th degree of Aries.

The Moon is exalted in the 3rd degree of Taurus.

EXILE: See “Detriment”

F

FALL: A planet’s fall is a sign of the zodiac in which it is thought to be particularly poorly-placed. The fall of each planet is located in the sign opposite to the sign of its exaltation. See entry for exaltation for each planet’s fall sign.

FEMININE SIGNS: The Earth and Water signs. Feminine signs are traditionally believed to embody passive and receptive energy.

FIRE SIGNS: The zodiac signs Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. Signs with the qualities of the fire element such as willfulness, energetic, etc.

FIXED SIGNS: The zodiac signs Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius. Fixed signs are traditionally believed to represent a concentrated energy.

GEOCENTRIC: The convention that the Earth, rather than the Sun is at the center of the Solar System. This view is commonly used for astrological chart calculations.

GRAND CROSS: Aspect pattern configuration in which four planets form mutual squares indicative of tension.

GRAND TRINE: Aspect pattern configuration in which three planets meet each other to form a triangle. This is a harmonious configuration.

H

HARD ASPECT: Aspects traditionally believed to create tension and/or friction, particularly squares, oppositions and quincunxes.

HOUSES: When the celestial sphere is depicted as a 360 degree circle and is divided into twelve sections called houses. They are numbered counterclockwise from the Ascendant (9:00 position). Each house represents certain experiential segments of life.

I

I.C.(Immun Coeli): One of the four major angles of a birth chart. It is the beginning of the fourth house and is commonly associated with one's roots, familial origins, and the subconscious foundations that were laid by one's mother and/or parents.

J

JUDICIAL ASTROLOGY: Relates to the forecasting of principal events that may befall a country and the public conditions that will emerge.

JUNO: An asteroid sometimes charted that many modern astrologers consider as significant. In Mythology queen of the gods (Greek goddess Hera- from Ancient Greek ὥρα (**hōra**, “time, season, year, timeliness”)

JUPITER: Planet symbolizing law, religion, authority, opportunity, the higher mind among other things. Modern ruling planet of Sagittarius. Exalted in Cancer. In mythology Jupiter (Greek Zeus) is king of the gods.

JYOTISH: Indian (Vedic) astrology based on the sidereal zodiac, as opposed to the tropical zodiac favored by contemporary Western Astrology.

K

KITE: An aspect pattern involving a Grand Trine with one of the planets making an opposition to a fourth planet, which in turn makes sextile aspects to the two others of the Grand Trine.

L

LATITUDE (Celestial): Measurement of distance of any planet or star north or south of the ecliptic. The Sun never has any latitude.

LATITUDE (Terrestrial): Degree of distance of any place north or south of the Earth's equator.

LEO: The fifth sign of the zodiac. Ruled by the Sun. The exaltation of Pluto. Leo's symbol is the lion.

LIBRA: The seventh sign of the zodiac. Its element is air, modality cardinal, ruled by Venus and has the exaltation of Saturn. Libra's symbol is the scales, or balance. Its themes include relationships, and the seat of moral sense among other topics.

LIGHTS: Refers to the Sun and Moon.

LILITH: There are three Liliths in astrology that can be placed on a chart: Black Moon Lilith, Asteroid Lilith and the lesser known Dark Moon Lilith. In mythology, Lilith was the first wife of Adam, formed like him from the earth, rather than from his rib, like Eve.

LONG ASCENSION: Signs of long ascension (Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius) take longer to ascend than others. Long and short ascension are reversed in the southern hemisphere.

LONGITUDE (CELESTIAL): Measurement along the ecliptic in terms of signs and degrees from the point of the vernal equinox (0° Aries).

LONGITUDE (TERRESTRIAL): Distance in degrees, minutes and seconds of any place east or west of Greenwich, England. Also measured in hours, minutes and seconds.

LUNA: The Moon.

LUNAR NODE: See Nodes

LUNATION: A lunar period, measured from one place in the zodiac until the Moon's return thereto. Lunation is also used to describe different aspects of the Moon to the Sun, thus accounting for its phases. The New Moon is also called a Lunation.

LUNATION CHART: A chart made for the moment the Moon conjoints the Sun

M

M.C.(Medium Coeli): One of four major points in the birth chart, positioned at the top of the chart, (or beginning of the tenth house which may or may not appear to be the top of the chart depending on the house system used). It represents public life and reputation.

MASCULINE SIGNS: Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius and Aquarius. Masculine signs are assertive and self-assured.

MERIDIAN: The Meridian at Greenwich divides longitude into east and west.

MIDPOINTS: The midpoint between two planets or angles and sometimes house cusps.

MULTI-PLANET SQUARE An aspect pattern that occurs when a group of planets cluster at one or both ends of a single square aspect.

MUTABLE SIGNS: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius and Pisces. Flexible and changeable nature.

N

NATAL: Birth. The natal chart is an astrology chart for the time of birth.

NODES: The north and south nodes of the moon are those points on the ecliptic where the moon crosses it in either a north or south direction.

O

OPPOSITION: An opposition is when planets are exactly opposite each other in the chart wheel. Oppositions are believed to indicate sources of tension.

ORB: The space in the chart wheel measured in degrees, between planets and points, by which an aspect may vary from exactness and still remain effective.

P

POLARITY: Opposite signs affect each other: each sign has a relationship with a sign that lies directly across it in the Zodiac.

PROGRESSION: A method of advancing the planets and points of a natal chart to a particular time after birth.

Q

QUALITIES: Cardinal, Fixed, Mutable. Also known as modalities, qualities indicate the particular way that the energy flows through that sign.

QUINCUNX (INCONJUNCT): An arc of 150 degrees. An uneasy aspect associated with karmic lessons.

QUINTILE: An aspect of 72 degrees. Considered an easy or soft aspect.

R

RETROGRADE: When a planet appears to be traveling backwards from Earth's perspective. The energy of a retrograde planet is said to be less assertive.

RULERSHIP: Different signs are "ruled" by different planets and their influences can be affected by this fact.

S

SATURN RETURN: a Saturn return is an astrological transit that occurs when the planet Saturn returns to the same place in the sky that it occupied at the moment of one's birth. While the planet may not reach the exact spot until the person is 29 or 30 years old, the influence of the Saturn return is considered to start in the person's late twenties, notably the age of 27.

SIDEREAL TIME: Time reckoned by the stars rather than by the Sun.

SOLSTICE: When the Sun reaches its maximum declination, or highest and lowest point in the sky. This occurs twice a year, at the beginning of summer and winter.

STELLIUM: A group of planets gathered in one area of the zodiac; sometimes a multiple conjunction.

SUN-SIGN ASTROLOGY: Popular in mainstream culture, particularly as seen in media Astrology columns, predictions for the day, month or year ahead on the basis of solar charts.

SYNASTRY: Comparing natal charts to find strengths and weaknesses in the area of compatibility.

T

TRANSIT: A planet's movement through a sign or house.

T-SQUARE: An aspect pattern made of a minimum of three planets and two square aspects, forming a visual "T".

U

URANIAN PLANETS: Planets postulated to lie beyond the orbit of Pluto.

W

WATER ELEMENT: One of the four astrological elements. A feminine element, it stands for emotion, feeling, matters to do with intuition and so on.

WATER SIGNS: Cancer (cardinal), Scorpio (fixed), Pisces (mutable)

Y

YOD: A powerful aspect.

YOUTH: The period of life from birth up to the first Saturn Return.

Z

ZODIAC: From the Greek 'zodiakos', meaning 'circle of animals'. A band in the heavens divided into twelve signs, each containing 30 degrees of longitude and traditionally representative of various human traits.

Suggestions for Further Reading

The following is a list of books and their descriptions (taken from Amazon.com) that can help you learn about astrology and your chart in more detail.

Astrology, Karma & Transformation: The Inner Dimensions of the Birth Chart by Stephen Arroyo

“This widely praised and internationally acclaimed classic on the spiritual aspects of astrology, a continual best-seller since publication, has now been translated into more than 20 languages, including Chinese, Turkish, Russian, Serbian, & Romanian. It has been enthusiastically reviewed by Library Journal, Isabel Hickey, CAO Times, and dozens of others. Often ranked as "my favorite astrology book" in surveys, it is now, as it has always been, a profound book far ahead of its time that speaks to readers personally in a life-changing way.”

Stephen Arroyo's Chart Interpretation Handbook: Guidelines for Understanding the Essentials of the Birth Chart by Stephen Arroyo and Jerilynn Marshall

“This book focuses on precise, in-depth language that shows the reader how to think astrologically in a way that never loses sight of the basic principles and reliable meanings being considered. Those trying to learn astrology, especially as a self-help method for understanding deeper needs and motivations, have long been frustrated by the lack of a quickreference handbook that penetrates to the essential truths that people immediately identify with. Now, this pioneering work fills the need for accessible, accurate guidelines that help one gain greater understanding of oneself and others. This widely-popular book shows how to combine key principles and interpretative phrases in a way that illuminates the

meanings of the planets, signs, houses and aspects emphasized in any birth chart.”

Astrology for Yourself: How to Understand And Interpret Your Own Birth Chart by Demetra George and Douglas Bloch

“Astrology for Yourself is designed to introduce you to the language, art, and science of astrology through a series of self-directed, programlearning exercises that will literally enable you to write your own chart interpretation. Aside from providing you a wealth of knowledge about your birth chart, Astrology for Yourself promises to promote personal growth and change your life.”

The Secret Language of Birthdays: Your Complete Personology Guide for Each Day of the Year by

Gary Goldschneider and Joost Elffers

“Combining astrology, numerology, and pure psychic intuition, *The Secret Language of Birthdays* is a wholly unique compilation that reveals one's strengths, weaknesses, and major issues while providing practical advice and spiritual guidance.

Many have suspected that your birthday affects your personality and how you relate to others. Nineteen years and over one million copies later, *The Secret Language of Birthdays* continues to fascinate readers by describing the characteristics associated with being born on a particular day. The 366 personality profiles are based on astrology, numerology, the tarot, and Gary Goldschneider's observations of more than 14,000 people. Your strengths, weaknesses, and major concerns will be illuminated while you are given practical advice and spiritual guidance. After you study your profile, it will be hard to resist examining those of family, friends, colleagues, and even celebrities.”

The Inner Planets: Building Blocks of Personal Reality

by Liz Greene

“The fourth volume to appear in the *Seminar in Psychological Astrology* series sponsored by the Centre for Psychological Astrology in

London. In this exciting book, the authors team up to discuss the value of Mercury, Venus, and Mars as they symbolize important aspects of personality. This book is about the process of understanding how the inner planets actually represent the individual, and how they directly color the energy of the Sun and the Moon.”

The Luminaries: The Psychology of the Sun and Moon in the Horoscope by Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas

“The third volume in the *Seminars in Psychological Astrology* series. The authors discuss the mythology and psychology of the Moon, and show its relevance as a signifier of relationships. In addition, the correspondence between the Sun and the development of consciousness is explored in depth. Includes a chapter on the lunation cycle.”

Knack Astrology: A Complete Illustrated Guide To The Zodiac by Molly Hall

“No other astrology book for beginners and intermediates is as easy to follow and visually stunning as Knack Astrology. With some 400 fullcolor photographs and illustrations that provide quick interpretive and reference tools, it begins with the cosmic clock, takes readers through the signs and houses of the Zodiac, and teaches the basics of reading and interpreting a birth chart. Chock-full of useful interpretations of signs, planets in signs, aspects, and synastry, it ensures that readers will come away with a sufficient understanding of astrological charts to begin creating their own.”

The Art of Chart Interpretation: A Step-by-Step Method for Analyzing, Synthesizing, and Understanding the Birth Chart

by Tracy Marks

“Learn how to determine and interpret the essential personality traits indicated by the birth chart. Interpreting a horoscope effectively and determining an individual’s primary qualities, strengths, and weaknesses requires skill in collecting and organizing astrological information. The Art of Chart Interpretation presents a practical system for amateur and professional astrologers confused by the many details of the birth chart. With clarity and insight, Tracy Marks provides a comprehensive method for collecting and evaluating astrological data. Her step-by-step

techniques and worksheets aid astrology students in developing their abilities to analyze and synthesize the many facets of the chart and to grasp the essential features of the personality.”

Planets in Aspect: Understanding Your Inner Dynamics
by Robert Pelletier

“Every major aspect (conjunction, sextile, square, trine, opposition, inconjunct) is covered, 314 aspects in all, 300 words per aspect, thumb indexed for easy reference. Planets in Aspect, the first volume published in Para Research's Planets series, is undoubtedly the most thorough in depth study of planetary aspects (including the inconjuncts) ever written. It's intelligent, yet easy to read. It's personal, yet objective. It's astrology that really works... and keeps on working for you.”

Planets in Houses: Experiencing Your Environment Planets
by Robert Pelletier

“What Robert Pelletier does in Planets in Houses has never been done before in the history of astrology. He discusses the meaning of each planet in each house as derived by counting from each of the other eleven houses, and he discusses the meaning of each house position in relation to the other houses with which it forms trines, sextiles, squares and oppositions, inconjuncts and semi-sextiles. In each chapter, wheel symbols graphically show the seventeen different house relationships delineated for each planet. Finally, Pelletier delineates the Sun-Moon polarities in terms of the wheel of houses: for each house position of the Sun, he interprets each of the twelve possible related house positions of the Moon. Each chapter presents the traditional meaning of the house and explains how the derivative house system applies to it.”

The Zodiac as The Universal Matrix by Dane Rudhyar

“The Zodiac as The Universal Matrix is not only one of Rudhyar's most accessible and easy-to-read books, it is also the only book in which Rudhyar provides comprehensive descriptions of each of the ten astrological planets in each of the twelve signs of the zodiac; and the descriptions themselves are more striking and psychological critical than what we came to expect from Rudhyar during the second half of the 20th

century. Written during 1942, it uses the birth charts of many world leaders of the time as examples.”

**The Twelve Houses: Exploring the Houses of the Horoscope
by Howard Sasportas**

“In *The Twelve Houses*, acclaimed astrologer Howard Sasportas explores in detail the experiences and situations associated with each of the houses, describing not only their tangible associations but also the more subtle meanings of each of the different spheres of life. A pioneering volume and a favorite among students and professionals alike, this is the recognized as the definitive work on the subject. This revised edition contains a new forward by Liz Greene and tribute essays from leading astrologers Darby Costello, Melanie Reinhart, Erin Sullivan and Laura Boomer Trent.”

**Aspects in Astrology: A Guide to Understanding Planetary
Relationships in the Horoscope by Sue Tompkins**

“Sue Tompkins, a fellow of the Faculty of Astrological Studies in London, shows how to interpret aspects when doing daily astrological readings. She uses the lives of real people to plot the aspects and offers examples of every possible planetary combination. Detailing the influence of oppositions, trines and elemental trines, and cardinal, mutable, and fixed crosses, Tompkins shows how aspects provide the energy in the chart that transforms the horoscope into something symbolizing an alive and vital human being. With *Aspects in Astrology*, Tompkins provides both the novice and the experienced astrologer the evidence and concrete methods needed to grasp the vast knowledge offered to us by our horoscope.”

