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INTRODUCTION

Your birth chart is all about you—your potential, talents, and life possibilities. It reflects what comes easily to you, what you can master with effort, and what probably would not be worth your time.

As you unravel your chart, you'll discover many traits you're already aware of and many you're not. Astrology can help you resolve life issues through self-understanding, identify the qualities you seek in an ideal mate, realize your career and financial potential, develop your communication skills, and discover your inner strength. Some of what you learn will amuse you, some will prompt further in-depth learning, and some will motivate and inspire you to become the very best you can be.

You can do the same for your friends, family, colleagues, children, parents, siblings, love interests, partner, and all the other people in your life.

Don't be surprised if this book triggers your thirst for more astrology. Many astrologers got their start by doing just what you're about to do. By reading this book, you can master the basics of astrology and be well on your way to learning how to read a birth chart just like professional astrologers do.

As is typical for those who share my Aquarius Sun sign, the universe has carried me in many diverse directions and always for reasons that were not initially evident. Aquarians seem to attract unusual and unexpected opportunities, almost as if the universe is carving out a new path for them to follow. And so it was with me and astrology.

Introduction

Of course, my journey began when the astrological timing was right, although I didn't learn that until some years later. That undoubtedly will be the case with you, too, as you begin your astrological journey.

Many years ago I was visiting a friend, Joan Kopf, in Nebraska. By chance—or really not, if you recognize the power of the universe—she made a few comments about astrology that for some reason caught my interest. Joan then offered that her mother was the family astrologer and had been interested in the subject for years, reading the family's charts. What was this all about? I wondered. The next thing I knew, we were off to visit her mother.

Joan's mother gave me a brief introduction to astrology and showed me some books. I was hooked within an hour of our arrival.

Back home, I immediately purchased the beginner's book she had recommended to get started. I opened it at 8:00 one Saturday morning and by 10:00 that night I was still at it. Now I was really hooked! That day I managed to calculate my birth chart—by hand, using addition, subtraction, and the information in the book. (Although the do-it-yourself method wasn't terribly difficult, I soon graduated to my first astrological computer calculation program.) I read all about my Sun, Moon, and rising signs and all the other planets in my chart, as well as houses and aspects. I was intrigued. How could planets zillions of miles away in outer space say so much about me?

That's a question that has perplexed astrologers for four thousand years. Astrology works, but no one knows how. People sometimes ask me if I really believe in "that stuff." And they always seem to be shocked when I reply in the

affirmative, adding that I've used it to my advantage on many occasions and have done the same for hundreds of clients. Now, really, what would they expect an astrologer to say? I sometimes follow up by asking for the person's month and date of birth and then offer a few insights into what has recently occurred or is currently going on in his or her life. The person is always amazed, and I figure I've done a little something to enlighten another individual about the power of astrology.

Back to my personal adventure. I read every astrology book and magazine I could find for the next six months or so, and then one day discovered that the headquarters of the American Federation of Astrologers is in Arizona, where I live. This organization has a library filled with books and more books—a gold mine! I spent an entire afternoon there, totally in awe of all that knowledge in one place. I went home with a hefty stack of books.

By chance (there's that Aquarius word again), Linda Miller, an employee there, asked if I would be interested in having a list of certified astrologers who were also teachers. Certified? Teachers? That, too, was an eye opener and just what I needed.

Again, by chance, I hit the jackpot with the first one I called, Aurora Isaac. She said she had a class beginning within a few weeks and asked if I would be interested. You bet! Three months later, at the end of the class, I was reading charts! Her practical experience and outstanding teaching skills helped me pull together all that I'd read and learned on my own.

Then I begged Aurora to teach me predictive astrology. She agreed, much to my delight. Secret revealed: once I discovered that astrology

could be used to forecast trends and to identify the best timing for events, such as when to apply for a job, that knowledge further fueled my interest and my studies. This is more Aquarius, a sign known to live in the future and to have an insatiable curiosity about what's going to happen and when.

Aurora made an important point that I'll never forget. She emphasized the importance of learning natal astrology (birth chart astrology) before learning forecasting. And she was so right. Without that foundation, it's next to impossible to have any success with predictive astrology or any one of the many other branches, or specialties, of astrology. After all, if your birth chart doesn't indicate musical talent, for example, then the very best current astro-

logical conditions won't land you a spot on a Broadway stage.

So you've begun your astrological journey in the right place and with the right person—you! Start with your birth chart. You know yourself best, so you'll quickly be able to see how astrology works in real life. Even with a little knowledge, you'll begin to learn why you react the way you do in certain situations and enjoy the ego boost that comes from knowing that your strengths and talents are even greater than you ever imagined.

It isn't by chance that you picked up this book. Enjoy your journey just for the fun of it, to learn more about yourself and the people around you, or even to someday become an astrologer!



CHAPTER ONE



THE BASICS OF ASTROLOGY

You've probably read your horoscope online, in newspapers or magazines, or in publications that focus on the year ahead. These forecasts are based on your Sun sign, which is easily determined by your birth month and day. You might even know some of the characteristics associated with your Sun sign and those of family and friends. Sun sign descriptions are amazingly accurate, even though there's no rational explanation why astrology should work. After all, the Sun, Moon, and planets are millions of miles away from Earth. How can a body in outer space realistically affect a person on Earth?

A Sun sign is just a Sun sign. It's important, yes, because it's the essence of you. It's your ego at work. But from an astrological viewpoint, there's so much more that defines you—your character, talents, strengths, and challenges.

The ancient Babylonians were as perplexed by this astrological phenomenon as we are today. In the four thousand or so years since they invented astrology, no one has discovered an explanation for why it works. But work it does.

Around the sixteenth century BC, the Babylonians began to observe that events on Earth could be correlated to celestial phenomena. Their brand of astrology is what is today called *mundane astrology*, or the astrology of countries, wars, coups, economic conditions, and weather, to name a few. It eventually evolved into what is now known as *electional astrology*, the branch in which the planetary positions are used to select a favorable time to launch an event, such as a wedding, business opening, meeting, or job application. Babylonian astrologers used the 360° circle (a zodiac of twelve signs similar to what is used today) and also developed *ephemerides* (tables of astrological data) that listed the

planetary positions and eclipses. At that point in time, no connection had been made between astrology and the individual.

It wasn't until more than a thousand years later, sometime between the seventh and fourth centuries BC, that the Babylonians developed the concept of natal astrology. The natal horoscopes of the time, which probably were limited to royalty and wealthy people, were inscribed on cuneiform tablets and listed the planetary positions along with comments referring to wealth potential, longevity, family, and status. The natal horoscope was seen as a predictor of the person's life, much as it is today, the difference being that twenty-first-century astrologers—and people—recognize that everyone has free will; the Babylonians considered the chart fateful.

The Babylonian knowledge was passed to the Persians, Egyptians, and Indians. It was readily adopted in India, where today it is considered not only valid but necessary to a successful life.

Great advances in astrology were made in Alexandria, Egypt, in the second and third centuries AD, partly as a result of King Ptolemy I Soter, who ordered the construction of a great library that attracted scholars. During this period, the following concepts were developed: the Ascendant (rising sign) and Midheaven, astrological houses, planetary rulers, aspects, and predictive techniques. Astrology was considered a science and spread to western Europe, where educated people knew Greek and Latin.

Although astrology died out in western Europe with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, it survived somewhat in the Eastern Roman Empire. A general revival of astrology began around 1000 AD and continued for the next five hundred years. Like all else, astrology

benefited from the invention of the printing press, which made information more readily available to the populace. Astrology was taught in colleges and universities and was a required subject for medical students.

Astrology then experienced another decline, which began in the late seventeenth century and lasted about two hundred years. It was still popular in England, however, because the annual astrological almanacs that had been printed since the sixteenth century continued to be in demand by the public. Renewed interest in astrology developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it wasn't until the 1930s that first weekly and then daily horoscopes began to appear in newspapers. The first such column appeared in the London *Sunday Express*.

The twentieth century saw refinements in astrological technique and an emphasis on psychological astrology versus event-oriented astrology. But the basics remain the same today as those developed by the earliest astrologers, and there is a growing interest in older astrological literature as more of these works are translated and made available.

WHY STUDY ASTROLOGY?

Metaphysics encompasses a wide range of subjects and areas, most of which are focused solely on divination, or predicting the future. What makes astrology different from the tarot, I Ching, runes, and other forecasting methods is that it is all-encompassing. You can use astrology not only to forecast events but also to gain great insights into your personality. You may think you know yourself better than anyone else walking the planet; that's probably true. But has

someone ever commented on a personality trait that you were unaware of, at least on a conscious level? Something that you only then realized was a strength—or a detriment—because it is such a natural part of your personality? Something that made you realize you'd just discovered another whole side of yourself? This is part of the natural growth process.

Have you ever asked yourself why you react the way you do in certain situations? Why you repeat negative behaviors even though you know better? Have you ever knocked yourself out trying to do something, when your energy would have been better directed elsewhere? This, too, is part of the natural growth process. It is how we evolve as humans.

Now suppose you had all this information sooner rather than later. You'd be able to use it to your advantage for many more years, to make the most of your potential and in essence speed up that growth process. After all, we don't have all that many years in a lifetime to do everything we want to do.

This is one fabulous reason to study astrology: self-knowledge is the ultimate form of personal empowerment.

You may have heard people say that astrology is difficult, that it requires "all that math." Yes and no.

The math of astrology is nothing more than simple addition and subtraction using preset formulas. But in today's world you don't ever have to pick up a pencil. There are numerous online sites where you can get a computer-calculated birth chart in seconds (see appendix III), or you can take advantage of the free birth chart offer at the back of this book. Later, when you're more advanced in your studies and want

to become a certified astrologer, you can learn the math in preparation for taking an exam. Or, if you're not at all intimidated by math or just want to challenge yourself, you might want to learn this nuts-and-bolts side of astrology now. The point is that it's no longer necessary to first learn the calculations. You can get started right now!

Now, the question about difficulty. Is astrology difficult or isn't it? Yes, it is, or can be, but no, it's not.

Have you ever done anything in your life that was difficult at first but then came easily, such as playing a musical instrument or sport, speaking in public, or learning a language? Chances are, you have. And each came with a learning curve that began with initial excitement and quickly acquired skills, followed by the middle ground that required more study or practice to jump the hurdle to a comfort zone of confidence. Learning astrology is no different than learning anything else. It requires some patience and a lot of practice.

But how difficult is it, really, to read a birth chart? To glean all the insightful information about you and your personality? Not as hard as you might think. It's a matter of learning what each factor in the birth chart symbolizes and then blending the information until you have a full picture. Although that might seem like an oversimplified answer, consider this example using astrological keywords, which is the way every future astrologer learns to interpret a chart: Sun (ego) in Capricorn (ambitious) in the personal financial sector (second house) conjunct (next to) Jupiter (expansion) adds up to an individual whose self-esteem is linked to achievement and high earnings but who also spends freely on status symbols. It's that simple!

There are a few important tips I can give you to speed up the learning process (you'll learn the terminology mentioned below as you read this book):

1. Learn, and practice writing, the glyphs (symbols) for the planets, signs, and aspects. The inside back cover of this book has a handy list of astrological glyphs for your reference.
2. Learn the essential keywords for each sign, angle, planet, house, and aspect.
3. Learn the rulership relationships of the signs, planets, and houses, and the essential keywords for each.
4. Use the charts of people you know well—friends and family. This will help you see how the various factors manifest in real life.
5. When you study the chart, focus on a single planet or angle at a time and then move on to the next and the next until you've studied them all. Make notes and sentences using the keywords (as in the previous example) as you do this.
6. Talk with the person whose chart you've studied and explain what you've learned. Ask for feedback and listen closely to what you hear in order to determine what was correct or incorrect in your assessment.

Before long, you'll be reading a chart just like an astrologer!

WHAT YOUR BIRTH CHART REVEALS

As the ancient Babylonians observed, astrology is the correlation of celestial events to life on Earth. The planets do not cause events to happen on Earth or in individual lives; rather, they reflect the events that occur on Earth and in individual lives. As above, so below.

Life may appear to be random or even fateful, but it's not. Have you ever made a decision you later regretted? Of course you have. Everyone has. But what if you could almost always make the right decision about major life events, such as finances, relationships, and career? Astrology has the potential to help you do just that.

You can glean a phenomenal amount of information from a birth chart. In fact, you will be astounded once you discover just how much you can learn. To give you an example, a friend of mine asked me to look at the chart of her daughter's fiancé. My friend had some nagging doubts about the relationship and wondered if I could discover the reason why. (She did this with her daughter's knowledge.) I looked at the fiancé's chart, mentioned several things, and then asked about the man's financial attitudes. The chart indicated that he was a high roller, a big spender who had the potential for serious financial problems. My friend said that, to her knowledge, this had never been an issue, and her daughter confirmed that, adding that her fiancé was somewhat secretive about money matters. I suggested that she ask to see the man's credit report before they proceeded with the wedding plans. It was no surprise to me that he refused, and that she broke off the relationship rather than risk her excellent credit rating.

My friend's daughter later learned that her former fiancé did indeed have a history of serious financial problems. Needless to say, they were and are extremely grateful.

Life is about making choices. In this case, my friend's daughter used the power of astrology to make an informed major life decision that undoubtedly saved her from years of regret. This is what you will be able to do in almost any situation, for yourself, your friends, your family members, and possibly even clients.

I've seen a look of amazement on the faces of countless clients. Most people who know little or nothing about astrology don't realize just how much an astrologer can learn about them from their birth chart. This is one reason that many people in the know are reluctant to give their birth information to just anyone. Inevitably, some of these clients, first through body language and then through words (or the lack thereof), clam up when they realize that their personality, attitudes, and issues are as visible to an astrologer as are their talents and skills. Those who are open to the information use this powerful tool of self-awareness to learn about (or perhaps become fully aware of) their detrimental patterns of behavior and how they can reverse them. Astrology can be used not only to identify what holds you back but also to learn how to change these things to improve every facet of your life.

Astrology is a symbolic language. Each planet and every other factor in a birth chart represents certain traits, characteristics, people, talents, and areas of life. Everything that involves your life on Earth is represented in your horoscope.

A birth chart is also a map. Your birth chart is a map of your life and your potential as represented by the planetary positions at the exact time, date, and place of your birth. In it are eight planets and the Sun and Moon, along with other factors that provide much more insight into your personality. (Astrologers refer to the Sun and Moon as planets for ease in terminology and thus use a group of ten planets, not eight.)

Your birth chart is unique to you and thus reflects you, the individual. You share certain personality traits with others born with the same Sun sign, but the Sun is only one of ten planets and the many other factors that go into a birth chart. You're a person of many facets, likes and dislikes, and strengths and weaknesses. By studying your birth chart, you can identify the areas in which you naturally excel, those that are challenging, and everything in between. Astrology has the potential to teach you more about yourself than any other field of study. And when you know yourself well, you can make the most of the map of life that is your birth chart.

It's well recognized that environment helps shape personality and that people are a complex mix of innate talents and skills, experience, and family influences. Your birth chart is a reflection of all these things. If you study the birth charts of your family members, you will see many similarities to yours. These common factors symbolize not only your similar childhood experiences but also the genetic traits you've inherited from your parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and so on. These similarities will add to your depth of understanding about your own personality because you'll immediately identify

behavior patterns as well as skills and talents that you have in common with the rest of your family and be better able to make the most of them in your own life. You thus will have an advantage, a head start, in not repeating the mistakes of your elders, whether negative traits or failure to fulfill potential in a certain area. This is another good reason to study astrology.

Although your birth chart reveals everything in your life, there are certain main areas of interest for most people: relationships, career, money, family, and health. As you become more proficient at astrology, you can explore the depths of your chart for specifics such as your relationships with in-laws, bosses, and coworkers; your partner's spending habits and career potential; your life lessons; your people skills and communication style; and where you're lucky, because everyone is lucky in some way just as everyone has challenges.

With more than six billion people on Earth, relationships are a major focus. We all have relationships with romantic partners, business partners, children, parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, store clerks, colleagues, and supervisors, yet the first relationship that comes to mind is usually a romantic partnership. Some fortunate people experience complete happiness, a union in which a harsh word is never spoken. Most partnerships go through ups and downs as each person's needs and interests change. Some people are totally unsuited for each other, as they discover too late.

Relationships are a good example of how astrology works and what you can learn from your birth chart. There are, for example, some planetary configurations that indicate divorce, disappointment, or deception. Does this mean

that everyone who has one of these configurations will experience a negative outcome? Absolutely not! Awareness and learning more about how you react in various situations can go a long way toward reversing what appears (to others who don't have your knowledge of astrology) to be fated. Possibly more important is knowing how to direct the specific energy represented into constructive activities that will strengthen the relationship. That's what astrology can do for you and your relationships.

A woman I know who had a series of failed relationships, each ending with the potential partner moving on, learned through astrology that she was the common denominator, and not men in general, as she had come to believe. She discovered that she had a fear of commitment and found it difficult to express her emotions. After examining her specific reactions, which were reflected in her birth chart, she was able to trace them back to her childhood and her parental relationships. Her next serious relationship led to a successful marriage because she gained the self-knowledge she needed and learned to express herself more fully and easily.

Another woman I know, however, continues to blame every failed romantic and business relationship on men, several of whom have left her in a tight financial spot. She refuses to accept that it's her overly trusting attitude toward people in general and especially men that attracts those she should steer clear of, and this will continue to happen until she accepts that fact. We tend to attract the people and situations we need to deal with during our lifetimes in order to grow and to learn life lessons. But why invite negative influences into our lives one more time or even at all? Astrology makes it possible to escape our

self-defeating behavior, as well as the potential for it in situations yet to be encountered.

If you're dissatisfied with your career choice or unable to find your niche, astrology can help you identify your major strengths and talents, a specific career field, and your ideal working conditions. People who are perpetual job hoppers or have difficulty hanging on to a job can learn the reasons for this through their birth chart and take action to change the behavior that prompts it.

I know a man who held a dozen jobs in half as many years before finally realizing, through the help of his birth chart, that he had issues with women largely as a result of his negative relationship with his mother. In every one of those jobs he had a female boss whom he considered to be incompetent, just as he viewed his mother. Once he realized this, he was able to view his next female boss more objectively and has had a successful, long-term relationship with her and the company.

Money. For many people this is the single most stressful area of life. Money represents security and freedom. Almost everyone wants more money, and many people want more just to spend more. Your chart reflects your earning power, spending and saving habits, risk tolerance, inheritance potential, and attitude about debt. By combining this information with common sense and professional advice, you can maximize your financial potential.

Consider the example of a couple who earn a six-figure income. Their debt far exceeds their income, and every time money is tight they refinance their mortgage to pay down their credit cards and other consumer debt. They've even tried credit counseling, yet each time they run up new debt, buying new vehicles and max-

ing out their credit cards. As their birth charts reveal, they're motivated by two factors: a desire for status and for material proof of their success. An astrologer explained this to them, but they chose not to change, instead putting their faith in the false belief that their habits will never catch up with them. Their birth charts say that sooner or later they will. Then, if my experience with some clients holds true, they'll consult an astrologer, not to learn where they went wrong but instead to find a magic fix for their dilemma. They will be sorely disappointed to learn—if they truly are ready to hear the information—that the only magic fix is to change their financial attitudes.

Astrology gives you information, but it's up to you to use this knowledge and put it to work to improve your life.

THE LANGUAGE OF ASTROLOGY

Like any other field of study, astrology has its own language. With a little practice, you can learn the language fairly quickly and begin to interpret your chart and those of friends and relatives. A natal chart has four essential components—the same ones astrologers have used for centuries. They are:

- twelve signs of the zodiac
- ten planets
- twelve houses
- aspects

I will explain these four elements in detail in subsequent chapters of this book. My goal here

is to give you a basic overview so you can begin to understand the components of a birth chart.

Signs

There are twelve signs in the zodiac (Aries through Pisces), which are also the names of the constellations. Each sign is 30 degrees of a perfect 360° circle. Each single degree of the 30° in a sign is further divided into 60 minutes (60'), which are each again divided into 60 seconds (60"). Most astrologers use only degrees and minutes. Each sign is represented by a glyph. Once you learn these glyphs, you can use them instead of writing out the full name of the sign. Refer to the inside back cover of this book for a list of astrological glyphs.

One sign = 30 degrees

One degree = 60 minutes

One minute = 60 seconds

Figure 1 is an illustration of what is called the *natural chart*. It shows the zodiac signs, along with their glyphs, in order, beginning with Aries at the left center point and continuing around counterclockwise to Pisces. This is the natural order of the zodiac.

Notice that the directions are reversed. Unlike the usual map orientation, south is above, north below, east to the left, and west to the right. There is a simple explanation for this: the Sun rises in the east and sets in the west. So the birth chart is a depiction of the path of the Sun as it appears from Earth, which is the center point of the chart.

Notice also that the clock times correspond to the Sun's position relative to Earth. The Sun rises in the east at sunrise (approximately 6:00

a.m.), reaches its highest point at noon, sets in the west (approximately 6:00 p.m.), and reaches its lowest point at midnight. So if, for example, you were born at noon, then the Sun would be at the top of your chart, when the Sun is at its highest point. If you were born at 9:00 p.m., then the Sun would be halfway between west (6:00 p.m.) and north (midnight), which is northwest by direction.

The signs and their glyphs are:

Sign	Glyph
Aries	♈
Taurus	♉
Gemini	♊
Cancer	♋
Leo	♌
Virgo	♍
Libra	♎
Scorpio	♏
Sagittarius	♐
Capricorn	♑
Aquarius	♒
Pisces	♓

The annual equinox or solstice that signals the start of each season coincides with the Sun's entrance into one of four signs: Aries (spring equinox), Cancer (summer solstice), Libra (autumnal equinox), and Capricorn (winter solstice).

The zodiac used by most Western astrologers is called the *tropical zodiac*. It is an accurate depiction of the constellations and the signs associated with them as they were viewed by the Babylonians rather than by present-day astronomers. Since ancient times, the constellations have precessed, or moved backward, in the heavens. Astrologers who equate the signs with the cur-

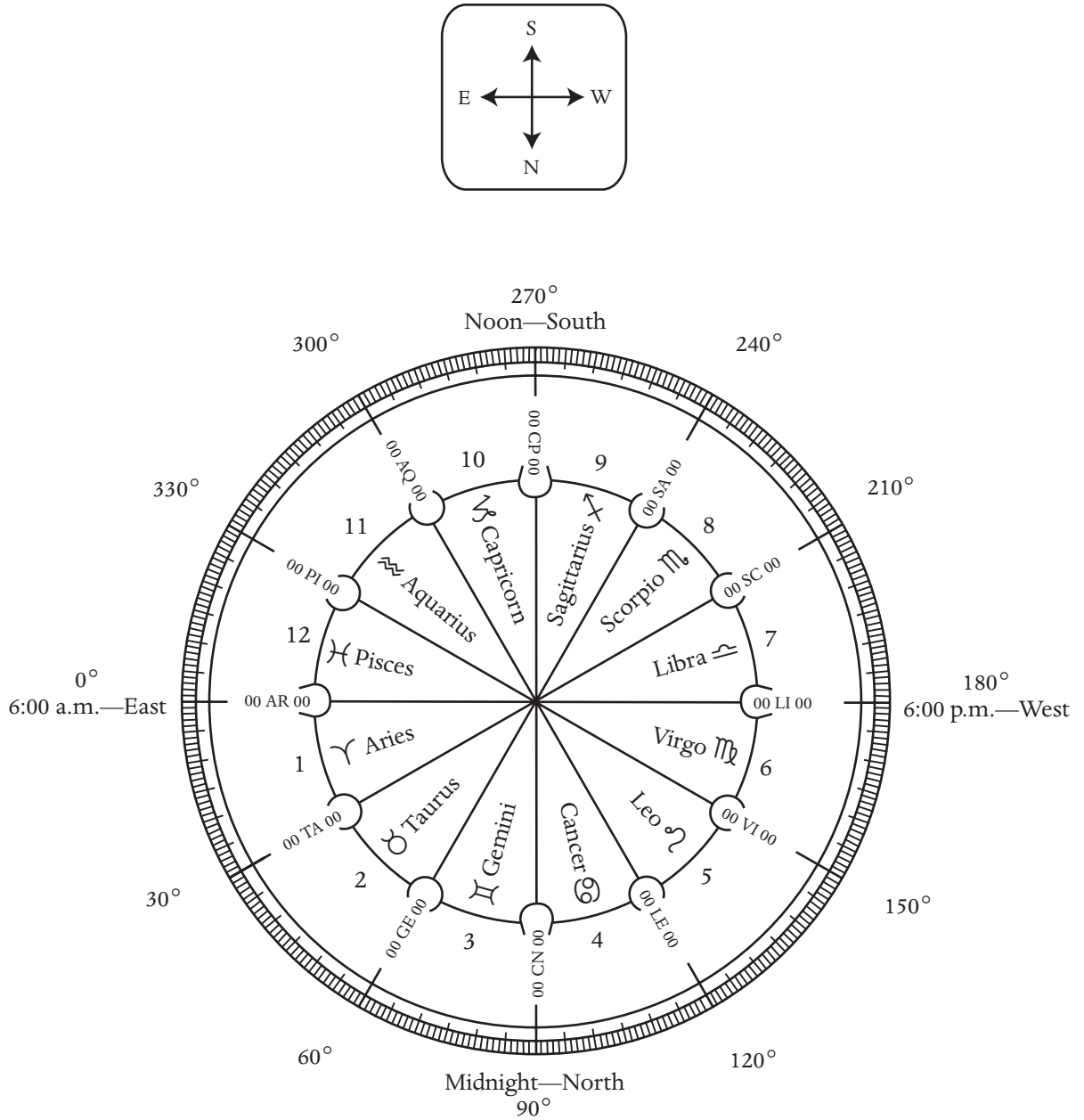


Figure 1. The Natural Chart

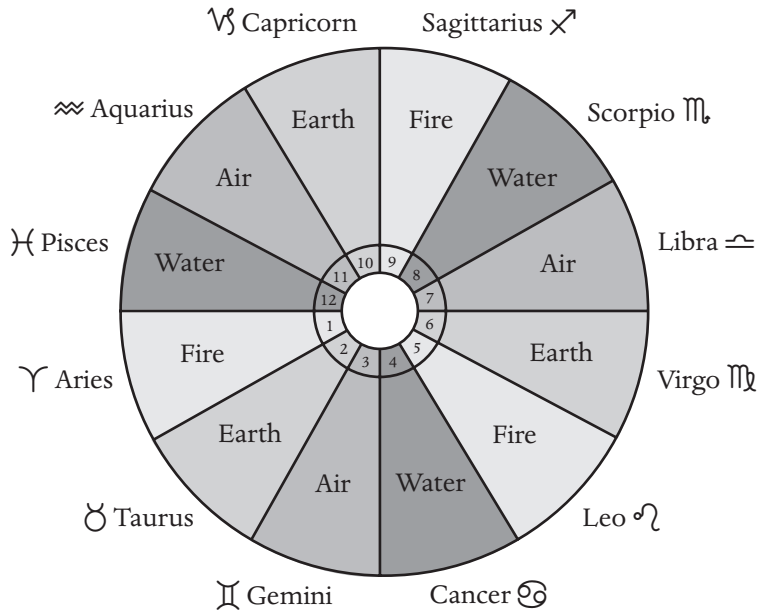


Figure 2. The Elements: Fire, Earth, Air, and Water

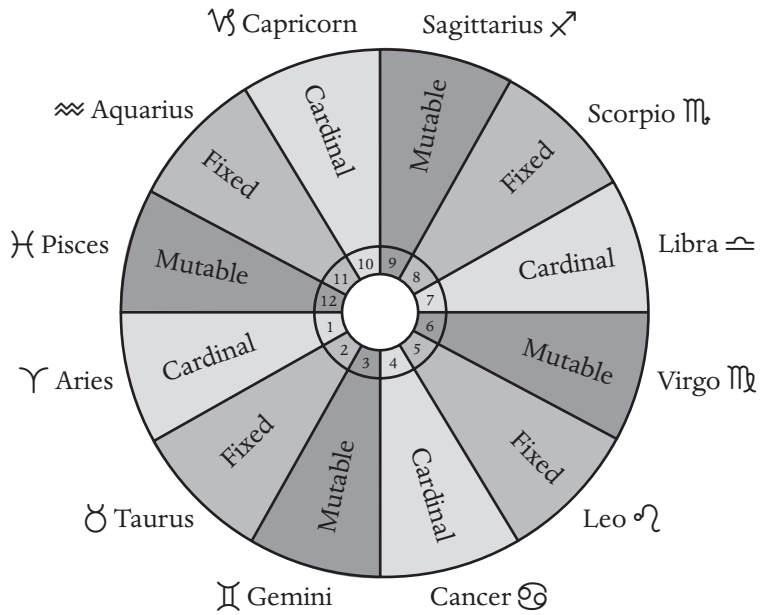


Figure 3. The Qualities: Cardinal, Fixed, and Mutable

rent positions of the constellations practice *sidereal astrology*, which is used extensively in India.

Each sign is associated with certain characteristics that describe personality traits. People born under the same Sun sign share these traits to a greater or lesser degree depending on other influences in the birth chart, but the basic nature of each sign is easily described through its *element* and *quality*.

The four elements are fire, earth, air, and water (figure 2). The three qualities are cardinal, fixed, and mutable (figure 3). Each sign falls into one element and one quality. You can learn a lot about your basic nature just by observing the dominant elements and qualities in your chart. Briefly, here are the signs and their elements/qualities and characteristics (you'll learn more about the signs in chapter 2):

Fire signs: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius—are outgoing and action-oriented.

Earth signs: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn—are practical and realistic.

Air signs: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius—are intellectual and people-oriented.

Water signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces—are emotional and intuitive.

Cardinal signs: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn—are self-starters.

Fixed signs: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius—are determined.

Mutable signs: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces—are easygoing.

Each of these signs is represented somewhere in your chart, and you express each of them in one way or another, to a greater or lesser degree. For example, a certain sign placement in your

chart might indicate that you excel when you have a high level of job autonomy or that you're happiest in a team environment; this is valuable information in a job search. The point is that you experience every sign, not just your Sun sign, and some signs more than others.

Planets

Each of the ten planets in your birth chart is in a sign, as is your Sun. So you have a Moon sign, a Venus sign, a Mercury sign, and so on. Although the Sun and Moon are commonly called planets, you'll also see them referred to as "luminaries" or the "Lights," because the Sun provides light during daylight hours and the Moon illuminates the night. These terms were first used by ancient astrologers.

A planet's characteristics and energy are modified and expressed according to its sign. For example, Mercury is associated with all forms of communication, so your communication style thus is influenced by the sign that your Mercury is in. This is one reason that one person may be a dynamic speaker (Mercury in Leo) while another has the ability to instantly put other people at ease (Mercury in Libra).

Each of the planets is associated with one or two signs. This is called *rulership*. Astrologers say, for example, that Jupiter "rules" Sagittarius, and Mars "rules" Aries. A planet and the sign it rules are very compatible, and the meanings of both are similar. Because there are twelve signs but only ten planets, Mercury and Venus each rule two signs.

Before the outer planets (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto) were discovered, astrologers used what are now called *traditional rulers* for three of the signs: Mars for Scorpio (modern ruler,

Planet	Rules	Planetary Keywords
Sun ☉	Leo ♌	Ego, individuality, confidence
Moon ☾	Cancer ♋	Emotions, habits
Mercury ☿	Gemini ♊, Virgo ♍	Communication, thought process
Venus ♀	Taurus ♉, Libra ♎	Love, money, powers of attraction
Mars ♂	Aries ♈	Energy, initiative, temper
Jupiter ♃	Sagittarius ♏	Expansion, good fortune
Saturn ♄	Capricorn ♐	Restriction, responsibility, life lessons
Uranus ♅	Aquarius ♒	Independence, eccentricity
Neptune ♆	Pisces ♓	Vision, creativity, illusion
Pluto ♇	Scorpio ♏	Transformation, major change

Chart 1. Planetary Rulers and Keywords

Pluto), Saturn for Uranus (modern ruler, Uranus), and Jupiter for Pisces (modern ruler, Jupiter). Some astrologers use both the traditional and modern rulers when reading charts today. I've found the traditional rulers to be useful, just as ancient astrologers did, so give them a try. To simplify things, this book uses the modern rulers for Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

The planets (in astrological order), their glyphs, the sign(s) they rule, and their basic meanings are shown in chart 1.

Retrograde and Direct Motion

All of the planets except the Sun and Moon periodically travel in *retrograde*, or backward, motion. They don't actually back up, but appear to do so when viewed from Earth; this is an astronomical phenomenon. A planet travels forward in direct motion, appears to stop—which is called its *stationary* point or *station*—and then resumes motion, moving backward to retrace its steps. When the retrograde period is completed, the

planet again stops, or stations, and then resumes forward motion.

Retrograde motion is relative motion. If you're on a slow-moving train and a faster, parallel train moves forward and passes you, you feel like you're moving backward. The same sensation can occur if you're in a stopped car and a car in the next lane suddenly moves forward; your reaction is to step on the brake.

Almost everyone is born when at least one planet is retrograde, and most people have several retrograde planets in their birth chart. Sometimes as many as half the planets in a chart are retrograde. You can identify the retrograde planets in your chart by looking for a retrograde glyph (♁) next to each planet.

Birth chart planets that are stationary are more powerful and usually have strong significance in the individual's life because the energy is highly concentrated. The energy of a retrograde planet is more internalized, lacking some of its natural outward expression. This can be helpful and productive or not, depending on

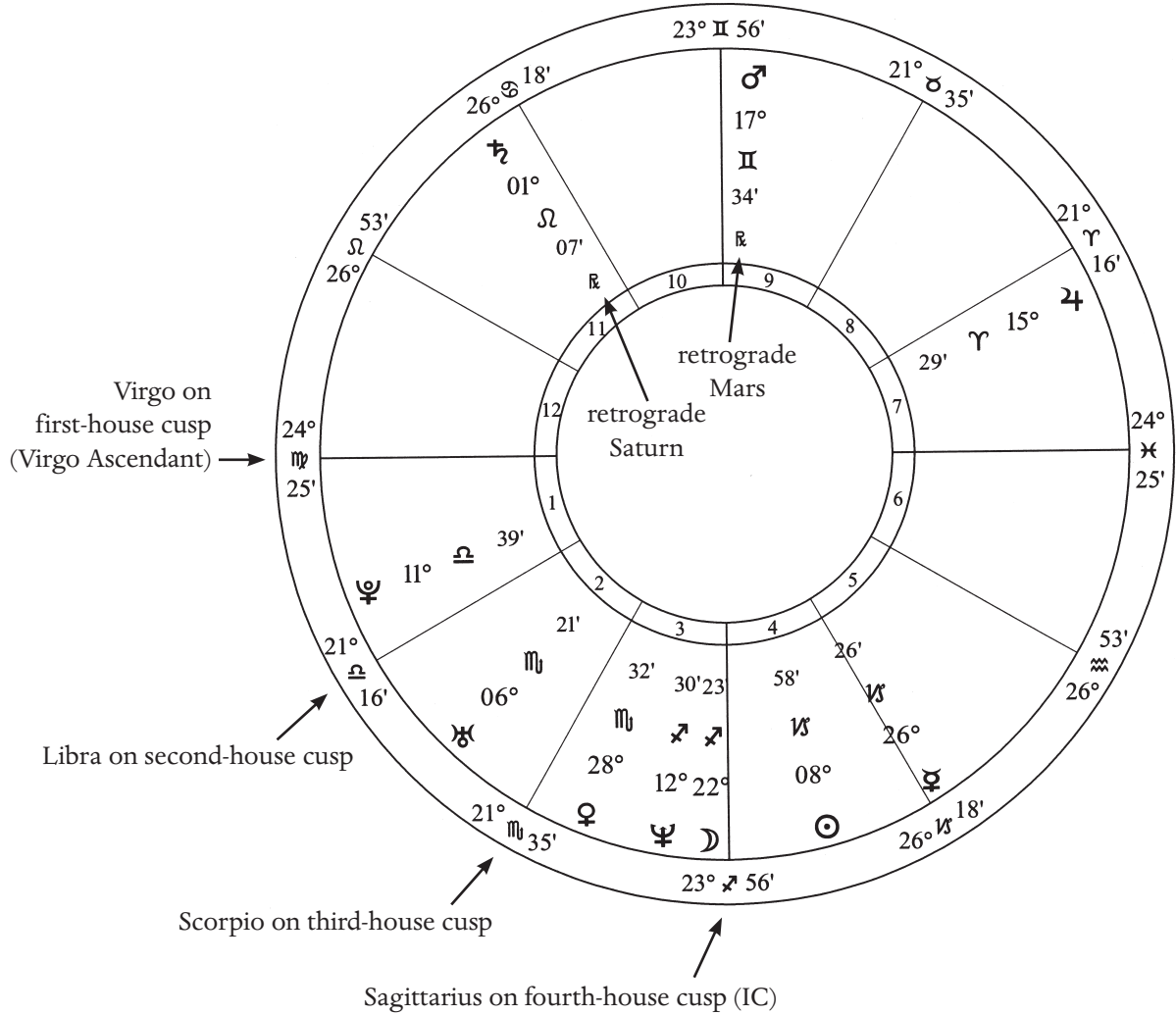


Figure 4. Retrograde Planets and House Cusps in Tiger Woods's Chart
 December 30, 1975 / 10:50 p.m. PST / Long Beach, CA
 Placidus Houses

how the individual handles and focuses the planetary energy.

Notice in Tiger Woods’s chart (figure 4) that only two planets—Mars and Saturn—are retrograde, as indicated by the \Re symbol near the glyphs for $\♂$ (Mars) and $\♄$ (Saturn). It is highly unusual to see only two retrograde planets in a birth chart because Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto are retrograde as much as half of each year, and Saturn for four to five months. With only two planets retrograde, Woods has well-above-average drive, determination, and initiative. But this is also a good example of the potential power of retrograde planets and why they’re not necessarily weak or weaker than direct planets.

Mars is the premier action planet. So if we assume that direct planets are stronger than weaker ones, then Woods should be someone who has reduced initiative and drive. Nothing could be further from the truth. He instead uses

the retrograde (internalized) Mars (action) in Gemini (thought process) for focused concentration. Any golfer will tell you that the game is far more mental than physical and that success is limited without the mental focus. Saturn, also retrograde, is associated with career and ambition. With the energy of this planet focused inward and in Leo, the sign of the ego, Woods has a strong ego investment in achieving his ambitions and career success.

So how do you know if a retrograde planet is an advantage or disadvantage? To be honest, you don’t, or at least not for sure. Much depends on other factors in the birth chart (you’ll learn more about these later in this book), which can increase the probability that the retrograde planet(s) will work in the individual’s favor, as well as on the choices made by the person. So if you were counseling Tiger Woods and you did not already know that he is one of the all-time

<i>House</i>	<i>Natural Sign</i>	<i>Planetary Ruler</i>	<i>Areas of Life Ruled by House</i>
First	Aries $\♈$	Mars $\♂$	Self, personality
Second	Taurus $\♉$	Venus $\♀$	Personal finances, possessions
Third	Gemini $\♊$	Mercury $\♃$	Communication, learning style
Fourth	Cancer $\♋$	Moon $\♁$	Home, family
Fifth	Leo $\♌$	Sun $\♁$	Children, sports, creativity
Sixth	Virgo $\♍$	Mercury $\♃$	Work environment, health
Seventh	Libra $\♎$	Venus $\♀$	Partnerships, close relationships
Eighth	Scorpio $\♏$	Pluto $\♇$	Joint resources, other people’s money
Ninth	Sagittarius $\♐$	Jupiter $\♃$	Higher education, travel
Tenth	Capricorn $\♑$	Saturn $\♄$	Career, status
Eleventh	Aquarius $\♒$	Uranus $\♅$	Friends, group associations
Twelfth	Pisces $\♓$	Neptune $\♆$	Subconscious, spirituality

Chart 2. The Houses: Signs and Rulerships

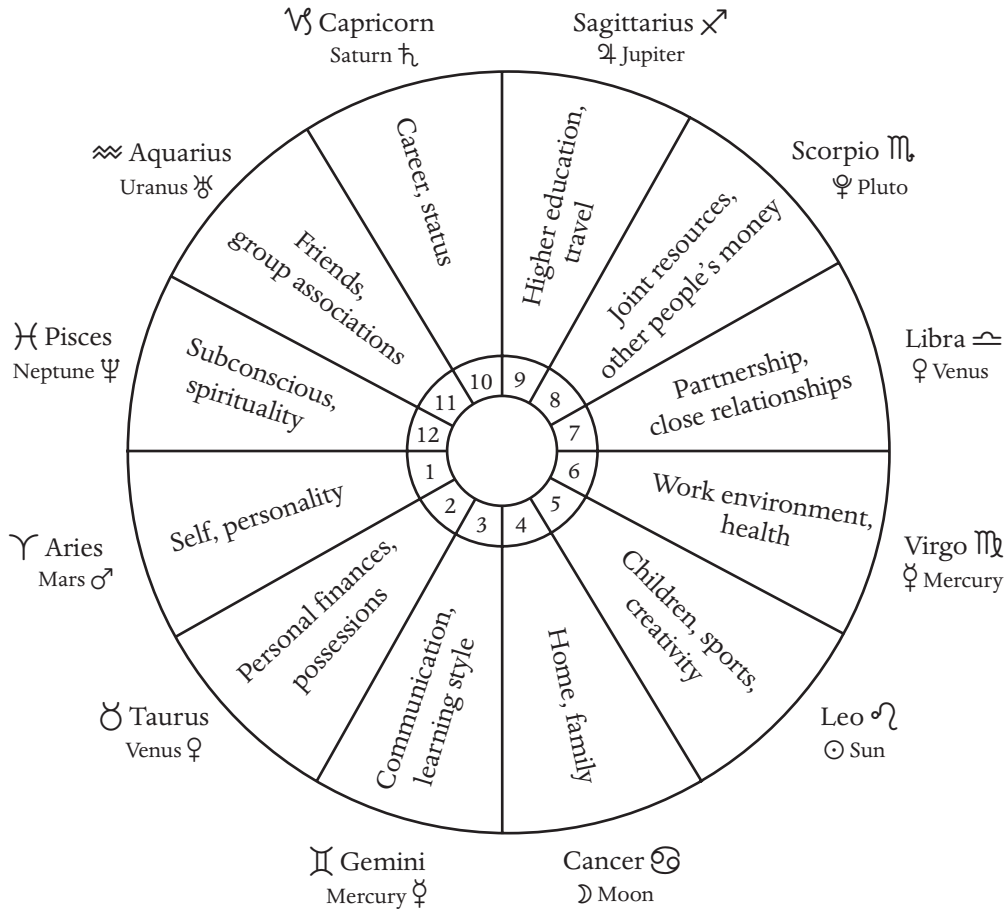


Figure 5. House Rulerships and Keywords

most successful professional golfers, you would tell him how he could use the energy of his retrograde Mars and Saturn to pursue his ambitions and succeed in the sports field.

Houses

There are twelve houses in a chart, each associated with a specific area or areas of life, such as career, money, relationships, and friendship (figure 5). They are numbered counterclockwise beginning with the left center, where Aries is located in the natural chart. Look again at Tiger

Woods's chart (page 17) and notice that Virgo (♍) is at the left center point—the Ascendant—of the chart instead of Aries, as it would be in the natural chart. This is because the chart was calculated for the exact date, time, and place of Woods's birth.

The importance of birth time accuracy cannot be overemphasized. Even a few minutes can make a big difference because the Ascendant sign changes about every two hours, or one degree every four minutes. So always use an actual birth time, preferably from a birth certificate.

Mothers' memories are often faulty, and a birth chart based on an approximate time, such as "about 6:00," isn't worth your time and effort. From my experience, these "about" times are usually hours away from the actual birth time. (For help obtaining an official U.S. birth certificate, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>.)

The dividing line between two houses is called a *cusp*. In Tiger Woods's chart, the second-house cusp is Libra (♎), the third-house cusp is Scorpio (♏), the fourth-house cusp is Sagittarius (♐), and so on, counterclockwise around the chart following the natural order of the zodiac.

The planet that rules the sign on the house cusp is said to be the house's ruler. In Tiger Woods's chart, for example, Saturn rules the fifth house because Capricorn (♑) is on the fifth-house cusp. Rulership is an important concept in astrology. In order to gain additional insights into the meaning of a house in a specific chart, you also look at the planetary ruler of the house (see chart 2). In Woods's chart, Saturn (♄) is in Leo (♌) in the eleventh house. You'll learn more about this concept later in this book.

The sign on the house cusp reveals a great deal of information about that area of life. But whatever the sign on a house cusp, the house also has some of the characteristics of the natural chart sign that is located there. For example, any planet in the first house somewhat exemplifies the initiative and energy, but also the impatience, of Aries. A planet in the sixth house takes on some Virgo characteristics, such as meticulousness and dependability.

Now that you're familiar with the basics of signs, planets, and houses, you can learn about another rulership concept: *universal rulership*.

This concept goes back to the natural chart (figure 1 on page 13). Each planet rules a sign, and both are associated with a house in the natural chart. For example, the Moon is the universal ruler of home and family because the Moon rules Cancer, the fourth-house sign of the natural chart; the fourth house is the house of home and family. So when reading a chart, you would study the Moon and the sign and house it's in, wherever it is in the chart, in addition to looking at the fourth house in the specific chart. You can see how doing this will give you much more information than will just looking at the fourth house of your chart.

Here's an example of what you can learn from house-cusp signs and rulerships and how astrologers read a chart. In Tiger Woods's chart (page 17), Mercury (☿) in Capricorn (♑) (the universal sign of career) in the fifth house of sports rules Woods's tenth house of career through Gemini (♊), the sign on the tenth-house cusp of Woods's chart (Mercury is the planet that rules Gemini). You thus immediately know that Woods's chart shows excellent potential for a career in sports because the energies of the fifth and tenth houses are linked through Mercury in Capricorn. To take this a step further, the fifth is the natural house of Leo (♌), and Saturn (the planet that rules Capricorn), the ruler of the fifth house in Woods's chart, is in Leo. Saturn in Leo thus reinforces the initial indication (Mercury, ruler of Woods's tenth house, in the fifth house) that the sports field is an excellent career choice for Tiger Woods.

To simplify this a bit, here is the formula: Mercury (Woods's tenth-house ruler—Gemini on the cusp) + in the fifth house (sports) + in Capricorn (tenth house of career in natural

chart) + Saturn (ruler of Capricorn) + in Leo (ruler of the fifth house of sports in natural chart). Don't be concerned if this sounds confusing at first. With practice, you'll get the hang of it.

Angular House Cusps

There are four angular house cusps (figure 6), collectively referred to as *the angles*: the Ascendant (first-house cusp), the Descendant (seventh-house cusp), the Midheaven (tenth-house cusp), and the *Imum Coeli* (or the IC; the fourth-house cusp). The angles signify important areas of life that are a major focus for most people.

The Ascendant (first-house cusp) represents you as an individual, and it's usually the first impression you make on others. In fact, anyone who knows a little astrology may instantly identify someone's rising sign as his or her Sun sign.

Sometimes the traits of the Ascendant and Sun signs are so different that the latter emerges only when you really get to know the person.

The Ascendant (also called the *rising sign*) indicates much of the outward manifestation of your personality. It's the point through which planetary energy is expressed, the face you show the world, and your subjective reaction to events and situations. While the Sun represents your internal motivations, the Ascendant represents your external responses. For example, someone with a Capricorn Sun may be reserved, cautious, and career-oriented. If the rising sign is Leo, the person is probably more outgoing and fun-loving, using Leo's warmth and leadership ability to further career ambitions.

The Descendant (seventh-house cusp), the point opposite the Ascendant, represents close relationships—with a mate or business partner

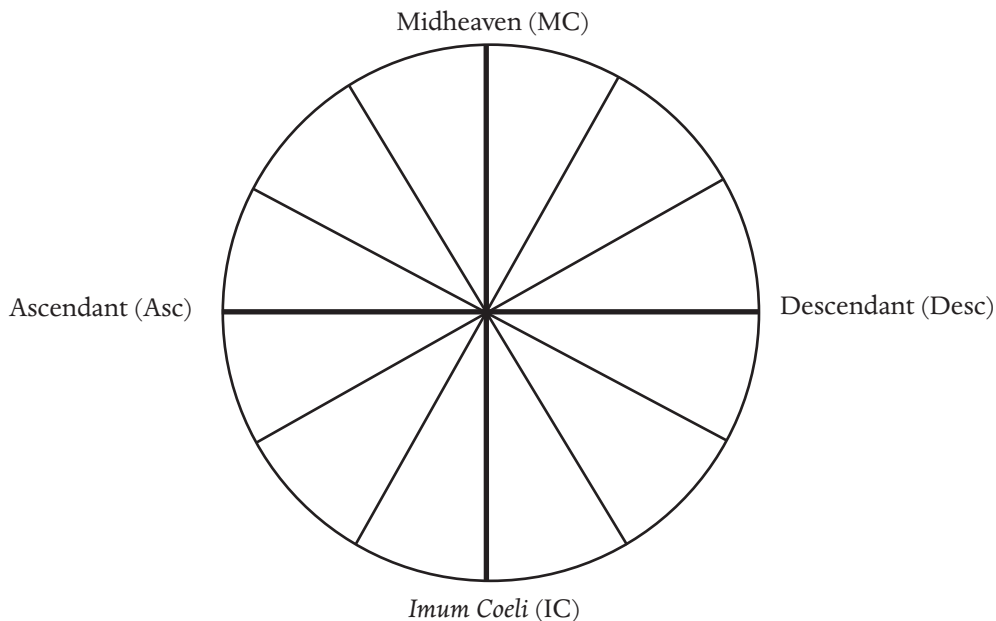


Figure 6. The Angles

Aspect	Degrees	Glyph	Keywords
Conjunction	0°	♄	Intensity, focus
Sextile	60°	✳	Opportunity
Trine	120°	△	Luck, ease
Square	90°	□	Obstacle, action
Opposition	180°	♋♌	Separation, polarity

Chart 3. The Major Aspects: Degrees, Glyphs, and Keywords

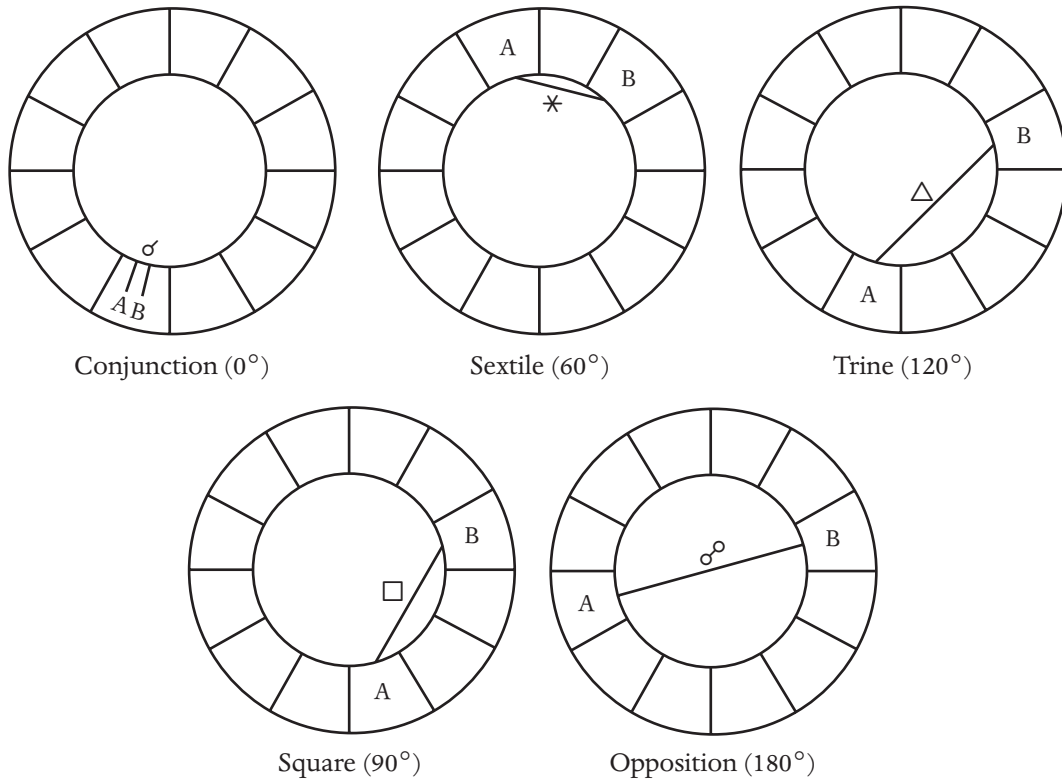


Figure 7. The Five Major Aspects

and sometimes long-term friends. This point in the chart indicates how you react to and interact with other people, the qualities you look for in a partner, and the general character of your close relationships.

The Midheaven (tenth-house cusp) sign shows where you want to shine in the world and in your career. It indicates what you want to be noted for, how you perceive status, what makes you feel important, and how you can expect your career life to develop. It also can offer insight into career interests.

The IC (fourth-house cusp) is associated with home and family, parents, your roots and childhood, as well as the physical environment of your home. This is the place you call your own and share with loved ones, literally and figuratively.

The sign on each angle gives a general indication of the affairs of that house. Planets in these houses also contribute to the overall chart interpretation, as you will see later in this book.

Aspects

Aspects are geometric angles, such as 90° or 120° . They connect the energy of two or more planets, reflecting ease, obstacles, challenges, or opportunities. The major “easy” aspects are the *sextile* and *trine*, and the aspects representing challenges are the *square* and *opposition*. The *conjunction* aspect can be either easy or challenging, depending on the planets involved (see figure 7). Chart 3 shows the major aspects and their degrees, glyphs, and keywords.

Ancient astrologers described the aspects as “bad” and “good,” or “malefic” and “benefic.” Although these definitions are still somewhat pertinent today, the meanings have been expanded and modified through centuries of

experience and knowledge. Life today is also far different from what it was even as recently as a hundred years ago. So while in the past a square was interpreted as a sign of war, battle, or conflict, it’s now defined as an aspect of personal challenge, a life lesson, or what motivates an individual to take action. A Mercury-Mars square, for example, might have indicated physical battle in the past, while today it is associated more with temper, arguments, and verbal battles.

In Tiger Woods’s chart (page 17), Mars is trine (120° from) Pluto. An exact trine would occur if Mars were at $11^\circ 39'$ Gemini or Pluto were at $17^\circ 34'$ Libra, but the allowable *orb of influence* for a trine is 8° , meaning the two planets would be in trine aspect if they were anywhere from 112° to 128° degrees apart. Mars and Pluto are $125^\circ 59'$ apart, so they are “within orb.” You will learn more about orbs in chapter 5.

The Mars-Pluto trine reflects determination, ambition, willpower, and success easily achieved, and thus also reinforces the strength of the retrograde Mars energy in Woods’s chart.

EPHEMERIS

Figure 8 shows a page from an *ephemeris*, the astrologer’s most valuable tool. You can purchase an ephemeris in book form that covers a time frame ranging from a single year to one hundred years, or use a computer program to generate your own ephemeris for any time period. An ephemeris is an essential astrological quick reference guide that lists the position of each planet—its sign and degree—on a given day. It also indicates when planets change direction to direct (D) or retrograde (R) motion.

An ephemeris is a gold mine of information. It’s greatest use is in predictive astrology, but

it's also essential if you want to hand-calculate a chart. An ephemeris is also very important for another reason: A computer-calculated chart shows you the positions of the planets on the day you were born. What it doesn't show you is whether a planet in your chart was stationing to turn direct or retrograde on the day you were born. The best way to find this information is to look at an ephemeris and find your birth date. Then you can scan from a week to ten days before and after your birthday to see if any of the planets were stationing.

Notice at the very top of the left-hand side of the ephemeris page that both a solar eclipse and a lunar eclipse are listed for that month. (A solar eclipse is also a New Moon, and a lunar eclipse is a Full Moon.) The data for the solar eclipse is "13 06:55 20♍10," followed by the Sun symbol and "Solar Eclipse (mag 0.788)." This means that the solar eclipse occurs on September 13, 2015, at 6:55 a.m. GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) at 20°10' Virgo, with a magnitude of 0.788.

Moving down, you can see the column headings for Day, S.T. (Sidereal Time, which is used to calculate a chart by hand), and the planets and North Node. The Sun and Moon are listed in degrees, minutes, and seconds, and the other planets are listed in degrees and minutes. Notice that the sign for each planet is listed after the degrees (the Sun is at 08°♍15'31").

Look at September 1 in the Venus column. It shows that Venus is retrograde. This is indicated by the "R" in "14°♌R58." Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto are also retrograde as the month begins. Now look down the Venus column to September 7, and notice the "D" for "direct." This indicates that Venus is in direct motion as of that date. Look at September 1, when Venus is at 14°♌R58, and how it barely moves during the

first ten days of the month as it slows, stations direct, and then begins to move forward. You can see a similar pattern in Mercury, which is retrograde as of September 18.

In the upper left of the bottom half of the ephemeris page below the data for the day are the lunar phases for the month—third quarter (September 5), New Moon (September 13), first quarter (September 21), and Full Moon (September 28). Below that is an aspectarian showing the planetary aspects for every day of the month. (Aspects are explained in chapter 5.)

To the right of the aspectarian is a small table that lists the date and time of the Moon's last planetary aspect in each sign and the date and time when the Moon enters the next sign. The time in between is when the Moon is *void of course*. Looking at the Moon column on the upper half of the page, you can see that the Moon begins the month in Aries. Then looking at the small table that shows the Moon's last aspect, you see that the Moon's last planetary aspect in Aries is formed on September 1 at 16:38 (4:38 p.m.) GMT. The Moon enters Taurus on September 2 at 9:03 a.m. GMT. So the Moon is void of course between September 1 at 4:38 p.m. and September 2 at 9:03 a.m.

This ephemeris includes the declination of each planet (not every ephemeris has declinations). This measures the planet's place in degrees north or south of the celestial equator (Earth's equator projected into space). Although declinations are not widely used, interest is increasing and some astrologers find them to be invaluable, especially in predictive astrology.

It's also fun to track the Moon's daily transit through your chart. The Moon will visit every house in your chart every month. You'll begin to learn a little about predictive astrology just

<i>Time Zone</i>	<i>Number of hours to subtract from GMT for North American locations:</i>	
	<i>Standard Time</i>	<i>Daylight Time</i>
Atlantic	-4	-3
Eastern	-5	-4
Central	-6	-5
Mountain	-7	-6
Pacific	-8	-7

Chart 4. Time Zone Conversions

by doing this, and within a few months you'll see a pattern begin to emerge. On some days you'll be almost consistently upbeat, and on others you'll want companionship or be in the mood to see friends or shop. Keep a diary so you can refer to it when you later begin to study predictive astrology.

Using your chart and an ephemeris for the current month, write outside the chart wheel the dates when the Moon will be (by sign) in each house. If you're using an ephemeris from a book, then the times when the Moon enters and departs each sign will be listed as either noon or midnight GMT (look for this information on the cover of the ephemeris), so you will need to subtract the appropriate number of hours for a North American location (see chart 4). Because of this, the date when the Moon changes signs might actually be the day prior to what is listed in the ephemeris. If you're using a computer program to create an ephemeris, you can set it for your time zone.

I find a noon GMT ephemeris to be the most useful when looking at the Moon's transits because it results in a morning (a.m.) time when the time zone adjustment is made.

Take a few minutes every evening to jot notes in your astrological diary about how you

felt that day and about any activities or outstanding events that occurred. Then compare your impressions to the transiting Moon's position in your chart. You'll probably see a pattern during the approximately two and a half days that the Moon is in each house, and you'll certainly see one if you do this for several months. Take special note of the days when the Moon is at the same point as a planet in a house. They're likely to be especially eventful.

Now that you're familiar with the basics of astrology, you're ready to take an in-depth look at the signs, planets, houses, and aspects. There is a chapter on each of these. In the last chapter you'll learn how to read, or synthesize, a chart. Chart synthesis is the art of blending all the astrological symbolism to discover the many facets of your personality as well as your strengths, talents, interests, and challenges. Be sure to also look at the appendices. There you will find information about additional astrological factors, the branches of astrology, astrological organizations, and websites where you can get a free birth chart. There also is an extensive suggested reading list and glossary, plus a list of glyphs on the inside back cover.