

Introducing Astrology

I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven, but of Heaven is my birth¹

The significance of astrology is that it can transform the profane into the sacred, the facts of astronomy into the revelation of a cosmic order manifest in the cell and the human person as well as in the solar system and the galaxy²

This article is designed to introduce you to astrology, in particular to three of its most basic building blocks, the planets, the zodiac signs and the ‘houses’ of the birth chart, as well as touching on the idea of planetary inter-relationships. Planets, signs and houses are covered in Module 1 of the Faculty’s Foundation Course – planetary inter-relationships are covered in Module 2. All of these subjects are dealt with in much more detail in our course material than they are here – this article will just give you a glimpse into the world of astrology and into the Faculty’s way of working.

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Astrology takes us into the very heart of life – it is at once intuitive and intellectual, down-to-earth and deeply magical, a system of thought and a very pragmatic tool: a philosophy of an interconnected earth and sky which over the centuries has inspired both scientists and artists, and is capable of describing and illuminating every stratum of life on earth, from the workings of the individual human psyche to the rhythms and cycles of the natural environment.

Its roots are to be found in the ancient world – the star lore and astronomy of Mesopotamia and the philosophy and mathematics of the ancient Greeks, brought together and planted in the fertile intellectual soil of Hellenistic Alexandria in the centuries just before and after Christ. Carried by the Arabs following the collapse of ancient Greece and Rome, it was transmitted into Europe in the early Middle Ages via Islamic scholars and became recognised as one of the pillars of Western magical thinking, along with alchemy and Kabbalah. Falling out of favour in the Age of Enlightenment, which emphasised rationality and scientific observation as the routes to knowledge, astrology re-emerged in the later part of the 19th century, encouraged by the founding of the Theosophical Society and a growing interest in alternative spirituality and ancient wisdom. In the 20th and 21st centuries, astrology has come of age, enriched by the depth psychology of Carl Jung, the humanistic spirituality and psychology of Dane Rudhyar and the inimitable work of Alan Leo, Charles Carter, Liz Greene, Howard Sasportas and others who have been in the vanguard of its rebirth as a subject worthy of serious attention and study.

Astrology has many branches: natal chart work – unlocking the potential of a single chart; synastry – the study of relationships; horary – the answering of a particular question; electional – the choosing of an ideal time to begin a new venture; relocation – analysing the effects of a move or a visit to another part of the world; to name just a few. It also has many professional and non-professional applications: as a consultative tool, for use alongside psychotherapy or complementary therapies, in business and financial fields, as inspiration for

¹ From an Orphic prayer written on gold leaf, found at Thessaly (4th century BCE)

² Dane Rudhyar, *An Astrological Mandala*, Vintage books, p.383

art, design, music and other forms of self-expression, and of course self-development and a better understanding of the world and the people around us. In practice, Faculty graduates go on to engage in a variety of astrological activities, from natal chart work to financial consultancy – it is even possible now to study the history and philosophy of astrology at university level, either as a dedicated course or as part of a course in Western esoteric thought.

It is an immensely rewarding subject – a potent language of archetypal symbols which becomes particularly powerful when used in a modern psychological context. It is this marriage of the archetypal, the magical and the psychological which the Faculty’s courses seek to convey, as well as offering a solid foundation in the core practices and techniques.

The basic components of any birth chart are the planets, the signs of the zodiac, the houses and the aspects – together these components interweave to form a picture which describes with great accuracy the character and experiences of the chart’s owner, from the seemingly most mundane aspects of life to the rich and complex inner world of the psyche. This taster module outlines these basic components, giving a glimpse of how they fit and work together. We hope you will have fun applying the information to your own chart using the self-study exercises included here, as you consider whether to cross the threshold into formal study on the Faculty’s courses.




The Planets

Your birth chart is a picture of the heavens at one specific moment in time, as seen from the perspective of the place at which you were born – it is your unique map, showing both inner and outer levels of experience. With you symbolically in the centre of the chart, you see the vista of the heavens, and in particular a narrow ring of sky which encircles the earth – the zodiac – against which the planets are seen to move in their orbits.

We will look in a moment at the zodiac, but first we will focus on the planets – these are the core archetypal or psychological drives which exist within each of us (and within all things). In astrology they are named after deities in the Roman pantheon, but they also have direct resonance with the Greek equivalents and with gods from other cultures. Each planet has its own symbol and its own particular meaning, which can manifest on many different levels, from inner psychological drives to abstract concepts, mundane objects to the plants and animals of the natural world.

The Personal Planets

These are the fastest moving of the planets and form the core of the personality

				
The Sun	The Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars

The Sun ☉

The symbol for the Sun is a circle with a dot in the centre, with the circle representing divinity and immortality, and the dot suggesting the creative spark of an individual life which partakes of the divine essence. Its role in the chart reflects the role played by the Sun in the

solar system – our core sense of self around which everything else revolves, our individual purpose and the place where we can shine by developing a range of unique gifts and talents.

The Sun has an ancient association with the idea of ‘spirit’ – the fiery drive of the conscious will – and in the chart it has a masculine slant, contributing to what Jung termed the ‘animus’ or inner image of the masculine, so it can denote the image of the father and other male figures, as well as our vitality and willpower. We can associate the Sun with the notion of centrality, management and authority – in both the external world (kings, rulers and authority figures) and in the body (the Sun rules the heart and spine). Its metal is gold and its colour is bright yellow.

The Moon ☾

As the Sun rules day, so the Moon represents the more mysterious, nocturnal or hidden worlds – both literally, as ruler of nocturnal animals, and of automatic functions such as digestion and sleep, and figuratively, as a symbol in the chart for the inner world of feelings and instincts. The Moon is our emotional memory bank, describing our instinctive responses to the people and events we encounter, and lying at the heart of our interconnections with others via family, romantic and social relationships.

The Moon has an association with feminine dimensions and Jung’s ‘anima’ or inner image of the feminine – so it can equate to mother and other female figures, particularly those who take a nurturing, feeding, catering or caretaking role. It has a strong influence over the domestic realm, suggesting what makes us feel comfortable and safe, and therefore has a strong impact on the kind of home life we might create for ourselves, as well as our daily emotional, mental and physical routines and rituals. Its metal is silver and its colours are light grey and white.

Mercury ☿

Mercury is the trickster and messenger of the gods – the communicator, agent, tradesman and go-between. Mercury functions as a mouthpiece, showing how we speak and communicate, and what we might like to communicate about. Here is our mental functioning too – what we notice, how we perceive, our critical abilities, capacity for logic, and how we absorb and process information. Schools, learning, libraries, books, magazines, newspapers and social networking all come under the auspices of this planet.

In contrast to far-ranging Jupiter, Mercury has a more ‘localised’ quality, representing short – range movement and people who are local to us – siblings and neighbours. It is a swift-moving planet with a somewhat eccentric and elliptical orbit around the Sun which has led astrologers to associate this planet with movement, mobility and change. Mercury’s metal is mercury (originally known as ‘quicksilver’) and its colours are blue, grey or multi-colours.

Venus ♀

Venus is well-known as the planet of love – in the birth chart, it describes the kind of person we are attracted to romantically and how we seek to make ourselves attractive to others. More widely, it shows generally how we relate to others, how we liaise, interact and find common ground, as well as the things we find attractive and valuable – our taste in art perhaps, our style of dressing, our concept of beauty and desirability.

Like the Moon, Venus also has an association with feminine and with the ‘anima’ – the image of femaleness within both men and women. A powerful Venus in the chart can suggest a strong desire for harmony, balance and fairness, all expressed (as with every planet) according to the nature of the sign it occupies. The metal of Venus is copper (a major export of the island of Cyprus, said to be the island of Venus’ Greek equivalent, Aphrodite) and its colour is green.

Mars ♂

Balancing the more receptive and ‘yin’ energy of Venus, Mars in the chart denotes our urge to attack, fight and defend. We may do this in a number ways, perhaps physically on occasions but also verbally or through strategy, cunning or simply refusing to back down. As another image of the ‘animus’, we take action according to our Mars – perhaps directly and assertively, or perhaps with polite deference to our opponent. It might show which sport we enjoy and how competitive we are, how physically energetic and how much stamina we have, as well as our willpower and drive, and how prepared we are to take a risk.

In both the natural and man-made worlds, Mars represents all those things which are hot and sharp – chillies, mustard and nettles, as well as tempers, knives and scissors. Its metal is iron (the resilient metal of weaponry and tools) and its colour is red.

The Social Planets

These move more slowly than the Personal Planets, spending longer in a zodiac sign. They represent processes of adjustment to wider social themes, opportunities and pressures.

♃	♄
Jupiter	Saturn

Jupiter ♃

Known traditionally as the ‘Greater Benefic’, Jupiter represents the idea of enlargement and growth. We usually seek some kind of expansion in the territory which Jupiter occupies in the chart, as if tapping into the spirit of protection, generosity, benefaction, wealth and abundance which this planet can bring. It is sometimes said about Jupiter that he promises more than he delivers, as his governance of frivolity, travel, adventure, gambling, horse-racing and general extravagance would attest, but he also offers the capacity for joy, trust and self-belief as a necessary counterbalance to Saturn’s path of self-doubt leading to hard work and mastery of skills.

On a wider social level, Jupiter represents the spirit of the law, its ethical and moral codes – so it may form the basis of the particular guiding philosophy or religious belief with which we most resonate. Jupiter engages us with a process of education and betterment that takes us beyond the primary stage of learning and discovery, into a search for meaning. Its metal is tin, the lightest of the metals, and its colour is purple, the colour traditionally worn by the judiciary and the clergy.

Saturn ♄



Whereas Jupiter tends to create a sense of increase and possibility, Saturn’s process is one of contraction and consolidation – an appropriate guiding deity for anyone taking exams or

seeking professional accreditation! Here is the part of us which is rooted in the notion of work and exertion for the purpose of achievement and respect, a process which may take many years to accomplish and which underscores Saturn's association with seriousness, gravitas and age (as well as the wisdom which comes with it).

As such, it can represent figures of authority, both in the family and in the wider world – parents, guardians, teachers, the police and all those who devise or reinforce the numerous sets of codes and rules which set the boundaries and govern life in any social or cultural unit. Appropriately, Saturn's metal is lead, the heaviest of the metals known in antiquity, and its colours are sombre black, dark grey or brown.

The Outer Planets (also known as the Collective or Generational Planets)

These take years to travel through one sign of the zodiac. Hence, as well as playing a personal role in the birth chart, they also represent processes and themes which are collective to society as a whole, embedded in movements in politics, society and the arts.

		
Uranus	Neptune	Pluto

Uranus 

When Uranus was discovered in 1781 its presence shattered the safe boundary symbolically held for centuries by Saturn and doubled the size of the known universe; it also coincided with the revolutions which brought massive social and political change across Europe and America – and in astrology it quickly took on a similar energy, as the planet representing any process or experience, either physical or psychological, of revolution and upheaval. Uranus offers us, individually and collectively, the potential for liberation and the electrical excitement which can be generated when we dare to make significant changes, as well as the chaos and disturbance which can accompany this.

In myth, Ouranos was the sky god of the Greeks, who fertilized mother Earth, Gaia, with his sudden bursts of creative energy but who would not allow his offspring to be born into the world – and so it can be with his astrological counterpart. Uranus is primarily a mental and intellectual energy which deals awkwardly with either the practicalities of the real world or the messiness of human emotions – under its rulership come invention, innovation, science and enlightenment, not to mention earthquakes, outlaws, eccentricities, jolts, breaks, schisms and arrhythmia. Uranium was named after the planet Uranus and is the radioactive element most capable of fission or splitting and used to generate electrical power. Uranus' colour is usually given as electric or sky blue.

Neptune 

With Neptune we move to a very different perspective – where Uranus seeks independence, Neptune seeks to merge and blur any kind of boundary so that distinctions, and sometimes a sense of reality, disappear. As a god, Neptune's realm is under the sea, a place of mystery and imagination where nothing is seen as it really is – and astrologically here is where, both individually and as a society, we follow a vision or dream, which may act as a powerful and important muse but which can also tip us into illusion and fantastical projection.

Neptune rules those things through which we can gain inspiration and connection to a world of non-ordinary reality, outside space and time – art, music, film, spirituality, imaginative exploration, romantic and universal love, dreams and fairy tales, not to mention alcohol and drugs (both recreational and medicinal). It tends to distort, erode or dissolve whatever it touches – or bring glamour and enchantment. Chemists have named Neptunium after the planet Neptune – appropriately it is hard to find, hiding itself in Uranium ores. In astrology Neptune's colour is sea green.

Pluto ♇ or ♇

Consistent with the mythic image of Pluto as the god of the underworld, this planet signifies a process of transformation – an experience of symbolic death and rebirth during which something is stripped down to its basic essence. In the process we often discover the true nature and potency of the thing in question, whether this is our creative output, our working life or our communicative abilities – astrologers often associate Pluto with power, particularly the power which comes from having been through some kind of symbolic 'near death' experience.

We are often passionate, heavy and intense, some might say obsessive, where Pluto is in the chart – there is the potential for compulsive behaviour around this planet, both in the individual and if we explore Pluto's effects in society in general. But there is also a therapeutic and cathartic quality too – in the body, Pluto rules the vital process of elimination of waste which would otherwise become poisonous; and we can see a parallel to this in psychological terms – Pluto may be a ruthless and non-negotiable force, but it governs the essential processes of renewal and regeneration. Its element is Plutonium, the heaviest of all the primordial elements and used in nuclear weapons. Pluto's colour is dark red.

There is one final body which many astrologers use – Chiron. Discovered in 1977, he is a relatively recent addition to the group of astrological planets but is included in the Faculty's courses because he has been found to represent a powerful archetype in his own right.

Chiron ♄

In Greek myth, the centaur Chiron experienced rejection by both his parents, but eventually became a wise healer and teacher; and his dramatic story includes a critical episode of wounding by a poisoned arrow, a wound of which he was unable to cure himself. Our astrological Chiron draws on these mythological images – it can represent early painful experiences of emotional or physical wounding, abandonment or misplacement, a place in ourselves which may be deeply sensitive and where, through force of circumstance, we may find it difficult to follow the conventional line. Where Chiron is, we may have to take a circuitous route to reach our goals, or we may naturally follow a maverick path. Often we seek to play the 'healer' here too – here we are sensitive to the experiences of others which are similar to our own and we are moved to help or to offer empathy and understanding.

As we might expect of a maverick, a tiny planetoid or asteroid no more than 100 miles across and with a highly elliptical orbit, Chiron has no metal or colour with which it is universally associated.

The Signs of the Zodiac

If you look at your birth chart, you may recognise the ring of 12 zodiac signs on the outer edge of the circle – Aries the Ram, Taurus the Bull, Gemini the Twins, and so on. The zodiac is a Babylonian invention, developed by the Greeks and drawing on ancient images from Babylonian, Greek and Egyptian myth. With the zodiac we begin to build our planetary vocabulary – the planets represent archetypal drives, but the signs represent a mode of operating or behaving, a particular manner in which such an archetypal drive might express itself when a planet occupies that sign in a chart. In a moment we will look at how this works, but first here are the glyphs for the 12 zodiac signs and a short description of each of them.

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

Aries

As the first sign of the zodiac, Aries represents the initiatory energy of spring – it is the sign that the Sun moves into at the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere. Aries represents the impulse to be first, ahead of the rest, driving the pace or being a courageous pioneer. It is bold and fiery, taking the initiative and directing its energy with speed towards a target.

Taurus

After the rush of Aries, Taurus brings calm and a placid approach. As an energy field, it is earthy and measured, taking pleasure in the organic rhythms of the natural world or the sensuality of taste and touch. When a planet is in Taurus, it tends to act slowly, with deliberation and often with an unwillingness to change, let go or move on – its forte is gradual accumulation, the slow building or bringing to fruition of whatever it happens to be, often with a strongly material or physical dimension to it.

Gemini

With the Twins as its emblem, Gemini is concerned with duality, often representing a split between opposites but with a lightness and dexterity that can allow easy movement between the two, like an alternating current – two jobs, two homes, two creative talents, and so on. Communication and language, dialogue, exchanges, networks, bridges and links of all kinds feed the Gemini spirit, as does learning and the uptake and dissemination of knowledge and ideas in this most cerebral of signs.

Cancer

As suggested by its glyph, ♋, representing the protective claws of the crab, the Cancerian instinct is to nurture, foster, defend and keep safe. It has a strong orientation towards family and tribe, gravitating towards what is felt to be familiar and secure, and it will defend its territory with great tenacity. It is also a highly intuitive sign, sensitive and emotional – planets here often act from ‘gut instinct’ rather than from a place of clear rationality or logic.

Leo

Leo’s image is the lion, proud and regal – planets in this sign tend to act boldly and dramatically, with a sense of showmanship, grandeur and bravura. As the sign which the Sun

occupies during the hottest part of the year in the northern hemisphere, it is a sign of warmth and brightness, with a focus on creative expression and playfulness. In Leo is embedded the myth of kingship – a bright central flame around which everything revolves and which provides leadership, fidelity and loyalty.

Virgo

The energy here is careful, ordered and precise – the sign of the craftsman or the engineer. Unlike Leo, there is often humility and reserve expressed by planets in this sign, and a tendency to strive for usefulness and a practical outcome. The Sun is in Virgo during harvest time and an agricultural analogy is appropriate here – this is the sign denoting the process of sorting wheat from chaff, what is useful from what is not, giving it dominion over the digestive organs in the human body as well as a connection with the gift of being able to research, analyse, appraise and evaluate.

Libra

As the sign of the scales, Libra's process is about weighing and balancing, making it a fine adjudicator or referee – its famous capacity for indecision may even be seen as part of this process, since Libra is concerned with justice and a fair outcome. As a dualistic sign, it is interested in the notion of relationship and inter-personal connection, one-to-one, making it socially skilled, diplomatic, charming and courteous.

Scorpio

When the Sun moves into the sign of the Scorpion, it is late autumn in the northern hemisphere, when the natural world begins to draw in its energy in readiness for a rebirth in spring – Scorpio thus represents a cyclical process of death and rebirth, with all its attendant sense of crisis and drama; planets which occupy this sign in the chart tend to express themselves passionately and intensely. Not that one would necessarily see this at surface level – there is great secrecy in this sign and much of its process will occur at depth. Like its opposite sign of Taurus, it can show fixity, loyalty and a reluctance to let go, but it can also engage in a process of ruthless elimination when this is deemed to be necessary.

Sagittarius

This is the sign of the archer, whose arrow is shot hopefully into the far distance – and Sagittarius' concern is with long-distance travel, exploration, adventure and experience, in both a literal and a metaphorical context. Planets which occupy this sign tend to need a broad canvas on which to paint their particular picture and they often display boldness, optimism and confidence – with Sagittarius, bigger usually feels better, and the instinct is to cover ground and to feel free.

Capricorn

Here is the sign of the goat – or more anciently, the goat-fish, a Mesopotamian deity image suggestive of the civilising influence of Capricorn as a sign which brings civic order, regulation and a well-run system. Planets here tend towards dignity, maturity and reserve, showing the capacity for hard work and focused attention to the job in hand, as well as the tendency (like the goat) to climb the mountain with dogged determination. With planets in this most productive and practical of signs, plans tend to be made – and carried out.

Aquarius

Aquarius is the sign of the non-conformist, the self-willed independent spirit – planets in this sign tend to play the game by their own rules, with a view to the freedom which comes from

innovation and experimentation. Having said that, as its image of the water-bearer suggests, it is also a sign attuned to the notion of the common good, and as such it is also interested in equality and horizontal social structures, rather than the hierarchies which Capricorn might favour. It tends towards detachment and a logical, rational approach to most things.

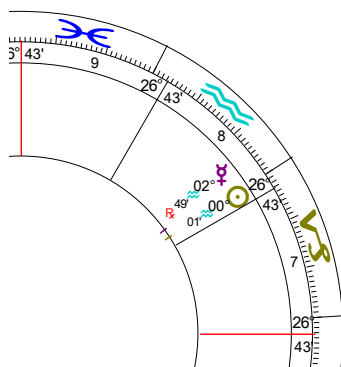
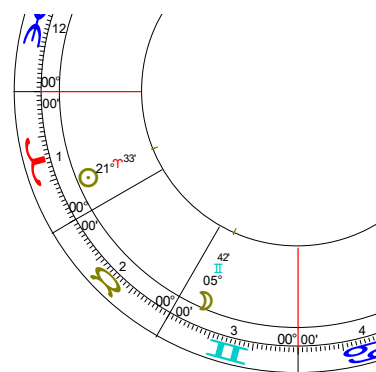
Pisces

As the final sign of the zodiac, Pisces does the opposite of Aries – Aries initiates, whereas Pisces disintegrates and dissolves so that the cycle can close before it begins with rebirth once again with the spring sign of the ram. Pisces has little power of discrimination, seeing no boundaries or clear dividing lines and tending to soften or blur the edges of any planet which occupies it. Its strength perhaps lies in its imaginative gifts (the ability to dream and fantasise), its innate sense of the spiritual and its capacity for service to a higher cause.

Putting Planets and Signs Together

Most people are used to reading about their Sun sign in the astrological columns of newspapers and magazines, but The Faculty's courses take you far beyond the superficial descriptions of the signs as used in such columns, to a deep understanding of them and how they operate within the individual birth chart. Each planet occupies a sign in the chart and the mix of planets in signs offers us our first glimpse of the chart's dynamics.

For instance, the Sun in Aries suggests that the person's life story revolves around the process of learning how to take the initiative, assert their independence, lead from the front or show courage as a pioneer in their field – this is the alchemical 'gold' in the making. But the same person may have the Moon in Gemini, so there could also be a natural affinity with languages, a facility with words and communication, and an instinctual need to dialogue and share ideas. Sometimes these might work well together (a pioneer working in an educational field perhaps, or a person with an innate understanding of networks and intellectual/technical systems who feels vital and alive when

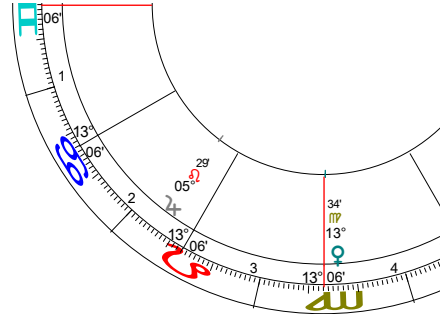


in the vanguard of new developments) – at other times they may need to be balanced (for example, the need to forge ahead unaccompanied versus the instinct to dialogue with others).

We can look at a couple of examples of famous people with particular planetary placements by sign. The astronaut Buzz Aldrin has both the Sun and Mercury in Aquarius, giving him a desire for technical (Aquarius) knowledge (Mercury) and a mind (Mercury) which thinks logically and rationally (Aquarius) – with the Sun there too, it is perhaps not surprising that his life's work (Sun) has been in a scientific field (Aquarius), and it might be the good of the wider community (Aquarius) which particularly motivates him (Sun).

As another example, Mick Jagger, singer with the Rolling Stones, has Jupiter in Leo and Venus in Virgo. Jupiter represents our need for expansion and our capacity for optimism and

enthusiasm – in the regal sign of Leo, this suggests the capacity for buoyant self-confidence and a desire to enjoy the fine things in life. Venus in Virgo tells a slightly different story – Virgo is a more introverted sign, and one which denotes attention to detail, so we could say that he admires finely-made things, prefers art which is well-crafted, or relates to people through showing care over small details. It could also, of course, describe the kind of women he is attracted to!



SELF-STUDY EXERCISE

Look at your own chart and write out a list of the planets in their respective signs of the zodiac. Try to come up with a few ideas for each of the placements, remembering that the planet is the archetypal drive (Mercury – the drive to communicate; Venus – the drive to relate, etc) and the sign is the manner in which this is done (Aries – quickly, forcefully; Taurus – slowly, patiently, etc). If you find it difficult, you can use keywords to help:

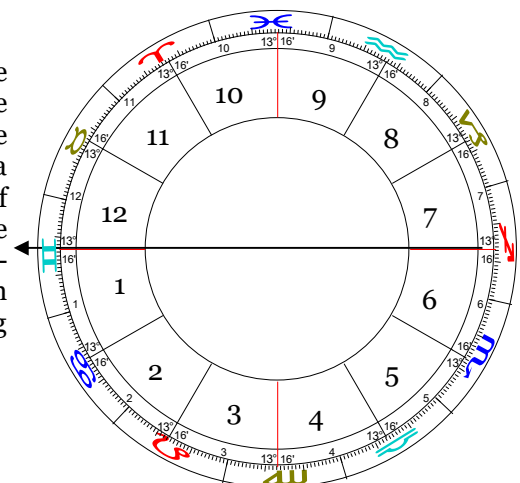
Jupiter	Leo
<i>The urge to travel and explore</i>	<i>Kingly, regal</i>
<i>Philosophical views and ideas</i>	<i>Confidently, proudly, courageously</i>
<i>Religious expression</i>	<i>Dramatically, with a sense of theatre/show</i>
<i>The desire for expansion, enlargement</i>	<i>Glamorous, shiny, bright</i>
<i>Where one feels lucky, blessed</i>	<i>Radiating from a central place</i>

Jupiter in Leo
<i>Travels in style; adventures and new experiences are approached courageously; proudly expresses religious beliefs; puts on a big dramatic show; feels lucky and happy when in a position of influence and management; confidently seeks to create a better situation for themselves.</i>

If you do not have a copy of your birth chart already, there are several sites on the internet where you can obtain one for free. Search for ‘free birth chart calculator’.

The Houses

Each planet occupies a ‘house’ in the chart – you can see this in the chart section at the top of this page, where Jupiter occupies one section, Venus another, and there are some sections which are not occupied at all. Each house is a particular territory – an area of life in which some kind of activity could potentially take place. You can locate the houses in your own birth chart by beginning on the left-hand side of it (equivalent to the location of the arrow in the chart wheel to the right of this paragraph) and counting the houses from 1 through to 12 around the circle.



The 1st House

This house denotes the way in which we present ourselves to the world – our body, how we dress and how we look, how we seem to others and the first things that people notice about us. This is perhaps the least hidden side of our personality and the way in which we dialogue with and mediate the outside world, often according to what we think is expected of us.

The 2nd House

The 2nd is a house of money and material goods, specifically those which we possess and earn for ourselves – so it can denote income, the desire for physical possessions, our relationship to money and our beliefs around it. Symbolically it is also a house denoting worth – what we place value on and hence what we might wish to spend our hard-earned cash on.

The 3rd House

This house covers people and territories which are close to us – the local vicinity, our immediate environment, our siblings, neighbours and short journeys. It also denotes our experiences of school and primary education, as well as the development of language and communication skills and our facility (or otherwise) with these things.

The 4th House

This house is our home territory – it can describe different aspects of home life, from the purely physical to the emotional and psychological; the dynamics of home and family life. Traditionally, it is the house denoting father, although many astrologers now see both the 4th and the 10th houses as showing different aspects of both parents. The 4th is our place of retreat and sanctuary, our private space and how we need this to be in order to feel safe and secure. The ancestors inhabit this house – so it can describe immediate family, but also the genealogical line stretching back through the generations.

The 5th House

The 5th is a house of play, leisure and recreation – it describes hobbies and sports, all the things we do in order to ‘recreate’ ourselves away from work and the pressures of everyday life. Whatever planet is here (Neptune here might denote a love of film or relaxing by the sea; Venus here might suggest a flair for dressmaking), it is our medium for play and enjoyment – activities we do because they make us feel creative and alive. Following the creativity theme, it is also a house of pregnancy, childbirth and children.

The 6th House

After letting our hair down in the 5th house, the 6th is a house of everyday duties and routines – the work we do to pay the bills, the rituals of everyday life, and our approach to housekeeping and husbandry. Here we are keen to hone a craft or learn a technique, or put our skills to good use, according to the nature of the planet or planets which occupy it – with Mars here we may be keen to learn how an engine works, or with Mercury we may be interested in the pragmatic uses of language and learning. It is also a house of health and wellbeing, and a house denoting practical service.

The 7th House

In the 7th house we learn how to relate to others – opposite the 1st, it is the house of the ‘not self’, the ‘other’. Traditionally it is the ‘house of open enemies’ – the opponents we can see – and of litigation in the lower courts, which perhaps says something about traditional astrology’s view of the marriage partner, who also belongs here! In psychological terms,

planets in the 7th can form a kind of shadow – traits and behaviours which we are attracted to (and attract) in other people, as a way of learning about them in ourselves.

The 8th House

Whereas the 7th is a house of contractual relationships and partnerships of all kinds, the 8th takes us into deeper emotional territory. It is a house of ‘other people’s money’, including mortgages, investments and inheritances. Opposite the 2nd, it denotes shared finances and shared possessions – also shared values, for which shared possessions are surely a metaphor. Here we engage deeply with another person, letting down our guard – or not, depending on which planet/s are here. Our experience in this house is often of an underworld journey, where we experience death and regeneration – we might remind ourselves that the word ‘mortgage’ is a French legal term meaning ‘death contract’!

The 9th House

After the intensity of the 8th house, the 9th is where we seek adventure – it is a house of travel (long distance, as opposed to the short distances we cover in the 3rd), showing how we respond to the unknown, the international, the unfamiliar and the far-away. If the Moon is here we might at some point make our home abroad, but Saturn in this house might suggest ‘fear of flying’, both literally and metaphorically. Further education also belongs here, along with philosophy, morality, religion and beliefs in general – all of those things which engage us with the bigger questions of life and stretch our understanding of the world.

The 10th House

The 10th house, opposite the 4th, shows our public profile – our professional work as well as what we are famous for in public life. Whatever planets are here, we usually seek respect for those skills and talents, striving to create some kind of solid achievement in those terms. It also suggests the notion of responsibility and management – how we feel about being in charge, as well as our relationship to those who are, in the form of bosses, leaders and those higher up whatever hierarchy we happen to work within. Chiron here might suggest the professional therapist and someone who follows an alternative style of career path – Venus a career in fashion, art or design.

The 11th House

As we move in the circle from the 7th towards the 12th house, the themes take us ever further into connection with others and with the outside world. In the 11th, we connect to wider society in the form of groups and collectives, committees and councils. It is the house of friendship and fellowship, support and allies, shared ideals and ideologies, and how we feel and behave within the groups we find ourselves in. A person with Jupiter here may be the life and soul of the party, or with the Sun may take on the role of group leader; if Mercury, they might enjoy quick networking via smart phone.

The 12th House

This is the most collective of all the houses, where individual identity disappears and is replaced by notions of sacrifice and higher service. If we have planets located here, we may find it difficult to define our needs or skills around them unless we are engaged in some kind of collective endeavour where they can be reflected back to us – Mars here might suggest the armed forces, for instance, or the Moon might be drawn to work in a care home or hospice. The 12th denotes places of retreat and incarceration, such as hospitals, prisons, religious houses and institutions – places away from worldly life where individuality is less defined – as well as the timeless world of fantasy and the imagination.

Putting Planets, Signs and Houses Together

We can put these three layers of our astrological vocabulary together – planets, signs and houses. We have seen a few examples of how a planet might operate through a sign – the house will tell us in which territory the planet-sign combination will express itself. The rule to follow is:

Planet – what is being done

Sign – how it is being done

House – where it is being done

If we look back at our two examples, we can see that Buzz Aldrin's Sun and Mercury in Aquarius are located in the 8th house – the house of deep encounters, as well as 'death and resurrection', amongst other things. So we can expand our understanding of these two planets by saying that his mission in life (Sun) has been to scientifically explore (Aquarius) the unknown (8th) and undergo critical or 'near death' experiences from which he can be symbolically reborn (8th house). His Mercury here might suggest a desire for scientific knowledge (Mercury in Aquarius) of hidden things (8th), for the purpose of understanding them rationally (Mercury in Aquarius).

In the chart of Mick Jagger, Jupiter in Leo is in the 2nd house, the house of possessions and personal finances – so we can expect that this might equate to confident (Leo) enlargement (Jupiter) of financial resources (2nd) as well as a buoyant and optimistic (Jupiter in Leo) sense of self-worth (2nd). His Venus in Virgo is in the 4th house, so the talent for design and artistic craft suggested by Venus in Virgo may be most apparent in his home (4th), perhaps a talent which has been passed down the family line or which was particularly admired and encouraged in his family of origin (4th house).

SELF-STUDY EXERCISE

Take the interpretations you made for your planets in signs in the previous exercise and try to add the houses. Again, you can use keywords and key phrases to help you.

Putting Planets Together

We will touch on just one more idea before we close. If you look at your own natal chart, you will see that each planet is joined to others by connecting lines in the centre of the chart. Each of these lines signifies an 'aspect' – a relationship between two planets based on the angular distance between them.

To begin explaining what this means, we can take any pair of planets and think about what would happen if we combine their energies. For instance, we can take Mercury and Saturn:

- Mercury = capacity/need to link, communicate, think and move around
- Saturn = capacity/need to structure, consolidate, manifest and take seriously

All sorts of traits, skills and interests might arise when these two archetypal drives work together, according to the person's own choices and life situation, as suggested on the following page.

Mercury	Saturn	Mercury + Saturn
Language	Old	Speaks Latin and Greek
Language	Structure	Interest in linguistics or grammar
Communication	Practical	Sticks to the facts
Education	Professional	A professional teacher
Knowledge	Respect	Seeks respect for knowledge, works hard for it over time
Information	Serious	Writer of technical material
Speaking	Reserve	Someone who carefully considers what they say
Knowledge	Structure	Interest in architecture
Books	History	Likes to read history books, wants to know about the past
Paper and pens	Professional	Owens a stationery business
Newspaper	Authority	Editor of a newspaper
Knowledge	Scepticism	Seeks formal proof for any theories or information

These are just a few ideas – there are likely to be many possibilities, in all levels of experience, which a person with a Mercury-Saturn connection (aspect) in the chart will manifest, and at the heart of them all will be the core desire for seriousness, structure and practicality around language, communication and knowledge.

How easy or how difficult this might be for the person to attain, how comfortable or how stretched they might feel about this process, will be shown by the different types of aspect – the connecting lines in the chart. Here are the main 5 aspects used by astrologers:

Aspect	Glyph	Equates to division of the circle by...	Angle between the two planets <i>(allowing for a small orb either side)</i>	Meaning
Conjunction	♌	1	0° - next to each other in the chart	Unity: the two planets combine to create a focused ‘third force’
Opposition	♍	2	180°	Stress, tension, see-saw between two sides, possible projection of one end onto others
Trine	△	3	120°	Ease, harmony, enjoyment, natural skill, taken for granted
Square	□	4	90°	Work, effort, manifestation, pressure to hone skills and achieve practical outcomes
Sextile	✳	6	60°	Creativity, enjoyment but with some effort, creative gifts

A **Mercury-Saturn conjunction** will create a powerful third force in the chart – a serious and structured learner and thinker. **Mercury opposite Saturn** would still suggest the desire to be respected for one’s knowledge and learning (Mercury-Saturn), but the process might be characterised by a rejection of the need for serious practice, or doing one’s best learning when there is someone (or something) else around who can impose structure and discipline. **Mercury in square to Saturn** suggests again the same themes as in the table, but this time there is the conscious desire to practise those skills really hard and manifest something tangible out of them – a collection of diplomas, facility with several languages,

technical expertise, or whatever it happens to be – at the same as feeling that these things are immensely difficult to attain. **Mercury trine or sextile Saturn** eases the process, injecting it with a greater degree of enjoyment and flow – with **the sextile** giving extra motivation for creative use (perhaps someone who likes to build model railways or is good at calligraphy).

SELF-STUDY EXERCISE

1. Your Own Chart

Find an aspect between two planets in your own chart – a conjunction, opposition, trine, square or sextile. You can do this by looking at the connecting lines, or by checking in the ‘aspect grid’ below the chart wheel, if there is one.

Make a list of keywords and ideas for each planet, and then try combining them to create themes, as in the example of Mercury-Saturn on page 14.

Finally, see if you can add the idea of the particular aspect, to qualify this information. Can you see how you express or experience the aspect in question?

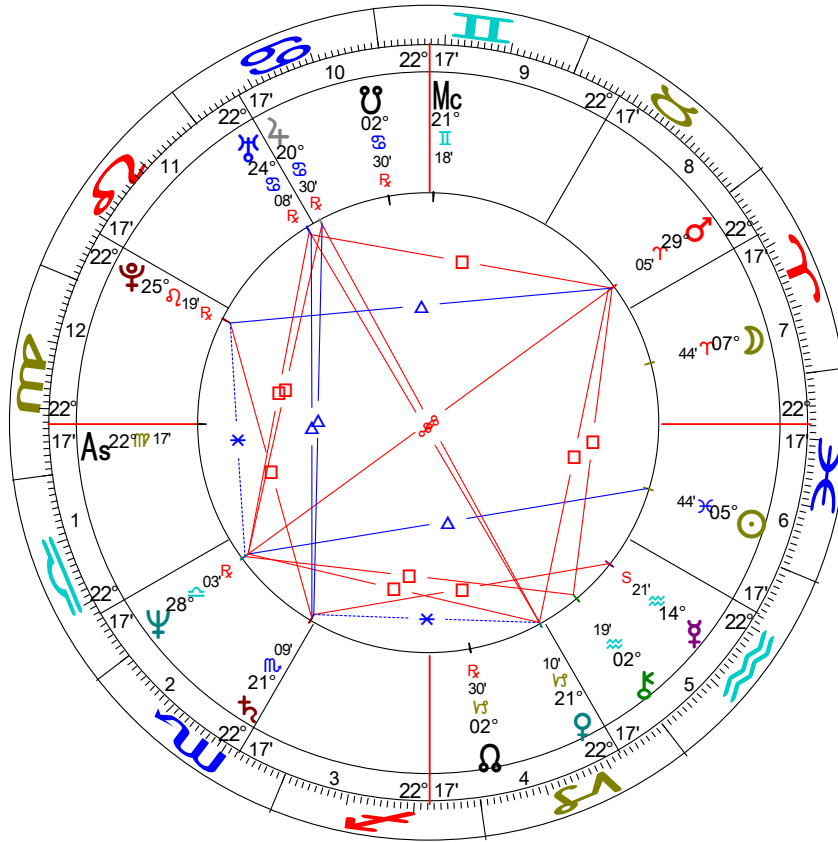
2. Mystery Chart

On page 16 is the chart of a famous person whom we have called ‘Simon’. You will see that Simon has the Sun in Pisces in the 6th house in trine to Neptune in Libra in the 2nd house. His chart also contains Venus in Capricorn in the 4th house opposite a conjunction of Jupiter and Uranus in Cancer involving the 10th and 11th houses.

Try to come up with a few ideas for these aspects. You can use keywords if you find that helpful. The opposition here is complicated by the fact that three planets are involved – you could try first interpreting Jupiter by itself (in its sign and house), then Uranus by itself (in its sign and house), then what it might mean to have these two planets in conjunction, and then finally think what the energy of Jupiter-Uranus might feel like when it is in a see-saw relationship with Venus in Capricorn in the 4th.

The identity of the person, along with a few ideas for the interpretation, are given at the bottom of page 17.

Mystery Chart – ‘Simon’



Studying Astrology with the Faculty

We hope the contents of this module have whetted your appetite to find out more about astrology. You can take the subject as far you would like to go – you may just want to dip into our online seminars from time to time, or you may decide to study the Foundation Course or feel that you would like to go all the way and gain the Diploma. You may have a professional career as an astrologer in mind, or just be interested in using astrology to understand more about yourself and the world around you. Whichever you decide, our seminars and courses will provide you with what you need to learn this most fascinating and magical subject.

The Faculty is a world-wide community of students and tutors, and we have decades of experience as a school – we have been at the forefront of astrological education since 1948 and our Diploma is much sought after and respected as a benchmark of excellence and proof of a high level of knowledge, skill and professionalism. The course includes not only the development of astrological knowledge and psychological depth, but also professional skills and personal self-development as an integral part of what we offer, with a team of highly skilled and qualified tutors.

Our tutors all hold our Diploma and most of them also hold other professional qualifications in counselling, therapy and other related fields, regularly engaging in ongoing training. As a student of the school, you will be fully supported by your tutors and by Faculty staff throughout the learning process, encouraged to work on your own chart to gain greater understanding of yourself, and have access to a range of learning methods which you can combine to suit your circumstances – distance learning with a personal tutor, classroom teaching and our annual Summer School in Oxford. Every part of the course is supported by written course material.

If you have any questions about studying with the Faculty, you can contact us at the following addresses:

Director of Studies – for queries about courses, exams and study options

Carole Taylor – carole.taylor@astrology.org.uk

General Enquiries and Enrolments

Tatiana Cuoco, Administrator – info@astrology.org.uk

Summer School Enquiries

Lindsay Gladstone – summerschool@astrology.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming you to the courses!

* * * * *

*The chart belongs to **Steve Jobs**, co-founder of Apple Computer Corporation and Pixar Animation Studios. **The Sun in Pisces in the 6th** suggests a life path (Sun) which includes working imaginatively and intuitively (Pisces) in a technical field (6th) – Neptune in the 2nd perhaps adds a feeling of unworldliness in material and financial terms but also suggests the capacity for unbounded generosity and sacrifice in service to a set of spiritual values. These values can combine easily with and support (trine) the imaginative visions of the Sun in Pisces.*

*With **Jupiter in Cancer in the 10th**, Jobs was perhaps drawn to a career which would allow him to explore widely and reach high (Jupiter in the 10th), but in which he could also work within a wide network of people (Jupiter in Cancer), perhaps all linked emotionally by the same philosophy (Jupiter in Cancer), which could feel like a professional ‘family’ of which he would be the motivational leader (Jupiter in Cancer in the 10th). **Uranus in the 11th** perhaps adds a technical and intellectual slant to that work and aspiration, based around a specific ideology of freedom and innovation for the good of the collective (Uranus in 11th).*

*The desire for professional freedom, limitless possibility and work which benefits the ‘human family’ (Jupiter and Uranus in Cancer, Uranus in the 11th) must here balance itself with the more conservative qualities of **Venus in Capricorn in the 4th**, which needs the private world of home and family as a place to return, where everything is beautifully structured and well-ordered. There may be a need for secure, long-term relationships (Venus in Capricorn) as the firm base (4th house) from which it is possible to go out into the world and manifest the ‘blue sky’ visions of Jupiter-Uranus.*