

Summary of Astrological Terms

By Phoenix Wolf-Ray

In this system, twelve planets (including Earth and Chiron) are each associated with an element and guiding (or ruling) a particular sign and house.

The Twelve Planets:

- **Q Sun** (the light we shine, source of consciousness, inner bias)
- **;** **Earth** (our physical matrix, body, immediate environment)
- **R Moon** (the feelings we reflect, instincts, infantile memories and emotions)
- **S Mercury** (the way we think, communicate & process information)
- **T Venus** (the way we love, how we attract love, female creative side)
- **U Mars** (what we want and how we get it, male creative side)
- **♃ Jupiter** (that which encourages us and gives us faith, connection with spirit)
- **♄ Saturn** (that which limits, slows us down and ultimately strengthens us)
- **♅ Chiron** (our bridge between the mundane and the transcendent: magic)
- **♁ Uranus** (that which awakens us out of our habits and shatters outworn forms)
- **♆ Neptune** (that which mystifies, mysticizes and dissolves our boundaries)
- **Z Pluto** (that which terrifies, enrages and compels us to transform).

The planets, or *forces*, are the actors in our personal play. They represent sub-personalities within our whole selves. Each of these parts has its own agenda, desires, goals and style of getting its needs met. The *styles* are called *signs*. Each sign is *ruled*, or *guided by*, a different planet.

In old times, rulerships were shared, since there were not enough known planets to go around. My inclusion of *Earth* as the ruler of *Taurus* and *Chiron* as the ruler of *Virgo* leaves each sign guided by a single planet, allowing a symmetry previously missing from the astrological system. The *sign* that each planet guides is that which best matches its elemental nature..

The Twelve Signs And Their Guides:

- **A Aries** (guided by **U Mars**)
- **B Taurus** (guided by **;** **Earth**)
- **C Gemini** (guided by **S Mercury**)
- **D Cancer** (guided by the **R Moon**)
- **E Leo** (guided by the **Q Sun**)
- **♍ Virgo** (guided by **♅ Chiron**)
- **♎ Libra** (guided by **♃ Venus**)
- **♏ Scorpio** (guided by **Z Pluto**)
- **♐ Sagittarius** (guided by **♃ Jupiter**)
- **♑ Capricorn** (guided by **♄ Saturn**)
- **♒ Aquarius** (guided by **♁ Uranus**)
- **♓ Pisces** (guided by **♆ Neptune**).

Characteristics of each force and style:

- **♂ Mars A Aries:** *Mars* is the initiating force, the bursting forth of spring from cold dead winter, masculine creativity & sexual drive (in women as well as in men), self-assertion; *Aries* is the sign of initiation, new beginnings, effortless springing forth, the kind of pure selfish motivation and energy found in an infant.
- **♁ Earth B Taurus:** *Earth* is the body that contains us, the sensual embrace of flesh, physical needs, the ground we stand on, our personal environmental matrix; *Taurus* is the sign of comfort and stability, solid ground underfoot, sensuality.
- **☿ Mercury C Gemini:** *Mercury* is our mind, our thought processes, how we perceive and communicate, how we filter and interpret our perceptions; *Gemini* is the sign of thinking, noticing, perceiving, analyzing, rationalizing; Gemini loves to exchange information with others.
- **☾ Moon D Cancer:** the *Moon* is our personal feeling-body, our childhood memories, our unconscious mind, our instinctual responses; *Cancer* is the sign of feeling, sensitivity to our own and others' needs, the instinctual desire to mother and be mothered, vulnerability and the need for self-protection.
- **☼ Sun E Leo:** the *Sun* is our conscious goals and desires, that which we idealize above all else, our creative life-force, our inner light which illuminates our world; *Leo* is the sign of spontaneity, creativity, dramatic/entertaining, dazzling, larger than life, always on stage, the center of every interaction.
- **♄ Chiron ♍ Virgo:** *Chiron* is the bridge between our physical limitations and our radical desire for freedom; it manifests magic through seemingly random choices in the moment that have a transmutative effect on our reality. *Virgo* is the sign of microcosmic, quantum physical reality; colorless, practical, helpful; ritual, service, sacrifice ('to make sacred').
- **♀ Venus ♎ Libra:** *Venus* is the heart in our breast, our aesthetic sense and desire for love, relationship, feminine creativity & sexual desire (in men as well as in women). *Libra* is the sign of balance, harmony, mirroring/polarizing, the Other which is both idealized and reviled; the painful and beautiful balancing of truth.
- **♇ Pluto ♏ Scorpio:** *Pluto* is the darkness hidden at our core, ancient secrets which pressure us from within, hidden treasure, a black hole of compressed terror, desire, rage, grief and loss. Scorpio is the sign of death, intense emotional and sexual bonding, magick, power, peak states.
- **♃ Jupiter ♐ Sagittarius:** *Jupiter* is the expanding light of faith that lifts us out of the darkness, that inspires us to live after all, the still, small voice of encouragement and support; *Sagittarius* is the sign of seeking new expanded frontiers of understanding and philosophy, jovial creative expansiveness, camaraderie, fun at parties.
- **♄ Saturn ♑ Capricorn:** *Saturn* can be frustrating; it is the down-to-earth practicality of discovering our physical limitations and developing our powers, defining the bounds of time and space. *Capricorn* is the sign of getting things done, necessary and productive things that further our physical evolution, struggling against forces designed to make us stronger. .

- ♃ Uranus ♒ Aquarius: *Uranus* is the iconoclast, the high-minded idealistic rebel, the genius, both the mad scientist performing experiments on animals and the flower child who loves everybody; *Aquarius* is the sign of revolution--social, political, technological and personal, and the development of kinship on a grand scale.
- ♆ Neptune ♋ Pisces: *Neptune* is the mysterious faerie queene, the fey strange changed side of life, that dissolves and reforms in gauzy unbounded scenes. *Pisces* is the sign of mysticism, compassion, emotional transcendence, boundlessness unity and oneness with All.

Examples of how different combinations of planets through the signs might work: *Mars in Gemini*; the bursting forth of new ideas. *Mercury in Aries*; thinking and talking a lot about bursting forth and starting something new. *Saturn in Taurus*, limits and difficulties around our immediate physical environment, e.g. our body. *Jupiter in Virgo*, faith in the greater meaning even of apparently trivial tasks and experiences.

The Houses:

The **houses** are the environments in which our parts play out their roles. The progression of the houses from 1st to 12th represents the stages of our personal evolution from initial spark to re-mergence:

The First Quadrant. Crossing the *Ascendant* (see discussion of *angles* later on), this stage we are rooted in the self, the present moment, uncomplicated by memory and unswayed by others' needs. We are focused on the purity of our experience:

- The **1st House** is naturally associated with **Aries/Mars**: this is the simplest level of being, pure existence, pure self, the moment after life is born from the Void. Joy, rage, driving force, exploding into existence.
- The **2nd House** is associated with **Taurus/Earth**: pure sensation, comfort, sensual and physical pleasures, relationship with the physical body and the body of Earth as a whole. Solid ground, continuity and steady growth.
- The **3rd House** is associated with **Gemini/Mercury**: curiosity, interest, information exchange and processing. The activation of the ever-restless mind, without guidance or discrimination.

The Second Quadrant. the *Nadir* is crossed, reality becomes more complex. In the Second Quadrant, memory, old feelings, family heritage become part of the matrix. We begin to create, to take responsibility, to learn.

- The **4th House** is associated with **Cancer/the Moon**: Emotions enter the mix, genetic heritage, childhood, racial and past-life memory, emotional security, nurturing. Here, we process and feel our past pains, joys and family stories.
- The **5th House** is associated with **Leo/the Sun**: joy, spontaneity, childlikeness, playful transmutation of the 4th House's deeply felt emotion into creative expression. Here, we discover our own light as a source of inspiration.
- The **6th House** is associated with **Virgo/Chiron**: learning how things work, healing & fixing broken things, perfection and service to a higher power. Here, we put in time performing routine tasks (with as much awareness as possible).

The Third Quadrant. the *Descendant* is crossed, bringing a new level of existence forward, that of caring for others' needs, intimacy & sexual/emotional exchange, discovery of a Higher Power:

- The **7th House** is associated with **Libra/Venus**:: others, relationships, the mirror, facing our own shadow reflected in the face of a loved / hated one. Here, through loving trust of another, we learn about our own dark sides and begin to integrate them.
- The **8th House** is associated with **Scorpio/Pluto**: the depths of emotion, ancient unprocessed memories and emotional experiences of death, powerful sexual forces, the hidden past we have feared. Here, we enter the fire and re-bond with our power.
- The **9th House** is associated with **Sagittarius/Jupiter**: expansiveness, exploring new territory, optimism, faith in the shape of the universe and one's own place in it. Here we discover a personal relationship with a Higher Power.

The Fourth Quadrant: the *Midheaven* is crossed, activating our relationship with society and the collective, bringing focus to our responsibility and ability to relate on a greater level:

- The **10th House** is associated with **Capricorn/Saturn**: social responsibility, how one fits into the greater whole, the role we play in society, career, our legacy. Here we work to overcome our limitations and help our society fulfill its mandate (from our point of view).
- The **11th House** is associated with **Aquarius/Uranus**: radical understandings, revolutionary awakenings, group relationships, marching to (or being!) the different drummer: a balanced sense of both uniqueness and equality of all beings.
- The **12th House** is associated with **Pisces/Neptune**: sleep, rest, dreams, boundlessness, choicelessness, the Void from which we are born. Here, we drift, dissolve and melt, awaiting the summons to be born again.

There are four basic kinds of houses, depending on which *element* they are naturally associated with (apart from whatever sign or planet is found in that house).

The Elements:

- **Fire**, or spirit/ creativity/ consciousness/ energy. Fire is enthusiastic, inspired, energetic and creative, but not always grounded or sensitive to others.
- **Earth**, or body/ functionality/ physical matter/ competence. Earth is practical, reliable, musical and grounded, but not always communicative or inspired.
- **Air**, or mind/ relationship/ communication/ perception Air is interested, aware, idealistic and communicative, but not always practical or emotionally attuned.
- **Water**, or feelings/ psyche/ magic/ mystery. Water is sensitive, vulnerable, caring and wise, but not always communicative or outwardly creative.

The Modes:

There are three signs in each element, one in each *mode*: **cardinal** (or initiating), **fixed** (or stable), and **mutable** (or changing).

- The **cardinal mode** is the initiating energy of that element, the beginning-place, where life, feeling, love and matter are born.
 - **Cardinal fire** is **Aries**, the bursting-forth of life from the void, the first spark of life—the beginning-place for consciousness, the ferocious drive to exist.
 - **Cardinal earth** is **Capricorn**, the slow-growing, struggling seed of physical reality, which grows stronger over time. Here we receive our greatest physical challenges.
 - **Cardinal air** is **Libra**, the moment of the first breath, opening in trust to love and vulnerability, the birth of love.
 - **Cardinal water** is **Cancer**, the deep roots of emotional memory, the history behind our hurts and feelings, our psychic source.

- The **fixed mode** is the steady-state, or sustained maximal expression of that element. Here, each element is found in its purest form.
 - **Fixed fire** is *Leo*, the bright, fixed light of the creative fire, unquenchable, sure of itself, confident and powerful as the *Sun* itself.
 - **Fixed earth** is *Taurus*, the solid ground of Earth itself, stable, reliable, unquestionable, the matrix within which everything is contained.
 - **Fixed air** is *Aquarius*, the broad overview, ability to see all sides of a given issue, focus on equal rights, individual freedom and visionary ideals.
 - **Fixed water** is *Scorpio*, deep, intense, emotionally compelling, the place where all past unprocessed emotion inescapably waits to be felt.
- The **mutable mode** is more complex, and is the shifting, breaking-down of that *element*, fluxing and changing into more and more complex forms. The **mutable mode** makes evolution possible!
 - **Mutable fire** is *Sagittarius*: expansive, circulating a comfortable, optimistic warmth that radiates outward in all directions, ever-opening, ever-learning, ever-changing.
 - **Mutable earth** is *Virgo*: the quantum, unpredictable, atomic level of matter, the minute functioning of bodies, where magic happens and order is brought from chaos
 - **Mutable air** is *Gemini*: restless, flowing, shifting mind, attention and perceptions; the curiosity and changeability of interest and focus
 - **Mutable water** is *Pisces*: where everything dissolves into a great cosmic soup of oneness, where reality is shifty, confusing and disorienting, transcendence

The Houses By Element:

- **Fire houses:** first, fifth and ninth
 - **earth houses:** second, sixth and tenth
 - **air houses:** third, seventh and eleventh
 - **water houses:** fourth, eighth and twelfth.
- When a planet is in a **fire house**, it shines and sparkles. Even a practical, colourless planet like *Saturn* sparkles in the fifth house, radiates warmly in the ninth and blazes forth in the first, albeit in a dim and muted way.
 - When a planet is in an **earth house**, it solidifies and gains substance. Even a fiery planet like *Mars* gets practical in the second house, busy in the sixth and committed in the tenth, though in an angry and impatient sort of way (Mars hates to be slowed down or held back in any way, including by his environment).
 - When a planet is in a **water house**, it becomes sensitized and psychic. Even a balanced planet like *Venus* can be easily hurt in the fourth house, intense in the eighth, and dissolved in dreams in the twelfth, only in a harmonious and truthful way.
 - When a planet is in an **air house**, it feels light and open. Even a self-protective solitary force like the *Moon* can chat in the third, open to love in the seventh and gather with others in the eleventh, only in a sensitive, shy way.

The houses are significant on their own, but when the sign or style on the **cusps** (or beginning point) is taken into consideration, even more refinement of meaning is possible.

Signs on the cusp:

- **A Aries** on the cusp of a house means, that particular house environment is approached in a direct, brash, and pushy sort of way. Where we have Aries, we don't want to wait our turn. We want what we want, and we want it now.
- **B Taurus** on the cusp of a house means, that particular house environment is approached calmly and sensibly, with no nonsense and much comfort given and taken. Where we have Taurus, we have what we want, and we want to keep it.
- **♊ Gemini** on the cusp of a house means that particular house environment is approached in a careless, breezy way, with curiosity and wonder. Where we have Gemini, we are interested and inquisitive, without agenda.
- **D Cancer** on the cusp of a house means, that particular house environment is approached sensitively, with care, and the giving and taking of nurturance. Where we have Cancer, we are soft, frightened and naked inside a shell of self-protection.
- **♌ Leo** on the cusp of a house means, that particular house environment is approached, spontaneously, creatively, dramatically. Where we have Leo, we pull out all the stops and get the attention we want without having to try hard. We shine!
- **♍ Virgo** on the cusp of a house means, that particular house environment is approached carefully, alertly, with understanding of its inner workings. Where we have Virgo, we have a quantum mechanic tweaking intricate micro-circuitry for our best possible universe.
- **♎ Libra** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached harmoniously and with studied aesthetic effect. Where we have Libra, we will give anything, say anything, do anything for the sake of love, truth and beauty.
- **♏ Scorpio** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached with great intensity. Scorpio is where pain and pleasure are most extreme. Where we have Scorpio, we can suffer the tortures of Hell, but if we completely surrender to the feeling, we can enjoy it. A lot.
- **♐ Sagittarius** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached exuberantly, with faith and joy. Where we have Sagittarius, we know exactly how the universe works, or believe we do.
- **♑ Capricorn** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached seriously, in a disciplined manner. Where we have Capricorn, we know it's going to be hard, and we are in it for the long haul.
- **♒ Aquarius** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached eccentrically, in a unique manner. Where we have Aquarius, we idealize freedom, equality and community.
- **♓ Pisces** on the cusp means, that particular house environment is approached dreamily, vaguely, in a confused (or mystical, depending on our inclinations) manner. Where we have Pisces, we have lost all boundaries and separations and exist in a dreamlike state.

Retrograde Planets:

Sometimes, because of the relative motion of the planets to Earth's orbit, a planet appears to stop moving forward and begin to move backward on its path through the zodiac. This is called **retrograde motion**. All planets except the **Sun, Moon** and **Earth** go **retrograde** at certain times. When this happens, the energies of that planet become inner-directed--introverted--and it can be more difficult to access the energies and gifts of that particular planetary force. Conscious effort and intention must be directed at bringing it to consciousness.

Each sign, planet and house is associated with an **element**.

Intercepted Signs and Planets:

Sometimes, because of the differing house sizes, there are signs which do not appear on the cusp of any house, but are buried entirely within a house. These are called **intercepted** signs, and any planets in these signs are considered to be **intercepted** as well. Intercepted signs and planets can be difficult to connect with; they are lost from awareness and must be connected with through some sort of conscious exertion of effort and intention.



The Angles:

The Ascendant (or **1st House Cusp**), the Nadir (or **4th House Cusp**), the Descendant (or **7th House Cusp**) and the Midheaven (or **10th House Cusp**) are known as the **angles**. These are powerful points in which the inner world (represented by the **planets, signs** and **aspects** within the astrological chart) meets and interfaces with greater reality.

- **ASC (Ascendant):** is the personality, the window through which we view the immediate world around us; it determines how we view reality; whether we are generally optimistic or pessimistic; how we behave; and how we see ourselves.
- **IC (Nadir):** is our past, our history, our emotional and genetic heritage. This is a window into a greater reality that is, nonetheless, inner. It is a very personal, secret, hidden place, in which we feel and sense currents and moods unexplainable to others.
- **DESC (Descendant):** is the relationship point. It is the opening through which we view our partners in relationship; not just the ones we love, but the ones we hate as well. It is a place of projection, for it exists somehow behind us... we are not capable of true objectivity or balanced perception when it comes to the affairs of the Descendant.
- **MC (Midheaven):** is the pinnacle of achievement--it is the point at which we serve our society, it is the place where we are most socially visible. It is how our community-at-large perceives us... our social and business reputation, in other words, as well as our style of pursuing a career and ambition.

Points Not Associated With Signs and Houses:

There are several points on the chart used in readings which are not associated with either a house or a sign, but are important in understanding.

The  North &  South Nodes: Based on the points where the Moon's orbital path intersects the Plane of the Ecliptic, this is the polarity of the evolutionary Destiny Path, from the

reincarnational past (the ♀ **South Node**) to the new evolutionary edge that is being opened up in this lifetime (the ♂ **North Node**).

- Planets and signs on the ♀ **South Node** indicate where a person is most comfortable, the 'birthright' energies that come most naturally. Gifts, mastery that require no conscious effort to develop. It is also a place where there is a tendency to cop out, to avoid growth and challenge.
- Planets and signs on the ♂ **North Node** indicate an uncomfortable yet excitingly attractive sense of 'newness', where we are drawn in order to challenge and complete ourselves. It is a place that may be scary to approach, yet if we avoid it, we cannot evolve as souls.

The Part of Fortune: The most commonly used of the Arabic Parts (calculated mathematically, based on the relationship between the Sun, Moon and Ascendant), this point indicates where we may find our fortune--our joy.

The next piece to consider in a basic chart interpretation is **aspects**, or relationships between the planets. Aspects, and their nature, are determined by the distances between planets in degrees--30 degrees, 60, 90, etc.

The Major (Dominant) Aspects:

- **conjunctions** (0 degrees, merged, blended)
- **sextiles** (60 degrees, zingy, stimulating)
- **squares** (90 degrees, stressful, dynamic, conflicting)
- **trines** (120 degrees, open, flowing, friendly)
- **quincunxes** (150 degrees, disconnections, stress, miscommunication)
- **oppositions** (180 degrees, polarities, tugs of war, two sides of a coin)

A **combustion** indicates a conjunction that is especially close--within a single degree. These forces are so blended that they are virtually one.

The major aspects are normally the only ones taken into consideration in a reading. Aspects are shown on the chart by color-coded lines: red for **squares**, green for **trines**, blue for **sextiles**, purple for **oppositions**, orange for **quincunxes**

Orbs are the relative closeness allowed for a particular aspect. A precise square, for example, is 90 degrees; but an orb of 8 degrees may be allowed (depending on the forces involved), so that even an 82 or 98 degree aspect could be considered a square.

A **stellium** refers to three or more planets found in a single house or sign... stelliums indicate large concentrations of energy within that house or sign, and give extra weight to that part.

The final piece normally addressed in an astrology reading is **transits**, which are the current positions of the planets in the sky--particularly the planets from Jupiter outward (**Saturn**, **Chiron**, **Uranus**, **Neptune** and **Pluto**)--and their impact as they move across sensitive points relative to the natal chart.

For example, transiting **Pluto** may move into a **conjunct** or **square** position relative to natal **Mars**, and that will denote a fairly lengthy time of struggling with **Plutonian** energies in the area of life determined by **Mars' sign** and **house** position.

The final picture can be very confusing, and it takes a skilled astrologer to begin to make sense of it. Astrology is a fascinating study, and your own chart is the perfect place to begin.

© 2006 Phoenix Wolf-Ray
9917 Willow St. Chemainus, BC V0R 1K1
1-250-709-4186
phoenix@earthmatrix.net
<http://earthmatrix.net>