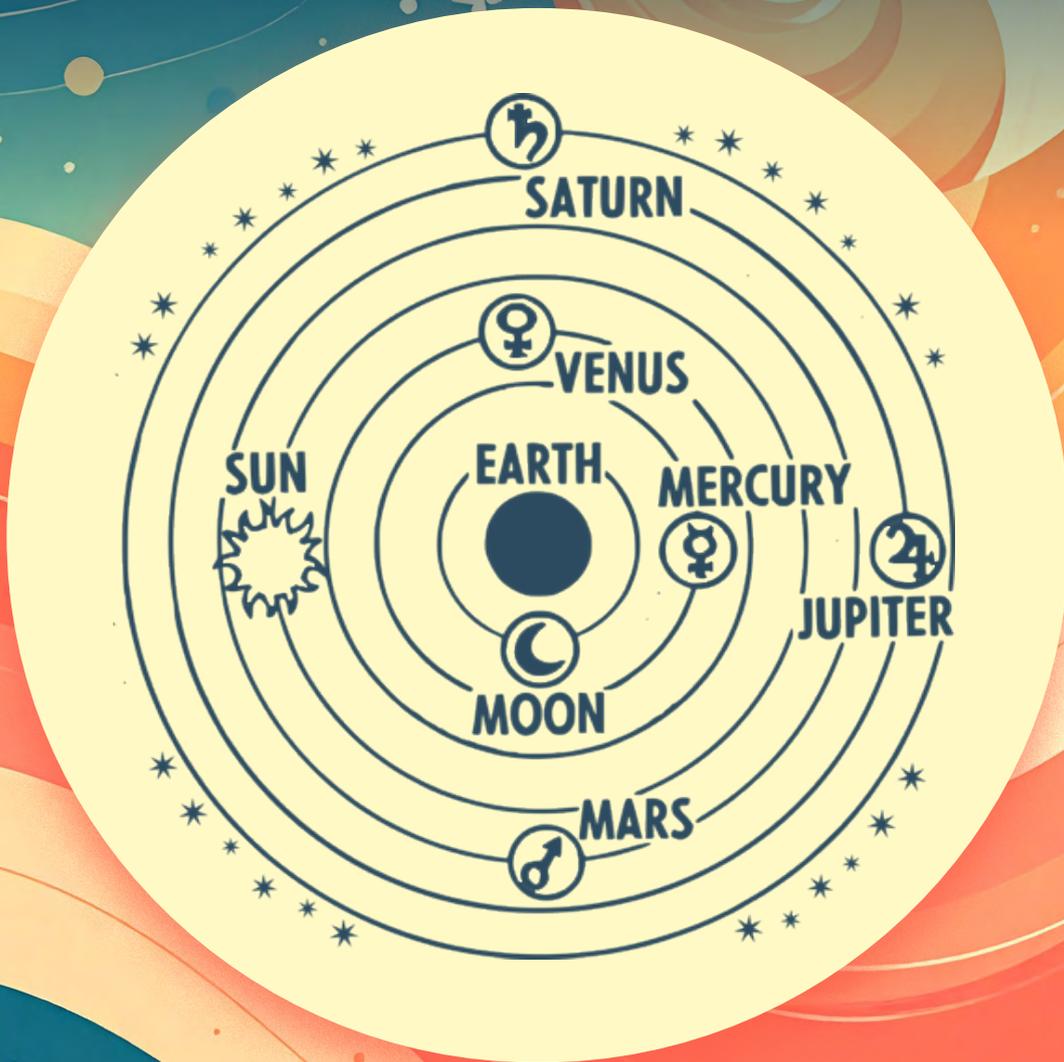


Your Astrology Workbook

A beginner's guide



Exploring Astrology with Sue Brayne

Discover, Embrace, and Connect to the Cosmos

Table of Contents

Welcome to Your Astrology Workbook	3
What is a natal chart?	5
The 12 Astrological Sun Signs – The ‘What’ of your Chart	7
The 12 Houses: The ‘Where’ of Your Chart	10
Cusps	11
The Planets: The ‘Who’ of Your Chart	15
Retrograde Planets	17
Planets in Dignity, Exaltation, Detriment, and Fall	19
Hemispheres and Quadrants	21
The Four Quadrants	23
The Four Elements and Yin and Yang	27
Yin and Yang Factors	30
Discovering the Four Modalities	33
Modality of Your Ascendent	34
The Big Three: Sun, Moon, and Ascendent	36
Sun, Moon, and Ascendent worksheet	37
Combining Planet + Sign + House: Building Interpretation Skills	39
The Nodal Axis: Your Soul’s Evolutionary Compass	41
The Nodes’ Movement	41
Retrograde (Backward) Motion	41
Aspects: How Planets Talk to Each Other	46
Planetary Teachers by Transit	50
Nodes Transits	51
Bringing it all together	53
Closing Thoughts	54
Resources	56

| Welcome to Your Astrology Workbook

This workbook is a basic introduction to reading your birth chart. It's designed to help you start learning the foundations of astrology and begin making sense of how it relates to your own life. There's a lot to discover, and this is your starting point.

Astrology is a meaningful approach to understanding both yourself and the world around you. It draws from thousands of years of history, blending ancient wisdom, observation, symbolism, and insight. At its heart, astrology helps you to notice patterns both in the heavens and within your own life, and use those patterns to reflect, grow, and make more inspired choices.

In this workbook, you will:

- Touch on the ancient history of astrology and why it still matters today.
- Explore the signs of the zodiac, the planets, and the twelve houses, and how they all work together in your chart to shape your unique experience of life.
- Understand how your souls' evolutionary journey is reflected in the chart through the nodal axis
- How aspects bring dynamism to your chart, revealing areas of ease, challenge, and growth in your personality and life.
- Try simple, practical exercises to develop and deepen your understanding of your astrological chart.
- Create your own astrology chart as you go through this book (see page 42)

My hope is that this workbook will inspire a deep desire to find out more about who you are, and why you are here.

What is astrology?

Astrology is an ancient symbolic system that explores how the positions and movements of celestial bodies, like planets and the fixed stars, reflect inner patterns of our personality, life cycles, and events on Earth. Rather than predicting exact outcomes, astrology offers a language of insight and consideration, helping us understand ourselves and our experiences in a deeper, more meaningful way.

At its core, astrology connects us to the cosmos, showing how we are part of a larger, dynamic whole. As such, it can guide self-awareness, decision-making, and spiritual growth.

Brief history

- **Ancient Origins:** Astrology dates back over 3,000 years to the Babylonians who developed the zodiac – the twelve signs that create the structure for the astrological chart we know today.
- **Classical Influence:** The Greeks, especially Ptolemy, formalised astrology into a system combining astronomy and philosophy (Ptolemy was a 2nd-century Greco-

Egyptian astrologer, astronomer, and mathematician whose work Tetrabiblos laid the foundation for much of Western astrological thought).

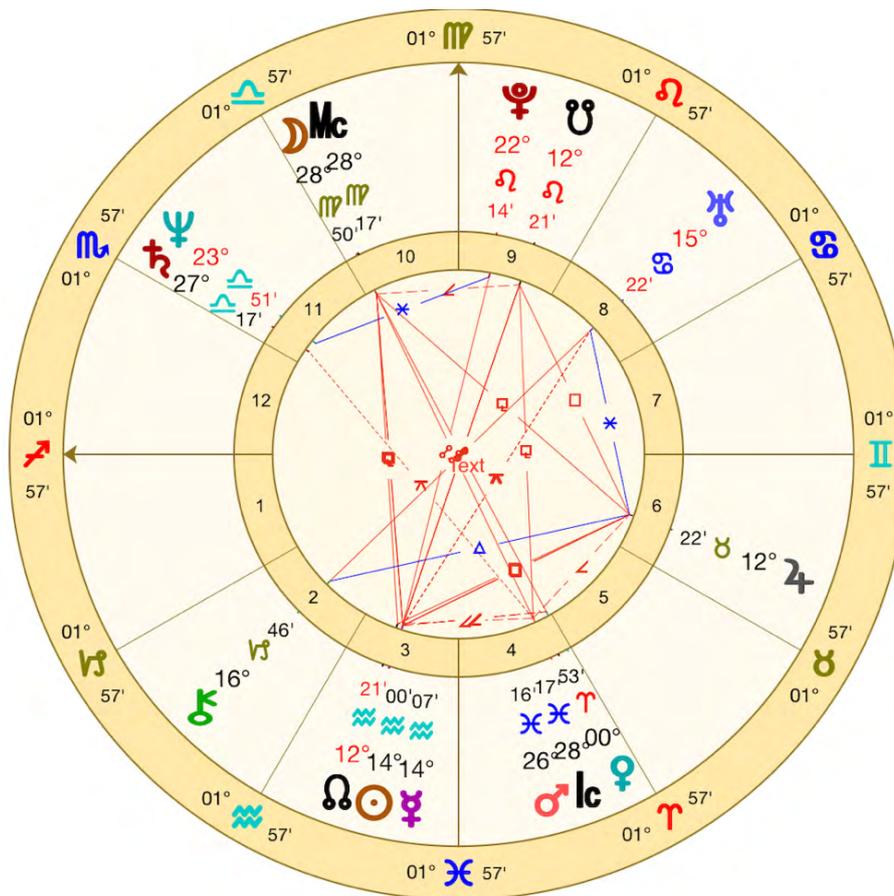
- **In classical times**, astrology was revered as the language of the cosmos, through which the heavens communicated divine order, meaning, and guidance to humanity. In fact, astrology and astronomy were regarded as the same discipline and skill.
- **The Church began to seriously oppose astrology** in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, particularly after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Constantine (early 4th century). The Church maligned astrology because it challenged ecclesiastical authority by suggesting that people could access divine order and destiny outside of Church doctrine and control. At the same time, the Church strongly rejected beliefs in reincarnation, viewing them as incompatible with Christian teachings on the soul's singular earthly life and final judgment, further suppressing alternative understandings of the soul and afterlife
- **Medieval to Renaissance:** The resurgence of astrology in Medieval and Renaissance times was fuelled by the translation of ancient Greek and Arabic astrological texts into Latin, sparking renewed interest in celestial knowledge as a way of understanding nature, health, and divine order. Astrology was studied alongside medicine and philosophy, influencing early science. It was an integral part of university curricula, shaping understandings of the body, soul, and cosmos in both scholarly and spiritual contexts.
- **This resurgence alarmed the Church**, which saw astrology's growing influence as a threat to its authority, leading to censorship, condemnation, and in some cases, the persecution or execution of astrologers (as well as many others) accused of heresy.
- **The Age of Enlightenment** separated astrology from astronomy by elevating empirical science and reason, dismissing astrology as superstition incompatible with the emerging scientific worldview. This shift marked a turning point in Western thought, where the cosmos was increasingly seen as a mechanical system, stripping celestial bodies of their spiritual and psychological significance.
- **Modern Revival:** In the 20th century, psychology and astrology merged, with thinkers such as Carl Jung and James Hillman exploring astrology's symbolic depth. This integration helped reframe astrology as a way for self-understanding, aligning it with the inner world of the psyche rather than external prediction.
- **Contemporary Uses:** Today, astrology is widely used for personal growth, timing important life events, relationship insight, and creative guidance. It's embraced as a process for self-discovery rather than deterministic prediction.

How to use this workbook

Each section provides bite-sized information together with suggested reflection to help you connect the astrological concepts to your own birth chart and life experiences.

You don't need prior knowledge of astrology – this workbook is designed to provide you with the basics. You just need curiosity and the willingness to engage with openness and patience. In my experience of working with astrology, it grabs hold of you and doesn't let you go!

| What is a natal chart?



A natal chart (also called a birth chart) is a snapshot of the heavens at the exact moment and place you were born. It maps the positions of the Sun, Moon, planets, and other key points against the backdrop of the zodiac signs and astrological houses. Your chart serves as a symbolic map of your personality, tendencies, potentials, and life themes.

Think of it as your cosmic fingerprint, unique to you. While it doesn't dictate your fate, it reveals patterns and aspects that influence how you perceive, respond to, and move through the world.

What you need: birth date, time, and location

To generate an accurate natal chart, you need three key pieces of information:

- **Birth Date:** Day, month, and year of your birth.
- **Birth Time:** The Ascendant or rising sign (describes your personality) changes approximately every two hours, completing a full cycle through all twelve signs in about 24 hours. However, because the Earth rotates continuously, the Ascendant moves about 1 degree every 4 minutes, so the exact degree, and therefore the precise house cusps, shift constantly throughout those two hours.
- **Birth Location:** The city or town where you were born, including the country. This locates you geographically on Earth to calculate planetary positions correctly.

It's important to understand that while the zodiac traditionally begins with Aries, this does not mean your Ascendant is Aries. Your unique combination of birth date, time, and location determines your Ascendant and places the planets in their specific signs and houses.

If your birth time is unknown, a chart can still be created, but the accuracy of the Ascendant and house placements will be limited. In this case, it's best to consult an astrologer who can help rectify your birth time - a process that often uses key life events to estimate a more accurate chart.

How to get your free natal chart

There are several trusted websites where you can generate a free birth chart with ease. Here are two popular options:

astro.com

- Navigate to "Free Horoscopes" > "Extended Chart Selection"
- Create a free account to save your charts or enter your birth data directly
- Choose "Natal Chart Wheel" for a classic chart image and details

astro-seek.com

- Go to "Free Horoscopes" > "Natal Chart, Ascendant"
- Enter your birth details in the form
- View or print your natal chart and download various reports

Both sites also provide useful explanations and interactive tools to explore your chart further.

Now, let's get on with Astrology ...

| The 12 Astrological Sun Signs – The ‘What’ of your Chart

The zodiac is divided into 12 astrological signs (or Sun signs) each representing different qualities, traits, and ways of being. These astrological signs create the structure of the zodiac in a fixed order, beginning with Aries and ending with Pisces.

Sun Sign Date Changes

Aries	March 20–21
Taurus	April 19–20
Gemini	May 20–21
Cancer	June 20–21
Leo	June 20–21
Virgo	August 22–23
Libra	September 22–23
Scorpio	October 22–23
Sagittarius	November 21–22
Capricorn	December 21–22
Aquarius	January 19–20
Pisces	February 18–19

Elements and Modes of the astrological signs

Each astrological sign has its own glyph (symbol), element, modality, and key characteristics. The vitality of each of the twelve astrological signs is created from a combination of one element and one mode. These elements and modes never change.

There are four elements, which represent the temperament of an astrological sign:

- **Fire** (inspiration)
- **Earth** (grounding)
- **Air** (ideas)
- **Water** (emotions)

There are three modes, which is how an astrological sign acts out this temperament:

- **Cardinal** (drive/initiatory)
- **Fixed** (resilient/steady)
- **Mutable** (adaptable/flexible)

To make things simple, below is a chart summarising each astrological sign with its mode and element, and a key word to illustrate how the sign expresses itself positively and negatively. We all possess positive and negative traits no matter how much we don't want to admit to them.

Sign	Glyph	Mode	Element	Positive key word	Negative key word	Your own key words
Aries	♈	Cardinal	Fire	Pioneering	Selfish	
Taurus	♉	Fixed	Earth	Practical	Stubborn	
Gemini	♊	Mutable	Air	Communicative	Gossip	
Cancer	♋	Cardinal	Water	Protective	Possessive	
Leo	♌	Fixed	Fire	Creative	Arrogant	
Virgo	♍	Mutable	Earth	Analytical	Critical	
Libra	♎	Cardinal	Air	Balanced	Dependent	
Scorpio	♏	Fixed	Water	Passionate	Obsessive	
Sagittarius	♐	Mutable	Fire	Exploring	Unreliable	
Capricorn	♑	Cardinal	Earth	Responsible	Workaholic	
Aquarius	♒	Fixed	Air	Humanitarian	Eccentric	
Pisces	♓	Mutable	Water	Artistic	Addictive	

It's important to remember that the element is the temperament of the astrological sign, while the mode is how the astrological sign acts this out.

For example:

the temperament of Virgo is grounded and practical with a strong sense of service and a desire for the analytical, detail, and perfectionism. On a positive note, Virgos act this out by applying their quick, adaptable mind (they are ruled by Mercury) to bring structure and order to the world (Earth). On a more negative note, Virgos can become highly-strung self-doubters, and super-critical perfectionists.

To give another example, Scorpio is in the element of water and a fixed modality. The temperament of Scorpio is about passion, power, truth, intrigue, and depth (it's ruled by

Mars and Pluto). On the lighter side, Scorpios act this out through their loyalty, intensity, achievement, and a powerful desire to penetrate the deep mysteries of life. On the darker side, this can manifest as possessiveness, obsession, sexual perversion, and revenge.

Take a look at your astrological Sun sign and see if you identify with its positive and negative traits outlined in the chart, or perhaps other traits come to mind, which you might want to note down in the righthand column. Astrology is here to help you gain a deep insight into who you are and how you respond or react to life.

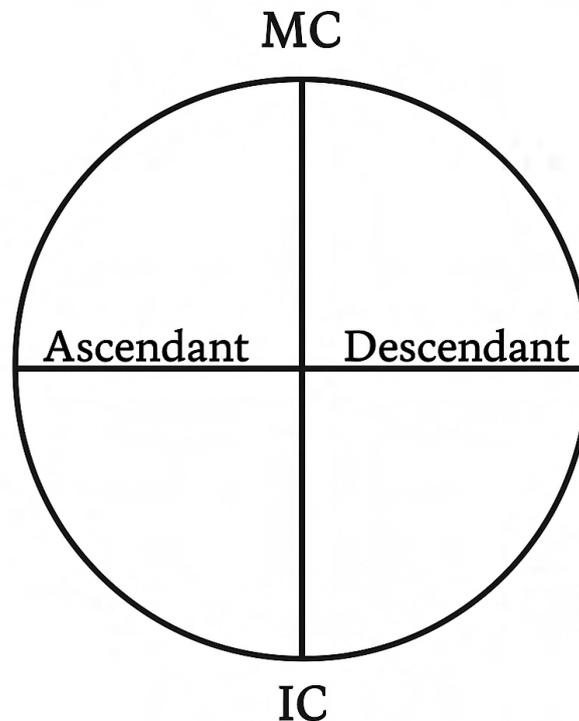
Journaling prompt:

What does it feel like to be the Sun sign that you are? How do you approach life? How do you shine your light?



| The 12 Houses: The 'Where' of Your Chart

Think of the birth chart as a 360° wheel divided into a grand cross

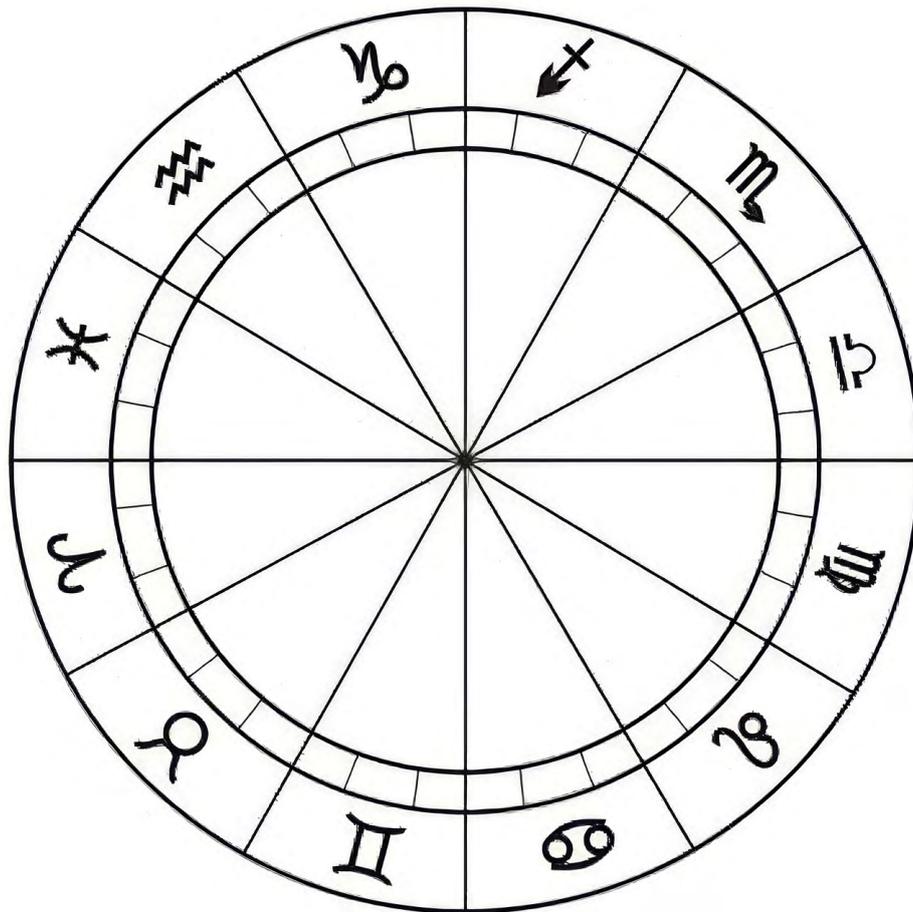


Horizontal line

- **The ASCENDENT:** The 1st house cusp is about you. It represents your personality, how you show up in life, and how others immediately see you
- **The DESCENDENT:** The 7th house cusp (opposite the Ascendent) represents your relationships and partnerships, one-to-one connections or what you might project into others

Vertical line

- **The MEDIUM COELI or MC** (literal meaning 'middle of the sky', where the Sun was at it's highest at the moment of your birth) represents your career, your social standing, your reputation, how you may be viewed in public settings, and the place where you find success. This is associated with the 10th house.
- **THE IMUM COELI or IC** (meaning bottom of the sky or the midnight point, opposite the MC) represents your home, family, roots, and ancestry, and the place where you are most private and most unconscious. This is associated with the 4th house.



Cusps

The rest of the houses fall anticlockwise between these four major angles creating twelve separate houses, each symbolising a specific area of life. Each house has an astrological sign on the cusp, marking the boundary between one house and the next.

1st House – The House of Self (Aries)

Keywords: Identity, physical appearance, first impressions, vitality, instinct.

- **Meaning:** The 1st house governs the personality you project to the world. It represents the ego, how others perceive you, and your approach to life.
- **Spiritual Insight:** This is the incarnation point - how the soul takes form in this lifetime. It can reveal the soul's 'mask' and what it came here to initiate.

2nd House – The House of Possessions (Taurus)

Keywords: Money, resources, self-worth, material security, values.

- **Meaning:** This house deals with what you own, both physically and psychologically, and how you relate to your worth and survival.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Reflects your relationship to the material world and how you anchor spirit in matter. Lessons often concern inner versus outer value.

3rd House – The House of Communication (Gemini)

Keywords: Thinking, learning, siblings, short travel, early education, community

- **Meaning:** Concerned with how we perceive, interpret, and exchange information. Also rules the mind, speech, close surroundings, and early schooling
- **Spiritual Insight:** Relates to how the soul seeks to understand and articulate its experience in this lifetime.

4th House – The House of Home and Roots (Cancer)

Keywords: Home, ancestry, inner emotional life, parents, psychological foundation, what we are most unconscious of.

- **Meaning:** This is the private self, your roots, and emotional inheritance. It is also associated with endings (IC is lowest part of chart) and conclusions.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Connects to your soul's lineage, karmic family dynamics, and your sense of belonging this incarnation.

5th House – The House of Creativity and Play (Leo)

Keywords: Creativity, children, romance, self-expression, joy, gambling, play, sport.

- **Meaning:** Focuses on how you express your uniqueness, seek pleasure, and create something that lives beyond you.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Speaks to how the soul creates meaning and joy – a house of play and creative destiny. Yet it also speaks of excesses.

6th House – The House of Service and Health (Virgo)

Keywords: Daily work, health, routines, service, humility, perfectionism, criticism

- **Meaning:** Rules work habits, bodily health, and how we serve others and ourselves. Also rules pets and people we work with.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Often a karmic house, it relates to the soul's discernment through practical service, embodiment, and desire to create a better world.

7th House – The House of Partnership (Libra)

Keywords: Relationships, marriage, contracts, projections, 'open enemies'.

- **Meaning:** Where we meet 'the other.' This house shows how we relate to and learn through intimate relationships or one-to-one partnerships.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Teaches the soul about reflection, balance, and what it needs to evolve through connecting with the other.

8th House – The House of Death and Transformation (Scorpio)

Keywords: Death, sex, other people's money, deep psychology, power, regeneration.

- **Meaning:** Associated with shared resources, intimacy, crisis, transformation, and the unseen (occult) realms.
- **Spiritual Insight:** A key house for soul evolution where ego must die so the deeper self may be reborn. Often shows karmic wounds and rebirth paths.

9th House – The House of Philosophy and Higher Learning (Sagittarius)

Keywords: Belief systems, travel, education, law, publishing, spiritual seeking.

- **Meaning:** Expands the mind beyond the local world. This house governs meaning, religious and spiritual exploration, higher education, and long-distance journeys.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Shows the soul's quest for truth, wisdom, moral and cosmic law – the house of spiritual worldview.

10th House – The House of Career and Public Life (Capricorn)

Keywords: Career, legacy, reputation, life direction, authority, father figures.

- **Meaning:** The most visible part of the chart. Shows your role in society, ambition, and what you're here to build or contribute.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Points to your soul's vocation and how it seeks to embody purpose in the world through long term planning and strategies.

11th House – The House of Community and Vision (Aquarius)

Keywords: Friends, groups, social movements, technology, hopes for the future.

- **Meaning:** Focuses on your place within the collective, networks, and your ideals for humanity.
- **Spiritual Insight:** Connects personal destiny to collective evolution. Often a house of soul tribes, vision, and the future-self.

12th House – The House of the Unconscious and the Divine (Pisces)

Keywords: Isolation, dreams, mysticism, institutions, the hidden self, karma.

- **Meaning:** Rules the unseen or hidden, and spiritual dimensions. Associated with retreat, charitable work, personal undoing, and transcendence.
- **Spiritual Insight:** The house of soul memory, past lives, and connection to Source. It can reflect both gifts and wounds from previous incarnations.

The Polarity Axes

It's helpful to look at how the twelve houses form six pairs of oppositions or polarities. Each pair creates an overarching theme which can add depth and context to how themes play out in your life.

House Axis	Overarching theme		
1 st /7 th	Relationships	Self (Aries)	Other (Libra)
2 nd /8 th	Resources	Possessions (Taurus)	Other's values (Scorpio)
3 rd /9 th	Exploring	Communicating (Gemini)	Seeking (Sagittarius)
4 th /10 th	Belonging	Safety (Cancer)	Status (Capricorn)
5 th /11 th	Generating	Personal (Leo)	Altruistic (Aquarius)
6 th /12 th	Service	Duty (Virgo)	Sacrifice (Pisces)

For example, if the Libra–Aries axis falls into the 3rd and 9th houses, the themes of communication, learning, and everyday interactions are deeply influenced by the Libra–Aries polarity of relationships.

For example:

- **Libra (Sign of Libra on 3rd house cusp):** You tend to seek harmony, balance, and fairness in your conversations and relationships with siblings, neighbours, and your immediate environment. You may have a diplomatic communication style, valuing cooperation and peace in your daily exchanges.
- **Aries (Sign of Aries on opposite cusp of the 9th house):** Opposing this, you may have a bold, assertive drive in your beliefs, higher learning, and worldview. This tension invites you to balance thoughtful dialogue (3rd house Libra) with confident self-assertion and pioneering ideas (9th house Aries).

Overall, the Libra–Aries axis in the 3rd and 9th houses suggest a life path involving mastering the balance between tactful communication and courageous expression of your convictions, especially in how you share ideas and expand your understanding.

Reflection: Take a look at which houses your Libra – Aries axis falls into (remember – they will be exactly opposite each other). Once you've done this, you might like to look at, for example, where your Cancer– Capricorn axis is in your chart. Think about how this might play out in your life, or what themes might constantly arise because of this. Then look at the other axes and think how they are influencing you.

| The Planets: The ‘Who’ of Your Chart

Your birth chart is like a cosmic cast of characters, with each planet representing a different part of your personality, drives, and inner world. Think of the planets as ‘who’ you are – the roles and qualities that shape your life experience.

The Planetary Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Planet	Glyph	Ruler	Overarching theme	Themes
THE LUMINARIES shedding light on spirit and soul	Sun	☉	Leo	Spirit	ego, nature, stamina, action, vitality, inspiration, the hero’s journey, father, day
	Moon	☾	Cancer	Soul	emotions, moods, fluctuations, intuition, mother, the unconscious, night, home, past
PERSONAL PLANETS shape different facets of our personality	Mercury	♿	Gemini and Virgo	Messenger	mind, communication, intellect, reason, language, the trickster, transport, youth
	Venus	♀	Taurus and Libra	Love	self-value, beauty, money, relationships, harmony, values, friendships
	Mars	♂	Aries and Scorpio	Assertion	aggression, protection, fire, courage, valour, passion, sexuality and desire
SOCIAL PLANETS bridging personal and transpersonal planets – shape how we engage with the world around us	Jupiter	♃	Sagittarius and Pisces	Benevolence	luck, faith, foreign travel, adventure, belief, expansion, publishing, politics, natural law.
	Saturn	♄	Capricorn and Aquarius	Boundaries	responsibility, time, limitations, hard learnt lessons, karma, the past
TRANSPERSONAL PLANETS spiritual evolution, and transformation	Chiron	♆		Healing	suffering, pain, wounding, healing, mentor, spiritual teacher
	Uranus	♅	Aquarius	Change	rebellion, eccentric, shock, the outsider, the maverick, awakener

Hierarchy	Planet	Glyph	Ruler	Overarching theme	Themes
	Neptune	♆	Pisces	Dissolving	creativity, charismatic, fog, releasing, confusion, highest spiritual expression
	Pluto	♇	Scorpio	Transformation	death and rebirth, transformation, reformation, regeneration, power, intensity, depth, sexuality

Activity:

Write One Sentence for Each Planet in Your Chart.

Look at the sign of each planet. Then, in the chart on the next page, write one sentence that sums up how you feel about the way the planet's energy shows up in your life.

Example:

Sun in Leo: 'I shine when I express my creativity and receive recognition.'

Moon in Pisces: 'I feel deeply and need time alone to recharge my emotional energy.'

Mars in Aries: 'I take quick action and enjoy challenges, sometimes acting before I think.'

Planet	Astrological sign	Your sentence
Sun:		
Moon:		
Mercury:		
Venus:		
Mars:		

Planet	Astrological sign	Your sentence
Jupiter:		
Saturn:		
Uranus:		
Neptune:		
Pluto:		
Chiron:		

Reflection: Has anything surprised you as you study how your planets are shaped by their signs?

Retrograde Planets

In astrology, a retrograde planet appears to move backward through the zodiac from our perspective on Earth. The Sun and Moon never go retrograde, but all other planets can. As seen from Earth, these planets appear to pause (station), move backward (retrograde), pause again, and then resume forward motion. This is an optical illusion caused by the Earth's faster orbit. Think of it like sitting on a train next to another moving forward - you may feel like your train is rolling backward, even though it isn't. Retrogrades work similarly: they slow a planet's energy, turning it inward and making it more reflective, nudging us to review, rethink, or tie up loose ends.

Not everyone has retrograde planets in their chart, but when they do, they often marked with an Rx or highlighted in red in the natal chart, they show where this inward energy is strongest. On a personal level, retrograde planets indicate where the soul is refining something from the past. They may feel quieter or more challenging at first, but over time they cultivate depth, intuition, and self-awareness. They aren't 'broken', they simply operate differently by highlighting parts of us that may feel uncomfortable to express. Therefore, they offer growth on our own terms.

People without retrogrades often develop life skills early, while those with multiple retrogrades may gain skills gradually, becoming more introspective, solitary, and insightful in the process.

Mercury Retrograde

(Many people have retrograde Mercury because it moves so fast)

Challenges: Reflective and less talkative, self-critical, can feel misunderstood or socially disconnected, difficulty with self-expression, understanding others' intentions, absent-minded, and not always attuned to details.

Strengths / Positive Side: Highly analytical, capable of unusual or original ways of thinking, introspective, literary or intellectual interests, and thoughtful in decision-making. Mercury retrograde encourages deep reflection and careful communication.

Venus Retrograde

Challenges: Unrealistic about love, overly romantic or seeking an idealised 'Big Love Story,' self-conscious about appearance, undemonstrative, and unconventional in social and aesthetic preferences.

Strengths / Positive Side: Strong focus on self-love and personal values, non-conformist and creative, attracted to unusual or artistic pursuits, independent in relationships, and capable of authentic, unconventional expressions of affection.

Mars Retrograde

Challenges: Inhibited action vacillates between doing and not doing, passive-aggressive tendencies, suppressed anger, and difficulty asserting oneself.

Strengths / Positive Side: Deep inner drive and focus on personal growth, reflective about goals and strategy, inventive in problem-solving, self-protective, and capable of endurance. Mars retrograde encourages thoughtful, deliberate action and mastery of inner energy.

Jupiter Retrograde

Challenges: Misunderstood beliefs, unconventional worldviews, alternating optimism and pessimism, reluctance to share ideas, and tendency to reject conventional thinking.

Strengths / Positive Side: Philosophically independent, reflective, spiritually introspective, capable of developing personal faith and wisdom, and able to cultivate a deep internal understanding of life's meaning. Jupiter retrograde fosters personal growth through inner reflection rather than external approval.

Saturn Retrograde

Challenges: Discomfort with authority and criticism, resistant to change, self-doubt, rigid habits, and unusual ways of expressing discipline.

Strengths / Positive Side: Motivated to build stamina and endurance, capable of profound self-discipline, introspective about responsibilities, and develops resilience through careful reflection and perseverance. Saturn retrograde encourages mastery over personal limits and thoughtful, long-term growth.

Retrograde Outer Planets:

Uranus, Neptune, Pluto move very slowly, so their retrogrades tend to affect a whole

generation rather than just an individual.

If all your outer planets are retrograde, it can suggest a sense of being out of sync with the collective energy of your generation. Their retrogrades invite deeper, long-term introspection rather than immediate, daily-life disruptions.

Planets in Dignity, Exaltation, Detriment, and Fall

Essential Dignities: Essential dignities describe a planet's strength and effectiveness in a sign. Planets can be comfortable, strong, weak, or challenged depending on the sign they occupy.

Dignity (Comfort)

- A planet is in dignity when it is in a sign it naturally rules.
- The planet can express its qualities easily and positively.

Example:

- **Sun in Leo:** Sun rules Leo, so it shines strongly, expressing confidence, leadership, and vitality.
- **Moon in Cancer:** Moon rules Cancer, so emotions, nurturing, and intuition flow naturally.

Exaltation

- A planet is exalted when it is in a sign where its energy is especially strong, though not ruled.
- The planet functions at its highest potential.

Example:

- **Sun in Aries:** Sun's energy is dynamic, pioneering, and courageous.
- **Moon in Taurus:** Moon feels stable, nurturing, and grounded.

Detriment

- A planet is in detriment when it is in the sign opposite its rulership.
- It is weakened, uncomfortable, or challenged in expressing its nature.

Example:

- **Sun in Aquarius:** Sun wants personal expression and authority, but Aquarius emphasises collective thinking – Sun feels restricted.
- **Moon in Capricorn:** Moon seeks emotional comfort, but Capricorn is disciplined and reserved – Moon feels constrained.

Fall

- A planet is in fall when it is in the sign opposite its exaltation.
- The planet struggles to express its positive qualities and may manifest in less effective or difficult ways.

Example:

- **Sun in Libra:** Sun's vitality and will are weakened; relationships may dominate individuality.
- **Moon in Scorpio:** Emotional intensity can be overwhelming, unstable, or secretive.

Quick Reference Table

Planet	Dignity (Rulership)	Exaltation	Detriment	Fall
Sun	Leo	Aries	Aquarius	Libra
Moon	Cancer	Taurus	Capricorn	Scorpio
Mercury	Gemini, Virgo	Virgo	Sagittarius, Pisces	None usually
Venus	Taurus, Libra	Pisces	Scorpio, Aries	Virgo
Mars	Aries, Scorpio	Capricorn	Libra, Taurus	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius, Pisces	Cancer	Gemini, Virgo	Capricorn
Saturn	Capricorn, Aquarius	Libra	Cancer, Leo	Aries

Dignity (Rulership): Planet at home, strong, comfortable

Exaltation: Planet strong but in a special way

Detriment: Planet opposite its home, weak, challenged

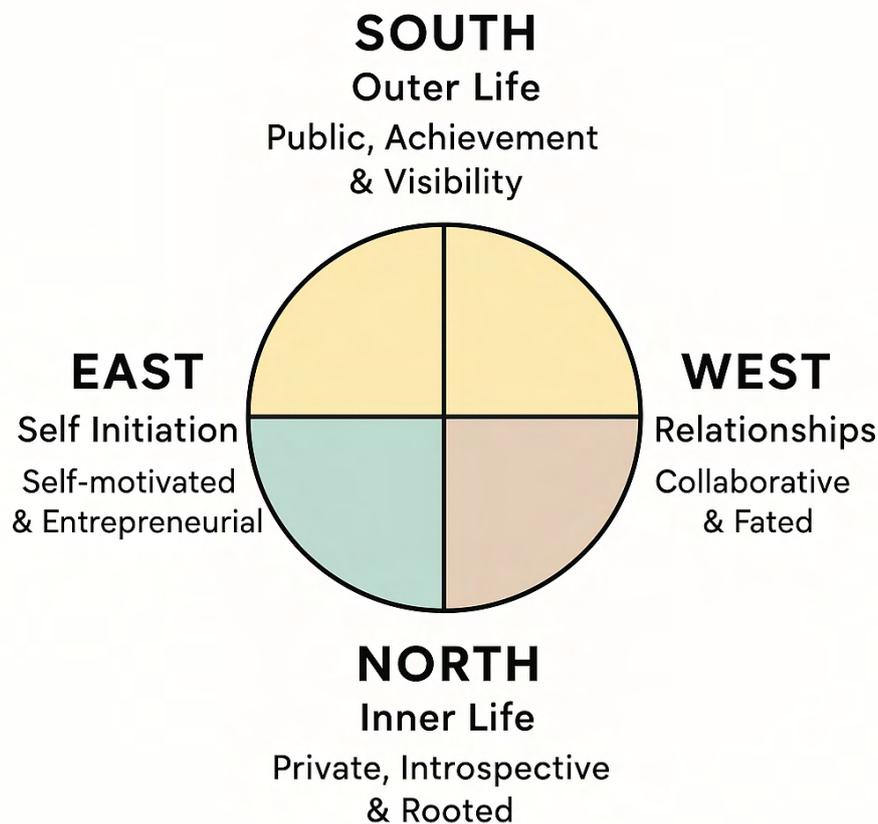
Fall: Planet opposite exaltation, difficult, restricted

| Hemispheres and Quadrants

Now that you have an understanding of the houses and planets, you can deepen your insight into what drives you by examining where your planets fall in your chart and the overall patterns they form. Each of the four hemispheres that create the structure of the chart represents an important side of your growth, and where your planets fall shows the way you naturally approach life.

For example, notice whether most of your planets lie **above** the Ascendant–Descendant axis (South: houses 7–12) or **below** it (North: houses 1–6). Also see whether they cluster on the **Eastern** side of the chart (houses 10–3) or the **Western** side (houses 4–9).

THE FOUR HEMISPHERES



Most Planets in the Southern hemisphere (upper half):

- Indicate a person whose focus is oriented toward the outer world – public life, achievement, and visible expression.

Most Planets in the Northern hemisphere (lower half):

- Point to someone who is more inner-directed, private, introspective, and rooted in personal

Most Planets on the Eastern side (left side of the chart):

- Suggest a more self-motivated, self-initiating, or entrepreneurial nature—someone who tends to act independently.

Most Planets on the Western side (right side of the chart):

- Indicate a life more shaped through relationships, collaboration, and sometimes experiences that feel guided or influenced by others.

Exercise:

Count the planets in each hemisphere and notice how their placement reflects the way you engage with life.

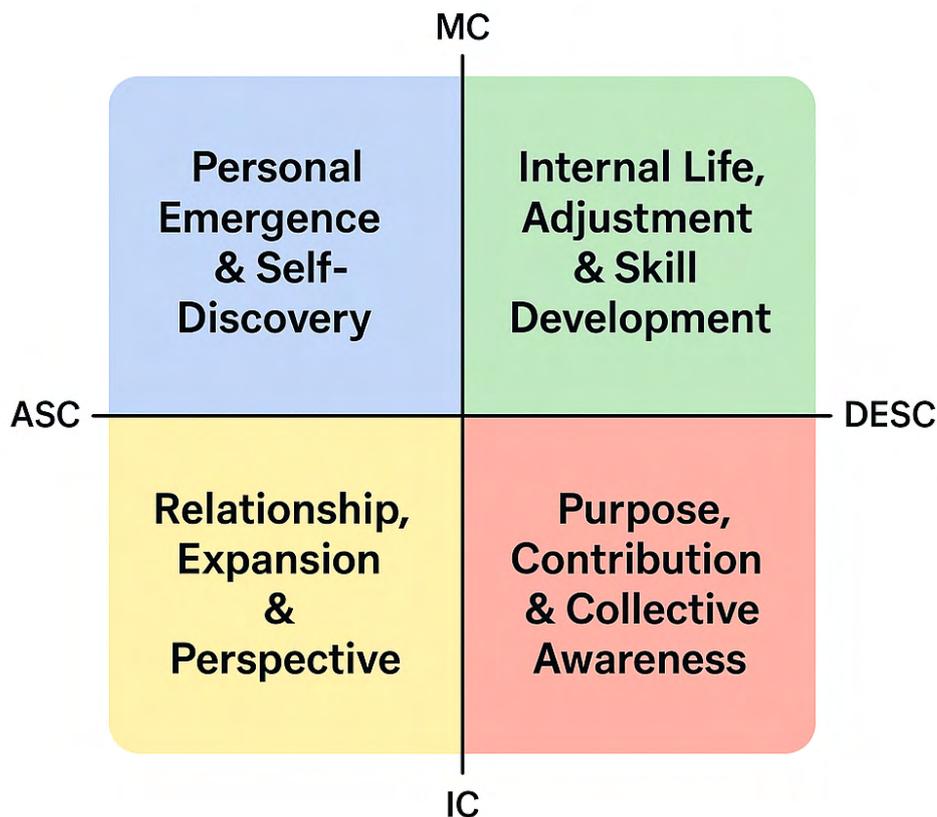
Hemisphere	Planets
Southern (houses 7 – 12)	
Northern (houses 1 – 6)	
Eastern (houses 10 – 3)	
Western (houses 4 – 9)	



The Four Quadrants

The next step is to look at how many of your planets fall into each of the four quadrants of the chart, created by houses 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, and 10–12. This helps you see where your energy is naturally focused. Each of the four quadrants highlight a different area of life, and irrespective of whether you have many planets, just a few, or none at all in a quadrant, this can influence how strongly those themes show up in your experience of life.

The Four Quadrants of the Astrological Chart



Quadrant 1 (Houses 1–3): Personal Emergence and Self-Discovery

This quadrant is all about getting to know yourself – your identity, your style of communication, the way you move through your immediate world. It’s where you build your voice and figure out what makes you, you.

House Themes

- **1st House – Identity and Persona:** How you show up, your instincts, your overall vibe.
- **2nd House – Values and Resources:** What you value, what you own, your sense of stability.
- **3rd House – Mind and Environment:** How you think, speak, learn, and navigate your local world.

Together, these houses reflect the early formation of your personality and the building blocks of personal confidence and skill.

If you have lots of planets here

- **Positive:** Strong self-awareness, clear sense of identity, natural curiosity, and a powerful personal voice.
- **Challenge:** You may become overly self-focused at times or struggle to see beyond your own perspective.

If you have few or no planets here

- **Positive:** You're adaptable and not overly fixated on identity or self-definition.
- **Challenge:** You may need time to understand who you are or feel unclear about self-direction until other areas of life inform it.

Quadrant 2 (Houses 4–6): Inner Life, Adjustment and Skill-Building

This quadrant blends your inner world with the growing awareness of responsibilities. It's where you build emotional foundations, cultivate routines, and learn how to be reliable and capable.

House Themes

- **4th House - Home and Foundations:** Emotional roots, family, inner security.
- **5th House - Creativity and Expression:** Joy, romance, play, creativity.
- **6th House - Service and Refinement:** Work habits, wellness, self-improvement, daily rhythm, duty, practical service.

Together, these houses highlight the development of stability, creativity, competence, and self-betterment.

If you have lots of planets here

- **Positive:** Deep emotional intelligence, strong creative impulses, and excellent practical skills.
- **Challenge:** You may get caught in self-improvement loops, over-nurture others, or feel pressured to 'fix' yourself or your environment.

If you have few or no planets here

- **Positive:** You move lightly through daily tasks and aren't weighed down by routine or emotional baggage.
- **Challenge:** You may overlook self-care or struggle with consistency and structure unless motivated elsewhere.

Quadrant 3 (Houses 7–9): Relationship, Expansion and Perspective

This is where your energy expands outward toward relationships, shared experiences, and the search for meaning. It's about discovering life through connection and exploration.

House Themes

- **7th House – Partnership:** One-on-one relationships, balance, agreements.
- **8th House – Shared Depth:** Intimacy, merging, psychological depth, transformation.
- **9th House – Wisdom & Exploration:** Travel, philosophy, spirituality, higher education.

These houses show how you bond with others and broaden your worldview.

If you have lots of planets here

- **Positive:** Strong relational awareness, a deep hunger for growth, and a natural ability to connect and understand life's bigger picture.
- **Challenge:** You may define yourself through others, rely heavily on relationships, or constantly seek meaning outside yourself.

If you have few or no planets here

- **Positive:** You're independent and comfortable forming beliefs on your own terms.
- **Challenge:** Relationships or big-picture thinking may take time to develop or may feel less intuitive.

Quadrant 4 (Houses 10–12): Purpose, Contribution and Collective Awareness

This quadrant focuses on public life, long-term direction, spiritual insight, and your connection to humanity as a whole. It's where personal purpose extends into a larger contribution.

House Themes

- **10th House – Career and Public Role:** Reputation, ambition, vocation.
- **11th House – Community and Vision:** Friendships, networks, shared ideals.
- **12th House – Inner Mysteries:** Subconscious, spirituality, healing, retreat.

Together, houses 10–12 show how you interact with the collective, whether through leadership, service, intuition, or transcendence.

If you have lots of planets here

- **Positive:** Strong sense of mission, visibility, and intuitive connection to collective themes or spiritual insight.
- **Challenge:** You may feel pressure to "live up" to something, or experience periods of isolation or emotional overwhelm.

If you have few or no planets here

- **Positive:** Freedom to explore purpose without pressure; you're not defined by public expectations.
- **Challenge:** Career direction or spiritual clarity may take longer to develop or may emerge later in life.

Exercise:

Count the planets in each house/quadrant and see if you resonate with how this might describe your focus in life.

Quadrant	Houses	Planets
1	1 - 2	
2	4 - 6	
3	7 - 9	
4	10 - 12	



| The Four Elements and Yin and Yang

It's important to know your astrological elements - Fire, Earth, Air, and Water - because they offer the foundation for understanding your temperament, expression, and psychological balance. Each element describes a core way of being, and your unique elemental makeup shows how your energy flows, what motivates you, and how you relate to the world and others.

As we've discovered, every zodiac sign belongs to one of four elements, and planets in that sign will express the nature of that element. For example: Mars in Taurus is in an Earth sign. Venus is Aries in a Fire sign.

Exercise:

1. Look up the sign of each of your **seven key planets** (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) plus the element of your Ascendant and MC (do not include the transpersonal planets).
2. Count how many planets you have in each element
3. Fill in the table below to see which planet is in which element and then read the descriptions below. Take note if you have a lot of planets in one element (excessive) or have no planets (lack) in an element. This will impact how you relate to life.

Planet	Sign	Element
Sun		
Moon		
Mercury		
Venus		
Mars		
Jupiter		

Planet	Sign	Element
Saturn		
Ascendant		
MC		

FIRE: Spirit, Inspiration, Will

Signs: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

Keywords: Action, vitality, enthusiasm, courage, individuality

Balanced Fire

- Energised, motivated, passionate
- Confident, courageous, takes initiative
- Inspires others, lives with purpose

Excess Fire (most planets in fire signs)

- Impulsive, reckless, easily angered
- Overconfident, domineering, attention-seeking
- Burns out quickly, avoids emotional depth

Lack of Fire (one or no planets in Fire)

- Low energy or drive, lacks passion
- Hesitant to assert self, fears risk
- May feel directionless or uninspired

EARTH: Body, Form, Reality

Signs: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

Keywords: Earthy, practicality, stability, structure, material resources

Balanced Earth

- Reliable, organised, grounded
- Manages time and money well
- Values tangible results, realistic

Excess Earth (most planets in Earth signs)

- Overly cautious, rigid, materialistic
- Resistant to change, overly focused on duty
- Can neglect emotional or spiritual needs

Lack of Earth (one or no planets in Earth)

- Disorganised, impractical, struggles with follow-through
- May live in ideas or dreams without grounding them
- Avoids responsibilities or physical realities

AIR: Mind, Thought, Communication

Signs: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius

Keywords: Thought, communication, objectivity, relationships, ideas

Balanced Air

- Active engagement
- Mentally agile, articulate, open-minded
- Sociable, fair-minded, curious
- Seeks understanding, loves learning

Excess Air (most planets in Air signs)

- Overthinking, scattered, disconnected from feelings
- Detached, avoids intimacy
- Talks more than acts; lives 'in the head'

Lack of Air (one or no planets in Air signs)

- Difficulty with perspective or communication
- Struggles with detachment or logic
- May feel misunderstood or socially isolated

WATER: Soul, Feeling, Intuition

Signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Keywords: Emotion, sensitivity, intuition, memory, depth

Balanced Water

- Deeply empathetic, emotionally intelligent

- Intuitive, imaginative, nurturing
- Comfortable with depth and mystery

Excess Water (most planets in Water signs)

- Overly emotional or moody
- Prone to co-dependency or emotional overwhelm
- Escapes into fantasy or addiction

Lack of Water (one or no planets in Water sign)

- Difficulty accessing or expressing feelings
- May appear cold or emotionally detached
- Avoids vulnerability and emotional intimacy

Summing it up:

- **Balanced elements:** The person has access to all four ways of being – action (Fire), grounding (Earth), thinking (Air), feeling (Water). They can respond appropriately to most situations.
- **Dominant element:** That element’s qualities shape the personality. Can be a gift but also needs integration of the other three to avoid obsessive tendencies.
- **Missing/lacking element:** The person may overcompensate or avoid this area of life. Developing this missing element becomes key to the soul’s growth.
- **Reflection:** What are your elements showing you about who you are, and how you relate to the world?

Yin and Yang Factors

Now you’ve explored your Elements and Modes, it’s time to count your Yin and Yang factors using all eleven planets: Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Chiron.

In astrology, the balance of Yin and Yang factors in a birth chart offers insight about your orientation and natural disposition.

- **Yin signs:** Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, Scorpio, Capricorn, and Pisces are receptive, introspective, and intuitive, often drawing energy inward.
- **Yang signs:** Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius, and Aquarius are expressive, assertive, and action-oriented, radiating energy outward.

By counting how many planets fall in Yin versus Yang signs, you can begin to understand whether you tend to move through life with a more inward, reflective approach or with a more outgoing, active stance.

If a chart is weighted heavily toward Yang signs, you may feel most alive when initiating, speaking, acting, or leading. You may be more comfortable with visibility, quick decisions, and movement.

On the other hand, a Yin-dominant chart suggests you are a more contemplative, emotionally attuned person who may prioritise depth, security, and responsiveness over speed or visibility.

While most charts contain a mix of both, imbalances can point to areas of overdevelopment or underdevelopment. Recognising this balance can help you cultivate greater wholeness by learning when to step back and receive or when to step forward and act.

Here are some examples of Yin–Yang imbalances in a birth chart and how they may manifest:

Excess Yang (eight or more planets in Yang signs)

Signs involved: Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius, Aquarius

Possible expressions:

- **Overactive and scattered:** Always busy, taking on too much, difficulty slowing down or resting.
- **Dominance or impatience:** Quick to speak or act, may interrupt or override others' feelings or processes.
- **Avoidance of vulnerability:** Prefers doing over feeling, struggles with introspection or receiving help.
- **Burnout-prone:** May run on adrenaline, ignoring emotional or physical needs until exhaustion sets in.

Example:

A person with Sun in Aries, Moon in Sagittarius, Mercury in Gemini, and a stellium (three and more planets in the same sign) in Aquarius might come across as high-energy, fast-talking, and intellectually driven but struggle with emotional depth, stillness, or creating intimacy.

Excess Yin (eight or more planets in Yin signs)

Signs involved: Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, Scorpio, Capricorn, Pisces

Possible expressions:

- **Withdrawn or overly private:** Difficulty asserting yourself or taking initiative.
- **Overthinking or internalising:** Tendency to ruminate, worry, or become overly self-critical.
- **Emotionally overwhelmed:** Prone to mood swings or getting stuck in the past.
- **Fear of visibility:** May shy away from leadership or speaking out, even when it's necessary.

Example:

A chart with Moon in Cancer, Sun in Pisces, Venus in Scorpio, and Saturn in Capricorn might belong to someone who is deeply sensitive, reflective, and emotionally complex, and may struggle with self-confidence, moving forward, or navigating public life.

How to Work with the Imbalance:

- **Too much Yang?** Practice receptivity, meditation, listening more than speaking, engaging the body gently (yin yoga, nature walks), and cultivating emotional intelligence.
- **Too much Yin?** Engage in physical activity, take small risks, speak up, create structure, and push gently into the outer world with support.

Balance doesn't require equal numbers. It's about awareness and integration. A person with a strong Yin chart can still express Yang qualities consciously, and vice versa. Astrology helps identify where support, challenge, or self-development may be most helpful.



| Discovering the Four Modalities

Modalities describe how zodiac signs and any planet in those signs express their energy, their style of action, and response to life. In other words, they reveal how you tend to start, maintain, or adapt to situations.

To remind you, there are **three modalities**

Cardinal (Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn)

- Initiators and leaders
- Start new projects and ideas
- Motivated, dynamic, action-oriented
- **Strength:** Visionary, drives progress
- **Challenge:** Can be impatient, struggles with follow-through

Fixed (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius)

- Stabilisers and builders
- Persistent, reliable, steady
- Loyal and committed
- **Strength:** Endurance, consistency
- **Challenge:** Resistant to change, can be stubborn

Mutable (Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces)

- Adaptable and flexible
- Good communicators and problem-solvers
- Thrive on change and variety
- **Strength:** Versatile, resilient
- **Challenge:** Can be scattered or indecisive

Activity:

Find the modality of each of your seven personal planets (Sun through Saturn) plus your Ascendant and MC and fill in the chart on the next page.

Planet	Sign	Modality (cardinal/fixed/mutable)
Sun		
Moon		
Mercury		
Venus		
Mars		
Jupiter		
Saturn		
Ascendant		
MC		

How do you see this showing up in the way you experience life?

Do you have a modality that's lacking?

How might this affect your ability to lead, follow through, or adapt?

Reflection:

- Are you mostly a starter (cardinal), a stabiliser (fixed), or prefer to be flexible (mutable)?
- How does this show in your behaviour or decision-making?

Modality of Your Ascendant

Remember: Your Ascendant is determined by the exact time of your birth. While the zodiac traditionally begins with Aries, this does not mean your Ascendant is Aries. Your natal chart is calculated using the place, date, and time of your birth. This unique combination sets your Ascendant and determines the positions of the planets in their respective signs and houses.

The Modality of your Ascendent strongly influences how you approach life, especially how you initiate action, respond to change, and meet the world. Therefore, the mode influences the way you engage with life's demands, challenges, and opportunities.

For example:

Cardinal Ascendent (Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn)

- **Keywords:** Initiating, proactive, directional, restless
- **Life Orientation:** Wired to initiate and take charge. There's often a strong drive to move forward in life and a need to be actively engaged in shaping one's path.
- **Response to Life:** Often make the first move, whether in relationships, projects, or crises. This can lead to leadership roles but may also come with impatience or a need for constant new beginnings.
- **Challenge:** Staying the course. The energy is great for starting things, but less so for finishing them.

Fixed Ascendant (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius)

- **Keywords:** Steady, determined, resistant to change, enduring
- **Life Orientation:** More likely to stick with what they start. They approach life with persistence, preferring stability and depth over constant change.
- **Response to Life:** Tend to hold their ground, often exuding strength, intensity, or self-possession. Their approach to the world is often grounded in values, loyalty, and consistency.
- **Challenge:** Rigidity or resistance to necessary change. They may struggle when life calls for flexibility.

Mutable Ascendant (Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces)

- **Keywords:** Adaptable, flexible, curious, responsive
- **Life Orientation:** These individuals meet life with curiosity, openness, and adaptability. They're often quick to adjust, learn, and change directions when needed.
- **Response to Life:** They tend to be multi-faceted and versatile, often navigating life through observation, communication, or service. There may be a chameleon-like quality to how they present themselves.
- **Challenge:** Scattered energy or lack of consistency. They may struggle to commit or stay grounded.

Journaling Prompt:

Think about a recent project or goal. Did you jump right in? Stick with it through thick and thin? Or adapt and change direction? How does your modality pattern reflect this?

| The Big Three: Sun, Moon, and Ascendent

When reading an astrological chart, the Sun, Moon, and Ascendent are regarded as the 'Big Three'. Together, they form the core of who you are and how you interact with the world.

Sun Sign – Your Core Essence

- Represents your basic self, ego, and identity.
- Shows your will to grow and shine.
- **Example:** A Leo Sun tends to seek recognition and creativity

Moon Sign – Your Emotional Self

- Governs your feelings, instincts, and inner moods.
- Reveals your emotional needs and subconscious reactions.
- **Example:** A Cancer Moon may crave security and nurturing.

Rising Sign (Ascendant) – Your Outer Mask and First Impression

- The zodiac sign that was rising on the eastern horizon at the time of your birth.
- Influences your appearance, style, and how others perceive you.

Activity:

Find your Sun, Moon, and Rising signs in your chart.

Fill out the worksheet on the next two pages. Write a couple of sentences describing how you express your Sun, Moon and Ascendent.

Sun, Moon, and Ascendent worksheet

WHAT IS YOUR SUN SIGN?

What mode does it fall into?

What element does it fall under?

What combination does this create?

Write down key words that describe your Sun sign

WHAT IS YOUR MOON SIGN?

What mode does it fall into?

What element does it fall under?

What combination does this create?

WHAT IS THE ASTROLOGICAL SIGN OF YOUR ASCENDENT?

What mode does it fall into?

What element does it fall under?

What combination does this create?

Write down key words that might describe your ascendent personality.

What combination does your core identity (Sun sign) emotional life (Moon sign) and your personality (Ascendent) create?

Core identity:

Emotional/intuitive nature:

Personality:

What does this teach you about who you are, and how you relate to life?

Combining Planet + Sign + House: Building Interpretation Skills

Why Combine?

As you've already discovered, each planet represents a specific function (the 'who') and is shaped by the sign it's in (the 'how'). To deepen your understanding, pay attention to the house the planet occupies – this reveals the 'where', or the area of life in which that energy is expressed. Together, these three factors form a unique and rich expression in your chart.

It's important to understand that astrology is about exploring possibilities, not fixed conclusions. So, focus on considering potential themes rather than becoming attached to one definitive view.

How to Interpret:

- Identify the planet (e.g., Venus – love and relationships).
- Note the sign (e.g., Venus in Sagittarius – adventurous, freedom-loving).
- Check the house (e.g., Venus in the 7th house – focused on partnerships).

Possible interpretation: **Venus in Sagittarius in the 7th house** combines a love of freedom, adventure, and ideals with a potentially deep desire for meaningful partnership. This person is likely to value honesty, growth, and shared exploration in relationships. They may be drawn to open-minded or culturally diverse partners, or to those involved in fields such as psychology, spirituality, or publishing. They might also seek connections that feel expansive rather than limiting. While they may idealise love, crave variety, and resist routine, they may well bring enthusiasm, optimism, and refreshing honesty to their partnerships and relationships.

Another Example: **Mars in Capricorn in the 10th house**

Possible interpretation: Mars in Capricorn in the 10th house potentially shows a person with a strong, disciplined ambition and a practical approach to achieving career goals. They are likely to be persistent, hardworking, and focused on climbing the professional ladder, driven by a desire for recognition and authority. Therefore, they might channel their energy into long-term success and building a solid reputation.

Activity:

Look at each of your planets + sign + house and fill out the chart on the next page.

Planet	Sign	House	Key Words
Sun			
Moon			
Mercury			
Venus			
Mars			
Jupiter			
Saturn			
Uranus			
Neptune			
Pluto			
Chiron			

Use keywords and meanings (look through earlier pages for help).

How do these planets in their sign and house play out in your life?

| The Nodal Axis: Your Soul's Evolutionary Compass

The Nodal Axis, consisting of the North Node and South Node of the Moon, is one of the most profound and meaningful points in your birth chart. Unlike planets, the nodes are not physical bodies but mathematical points where the Moon's orbit intersects the ecliptic (the path of the Sun as seen from Earth). Yet, their symbolic power lies in what they represent: the soul's karmic journey and evolutionary path through incarnation.

What the Nodes Represent

- **South Node:** Represents potential past life influences, familiar patterns, and comfort zones carried into this lifetime. It can reflect traits already mastered. However, when stuck in the South Node, we may resist growth by holding onto these familiar habits, blocking our evolution.
- **North Node:** Marks the path of growth and new challenges. This is often a difficult and testing path that points to qualities to develop and lessons to learn for our greater fulfillment.

Together, the nodal axis acts as an inner compass, showing where the soul has been and where it's called to go.

- It outlines the soul's journey from comfort (South Node) to growth (North Node).
- Connects past wisdom with conscious evolution.
- Guides how we face change, endings, and transformation.
- Operates beyond personality, tapping into fate and soul purpose.
- The nodes' signs, houses, and aspects reveal life areas and challenges tied to this journey.

In essence, the nodal axis guides you to the heart of your soul's mission in this lifetime, offering a soul-map for transformation, healing, and integration. Understanding this invites you to move beyond survival patterns and align with the deeper rhythms of life, death, and rebirth, which opens you to the mystery of the soul's great cycle of life and death.

The Nodes' Movement

Retrograde (Backward) Motion

Most of the time, the nodes move retrograde (backward or clockwise) through the zodiac. This backward motion defines the nodes' overall 18.6-year journey around the zodiac.

Oscillation (Forward) Motion

However, because of the Moon's orbital wobble, the nodes do not move back evenly. They oscillate, occasionally moving forward (direct) for a few days before resuming their retrograde motion. This back-and-forth movement happens about every two weeks, as the Moon completes one orbit around the Earth.

- **The True Node** incorporates these brief forward movements. Therefore, the True Node reflects its actual 'true' position and motion either backward or forward.
- **The Mean Node** is the mathematical average of the Moon's nodal motion – always moving backwards at about 3 minutes a day.

Some astrologers, especially in traditional and evolutionary astrology, prefer the Mean Node because it offers a stable symbolic anchor for understanding the soul's karmic process and unfinished patterns from the past. Other astrologers choose the True Node because it feels more alive and immediate. The direct motion of the nodes suggests the soul is moving forward into new experiences rather than primarily processing the past.

The Difference between the Nodal Axis and IC/MC Axis

The Imum Coeli (IC) and Medium Coeli (MC) form one of the most significant axes in the natal chart. Together, they reveal how the soul is rooted in the material world while also being drawn toward its highest expression.

To recap, the MC is marked by the highest point the Sun reaches at the time of birth, representing the call that draws the soul upward and outward. Directly opposite, the IC reflects the deepest, most hidden part of who we are – our inner foundation, our family, roots, and lineage.

In essence, the IC/MC axis symbolises how the soul anchors itself during incarnation: where it comes from, what sustains it, and how it seeks to manifest purpose within the physical world.

The Nodal Axis, by contrast, functions as an etheric compass of evolution, pointing backward to where we've come from (South Node) and forward toward the growth and development the soul is called to experience (North Node).

In short, the **IC/MC** axis stabilises, grounds, and expresses the soul's path in the physical world, while the **Nodal Axis**, opposing points derived from the Moon's orbit, is fluid, symbolic, and more ethereal, highlighting the soul's evolutionary journey.

Together, these two axes offer essential spiritual and embodied insights into who we are, where we come from, and the direction in which we are called to grow.

Important Nodal Pointers:

When the Nodes Are Direct (Not Retrograde) in a Natal Chart

The nodes move retrograde about 98% of the time, so a direct North/South Node in a natal chart is rare and significant. It doesn't change meaning of the node, but it adds nuance to how the nodal path expresses itself:

- **Faster or more conscious evolutionary movement**
Direct nodes often symbolise a soul that is moving more deliberately or consciously toward its evolutionary purpose, rather than being pulled by unconscious karmic patterns.
- **More personal control with nodal themes**
People with direct nodes may experience:

- ◇ clearer awareness of life direction
- ◇ more immediate recognition of lessons
- ◇ faster integration of North Node themes
- **Karmic emphasis on the present life**
There can be a stronger sense that 'I'm here to move forward – to get on with things,' not just to resolve past-life residue (though that is always part of the nodal story).
- **Stationary Nodes in your birth chart**
If the nodes are stationary, life may feel like pivotal turning point – nodal themes become a major life calling and purpose and destiny feels fated.

Summary:

- **Retrograde Nodes (normal):** evolution through karmic momentum from the past – unconscious pulls toward growth.
- **Direct Nodes (rare):** conscious forward movement – a life that breaks patterns and initiates new karmic directions.
- **Stationary Nodes:** heightened nodal importance with a destiny-focused lifetime.

The 29th Degree (Anaretic Degree)

The **29° degree** represents culmination, urgency, and mastery. When the North Node is at 29°, the soul is completing a major karmic cycle.

Core meanings:

- You are intensely called to address the lessons of the North Node's sign in this lifetime.
- Life pushes you toward growth more forcefully than usual.
- Avoiding your evolutionary path becomes difficult or impossible.
- Events feel fated or accelerated.
- It signals a 'final exam lifetime' for the North Node's themes.

Skipped Steps (Evolutionary Astrology)

A skipped step is unresolved karmic material symbolised by a planet that squares the nodal axis.

- A planet is a skipped step when:
- It squares both the North and South Node (classic case)
- The square blocks the natural flow between past and future
- Its themes must be integrated before North Node growth can occur

Purpose: The skipped step is regarded as the 'karmic bottleneck.' Until its lessons are learned, evolution stalls.

How it feels:

- Repeating life patterns
- Internal contradictions
- Crises that force clarity
- Karmic relationships tied to that planet
- A persistent feeling of 'Why does this always happen?'

Practical ways to address skipped steps

- Acknowledge the unresolved theme without judgment
- Consciously balance past (South Node) and future (North Node) tendencies
- Work directly with the planet/s involved

As you consciously embody the planet's lessons, the nodal axis begins to flow more smoothly, and the sense of being caught in old patterns gradually dissolve.

Exercise:

Exploring Your Nodal Axis. Complete on a separate sheet...

Step 1: Identify Your Nodes

- Find the zodiac sign and house placement of your North Node and South Node (remember, they are always exactly opposite each other)
- Are they retrograde, stationary, or moving forward in your chart?
- Do you have any planets squaring the nodal axis?
- Is your North Node at 29 degrees?

Step 2: Reflect on Your South Node (Comfort Zone)

- What qualities, habits, or patterns come easily to you?
- In what areas of life do you tend to feel "stuck" or like you're repeating the same old stories?
- Consider: How might these be linked to familiar but limiting energies or behaviours?
- How do you rely on these patterns for security or identity?

Step 3: Reflect on Your North Node (Growth Edge)

This exercise helps you to understand your life's path, and how worn-out patterns might play out in your life. There's no right or wrong – just a realisation which can help deepen your relationship with who you are, and why you are here. It also reminds you that it's a waste of time to compare your life with anyone else's. You have come to experience the life that is unfolding in front of you. No-one else will ever experience this the way you do.

Should you want to learn more about your nodal axis and how it manifests in your life, I highly recommend Pam Gregory's book: *How to Co-create Using the Secret Language of the Universe*.



| Aspects: How Planets Talk to Each Other

Aspects between natal planets bring your birth chart to life. They show how the planets, each representing a different part of your psyche, interact with one another. Without aspects, a chart is like a list of traits. Add the aspects and the chart becomes a dynamic, interconnected map of inner relationships, showing how different parts of you support, challenge, or influence each other.

Natal aspects reveal different layers of your chart: natural talents through trines and sextiles, inner tensions that drive growth through squares, strong personality focal points through conjunctions, and areas where you may project unconscious patterns onto others through oppositions.

Therefore, natal aspects expose the internal conversations you're having all the time – for example, where you feel ease, pressure, opportunity, or contradiction. It's these aspects that help you understand your patterns more deeply.

I love how Evolutionary Astrologer Steven Forrest says you can think of your chart like a play: the planets are the characters, the signs are their costumes and way of expressing, the houses are the stage or life setting, and the aspects form the plot – the storylines that shape your life. In short, it's the aspects that turn a chart from a collection of symbols into a living, breathing expression of your unique soul.

Major natal aspects:

Conjunction (0°)

- Planets are right next to each other
- Energies combine and intensify
- Can feel powerful, focused, or overwhelming
- You may express both planets as one

Sextile (60°)

- Planets are two signs apart
- Supportive and helpful energy
- A "gentle push" aspect

Square (90°)

- Planets are three signs apart
- Creates tension or inner conflict
- Can feel frustrating but helps you grow and take action
- Often shows where you struggle and develop strength

Trine (120°)

- Planets are four signs apart
- Easy flow and natural talent
- Feels comfortable and smooth
- May be so easy you take it for granted

Opposition (180°)

- Planets are across from each other
- Tends to feel like a tug-of-war between two parts of you
- Often shows up in relationships (tendency to project tension onto someone else)
- Calls for balance and integration

Orb Guidelines (Approximate)

Aspect	Maximum Orb
Conjunction	8–10°
Sextile	4–6°
Square	6–8°
Trine	6–8°
Opposition	8–10°
Minor Aspects	1–3°

Tight aspects

In evolutionary astrology, tight aspects (less than 1 degree between planets) highlight major karmic lessons and patterns that keep showing up until you address them.

For example, a Sun-Moon conjunction under 1 degree might point to inner tension between what you want and what you feel. Or a Mars-Saturn conjunction under 1 degree could show a deep inner drive held back by fear or self-doubt, pushing you to learn patience, discipline, and how to channel your energy effectively.

Activity:

Identify three aspects in your chart.

On a separate sheet, write how you think these aspects affect your personality or experiences

Example: 'My Sun squares my Moon, which sometimes causes inner emotional conflict.'

How Transits Work

Transits occur when the planets currently moving through the sky form aspects to the natal planets and points in your chart. These transits mark times of activation, growth, and change – periods when life themes symbolised in your chart are brought to life through some form of experience.

Transits do not cause events. Rather, they reveal how you are participating in the larger rhythm of time, with each moment carrying its own context and meaning.

The Mechanics of Transits

As planets move through the heavens, they activate natal planets to awaken specific lessons at the right time.

- **Inner planets (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars)** move quickly, highlighting everyday shifts, moods, and choices.
- **Outer planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Chiron)** move slowly, unfolding deeper psychological or spiritual processes. Because of their slower movement, outer-planet transits can take months or even years to fully unfold and integrate.

Transiting Aspects to Natal Planets

- **Conjunction (0°)** – Activation, emergence of a new cycle.
- **Sextile (60°)** – Opportunity, flow, creativity.
- **Square (90°)** – Tension, growth through challenge.
- **Trine (120°)** – Harmony, realisation, integration, openings.
- **Opposition (180°)** – Polarity, confrontation, synthesis.

Houses: Where the Energy Plays Out

The house being transited shows where in your life the transiting energy is manifesting, for example: your work (6th house transits), relationships (7th house transits), home (4th house transits), inner world or spiritual path (12th house transits).

The Felt Experience of a Transit

When you experience a planetary transit, it is not only an external experience (a relationship or an event that impacts your life), it's also a felt process that unfolds within you. The quality of the experience – how you respond or react – depends on your level of awareness and the nature of the planet involved.

The Phases of a Transit

Each transit has its own rhythm and quality – a movement of energy that unfolds over time.

Applying Phase

- As the transiting planet approaches the natal planet or point, you may begin to feel increasing tension, restlessness, or anticipation. Something feels as if it's 'in the air' – a subtle stirring or growing awareness that something is shifting or needs to change, or you might meet someone important.
- This is often an intuitive period, when you sense what is coming before the event itself manifests.

Exact Hit

- This is the peak of the transit – the moment when the experience of the transit is most fully present.
- Outer events, inner realisations, or emotional intensity may surface as life confronts you with what the transiting planet symbolises.
- Old patterns, beliefs, childhood wounds, or memories resurface, asking for attention.

Separating Phase

- As the transiting planet moves away, the intensity begins to ease off, giving way to understanding, relief, and sometimes, exhaustion especially when the transit has been particularly challenging.
- What was previously hidden starts to make sense, and new insights and goals begins to form.
- This is the phase of integration and making meaning of what has happened – a time to embody what you have learnt about yourself.

Multiple Hits and Retrograde Cycles

Transits from the slow-moving planets (Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, and Chiron) can last months or even years, sometimes involving multiple exact hits. So, these are like extended initiations that can influence an entire life chapter because they demand patience, endurance, and reflection. Each 'hit' deepens the process you are experiencing until you fully embrace the lesson or transformation that the transit brings.

Planetary Teachers by Transit

Jupiter – Growth, expansion, faith

- Broadens perspective, opens new possibilities.
- **Applying:** anticipation, optimism.
- **Exact:** Expansion, opportunities, lucky breaks, benevolence, overreaching
- **Separating:** integration of wisdom and confidence.

Saturn – Structure, responsibility, mastery

- Tests foundations; demands commitment and realism.
- **Applying:** pressure, resistance, self-doubt.
- **Exact:** restriction, focus, responsibilities, resetting boundaries
- **Separating:** earned strength, maturity, grounded clarity.

Uranus – Freedom, awakening, disruption

- Breaks through outgrown forms.
- **Applying:** restlessness, unpredictability.
- **Exact:** shocks, breakthroughs, liberation.
- **Separating:** authenticity, renewed aliveness.

Neptune – Surrender, dissolution, imagination

- Thins boundaries; reveals the soul's longing for unity.
- **Applying:** confusion, yearning, dissolving.
- **Exact:** Spiritual alignment, creative insights, illusion and delusion
- **Separating:** inspiration, restored meaning, spiritual clarity.

Pluto – Power, death and rebirth, transformation

- Confronts shadow; demands surrender and renewal.
- **Applying:** intensity, compulsion, pressure for change.
- **Exact:** crisis, breakdown, metamorphosis.
- **Separating:** regeneration, empowerment, profound renewal.

Chiron – Healing, mentorship, integration of wounding

- Exposes places of soul injury seeking awareness and healing.

- **Applying:** sensitivity, emotional vulnerability, resurfacing pain.
- **Exact:** healing crisis, breakthrough in compassion or self-understanding.
- **Separating:** integration, self-acceptance, the emergence of the inner healer.

Chiron's transits bridge personal suffering and collective wisdom, transforming pain into purpose and wound into gifts.

Consequently, transits carry a rhythmic flow of tension and release – a waxing and waning of internal pressure, often brought about by challenging external events or relationships. Understanding this pattern helps you to trust the process rather than resist it.

Purpose:

As such, all transits invite growth through the relationship between your conscious will and the larger patterns of life. When you understand this, transits can become welcome thresholds to awakening, transformation, and greater self-knowledge.

Nodes Transits

A Nodal Return occurs when the transiting North Node returns back to the exact position of your natal North Node, approximately every 18.6 years. As the North Node travels around the chart, it highlights the life themes of the house it is currently traveling through, showing where the soul is being called to grow and take conscious action.

Note: When the North Node transits a natal planet, it emphasises growth and future-oriented lessons in that area of life. The South Node (always directly opposite) may not be making a direct aspect to a natal planet at the same time, so the pull to release past patterns, karma, or ingrained habits may be less pronounced. This creates a subtle emphasis on stepping forward and embracing new experiences, while the clearing of the past often unfolds later, through other transits or aspects involving the South Node.

Essentially, the soul is being called to move into its future path first, with past patterns gradually released over time.

North Node transit hitting a natal planet:

- Activates future-oriented growth in the area of life ruled by that planet.
- Invites you to step into new experiences, skills, or ways of aligning with your soul's evolutionary path.
- May feel exciting, fated, or like a calling to stretch beyond your comfort zones.

South Node transit hitting a natal planet:

- Brings past patterns, habits, or karmic material to the surface for review and release.
- Encourages you to let go of what no longer serves and integrate lessons from prior experiences.
- Often triggers reflection, endings, or situations that highlight unresolved dynamics.

North Node transits are about stepping forward towards your destiny; South Node transits are asking you clear out the past so this can happen.

What happens at a Nodal Return (transiting North Node returns to natal placement):

- Marks a major turning point in life purpose and direction.
- Brings opportunities to realign with your soul's evolutionary path.
- Often coincides with life events that push you toward future growth (North Node themes) and away from patterns you've already mastered (South Node themes).
- Can feel like a crossroads or fated moment, prompting choices that set the tone for your next life chapter.
- Encourages conscious commitment to your North Node lessons, whether in career, relationships, creativity, or personal development.

In short: a Nodal Return is a kind of cosmic checkpoint, inviting you to step fully into the direction your soul has been moving toward since birth.



| Bringing it all together

Here is a blank chart where you can create your own astrological chart with your ascendant, planets, houses, nodal axis, and aspects as you go through this workbook. Or you can use this to draw up someone else's chart

Reading charts can feel overwhelming when you're just starting out, so here's a simple list I use to help make sense of things. It's by no means comprehensive, but it's a great place to begin:

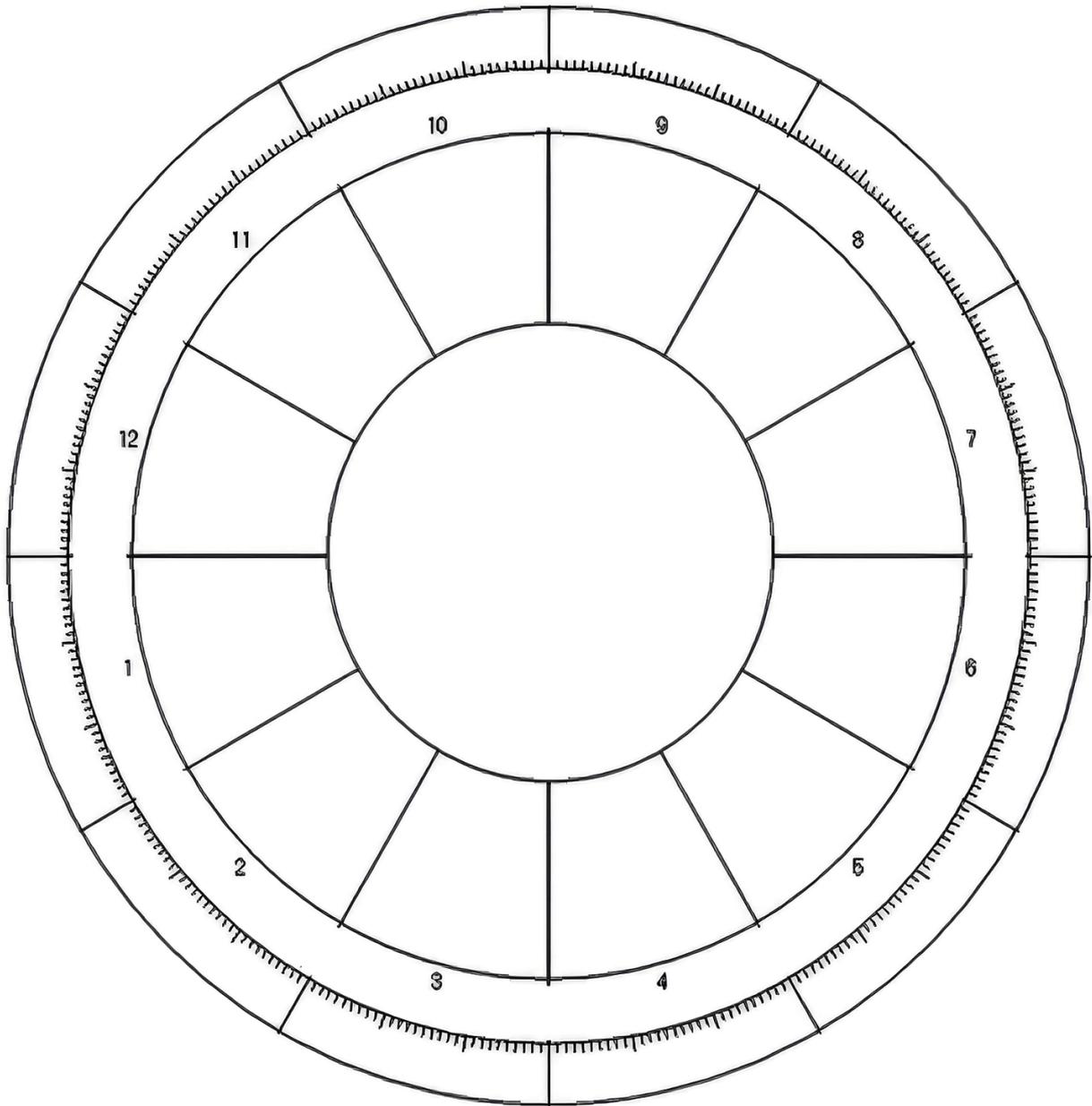
- **First Impressions** – Pay attention to the overall feel of the chart as it often gives an initial sense of the person's core dynamic.
- **The Big Three** – The Sun, Moon, and Ascendant are the heart of the chart.
- **Modality of the Ascendant** – cardinal, fixed, or mutable – gives insight into how the person approaches life.
- **Elements and Modes** – Look at which elements (fire, earth, air, water) and modes (cardinal, fixed, mutable) are most prominent; they reveal basic personality tendencies.
- **Yin and Yang** – Check whether there are more yin or yang planets. This can hint at whether the person is naturally more introverted or extroverted.
- **Angular Planets** – Planets on the angles (Ascendant, Descendant, Midheaven, IC) carry extra weight and strongly influence life events and personal expression.
- **Retrograde Planets** – Retrogrades point to areas that require inner reflection or lessons that tend to repeat throughout life.
- **Hemispheres and Quadrants** – Look at which sides and areas of the chart are active. This reveals whether the person's attention is mostly inward, toward relationships, or outward into the world
- **Aspect Patterns** – Notice the patterns planets form with each other – these often highlight recurring themes, strengths, and challenges.
- **Major Tight Aspects** – Aspects under 1 degree are especially potent, often revealing key karmic lessons or defining life patterns.

And, to say, everyone reads charts differently, so even as a beginner, you might notice something in a chart that no one else has, and that's the beauty of astrology.

| Closing Thoughts

This brings **Your Astrology Workbook: A Beginner's Guide** to a close, which has offered a basic introduction to your birth chart and the language of astrology.

I hope you have enjoyed the journey.



Along the way, you've explored the how the signs, planets, and houses work together, identified your elements and modes, considered your nodal axis, learnt about planetary aspects, and reflected on your personal strengths and challenges.

Take a moment to acknowledge the insights and awareness you've gained. You've begun to unlock the symbolic language of your chart and perhaps you may now have a deeper understanding of how you relate to life, to others, and the world around you.

Remember: the wisdom held in your chart is not fixed. It moves with you, changes as you grow, and offers deeper meaning at different stages of your life. This workbook is very much a beginning. There is so much more to learn.

In this case, I hope it inspires you to keep asking questions, noticing patterns that keep arising, and exploring your inner and outer world through astrology. Astrology offers a lifelong path of reflection and growth. It doesn't claim to give all the answers, but it can guide you toward greater self-understanding, compassion, and purpose.

Enjoy the journey. It's uniquely yours. And may the planets continue to be your companions along the way.



Resources

Recommended Beginner Books:

The Inner Sky, Steven Forrest

Astrology for the Soul, Jan Spiller

Parker's Astrology, Julia and Derek Parker

You Were Born for This, Chani Nicholas

Beginner Guide to Astrology, Victor Olliver

Astrology: Using the Wisdom of the Stars in Your Everyday Life, Carole Taylor

Useful Websites:

astro.com: Chart generation and interpretations

astro-seek.com: Free charts, progressions, tools

cafeastrology.com: Beginner-friendly explanations

chani.com: Modern astrology with personal transit tracking

astrologyhub.com: offers great information, interviews, and workshops

Sue Brayne (MA, D.F.Astrol.S.) is a Soul Astrologer, astrological journalist, therapist, death café facilitator and end-of-life researcher exploring life, death, and the soul's evolutionary journey. Surviving a light aircraft crash 40 years ago inspired her to study mortality, trauma and spiritual growth.



She trained with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, has an MA in the Rhetoric and Rituals of Death, and worked as an honorary researcher with Neuropsychiatrist Dr Peter Fenwick on one of the first studies into end-of-life experiences. Sue is also a TEDx Speaker (Wear Your Mortality with Pride), the author of *The D-Word: Talking about Dying and Living Fully and Dying Consciously*, and interviews Master Astrologers for the *Astrological Journal* and her *Celebrating Astrology* YouTube channel.

You can contact Sue through her website: suebrayne.co.uk



© Sue Brayne 2025. All rights reserved.

suebrayne.co.uk