

THE BASICS. Each month we will explore a sign and a season. My intention for this class: Inspired by astrology's symbols and patterns, we open to wonder and practice cosmic mindfulness— a practice of developing relationships with nature, self, and Mystery. Although each session is designed to be a unique offering that anyone can drop in on, students will get the most from the experiences if they ground themselves in a few astrological concepts. These concepts are:

- The glyphs. I suggest memorizing the glyphs for signs, planets, and aspects.
 - The construction of a chart
 - The elements
 - The modalities
 - What is a sign?
 - The natural wheel
 - House meanings
 - Sign rulerships
 - Aspect theory
 - The Golden Dawn Tarot/Astrology Correspondences
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CONSTRUCTION OF A CHART

Patterns give meaning. Meaning requires pattern.

The chart is a map of the whole sky—the part seen above us, and the unseen sky below us. Astrology developed when people thought that the sky, including the Sun, Moon and planets, revolved around the earth. For these ancient astrologers, the Earth kept still, the sky rose, and each day the Sun was seen to move farther along in one constellation until it reached a new constellation. The path that the Sun traveled in the course of a year became the zodiac. The chart reflects this perception of the sky.

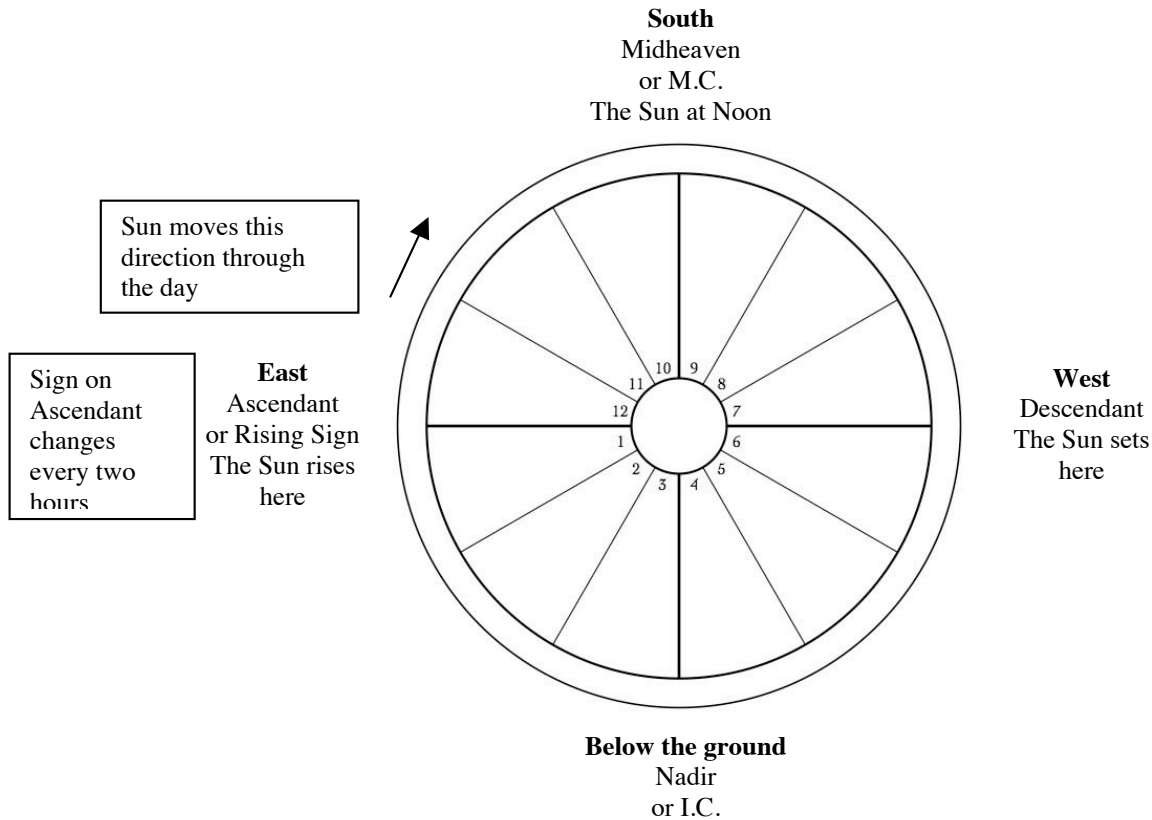
In a chart the left side of the circle is oriented to the east. At this point we see which constellation is rising at the moment of birth. If we wait a couple of hours, another constellation will be rising.

Across the wheel on the right side is the west. At this point, always exactly opposite in the zodiac from the rising sign, we find the constellation that is setting.

The top of the chart looks at the sky overhead, and points in a southerly direction to the ecliptic or the apparent path of the Sun.

The bottom half of the chart is the unseen sky below the horizon. We can imagine the line of the Midheaven at the top of the chart going from mid-heaven towards the south, through the earth and towards the north.

The Sun moves clockwise through the day. The signs move with the Sun and rotate through the wheel in the same direction as they rise, culminate and set.



The **angles** are important points describing fundamental areas of our lives. These angles are the two intersecting lines that divide the chart into four. One angle is the line of the horizon—the **Ascendant** in the east extending to the opposite point, the **Descendant** in the west. The other angle is the **Meridian** that runs through the sky from above our heads to below the earth. The top part of this line is the **Midheaven** or MC (Medium Coeli), which is also the beginning of the 10th house. The bottom part is the **Nadir** or IC (Imum Coeli), the beginning of the 4th house. Angle meanings: The Ascendant is about identity. The Nadir is about family and our inner selves. The Descendant is about relationship. The Midheaven is about career and vocation.

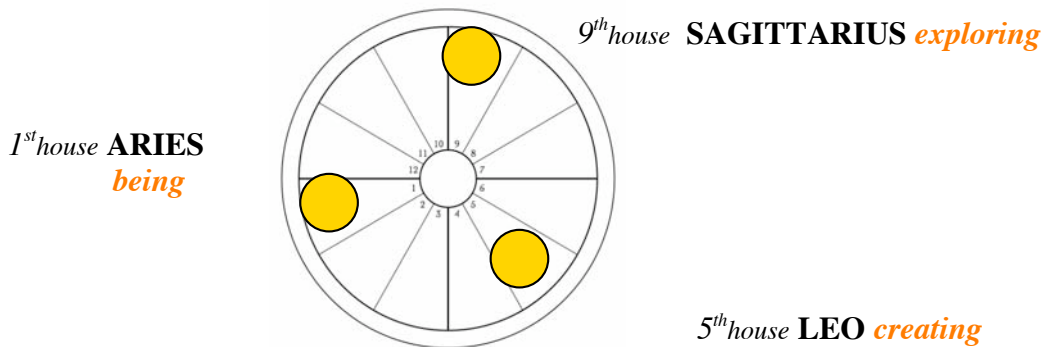
THE ELEMENTS

The four elements--FIRE, EARTH, AIR, and WATER—are the energy substance of experience. Each element is specifically expressed through three zodiac signs and three corresponding houses. The elements progress in a specific pattern through the signs and houses:

Fire, Earth, Air, Water. This pattern repeats three times to complete the wheel.

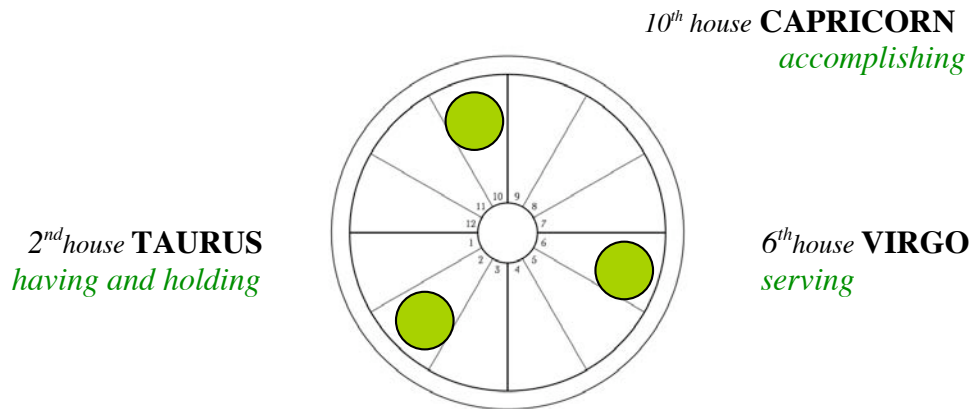
<u>ELEMENT</u>		<u>SIGNS</u>	<u>HOUSES</u>
FIRE	<i>identity/spirit</i>	ARIES, LEO, SAGITTARIUS	1 st , 5 th , 9 th
EARTH	<i>material/physical</i>	TAURUS, VIRGO, CAPRICORN	2 nd , 6 th , 10 th
AIR	<i>social/intellectual</i>	GEMINI, LIBRA, AQUARIUS	3 rd , 7 th , 11 th
WATER	<i>soul/emotional</i>	CANCER, SCORPIO, PISCES	4 th , 8 th , 12 th

FIRE is the warming, radiating, energizing life force. Fire seeks to realize identity. The fire signs and houses:



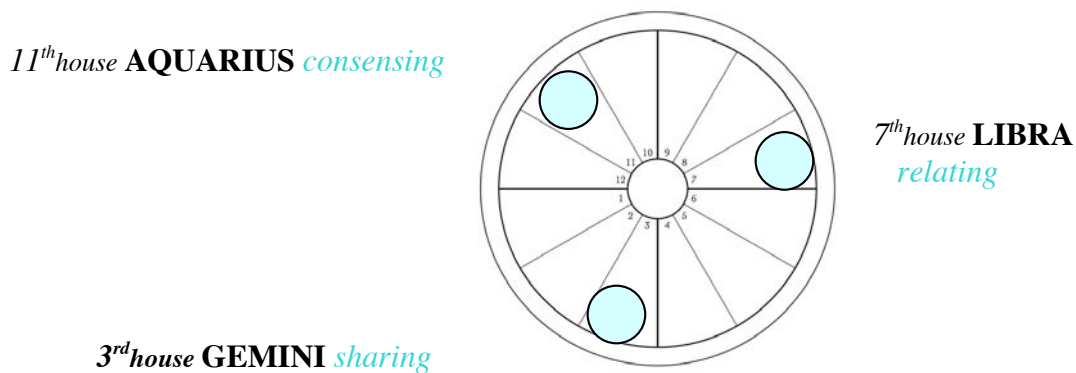
FIRE keywords: enthusiasm, faith, encouragement, drive, self-expression, directness, honesty, *being, creating, exploring*, sight, and identity. In Tarot- Wands or Staves suit

EARTH is the attunement to the physical world. Earth seeks to provide material substance. The earth signs and houses:



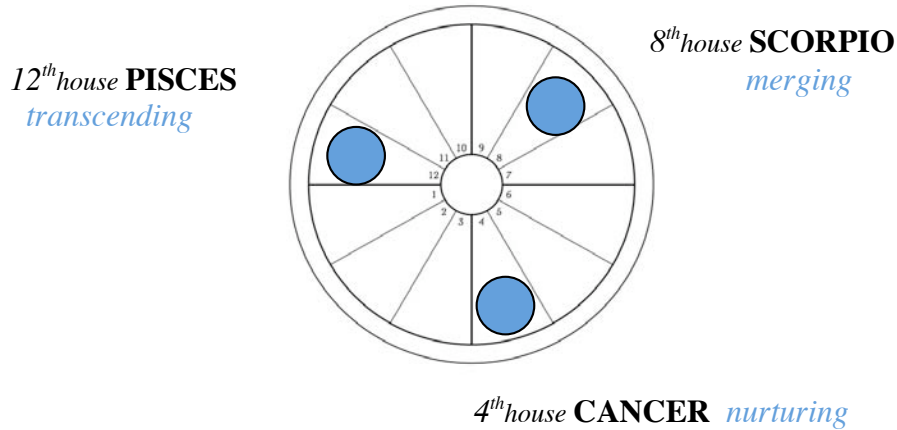
EARTH keywords: Practical ability to utilize, improve and manifest, naturalness, ease, comfort, value, organization, touch, taste, *having and holding, serving, accomplishing*, tangible, material, responsible. In Tarot – Pentacles or Disk suit.

AIR is the mind's sensation, perception and expression. Air seeks personal interaction and exchange. The air signs and houses:



AIR keywords: Information, communication, thought, abstract ideas, detachment, objectivity, perspective, *sharing, relating, consensing*, visioning, breath, sight, smell, hearing, social, intellectual. In Tarot – Swords suit.

WATER is the cooling, healing principle of sensitivity, feeling response, and empathy with others. Water seeks emotional and soul understanding. The water signs and houses:



WATER keywords: Emotions, bonds, connections, the unconscious, the Soul, *nurturing*, *merging*, *transcending*, unconditional love, compassion, intuitive awareness. In Tarot – Cups suit.

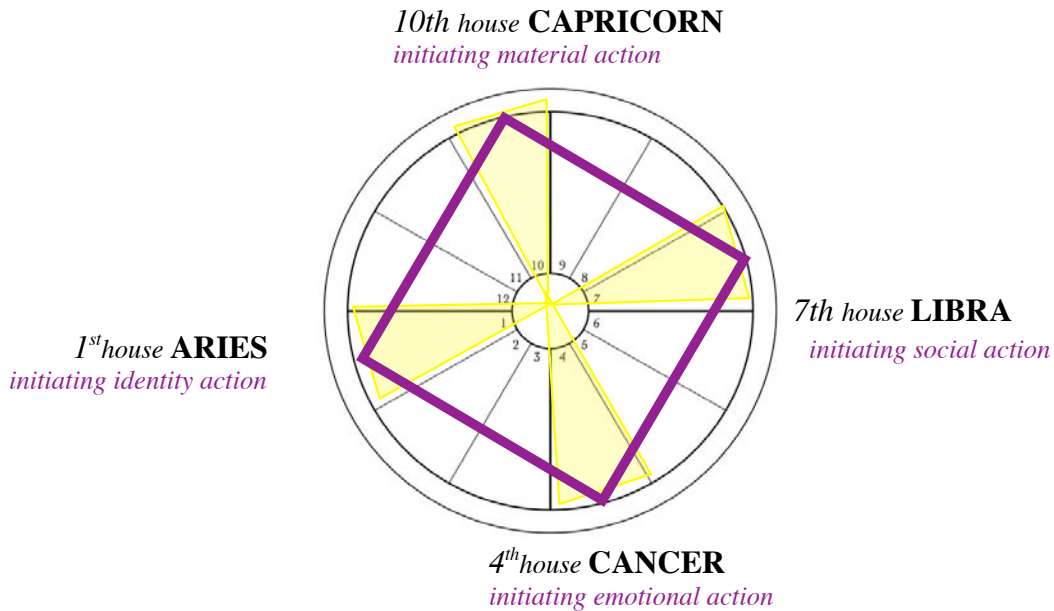
MODALITY

The three modalities—CARDINAL, FIXED, AND MUTABLE—describe the energetic quality of experience or *mode* of expression. Each modality is expressed through four zodiac signs and four corresponding houses. The energetic quality of experience is revealed by modality. Modalities reveal how energy manifests as movement. The signs are organized into three modalities:

<u>CARDINAL</u>	<u>FIXED</u>	<u>MUTABLE</u>
ARIES	TAURUS	GEMINI
CANCER	LEO	VIRGO
LIBRA	SCORPIO	SAGGITARIUS
CAPRICORN	AQUARIUS	PISCES

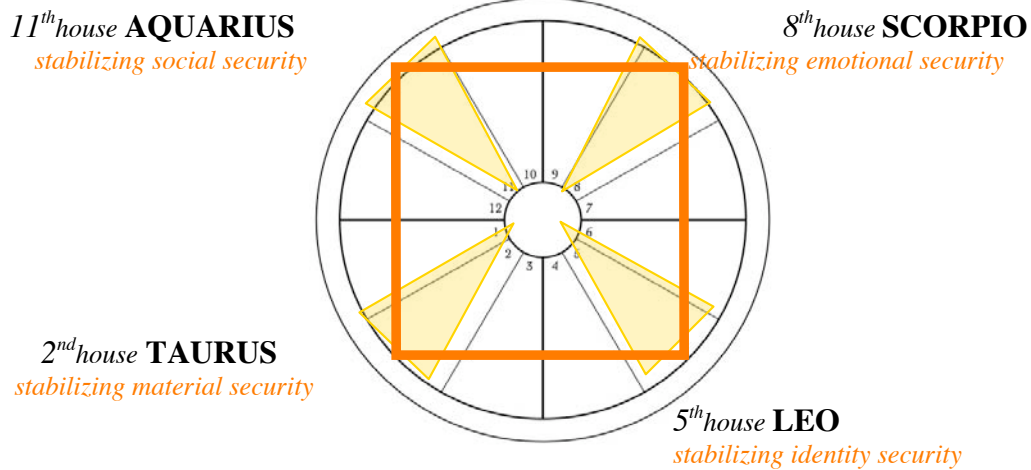
The modality of signs describe a process of development or change. The Cardinal signs *initiate* or generate energy for action. The Fixed signs *stabilize* and concentrate energy to solidify and secure. The Mutable signs *adapt* and distribute energy, learning from the action initiated in the Cardinal and secured in the Fixed phase, and reconciling growth with changing conditions of time and space.

CARDINAL signs and (Angular) houses:



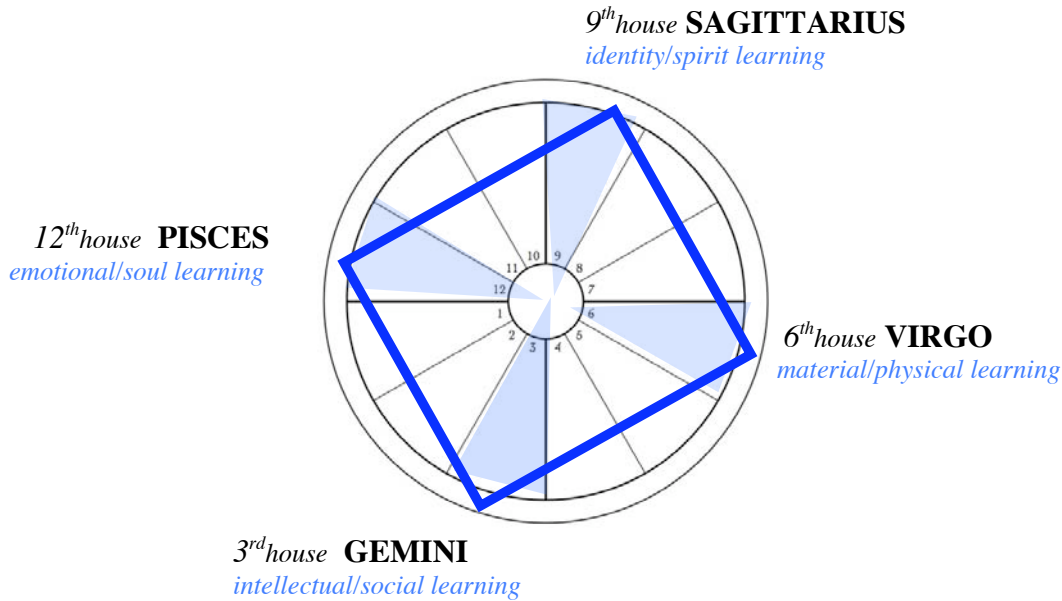
CARDINAL keywords: generating, beginning, active, direct, purposeful, starting, initiating, doing, outward movement, taking charge.

FIXED signs and (Succedent) houses:



FIXED keywords: concentrating, focusing, sustaining, finishing, preserving, conserving, securing, inward movement, maintaining.

MUTABLE signs and (Cadent) houses:



MUTABLE keywords: adaptable, flexible, connecting, linking, changing, versatile, distributing, integrating, spiraling movement, learning.

WHAT IS A SIGN?

Building blocks of a sign. The signs are inspired by and derived from the seasons. Each season teaches us about the unique qualities of each sign. Added to the qualities of the season, the signs are built with the pattern of element and modality. For example, there is only one expression of Fixed Water; that is Scorpio. Each sign contains 30 degrees, which reflects the number of days that the Sun spends in each sign, approximately 30 days. The signs are:

FIRE

Cardinal Aries - initiates identity action by being, "I am."

Fixed Leo - stabilizes identity security by performing, "I express."

Mutable Sagittarius - integrates identity through philosophy, "I believe."

EARTH

Cardinal Capricorn - initiates material action through accomplishing, "I lead."

Fixed Taurus - stabilizes material security through skills and comfort, "I have."

Mutable Virgo - integrates material learning by improving/refinement, "I serve."

AIR

Cardinal Libra - initiates social and intellectual action via partnership, "We are."

Fixed Aquarius - stabilizes social/intellectual security in community, "I consense."

Mutable Gemini - integrates social/intellectual lessons via curiosity, "I share."

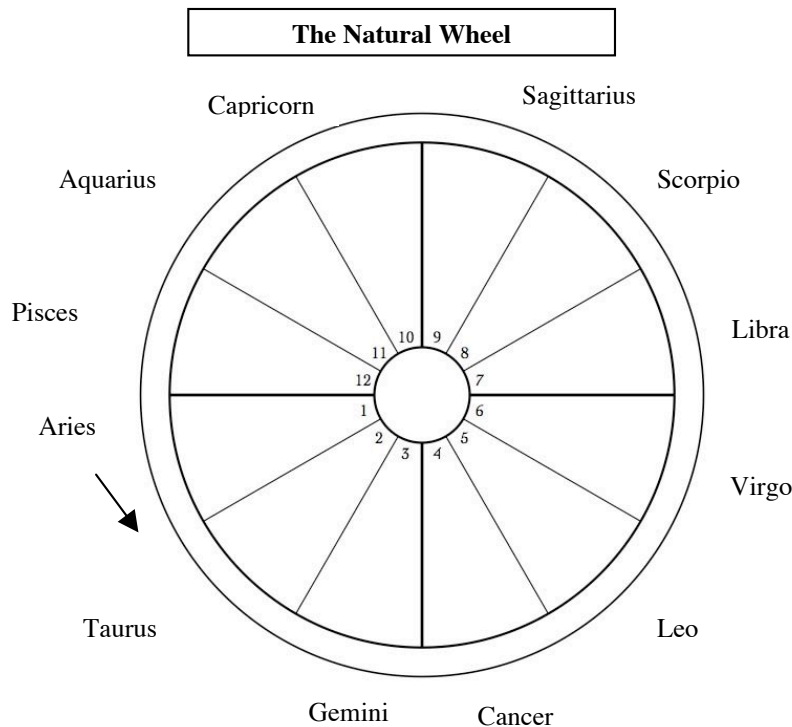
WATER

Cardinal Cancer - initiates emotional/soul action relating to self and family, "I nurture."

Fixed Scorpio - stabilizes emotional/soul security relating to other, "I merge."

Mutable Pisces - integrates emotional/soul learning through release, "I transcend."

THE NATURAL WHEEL is an archetypal pattern. In this pattern the signs and houses go together, so that the first house is Aries, the second is Taurus, the third is Gemini, etc. The Natural Wheel shows how the signs reflect on the meaning of each house. In most cases, the Natural Wheel is not the same as a personal horoscope. Not everyone will have Aries on the cusp of the first house, however the first house means the same thing for everyone. It is the house of identity – an Aries issue.



THE HOUSES

The houses in the chart describe 12 different arenas of life. House meanings take their cues from the signs that relate to the houses in the Natural Wheel.

House meanings from three perspectives.

Houses can be interpreted on several levels, from the literal to the spiritual. On the physical level, we are able to find a house for anything that exists – from prisons (12th house) to paintbrushes (5th house). Some of these associations are traditional, like the one about prisons in the 12th. Others are open to interpretation like the one about paintbrushes. I made that one up myself. My reasoning was that the 5th house is about creativity and so the tools of creativity might belong to this house as well. There is room for interpretation in house meanings. While there may not be much call for discerning which house rules paintbrushes, this type of logic can be useful in expanding what the chart can tell us.

As astrology has developed a more psychological approach in modern times, the physical realms have taken on symbolic significance. In the physical realm, if the 2nd house is about money, then in the psychological realm it can also be about values. When analyzing a chart both of these ideas can be explored through the 2nd house. There is also room here for interpretation. While values can be indicated by the 2nd house, they may also be explored through the 9th house where we hold our beliefs. It is up to the astrologer to explore such nuances and what they can tell us. An interesting philosophical question might be: What is the difference between a 2nd house value and a 9th house value? Astrology is full of such explorations.

The houses also describe the journey of the evolving self. The houses— derived from the signs, which are derived from the seasons—are a template for life. This template can become a guiding pattern for many things, from personal spiritual development to historical and cultural evolution.

House	Physical Realm: arenas of life	Psychological Realm: components of the psyche	Spiritual Realm: the unfolding journey
1	Appearance Identity	Role in family Individuation How others see you	The evolving self
2	Possessions, valuables Money Gain Innate talent and skills	Needs Safety and security Values	Relationship with the tangible world
3	Siblings Short journeys Information Immediate environment	Early peer experiences Communicating and learning	Expression of thought The microcosm
4	Home Real estate Father or mother	Family dynamics Influence of parents Inner world, secret self	Deep self Roots What we nurture Retreat
5	Children Gambling Romance	Creativity Taking risks Self esteem	Gifts Self worth
6	Work Employees Health Pets	Discernment and order Meaningful service Influence of health	Service Daily practice Apprenticeship Healing
7	Partnerships Marriage Open enemies	Projections, mirrors Justice Trust Agreements, compromise	Expansion of self Cooperation and harmony Balance
8	Death Others' money Inheritance Taxes The occult	Power Sex Hidden issues, taboos Depth psychology	Understanding power Death as initiator Soul
9	Law Religion Publishing Higher education Travel	Knowledge Seeking/knowing truth Judgment Mythologies Beliefs	Philosophy The macrocosm Knowing the stories Teaching
10	Vocation Profession Honor Mother or father	Public self Influence of family's expectations Ambition	What I profess Authority Status and excellence Recognition
11	Community Friends Hopes and wishes	Influence of friends and community Visions Rebellion	Consensus Collaboration The future
12	Places of confinement Secret enemies Sorrow Spirituality	Transcendence of ego Escapism Salvation Grief	Sacrifice Completion Surrender

SIGN RULERSHIP

Every sign has one or two rulers—planets that have an affinity for that sign. Some signs have two rulers—the traditional ruler and the modern ruler—assigned after the discovery of the outer planets. If the sign is a season, the planet is the god of the season. The rulers of each sign are:

Aries – Mars

Taurus – Venus

Gemini – Mercury

Cancer – Moon

Leo – Sun

Virgo – Mercury

Libra – Venus

Scorpio – Mars, Pluto

Sagittarius – Jupiter

Capricorn – Saturn

Aquarius – Saturn, Uranus

Pisces – Jupiter, Neptune

ASPECT THEORY

Aspects are relationships. As we all know, not all relationships are the same; some are easy and some are difficult. In astrology as well, some aspects are harmonious and some are challenging. However, easy aspects do not always give us the best means of developing our talents, and so challenging aspects can be our best allies.

Aspect theory is based on how the elements and modalities “get along” with each other. The harmonious aspects—the sextile and the trine—are based on relationships between the same polarity (i.e., both signs are Yin) or in the same element (i.e., both signs are earth). The challenging aspects are between signs of the same modality (i.e., both signs are Cardinal). These are the opposition and square aspects. There are two other significant aspects: the conjunction and the quincunx. The conjunction is a merging of energy within the same sign. The quincunx is the challenging energy that happens between two signs that have nothing in common (not the same polarity, the same element, nor the same modality). For instance Taurus (yin, fixed, earth) and Libra (yang, cardinal, air) are quincunx each other.

Oppositions are important. Signs that are opposite each other form a whole. They represent a shadow or overlooked perspective, which gives each sign wholeness. In essence, we could say that there are really only six signs – the linked pairs of opposite signs.

Squares (see the diagrams under Modalities above) represent similar points of view that are in conflict with each other. If Cardinal signs wish to take charge, imagine how a water cardinal sign and fire cardinal sign interact with each other. These aspects ask us to

develop talents, negotiate contradictions, and gain subtlety in our ways of expressing that modality's needs.

Trines are typically harmonious relationships but can be challenges in themselves as they may show us how we overuse certain modes of expression. We may take these qualities for granted or overlook the possibilities inherent in them.

Sextiles represent assets. They rarely point to the ways we will be challenged but can show us a blind spot. They invite us to consider the missing polarity.

The **Quincunx** is an intriguing relationship. Sometimes we can be fascinated by the absolute uniqueness of the other sign. However, it is very difficult to integrate quincunx relationships. They ask us to hold paradox and accept mystery.

The **Conjunction** occurs when two planets are near each other. Depending on the nature of the planets and the nature of the sign that they are in, this aspect can present challenges or gifts. Conjunctions are the beginning of the cycle between two planets. For instance, when the Sun and Moon are conjunct, which happens once a month, a New Moon occurs. All planets follow the same cyclic pattern, though their cycles can take many years to complete, depending on the length of their orbits.

TAROT AND ASTROLOGY

The following correspondences between the Tarot's Major Arcana card and astrology's signs and planets are based on the system devised by the Order of the Golden Dawn. Later additions to these correspondences were added after the discovery and understanding of the natures of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto had developed.

Number	Major Arcana	Astrological Symbol
0 or 22	The Fool	Uranus
1	The Magician	Mercury
2	The High Priestess	Moon
3	The Empress	Venus
4	The Emperor	Aries
5	The Hierophant	Taurus
6	The Lovers	Gemini
7	The Chariot	Cancer
8	Strength	Leo
9	The Hermit	Virgo
10	The Wheel of Fortune	Jupiter
11	Justice	Libra
12	The Hanged One	Neptune
13	Death	Scorpio
14	Temperance	Sagittarius
15	The Devil	Capricorn
16	The Tower	Mars
17	The Star	Aquarius
18	The Moon	Pisces
19	The Sun	Sun
20	Judgment	Pluto
21	The World	Saturn

The numbering and the names of these cards are based on the names and numbers found in decks based on Waite-Smith Tarot decks.