

Introduction to Astrology for Beginners

The Online Workshop

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ABOUT JESSICA ADAMS

I'm the astrologer for international editions of Vogue and Cosmopolitan. I started my career at Elle magazine. I'm the author of *Astrolove*, *2020 Vision*, *Handbag Horoscopes* and *Essential Astrology for Women*, all published in many countries around the world. I hold a B.A. in Ancient Civilisations, Philosophy and Religious Studies. All good training for an astrologer!



ABOUT YOU

You are free to download what you need from *Astrology for Beginners* at jessicaadams.com for your own learning and research. This entire online course is a mini-book of around 12,000 words and you may wish to download it in its entirety, for home study. The kind of astrology I teach is different to other forms of horoscope study. It's very simple, very stripped-down and very fast. Some of it will agree with what you see elsewhere, some of it won't. In all cases, test, try and use what works! The magic ingredient for this online mini course is a journal. Write daily and you will soon be amazed at how astrology starts working for you. And you'll learn more than I could ever teach you!

HOW TO USE THIS FREE ONLINE WORKSHOP

From time to time I'll release new podcasts, videos or other special extras. These will be announced on my website right here, jessicadams.com so be sure to check it regularly. You can also find the **Astrology for Beginners** podcasts, available at jessicadams.com. It's a free library of audio for you.



LIVE FROM LONDON!

In February and March 2009 I will teach a course at The Astrological Lodge in London. Come along on Monday nights if you happen to be in that city (in the vicinity of Baker Street) and you feel ready to learn simple, accurate, fast, people-friendly astrology. For more information visit the website: <http://www.astrolodge.co.uk>. Podcast versions of these London classes will be released at jessicadams.com so once again, check back regularly to pick up these exclusive extras. Each London class will tie into this online course too.

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ONE: THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

The easiest way to understand the twelve signs is to think of them as twelve people in a village – or a dozen people in a tribe. Each person has his or her own part to play in the overall wellbeing of the group. When planets or other heavenly bodies are ‘in’ a sign, their function is channelled through that sign.

ARIES

Aries is the sign we link with ‘taking’ – going out there to take what is wanted or needed. It’s like the villager who charges off on horseback to claim a new block of land for the tribe. Not surprisingly, other people often want the same thing! So Aries is associated with competing, and competition – and winning. This sign is about fearlessness and initiative. It’s also about energy. Aries is the sign which quests, competes, conquers, claims. Aries does whatever it takes to get in first and seize ownership or rights; without Aries, the tribe doesn’t survive.

TAURUS

If Aries is about taking, Taurus is about managing what is taken! Taurus is about saving, investing and hoarding. It’s also about stocktaking, and evaluation. From Taurus we get the idea of values and principles. Taurus has to put a price on the goods – and that price is not always fiscal. Sometimes it’s moral or ethical. What price a human life, for example? Taurus is the sign which cultivates and grows, which is why it turns up so often in the charts of gardeners, as well as stockmarket investors. It takes what Aries grabs and makes the most of it.

GEMINI

At some point, Taurus has to sell, buy or trade. Perhaps Taurus also has to argue a moral financial point – and debate its values. For this, Gemini is required. Gemini is about the power of communication. It’s usually about words, but can sometimes describe images (sign language or the language of film.) Negotiation is the key Gemini word. Sometimes charm or humour clinches a deal; Gemini is associated with both. Gemini is also about winning arguments. This sign is about fast talkers, persuasive debaters and getting the message across.

CANCER

What does the tribe do now that Aries has claimed the land, Taurus has part-sold some of it and Gemini has cleverly negotiated a price? Along comes Cancer, to create a home, and also a sense of belonging. In order to do this, Cancer has to remember his/her own family and home background and use this as a launching pad for an idea about what the house, apartment or home life should actually feel like. Cancer is

thus associated with the physical home, but also the family or clan. She uses her own past to help her decide what to build or create.

LEO

The tribe has taken land, managed it, negotiated it and now turned it into a new homeland. What next? Some kind of authority has to come in – with no arguments. Leo is the sign to associate with leadership, royals, presidents and anyone at the top of the tribe. It gets there by birthright and if it maintains its dignity and authority well, passes the ‘crown’ on to its heirs. This is where Leo’s association with children and young people comes in. Leo is about both natural command – and the importance of infants and teenagers in the tribe.

VIRGO

It’s all very well to have someone in charge, but what about the details? Leo is about overseeing the big picture – running the ‘kingdom’. However this sign can’t possibly rule and attend to the finer points of life. Virgo is thus to be associated with the daily round of work, duty and service. Without Virgo, Leo’s ‘court’ falls apart! Virgo is also about health and wellbeing – because without that, no good work can ever be done. Leo may think s/he commands the tribe but without Virgo there’s nothing to rule. Virgo makes things tick. It’s about method.

LIBRA

At some point the tribe has to form an alliance. Without an ally, it stands alone – and thanks to Aries, there will inevitably be conflict and competition out there. When resources like land are limited, there may even be war. We now come to the sign of Libra which rules partnerships of all kinds. Libra describes the tact, tolerance and timing which makes any one-on-one alliance function well. Because tribes often arrange alliances by marriage, it is responsible for those. It really describes all pairs and duets, though. Two against the world but *for* each other.

SCORPIO

Once a partnership is struck (for any purpose at all) there has to be agreement over money, property and assets, and often worst-case scenarios (divorce, death, bankruptcy.) Scorpio is in charge of this and the cash, homes, assets and possessions we associate with this sign are purely about the balance of power. Think about the taboo aspects of legal and financial issues (family inheritance, life insurance, messy divorces, child custody battles) and you begin to see Scorpio’s association with power, sex and death. It’s about taboo financials!

SAGITTARIUS

At a certain point, the tribe has to ask itself the following question 'What else is there?' This is where Sagittarius comes in! This sign rules travel, and also travel in the mind. It describes journeys which are geographical or mental. That's why it's linked to foreign people and places, emigration, education, publishing (the transmission of ideas) and also belief systems of all kinds – from the traditional religions, all the way to particular kinds of philosophy – and atheism. Aries travels to conquer and compete. Sagittarius travels to explore and discover.

CAPRICORN

Religion and education both require a structure. Without an organised hierarchy (a classic pyramid model) these big ideas cannot be contained for the tribe. Enter Capricorn, which is associated with the need for structuring, building, and maintaining. Think of the Vatican and other ancient structures with a long ladder of authority. Consider the passage of time too. Capricorn believes that people and ideas have to stand the test of years. Whatever Capricorn builds must stand firm. And of course, Capricorn wants to end up at the top of it.

AQUARIUS

The tribe is becoming a concrete entity! It is established, thanks to Capricorn's structuring. It's time for Aquarius, the sign we associate with reform, revolution and radical change. It describes freedom. Without Aquarius, the Capricorn structures and Leo rulerships can become restrictive, stifling, and stagnant. Aquarius seeks to keep the tribe moving – morally, philosophically, spiritually, mentally – by forcing others to change so they can also alter course. It cannot do this alone, so Aquarius is associated with groups and people power.

PISCES

The tribe has just experienced its Aquarian revolution. But what now? Pisces represents an extraordinary development in the life of the tribe; the ability to see through the usual boundaries which separate people (and animals) from each other. It is the furthest sign from Aries, and it describes the furthest possible journey from Aries; from conquering to spiritual understanding. Pisces rules the idea that we are all one. It's linked to the golden rule: 'Do unto others'. It tells the tribe – and beyond – 'We're all in this together. No separation.'

TWO: WERE YOU BORN ON THE CUSP?

A cusp is the dividing line between one sign and the next. If you were born on the changeover day that the Sun left one sign and went into another, then you were born on the cusp. It doesn't mean that you have the qualities of both signs. You're either an Aries or a Taurus. By looking up the exact time, place and date of birth at astro.com you can check this for yourself. Did the Sun edge over the line to Taurus or was it still stuck in Aries (by a fraction of a degree) when they cut your umbilical cord?

Elsewhere in astrology a cusp is just the dividine line between signs or houses. But that comes later...

THREE: THE SLIDING SCALE OF THE SIGNS

Each zodiac sign has a sliding scale. It operates at a lowest and highest level. It manifests in a negative or positive way. That's why two people who have the same sign dominating their chart can show you both sides of it. Human free will and choice dictates how we choose to pitch our sign. Do we pitch it low, or high?

LOW ARIES: Aggressive, violent, pushy, anger overdrive.

HIGH ARIES: Energetic, brave, moral, fights the good fight.

LOW TAURUS: Greedy, miserly, exploitative, materialistic.

HIGH TAURUS: Charitable, principled, businesslike, provider for others.

LOW GEMINI: Word-twisting, manipulative, unethical, cunning.

HIGH GEMINI: Wordsmith, wit, literary lion, entertainer.

LOW CANCER: Property obsessed, family-centric, mother-fixated, nationalistic.

HIGH CANCER: Gifted homemaker, family creator, homeland builder, nation builder.

LOW LEO: Snob, arrogant, out of touch with the tribe – and the world of children.

HIGH LEO: Values children, commands respect, inspires loyalty, rules well.

LOW VIRGO: Hypochondriac, body-obsessive, workaholic, detail freak.

HIGH VIRGO: Efficient, healthy, sensible work ethic, methodical.

LOW LIBRA: Operates as a couple not a person, wedding-obsessed, over-compromises.

HIGH LIBRA: Diplomat, equality advocate, gifted at forming and keeping a partnership.

LOW SCORPIO: Controlling, power-obsessed (especially in terms of sex or money.)

HIGH SCORPIO: Handles taboo human issues expertly, uses power fairly and wisely.

LOW SAGITTARIUS: Unwanted lecturing (on ideas or beliefs), uncommitted to family/place.

HIGH SAGITTARIUS: Gifted teacher/student, natural explorer, true believer.

LOW CAPRICORN: Ambition without ethics, slave to the 'system', inflexible.

HIGH CAPRICORN: Wise, enduring, contributes to sound structures which last.

LOW AQUARIUS: Revolutionary without principles, shocking, tribal (not individual.).

HIGH AQUARIUS: People power, human progress, believes in freedom for all.

LOW PISCES: Chaotic , no sense of separate identity, uses harmful 'escapes'.

HIGH PISCES: Spiritual, soulful, compassionate, finds blissful escapes (like music).

FOUR: HOW PEOPLE USE THEIR SIGNS

In real life, very few people are at either extreme of those sliding scales. Mostly, those you know will hover around the middle, and slide higher or lower depending on their life circumstances!

Another 'low' expression of a sign can be to deny it, ignore it and neglect it. So, for example, you could have the sign of Cancer strong in your chart (many planets and points are placed in it.) However, you reject what Cancer is all about and end up with no home, a broken family and no sense of place.

Everyone knows someone with a strong Virgo chart who is chronically unhealthy, overweight or suffers from addiction issues. Why? Because that person is running away from themselves! Denying their Virgo side – rejecting everything the sign stands for.

When people seem to actively push away the signs which dominate their horoscopes, they are usually in extreme inner conflict and turmoil, and seeking to disown who they truly are. This is where the alchemy of astrology can truly help. Through understanding the birth chart, you can reclaim the lost or rejected parts of yourself and start functioning as you were meant to be...so many astrologers believe, anyway.

Here is a very simple way to check how you are using your regular zodiac sign, also known as your Sun Sign (the sign the Sun was in, on the day you were born.) Take a look at your last birthday. Remember the birthdays before that, too. Ask yourself what those particular times told you about yourself – at least, in terms of the way other people regarded you. What did their reaction or feedback show you about yourself?

Sometimes the gifts people choose, or the messages they write on your birthday cards can reveal a lot! Sometimes unrelated events will have segued with your birthday that still seem to show you something about yourself.

Your birthday is the time that the travelling (transiting) Sun returns to exactly the same sign and position it occupied at your birth. It's your Solar Return, which is why we say 'Many Happy Returns.' On your birthday, there is a temporary spotlight thrown by the travelling (transiting) Sun on your own Sun Sign, and what it means – and the feedback you get from the world at large will show you how you are expressing it, on your own sliding scale.

A 'high' Pisces, for example, may get a bunch of spiritual books for her birthday. A 'low' Pisces may end up unconscious at a chaotic party, and have to detox for weeks. These are extreme examples, but hopefully you get the picture! The birthday, or Solar Return, is one way of spotting how you are using your Sun Sign.

FIVE: MORE ON THE SIGNS – AND THEIR ELEMENTS

Each sign has an element group it belongs to, and also a planet or point as its ruler.

Aries – Fire element, ruled by Mars

Taurus – Earth element, ruled by Venus

Gemini – Air element, ruled by Mercury

Cancer – Water element, ruled by the Moon

Leo – Fire element, ruled by the Sun

Virgo – Earth element, ruled by Mercury

Libra – Air element, ruled by Venus

Scorpio – Water element, ruled by Pluto

Sagittarius – Fire element, ruled by Jupiter

Capricorn – Earth element, ruled by Saturn

Aquarius – Air element, ruled by Uranus

Pisces – Water element, ruled by Neptune

SIX: A FIVE MINUTE GUIDE TO THE SIGNS

Planets in Aries operate through contests, competitions, challenges, battles. Aries is about being first, taking territory, seizing the day (Carpe Diem!) and generally rattling other people's cages. It's about assertiveness and oomph power.

Planets in Taurus operate through sales, purchases, business and often non-material values. Taurus is linked to charity and giving, and also to communism and socialism. It's also linked to buying, bartering, owning and keeping.

Planets in Gemini operate through communication, language, ideas, networks. Gemini is also about the short journey (taxi, train, bus, car, daily commute, aeroplane, boat). Brothers and sisters are linked to Gemini. It's light and fast.

Planets in Cancer operate through mothers, families, property and homeland. It's linked to homes of all kinds (houses, caravans or tents) and also to children and their needs. It's about clans - those you're born with and also create.

Planets in Leo operate through the world of children and also through leadership. Leo is about starring, taking centre-stage and shining. It's about dignity and showing by example. Thus it's linked to noble qualities and the nobility.

Planets in Virgo operate through the body - and the work ethic. Virgo is linked to shining good health and also obvious health problems. It depends on the individual. It's about lifestyle and daily grind - and doing it well or losing the plot.

Planets in Libra operate through partnership - and any battle over inequality or injustice. Libra is about balancing the scales. It points to weddings but also divorce settlements. It's about peace treaties and diplomatic agreements.

Planets in Scorpio operate through 'power' money, property and possessions. It's about the kind of money you get through a sexual relationship - typically marriage but not always. It's also about 'death' money - a will, for example.

Planets in Sagittarius operate through travel, education, publishing and beliefs. This sign is all about exploring, no matter if it's far-flung countries or outer galaxies. It's about the big picture, big ideas and the need to go further.

Planets in Capricorn operate through ambition, hierarchy and class/caste systems. Capricorn is about keeping something permanent and stable - thus, it's about building strong pyramid-styled structures. Skyscrapers or 'firms'!

Planets in Aquarius operate through groups, tribes and friendships. It's about the new ideas, alternatives and offbeat concepts which offer people other options in life. Typically these do appeal to large groups with common causes.

Planets in Pisces operate through psychic ability, imagination, compassion. It's linked to visions of all kinds, from the photographic and artistic, to the clairvoyant or religious. It's about the unseen world of the spirit, soul and inner eye.

SEVEN: MORE ON ELEMENTS

You'll encounter the planets and points (like Pluto and Venus) elsewhere in Simple Astrology. There is too much to say about them here. But the element groups are pretty straightforward. Aries, Leo and Sagittarius belong to Fire – which is warm by nature, but can overheat. It can classically burn out! Fire changes whatever it touches, usually for the better – but it can also ruin things if it goes too far. Because they are in the same element, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius have a natural click between them.

Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn are from the element of Earth. They are stabled, deeply rooted in permanence, and offer fertile ground for new things to grow. If out of balance, they can put out the warmth and positive 'change' of the Fire signs. Ideas about being 'grounded' or 'down to earth' fit nicely with this group, but so does a phrase like 'stick in the mud' if earth goes to extremes. Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn click.

Gemini, Libra and Aquarius belong to the element of Air. They are breezy, and oxygenate the atmosphere. They are essential if the fire signs (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius) are going to fulfil their cosmic purpose. They travel quickly, lightly and easily along the surface. If out of balance, they can seem impermanent, superficial, insubstantial. Libra, Gemini and Aquarius click together. Air signs can disrupt Water signs – rather like a strong wind churning up a river.

Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces belong to the element of Water. This is an easy one! We associate Water with tears and also with other bodily fluids – famously, those associated with sex. Water is about emotion, emotion, emotion. The intimacy of orgasm and the suffering of grief. Water makes us human. If out of balance, Water can put out the good work done by the Fire signs. However, Water works very nicely with the Earth element signs – in fact it requires them, to do its thing!

EIGHT: CHANNELLING THE SIGNS

The signs by themselves don't start to function in your chart until you find out how they are being channelled, by the planets and points. Each planet and point has a particular meaning of its own, and so when you channel anything through a sign, you automatically get a double meaning.

Here's an example, using the Sun Sign. The Sun describes what makes you stand out; what is well-known or obvious about you. The Sun in Aries means the Sun is in the sign of Aries. The Sun is being channelled through Aries. Because you know that Aries is about conquering and competing (taking) you now have a bigger statement: Having the Sun in Aries means you are well-known for conquering and competing!

YOUR SUN SIGN

Your Sun Sign is a great way to explain this 'channelling' business. Your Sun Sign is your regular zodiac sign or star sign. It just describes the sign the Sun happened to be transiting (or travelling) through on the day you were born. Like every other heavenly body, the Sun signifies specific things about you. Typically it shows what is most obvious about you, what other people identify as special about you, what you have to live up to – and when you fall short of the mark, what lets you down. The Sun is your special attraction. It's the bits of you that other people expect to see, and queue up to see – and gawp at.

Russell Crowe has the Sun in Aries so he's well known for being energetic, sports-loving, fiery.

Bono has the Sun in Taurus so he's well known for being rich but also being a campaigner against poverty.

Paul McCartney has the Sun in Gemini so he's well known for his lyrics, and his interviews, and his word power.

Princess Diana had the Sun in Cancer so she was well known for being a Mum and for her own mother issues.

Madonna has the Sun in Leo so she's well known for children's books and also her own parenting.

John Lennon had the Sun in Libra so he was well known for his partners: Paul McCartney and Yoko Ono.

Dylan Thomas had the Sun in Scorpio so he's well known for his passion and his approach to sex/death./money.

Winston Churchill had the Sun in Sagittarius so he was well known for being a world citizen and global thinker.

Rod Stewart has the Sun in Capricorn so he's well known for slowly climbing to the top: he was a grave-digger now he's a rock star.

Sarah Palin has the Sun in Aquarius so she's well known for her tribe (Republicans) but also her offbeat individuality.

George Harrison had the Sun in Pisces so he was well-known for his involvement with the Hare Krishnas.

The more confident you are, the more extroverted you are, the greater the chance you will be typical of your Sun Sign. Having a strong relationship with your father or another 'male' type authority probably helps. The weaker your sense of self, the lower your confidence, the lower the chances are you'll beam out your Sun sign in a typical way.

To give you a better idea of this planet/sign thing: if you are very caring, nurturing, protective of others (and especially if you work in a caring profession) you're more likely to 'do' your Moon sign. Why? Because the Moon rules the mother role. So sometimes people will meet you at a party and think you're a Taurean (wrong!) when you're a Pisces. Why? Because you have a Taurean Moon and you're a nurse and you just got off night duty.

Here's another example. If you're into relationships and in love with love, and have some kind of work or business partnership then you're probably in touch with your Venus sign a lot. Venus rules one-on-one relationships of all kinds. So maybe your Venus sign will be more obvious than your Sun sign.

And if you're a dynamo and quick to go on the attack or defence? And your motto is 'carpe diem' and you have the patience threshold of a bee? Well your Mars is probably quite strong in your chart (especially if you work in an emergency profession or a highly competitive field – or are involved with sports and the military). So your Mars sign will often be what people 'get' about you.

Remember the zodiac sign is the flavour, the style, the 'clothes' a planet wears. And each planet has a different function or job.

Freddie Mercury was born on September 5 1946 with Venus and Mars in Libra. So although he was a Virgo (he had the Sun in Virgo) most people got his Libra stuff: songs about love, amazing clothes, charm, and a whole bunch of different partnerships (including one with a woman, mentioned in the classic Queen song 'You're My Best Friend.'

You never look at 'just' the Sun sign in astrology. It's only one part of you (the show off, confident, fully backed, supported, admired and 'Me me me' part). You need all the other heavenly bodies too, and their signs, to build up the multicoloured, multiflavoured thing that is you.

NINE: HOW THE SIGNS WORK TOGETHER – THE CONJUNCTION AND SEXTILE

Astrology is based on the idea that some signs work well together, and others conflict. You can see this just by reviewing the 'tribe' described in the opening paragraphs or by considering the elements each sign belongs to. Common-sense will tell you that Aries, with all her conquering and questing, would find a natural ally in Sagittarius, who is born to explore. Logic also suggests that revolutionary Aquarius would threaten royal Leo. You can understand why an earth sign like Taurus would provide a fantastic foundation for a Water sign like Cancer. You can also understand why a fire sign like Aries needs an air sign like Gemini around.

The angles in astrology are one way to pin these differences and similarities down. Because a horoscope contains 12 signs with 30 degrees each, it's a wheel showing 360 degrees – all of which can be cut into geometrical shapes. Think about triangles and squares, half-triangles and so on...but in this case they all have ancient, proper, astrological names. Some of these geometric shapes show flow. Some show blockages.

This section is about the conjunction and the sextile.

A conjunction shows two signs which are next to each other – usually in the same sign, with only a few degrees (or no degrees at all) separating them. Thus –

Planets in Aries together

Planets in Taurus together

Planets in Gemini together

Planets in Cancer together

Planets in Leo together

Planets in Virgo together

Planets in Libra together

Planets in Scorpio together

Planets in Sagittarius together

Planets in Capricorn together

Planets in Aquarius together

Planets in Pisces together

A sextile shows two signs which are 60 degrees apart in the horoscope. It points to flow, easy interaction, complementary purpose. It's about a gentle clicking which takes place between the two signs.

Aries and Gemini

Taurus and Cancer

Gemini and Leo

Cancer and Virgo

Libra and Sagittarius

Scorpio and Capricorn

Sagittarius and Aquarius

Capricorn and Pisces

Aquarius and Aries

Pisces and Taurus .

TEN: MORE ON ASPECTS – THE SQUARE AND TRINE

A square reveals two signs which are 45 degrees apart. You know the phrase ‘It’s hard to square x with y?’ That explains the square perfectly. It’s about struggling to make two very different signs operate together smoothly.

Aries and Cancer

Taurus and Leo

Gemini and Virgo

Cancer and Libra

Leo and Scorpio

Virgo and Sagittarius

Libra and Capricorn

Scorpio and Aquarius

Sagittarius and Pisces

Capricorn and Aries

Aquarius and Taurus

Pisces and Gemini

Think about the tribe again. You can see why Aries sits uncomfortably with Cancer; he’s always running off to conquer new bits of land, while Cancer is desperately trying to create a secure home. Scorpio’s uncomfortable association with family inheritance (power money!) can get in the way of Leo’s plans for the dynasty...and so on. Note that the signs in square aspect are also from conflicting element groups: Scorpio is water, Aquarius is air. Air disrupts water.

After the square, we come to the trine. It rhymes with chime (and of course ‘rhyme’ itself) and this is a good way to think about it. Trines between the signs chime and rhyme. They go together, like Ben and Jerry.

Trines show signs which are 120 degrees apart in the horoscope. They show ease and flow.

Aries and Leo

Taurus and Virgo

Gemini and Libra

Cancer and Scorpio

Leo and Sagittarius

Virgo and Capricorn

Libra and Aquarius

Scorpio and Pisces

Sagittarius and Aries

Capricorn and Taurus

Aquarius and Gemini

Pisces and Cancer

ELEVEN: MORE ON ASPECTS – THE QUINCUNX AND OPPOSITION

You should be getting a feel for the angles now! And each sign helps to fill out an aspect of the experience of the sign that it trines. When the two signs meet in a given situation, both have something to help the other – both have something to teach the other.

Because they are in the same element group there's a basic 'sameness' about signs which trine.

The quincunx (awkward to say) is the aspect which shows a 150 degree angle between two signs. Funnily enough, it's about an awkward fit. When two signs are quincunx, which is so tricky to pronounce, they are actually in a really tricky position. They don't really clash but they don't really blend.

Aries and Virgo and Scorpio

Taurus and Libra and Sagittarius

Gemini and Scorpio and Capricorn

Cancer and Sagittarius and Aquarius

Leo and Capricorn and Pisces

Virgo and Aquarius and Aries

Libra and Pisces and Taurus

Scorpio and Aries and Gemini

Sagittarius and Taurus and Cancer

Capricorn and Gemini and Leo

Aquarius and Cancer and Virgo

Pisces and Leo and Libra

Let's use Leo, the monarch of the tribe, as an example. It's in an awkward, tricky position with Capricorn. The two should operate together, because Capricorn is all about the hierarchy and structure (the establishments) of the tribe – but Leo rules by divine right (just by being born a Leo) and that whole Capricorn business of working and waiting to get to the top – versus inheriting leadership - can create serious issues for both. Leo is a fire sign. Capricorn is an earth sign. They're about different things!

You can also see the awkwardness of Libra and Pisces. Libra is about balancing the scales between two people, or two sides. It's about the delicate footwork required to keep equality and fairness in a relationship

of any kind. Thus, Libra recognises the differences between people but seeks to balance them out. Meanwhile Pisces believes that there are no differences at all. Underneath we're all one!

The opposition is the last major aspect in Simple Astrology you need to know about.

It sounds like what it is. Two signs are opposite each other, like boxers in a ring, or political parties across a parliament. What we have here are two signs which simply do not fit. They are tied together, because the very existence of one, automatically entails the existence of the other! But at the same time, they have nothing to bind them together, to centralise them or to help them co-operate.

Aries and Libra

Taurus and Scorpio

Gemini and Sagittarius

Cancer and Capricorn

Leo and Aquarius

Virgo and Pisces

See how the signs are tied? You can't have a boxing match without two boxes. Neither can you have Aries without Libra. Aries is about conquering and taking – Libra is about finding an ally to help you. It's also about the agreement between two opposing sides, once victory is declared. You can also take Leo and Aquarius as an example of interwoven destinies. Leo cannot rule without the people, and that's where Aquarian people power comes in. Important point: When signs are opposite, they are in complementary element groups, which might sound weird. Doesn't fire need air? So doesn't Leo need its opposite sign Aquarius? The answer is yes, but only as much as one boxer needs another, or one army needs another. They feed each other, but across a conflict.

TWELVE: HOW TO INTERPRET ASPECTS IN REAL LIFE

The easiest way to interpret aspects between heavenly bodies in particular signs is to use pre-made sentences and insert what you need – that way it will instantly make sense!

*My Venus in Virgo conjuncts my Pluto in Virgo. That part of me that wants to form partnerships with other people through work and ‘the body’ blends with that part of me which finds control and power through work and ‘the body.’

*My Mars in Capricorn sextiles my Jupiter in Pisces. That part of me that takes territory through my ambition works well with that part of me that takes opportunities through my imagination and vision.’

*My Sun in Aries squares my Moon in Cancer. That part of me which shines through action is hard to square with that part of me which looks after other people by mothering them.

*My Moon in Libra trines my Venus in Gemini. That part of me which looks after other people by getting into partnerships with them works well with that part of me which forms partnerships with people by relying on words and ideas.’

‘My Sun in Leo is quincunx my South Node in Capricorn. That part of me which shines by being ‘Queen’ or ‘King’ fits awkwardly with that part of me which repeats old karma, in a difficult way, through my ambition.’

‘My Mercury in Aquarius is opposite my Pluto in Leo. That part of me which thinks logically through friends and groups fights against that part of me which takes control and power by being ‘Queen’ or ‘King.’

Use your journal to start playing around with these sentences, inserting your own heavenly bodies, signs and key phrases. It might seem a bit clunky at first but within minutes you should start to see how the HBs, signs and aspects are actually revealing a great truth about your life.

Just a reminder:

The heavenly body describes a part of you – the fighter, the opportunist, the star, the caretaker etc.

The sign that an HB is in shows you the style and manner in which this part of you operates.

The house that an HB is in shows you the area of life where this part of you will be most active.

The aspect that one HB makes to another shows you how this part of you works, or gets blocked.

Once you feel comfortable with the idea of aspects between each Heavenly Body, using the idea of the signs they are in, go to the next step and use the house of each HB in your interpretation too.

Thus –

'My Mercury in Aquarius in the Second House is opposite my Pluto in Leo in the Eighth House. That part of me which thinks logically through friends and groups, in terms of my money, fights against that part of me which takes control by being 'Queen' or 'King' in terms of other people's finances or property.'

That statement might belong to someone in the middle of a big battle over shares! Now, over to you.

THIRTEEN: THE HEAVENLY BODIES

In astrology there are official planets (like Venus) and planets which just got demoted (like Pluto) and asteroids, and 'points' (like the Moon's North Node and South Node). The simplest way to think about all these things is to call them Heavenly Bodies, or HB's for short. Life is too short to sit here worrying about names! This is my quick tour to the HBs in all their glory.

THE SUN

How you shine, how you show off, what you're well known for, what stands out about you, how strangers judge you, how you appear from a distance. How you are rated and assessed (do you 'do' your Sun sign well or not?)

THE MOON

How you look after people and animals. How you cook. What sort of mum or dad you are (if you believe dads can be good mothers too). How you care, nurture and protect. Your notions about security, safety, comfort.

MERCURY

How you write, read, talk and think. How you network and negotiate. How you sell ideas or products. How you persuade and cajole. How you explain yourself. How you communicate, beyond all the usual barriers/borders.

VENUS

All two-way relationships and partnerships be they romantic or not. Classically, a marriage or de facto relationship. Often, a business partnership (sometimes a duet between others). Always a balancing act.

MARS

That 'seize the day' feeling in us all. The part of us that wants to fight, or take over. How you defend territory or take it. The territory can be financial, emotional, professional, or actually something physical (land.)

JUPITER

The new opportunities that emerge whenever fate takes a hand and we find ourselves faced with the possibility of a bigger, better, more meaningful world. Jupiter is about onwards and upwards. It can make you feel blessed.

SATURN

Saturn is about fate too. This planet brings situations you cannot run away from or escape. The only way to cope is to build some kind of structure around yourself that makes you safer. It could be mental or physical.

URANUS

Revolution! Freedom! Change! Uranus is easy to spot. It was discovered around the time of the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution. It's about a cosmic reshuffle. Everyone ends up with more freedom.

NEPTUNE

Neptune is about addiction. It's about losing yourself in another reality. It's about forgetting who you are, what you are and where you come from. It's about the loss of boundaries that happens whenever we hit a blind spot.

PLUTO

Pluto is about dramatic changes in the balance of power that either make us feel like winners, or losers. If we feel like losers, though, we soon become winners again by surviving and creating a new life that suits us.

NORTH NODE

The North Node describes situations which feel familiar in a comfortable way. You can either go back and 'do' the North Node again or give it a miss. It's up to you. There's a 'been there, done that' feeling about this Node.

SOUTH NODE

The South Node is about more awkward déjà vu feelings. It shows you what is uncomfortably familiar or repetitive. And there's no escape from the endless repeat, repeat! All you can do is change your attitude.

CHIRON

You'll see Chiron described by some astrologers as wounded healing. Others call him a maverick. I think he's a maverick, for sure, and he's about daring, punk rock spirit, chutzpah, nerve, bollocks and testing boundaries.

PALLAS

Women's voices in a man's world. This asteroid is about your decision (if you are female) to be heard and seen. Do you remain a force behind the scenes or do you step out? For men it describes women in your life.

CERES

Ceres shows the kind of relationship you have with your mum (if you are a woman) but it also shows your own connection with a daughter if you are a mother. In other cases, it shows the women in your life and their mums.

JUNO

Juno shows domestic bliss, of the very traditional kind, when a woman creates a life and home with a man. It also raises issues about freedom for women in a domestic setting. Does the cosy security balance the rest?

VESTA

Vesta talks about groups of women and one man. It's very specific. Vestal virgins were protected, sacred groups of women who had complex politics with their male authority figure. Same for you. Put it to the test!

THE ASCENDANT AND MIDHEAVEN

The ascendant shows how you arrive, the first impression you make, and how you relaunch yourself.

The midheaven shows your highest aims, goals and achievements in life – your mission statement.

FOURTEEN: ROMAN AND GREEK ASTEROIDS

There are many, many Roman and Greek asteroids but in astrology we need to look at them all because we work with a Greek and Roman list of heavenly bodies (like Mars the Roman God of War) and thus to use some of the picture, but not the whole picture, leaves us incomplete. As research is still taking place into these asteroids you can add to the body of knowledge out there. In the meantime here are some recent findings which you may like to research further, in your journal. Your research today could be part of astrology tomorrow:

ICARUS – Human inventions and the reality of nature's laws. Science, technology and nature.

HYGEIA – The care and maintenance of the body – or the neglect of the same.

PHAETHON – African and Indian issues in a changing world.

EROS – The eternal love-go-round. Dating, mating and relating via serial monogamy.

LILITH – Seeing the (Christian) light – the impact of Christianity on people and cultures.

TORO – Female opportunists, often in power-packed environments (like politics).

SAPPHO – Support for monogamy and commitment, even from those who are outside it

AMOR – The pros and cons of 'progress' – is a Brave New World a good or bad thing?

PANDORA – The high stakes of hope. The rights and wrongs of daring to hope

PSYCHE – Divination through all its forms, from oracles to tarot cards to precognitive dreams

DIANA – Double meanings, twin meanings, often associated with trickery and duplicity

There are many more of these asteroids and space does not allow for me to list all of them. But the research of, and definition of, the Graeco-Roman asteroids should be a major part of your astrology. Track them in your own chart and begin to build up a picture of their meaning and purpose.

FIFTEEN: WHY YOU NEED TO USE ASTEROIDS

1. Asteroids in particular reflect feminism – the new world – because they were discovered in the 19th century when feminism was really starting to take off. Old astrology is the old world.
2. To live in a world which stops at 1930 with Pluto is to ignore space travel, the pill, the civil rights movement in the US, the end of apartheid, the internet, environmentalism and everything else that makes the 21st century the 21st century.
3. With the extended library of meaning which asteroids offer us, astrology offers more complex and subtle interpretation. In its current limited form, one house strains to do the job of several (the Seventh covers your lover and your worst enemy) and one sign or planet covers a multitude of bases (Cancer rules breasts and real estate!) With hundreds more symbols in our library (asteroids) we can probably broaden the meaning of each house so that it becomes more general – the specifics can be supplied by our new 'library'. So the Third House could become 'connections' for example rather than the grab-bag of stuff it currently covers.
4. Asteroid astrology is so vast it requires a computer – it's a digital astrology for the digital age: sheer numbers mean the orbs have to reduce to no more than 1' for 'strength'. A zero orb is striking – a nine degree orb is allowable but should be seen as less crucial. With very tight or close orbs, a chart's overall picture leaps out immediately. It's an obvious omen. A glaring 'showing' of what the cosmos is trying to tell you. Try it!
5. Astrology is based on theories by astrologers over thousands of years, giving certain qualities and meanings to the heavenly bodies. It's not remotely scientific. Astrologers have simply watched what happens when certain heavenly bodies line up in the sky in a particular way – and written down the meanings accordingly. This has often been done according to the Law of Correspondences and The Doctrine of Signatures. This applies as much to asteroids as it does to a planet like Mercury. Research the asteroids yourself and you will soon see how each of them seems to 'correspond' heavily to a theme.
6. For the sake of consistency, and to honour astrology's Graeco-Roman history, it makes sense to look at asteroids with names which have Graeco-Roman significance. There are thousands more of course but from this astrologer's point of view, the time is not yet right to use every asteroid we have. Thus it makes sense to factor in the asteroid Phaeton but not for America. By adding the recent wealth of all Graeco-Roman asteroid archetypes to astrology's library of meaning, we feel we can help fill out the meaning of the originals: Pluto, Venus, Mars and so on. You can't use Pluto without using Ceres. Both these characters were in the same myth together. Both these heavenly bodies are interlinked. Try it yourself. Track Pluto and Ceres in your chart. One tells the story of the other.

SIXTEEN: ASTEROIDS IN DEPTH

Why should you use Greek and Roman-named asteroids in your astrology? Because you're already using Greek and Roman-named planets anyway (like Mars) and to ignore the asteroids means that your astrology is incomplete. You're only working with half the myth.

Because there are so many asteroids your astrology can also become more precise. Having more heavenly bodies to work with in your horoscope means the aspect orbs (the distance in degrees between them, in any aspect) can narrow down to zero.

In asteroid-free astrology, there are fewer heavenly bodies to work with. Less symbols to understand. Fewer stories, myths and archetypes to explain what is happening to someone, or why their personality is a certain way. With less on offer, astrologers have always had to work with wide orbs (up to nine degrees in aspects) to actually give themselves something to work with!

When you use the oodles of Greek and Roman asteroids available, you can look for exact aspects, which means zero orb.

There are thousands of named asteroids at the moment. Ceres, the first one, was discovered in 1801. How do we know what Ceres represents? We look to the myth. Then we look to real life charts, to see what Ceres appears to be 'doing'. Astrologers have had around 200 years to do this, and although some progress has been made, new research is always welcome. Work with Ceres and you could be adding to this research.

My own understanding of Ceres is that she points to mother-daughter issues in a horoscope. This reflects the myth: Ceres and her daughter were separated from each other. When you look at real charts (particularly those of women who have complex connections with their daughters, or women who have a complicated life journey with their mothers) you'll often see Ceres aspecting the other heavenly bodies in a significant way, that explains the issue.

Why do asteroids like Ceres become named for certain myths in Rome or Greece? Pure accident, fate, or whatever you want to call it! Those 19th century astronomers were mostly non-astrologers. But their choices have become our synchronicity. It just 'does' happen that Ceres is the one asteroid which turns up most prominently in any situation where mothers and daughters have relationship issues with each other.

The asteroids are given numbers in astronomy. Ceres is number one, because she was discovered first. Asteroids which come inside the orbit of earth usually have Greek mythological names. Then there are those which have Egyptian names. Some astrologers do use Egyptian asteroids. I don't. Why not? Because they don't belong in the Greek-Roman astrology of our tradition.

This doesn't mean they don't work in a chart, but for the sake of consistency and completeness (and also to help your start in astrology) it may be more useful just to stick to the Graeco-Roman tradition. This also means you don't have to start figuring out asteroids like Darwin or Einstein, Shakespeare or Dickens! And of course there's also Lennon, McCartney, Harrison and Starr, named for the Beatles.

Asteroids are so new that astrologers help each other by exchanging new research findings on their meaning and significance. If you are interested in this, you may want to begin an asteroid journal, so that whenever you work with charts, you can also begin making notes.

SEVENTEEN: HOUSE SYSTEMS

A house system is a way of dividing up the circle of the horoscope, so you can see what someone's personality is like, and how the future will work for them. Each house system is different. Each house system was invented by a particular person, at a particular point in history, and it has a different flavour or angle. No one house system is better or more accurate than the other. They just show a perspective on your personality and future that reflects the time in which they were invented, or created.

PLACIDUS HOUSE SYSTEM is the most common in astrology. It shows you how you might have been seen by Italians in the middle ages (because it was invented by an Italian in the middle ages!)

KOCH HOUSE SYSTEM is another common house system in astrology. It was created by a World War Two survivor and shows you how your personality and life might have been seen in the mid 20th century.

EQUAL HOUSE SYSTEM divides the circle into equal houses. The ascendant sign and degree dictates the cusp of all the houses to follow. So if you have Taurus on the ascendant, or Taurus rising, at ten degrees, then Gemini will be on your Second House cusp, also at ten degrees – and so on. It's a system used by the Ancient Greeks and some alternative 21st century astrologers. So if that sounds like you, then use it.

SUN SIGN HOUSE SYSTEM is used by media astrologers like me and it's my favourite for prediction and personality analysis. It's the easiest one to use, so I use the Sun Sign House System (also known as the Solar Sign Chart or Solar Chart) in Simple Astrology. I believe the Sun Sign House System shows you the headlines of your life. It's about fast facts. Again, if this sounds like you, then use it.

The Sun Sign House System puts your Sun Sign on the cusp of the First House. It puts your Ascendant or Rising Sign into a house, and your Midheaven also into a house. You use equal sized houses of thirty degrees each.

So if you're an Aries (you were born with the Sun in Aries) you plonk Aries on the cusp of the First House, Taurus on the cusp of the Second House and so on. You should end up with Pisces on the cusp of the Twelfth House.

If your Ascendant is Aquarius, then your Ascendant goes into your Eleventh House of friends and groups.

If your Midheaven is Scorpio, then this goes into your Eighth House of finance, business and property.

This is a radical way of doing astrology but it's the one I have used for twenty years. I suggest you try all the big four house systems though. Once you find two you particularly like, use them together. All they ever do is show you a 'lens' or an 'eye view' of reality. So working with different house systems is like using different kinds of prescription glasses. Each one works in its own way. It's just what suits you! What kind of focus do you want on your personality and your life?

EIGHTEEN: HOUSE MEANINGS

These can get awfully complicated and confusing so I have stripped them back to basics.

HOUSE ONE – How you launch yourself on a mission – how you go out into the world to take it on.

HOUSE TWO – Your possessions, assets, savings, debts, financial position, lifestyle. Your values.

HOUSE THREE – Your way with words. Your powers of persuasion, negotiation and communication.

HOUSE FOUR – Your house or apartment. Your home. Your family. Your 'clan' (it may be flatmates or pets)

HOUSE FIVE – The part that children (your own or other people's kids) play. The next generations.

HOUSE SIX – Your daily workload. Your body. Your approach to your job and your health and wellbeing.

HOUSE SEVEN – Your partner. Your potential partner. Your former partner. Your worst enemy.

HOUSE EIGHT – Other people's money, assets, possessions and property. Example – a parent's will.

HOUSE NINE – Travel, teaching, study, your belief systems, and people from other cultures. Publishing.

HOUSE TEN – Your mission, ambition and position. Your goal and role. Usually your lifetime's career.

HOUSE ELEVEN – Your friends. The groups you belong to. How groups outside you, affect you.

HOUSE TWELVE – Your secrets. Your low profile roles. Your time alone. Your own private world.

NINETEEN: TRANSITS

You know where the Heavenly Bodies were at the moment of your birth. You know the signs they were in, the houses they were in, and the aspects or patterns they make with each other. So far so good.

Transits show the future, by revealing the ever-changing patterns that the heavenly bodies make, to their own original position in your birth chart. In other words, just because you were born with Mercury in Aries in the Fourth House doesn't mean that Mercury got stuck there. It kept on moving, and is moving all the time. Transits show what transiting or travelling Mercury is doing right now, in terms of making aspects (patterns) which affect your original birth horoscope.

Travelling or transiting Mercury will probably make a conjunction, sextile, square, trine, quincunx and/or opposition to many of your HBs as it zips through the heavens.

Because Mercury rules logic, it will show you where logic is active (temporarily) in a particular area of your life. The house that Mercury transits will show you where things suddenly become a matter of logic, for the time that Mercury is there.

The detail is filled in by the aspects. Does Mercury conjunct your Venus in the Second House as he passes through? Then your natural inborn tendency to form financial partnerships will suddenly get a new logical angle for the time that Mercury is there. An investment partnership may draw the advice of an accountant.

The best way to learn transits is to track them in your journal and see how they affect you. Pluto is an easy one to start with because it spends so many years travelling or transiting through the same sign. So you'll really see it at work, in a particular area of your life (or house of your horoscope).

Simple Astrology uses transits with zero degree orbs. So the aspects or patterns have to be exact. Simple Astrology tracks the movements of HBs like Pluto through a Sun Sign based house.

It doesn't use progressions, which you may read about elsewhere. Only transits.

TWENTY: THE QUICK GUIDE TO TRANSITS

The best way to explain how transits work in Simple Astrology is to run you through Pluto and its impact on your life from 2000 to 2008. Think back over the last eight years or so and see if you agree. I'm using the Sun Sign House System here. If you use Placidus, Koch or Equal House you'll get different results. But for me, this house system gives you the most accurate 'headlines' of your life. Probably because it was invented by the media, for the media!

Now, from 2000 to 2008 Pluto was transiting or travelling through the sign of Sagittarius. So it would have spent the last eight years in a particular house of your horoscope. Pluto rules dramatic, intense events which change the balance of power, leaving you in control – or out of the game. So these kinds of events would have surrounded one particular area of your life for the last eight years or so.

If you have the Sun in Aries then Aries is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Ninth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Ninth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Taurus then Taurus is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Eighth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Eighth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Gemini then Gemini is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Seventh House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Seventh House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Cancer then Cancer is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Sixth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Sixth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Leo then Leo is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Fifth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Fifth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Virgo then Virgo is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Fourth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Fourth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Libra then Libra is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Third House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Third House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Scorpio then Scorpio is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Second House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Second House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Sagittarius then Sagittarius is on your First House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your First House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Capricorn then Capricorn is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Twelfth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Twelfth House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Aquarius then Aquarius is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Eleventh House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Eleventh House. See the house list below.

If you have the Sun in Pisces then Pisces is on your First House cusp and Sagittarius is on your Tenth House cusp. From 2000 to 2008, Pluto was consequently travelling or transiting your Tenth House. See the house list below.

HOUSE MEANINGS

HOUSE ONE – How you launch yourself on a mission – how you go out into the world to take it on.

HOUSE TWO – Your possessions, assets, savings, debts, financial position, lifestyle. Your values.

HOUSE THREE – Your way with words. Your powers of persuasion, negotiation and communication.

HOUSE FOUR – Your house or apartment. Your home. Your family. Your 'clan' (it may be flatmates or pets)

HOUSE FIVE – The part that children (your own or other people's kids) play. The next generations.

HOUSE SIX – Your daily workload. Your body. Your approach to your job and your health and wellbeing.

HOUSE SEVEN – Your partner. Your potential partner. Your former partner. Your worst enemy.

HOUSE EIGHT – Other people's money, assets, possessions and property. Example – a parent's will.

HOUSE NINE – Travel, teaching, study, your belief systems, and people from other cultures. Publishing.

HOUSE TEN – Your mission, ambition and position. Your goal and role. Usually your lifetime's career.

HOUSE ELEVEN – Your friends. The groups you belong to. How groups outside you, affect you.

HOUSE TWELVE – Your secrets. Your low profile roles. Your time alone. Your own private world.

TWENTY-ONE - SUN SIGN PREDICTION – MEDIA COLUMNS

Can you really share the same future as one-twelfth of the population? That's what Sun Sign Columns would have you believe.

Sceptics of Sun Sign (media) astrology have a huge problem with the fact that it suggests one-twelfth of the population share the same destiny at the same time. So do many 'establishment' astrologers. This is an odd situation for Sun Sign astrology to be in. Shot by both sides! Yet it continues to be the most popular version of our divination in the world. Type 'Astrology' into global Google and see what comes up if you don't believe me...

The most serious attack on astrology in the 20th century undoubtedly had Sun Sign stargazing in mind. The 1975 article in American magazine the Humanist featured 186 'leading scientists', mostly from the US (including 18 Nobel Prize-winners), lending their names to a piece that bemoaned 'the uncritical dissemination of astrological charts, forecasts and horoscopes by the media and by otherwise reputable newspapers, magazines and book publishers...' *

The scientists wrote, 'We believe that the time has come to challenge directly, and forcefully, the pretentious claims of astrological charlatans.' So - not just pretentious but also fake. Phew!

Interestingly, the astrology-hating article was accompanied by a random drawing of a horoscope from 23rd November 1907 at 4.00am in New York City to show what the infidels were up to. It's not so random though. Interpret it in horary terms, as Geoffrey Cornelius does in his landmark book, The Moment of Astrology, and it provides an amazingly accurate description of the attack.

Interpret it as a Sun Sign chart and it also rings loud bells. Jupiter is at 13 degrees of Leo in the Tenth House square Mercury at 13 degrees of Scorpio in the First House. Those are your Nobel (noble) Prize-winners right there, in the Tenth House of success, attacking the reputation (First House) of Astrological (Scorpio) writers (Mercury.)

But wait, there's more! Neptune is at 14 Cancer conjunct the North Node at 14 Cancer in the Ninth House of Academics – and Beliefs. It obviously opposes the South Node at 14 Capricorn in the Third House of media. The article attacking magazine astrology ran in a magazine.

The 'random' chart used to illustrate the article also revealed Chiron, the indicator of audacity, at 13 degrees of Aquarius in the Fourth House opposite that noble, Nobel prize-winning Jupiter in Leo again, in the Tenth House. One of the curious features of the Humanist attack was that although it claimed to speak for the world, it was actually the work of a (mostly American) group of academics. Thus the Fourth House Chiron. Note too the fact that Neptune and the North Node are in Cancer. Not only was it a mostly-homeland protest, it was also deeply territorial. Scientists wanted astrology off their truth turf.

TWENTY-TWO - HOW SUN SIGN HOROSCOPES WORK

Take the Sun Sign and put it on the Ascendant. Use whole sign houses. Only validate exact aspects (zero orb). Everything else is the same! The heavenly bodies mean just what they usually mean. So do the houses. What you're working with, though (with a Sun Aries person) is Aries on the ascendant, Libra on the descendant and Capricorn on the MC. It's simple but it works.

If you have only ever read your future (transits or progressions) with your natal (birth) chart then try your Sun Sign chart instead. I believe you'll find evidence that may change your mind, if you're sceptical.

Just when you thought Sun-Sign astrology was hated enough by the academic establishment, here's another attack from the inside: Fred Gettings, in *The Arkana Dictionary of Astrology* (Penguin Arkana 1990) labelled Sun-sign astrology as 'a popular form of so-called astrology...it is interesting to observe that recent judicial interpretation in the English law courts has determined that the popular Sun-sign system may not be properly described as being part of genuine astrological practice.'

Okay Fred you can take the clothes-peg off your nose now!

That's not an unusual angle on Sun-Sign stuff. Here is Dennis Elwell in *Cosmic Loom* (Urania Trust 1999)

“Those who are nowadays identified with astrology in the market place are the least qualified to speak for it. This precious knowledge has fallen into the hands of buffoons.”

The primary question in the light of these two attacks on Sun Sign astrology (and there are many more) is, does Sun Sign prediction actually work?

Well...why should astrological trends be any different from weather trends? If you are in Manhattan this week you will share early spring weather with millions of other people. If it rains on your weekend picnic plans you will all be affected in much the same way, at the same time. Season events have the same mass general impact. Christmas Day around the Western World is usually a shared 'future' of over-indulgence, generosity, grateful receiving and family reunions.

Sun Sign astrology is just another arbitrary way of grouping our common destinies together. It all depends on the language you use. Being specific and detailed ('You will meet a tall, dark, handsome stranger on Thursday) is obviously not applicable, any more than a personalised and specific weather forecast would be. Have you ever heard the weather person tell you there will be a heatwave outside your front door at 100 Acacia Avenue at 12 minutes past 5 on Friday morning?

Unfortunately, Sun Sign astrology has been misused and abused in the last 80 years, so you may often have read inarticulate or poorly expressed predictions – rather like listening to a weather forecaster who has lost the plot. #

Sun Sign astrology is not about vague generalisations or obtuse statements, any more than it is about the highly specific. Don't be fooled by the way it has been poorly used – as a predictive system it can be strikingly accurate, more often than chance would allow.

TWENTY-THREE - SUN SIGN ASTROLOGY AND NATAL ASTROLOGY

For amazing predictive results, use your Sun Sign chart alongside your Natal Chart (using the Placidus, Koch or Equal House system) and look for the same story being told twice. The Natal Chart shows you the private person. It is based on an exact birth time and place – something that is usually personal information, known only to one's mother, oneself and one's astrologer. It shows the inner view – the subjective interpretation – of events taking place outside. The Natal Chart horoscope looks like one eyeball, peering into one angle on reality.

Your Sun Sign Chart is the other eyeball you need for 20-20 Vision. It shows you the life that others see from the outside. Because it was created for the media it works rather like journalism. It's about facts, not necessarily subjective impressions. It's about the way things actually are. And it's about specific timing too. It lends itself to quick, sharp, short predictions, because it reflects the medium it was created for.

The explosion of Sun Sign astrology in the 20th century kept pace with weather forecasting, which started life in a fairly primitive form and then became extremely hi-tech thanks to the advent of satellites. Both have a lot in common. They can be brought down to earth and applied to the individual, even though they are articulated in broad terms. You tailor the forecast to suit your own specific life and concerns. Both are far from perfect (thanks in part to a little thing called chaos theory.) Nevertheless, as a general guide to trends and conditions, millions of people all over the world are satisfied with both.

A recent US survey showed around 25% of Americans are open to astrology and other forms of divination. Perhaps you are reading this right now because it works for you too.

Media astrologers sometimes use other techniques apart from Sun Sign charts, of course, but since 1930 this has been the benchmark in media astrology.

TWENTY-FOUR - HOW SUN SIGN ASTROLOGY WORKS IN REAL LIFE

Here's an example of how it all works. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama are both Sun Leo men. Thus, they share the same human weather – the same astrological patterns – the same human weather. In 2008, the year of the US Presidential Elections, Clinton and Obama both had several heavenly bodies passing through their Seventh House of partners and opponents. Try Neptune, Chiron and the North Node for a start.

This is what any astrologer might expect to see and – it's right there. By the way, Hillary Clinton had Saturn in her Eleventh House of group commitments that year (The Democrats) and the South Node in her Tenth House of career (tough professional karma).

Madonna is another Leo. She also had the same Sun Sign chart as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama in 2008. Heavenly bodies in her Seventh House of partners and opponents also included Neptune, Chiron and the North Node. It was the year that Clinton saw his wife fail to get the nomination, it was the year that Obama saw his wife become first lady, it was the year that Madonna and Guy Ritchie divorced.

Neptune is about boundaries. Chiron is also about boundaries. And the North Node is about karma. Put them together in the Leo Seventh House of partners and opponents in 2008 and with free will, that's what the average Leo got!

TWENTY-FIVE - SCEPTICS AND ANTI-ASTROLOGERS

What about sceptics and opponents of astrology? Can they be affected by the 'human weather' of sun sign predictions too? In September 2006 three Aries men (none of them fans of stargazing) were all caught up in religious controversy in the same month, when Pluto in their Ninth House of religion formed a tense square aspect with Venus, Mercury and the Sun, all in their Sixth House of work. The squares were exact at 24 degrees of Sagittarius and 24 degrees of Virgo.

The three men were the Pope (the Catholic Church forbids astrology), journalist Christopher Hitchens (a sceptic) and Richard Dawkins (who has written at length about his opposition to astrology.)

Remarkably, though, all three Aries people went through typical Pluto Ninth House square 'weather' that month. And the Pope was attacked for a speech on Islam, Dawkins released *The God Delusion*, his highly controversial book, and Hitchens wrote an article debating the Pope's actions!

There is more about this in my book *2020 Vision* (Penguin) if you are curious.

In the meantime, here is a great test for you, so you can see for yourself how Sun Sign forecasting works. Find reliable birth data for high-profile people online. Start at www.astrodatabank.com and go from there. Astrologers prefer AA data, from birth certificate, or A, which is verbal memory. They also accept B, which is biographical (from Wikipedia for example.)

Once you have found a bunch of people born under your own Sun Sign start setting up some Sun Sign charts for the next 12 months and jotting down some predictions. What challenges will they face and which primary questions will they have to answer?

Sun Sign astrology is not about fixed outcomes. It is about trends and conditions. Given your knowledge of someone's Sun Sign you may be able to speculate how they **might** respond to a situation (Leo Sun men like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have an investment in their children, for example) but beyond that, it's up to the individual. It's all free will. Weather forecasters do not tell you if you're going to dance in the rain naked, or sit there crying because your picnic just got canned – they merely tell you if it's likely to rain. It's the same story with Sun Sign astrology.

*(From *The Moment of Astrology* by Geoffrey Cornelius (The Wessex Astrologer.)

LEARNING ASTROLOGY – THE NEXT STEP

If you are lucky enough to have access to The Astrological Lodge in London, you may want to begin with their famous Monday night classes – the sessions at the pub afterwards are usually as informative as the lectures! The London School of Astrology is really popular with many of my colleagues too (Sue Tompkins and Frank Clifford are hard to beat) and my friend and colleague Adam Smith is currently teaching special term courses at The College of Psychic Studies too. In Australia, please contact The Federation of Australian Astrologers; these hard-working people are brilliant at gathering the best contacts and resources, from Darwin to Hobart. In the USA you are really spoiled for choice, as astrology is now taught at college level. There are some wonderful natural teachers around, though – visit michaellutin.com to find out about his workshops and lectures – and make sure you listen to the new breed of American astrologers, like Holly Anderton, whose podcasts are available on iTunes.

Remember, you can always download my free weekly astrology podcast to see how the heavenly bodies are operating in real life, every seven days. And if you haven't already discovered the Astrology for Beginners podcasts on iTunes, what are you waiting for?

You may also want to further your ideas about astrology by finding my recent books: *Astrolove*, *2020 Vision* and *Essential Astrology for Women*.



This series accompanies the **Astrology for Beginners** podcast which can be found on the Jessica Adams website and Lifestyle PodNetwork at LifestylePodNetwork.com