

A First Look at Astrology

Every person is born with a set of attributes and potentialities. Some of these are common to all human beings. Some are shared by a group or a tribe. Some are specific to a particular individual. An astrological horoscope, or natal chart, is a blueprint of a particular person's talents, gifts, challenges, most easily available energy patterns, and sources of frustration. The path of least resistance is charted as well as the path of greatest productivity.

There are four major playing pieces : Planets, Signs, Houses, and Aspects. In astrology the Sun and Moon are called planets. The remaining planets are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. A planet represents a concentrated energy. For example Mars represents the energy of action or doing. Making something happen in the world. Saturn represents the energy of structure, or law. 'Law' exists at many levels. The letter of the law, the spirit of the law, the law of the spirit. No matter how subtle, the underlying energy represented by Saturn is about structure. The Moon represents the energy of emotion and unconscious need. Unspoken layers of security concerns.

There are 12 signs: Aires, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. A Sign is an energy flavoring. For example the Moon symbolizes emotional need. And how those needs are addressed. The Moon in Leo suggests an emotional need to be recognized and appreciated. The Moon in Scorpio suggests an emotional need to get to the bottom of things -- Finding, and understanding, the motive behind the motive. The Moon in Capricorn suggests an emotional need to take charge, create a plan, and administer the achievement of well defined goals in a practical way.

There are 12 houses in a chart. Each house represents an area in life where energies may be played out. For example, the Moon in the first house suggests important emotional needs will center around self discovery. Who am I? The Moon in the second house suggests important emotional needs will center around resources that I deem necessary to support my self concept.

An aspect is an angle between two planets, relative to the circle of the zodiac. Aspects identify the ease, or lack of ease, with which given energy combinations flow. Most angles are not important enough to have a name. Very generally speaking multiples of 60 degrees represent aspects that indicate an easy flow of energy. Multiples of 45 degrees represent aspects that indicate a more difficult flow of energy. (There are exceptions to this generalization.) For example, if the Moon and Saturn are 120 degrees apart ($120 = 2 \times 60$), then when I try to please an authority figure (Saturn) I receive positive feedback and feel emotional satisfaction (the Moon). Obviously, not every time. And, of course, this is tempered by whatever else is going on in the chart. A 120 degree aspect is called a Trine. An easy energy flow. Now suppose the Moon and Saturn are 90 degrees apart ($90 = 2 \times 45$). Then there is an indication that the authority figure may be critical, causing emotional tension in me. A 90 degree aspect is called a Square.

Let's back up for just a moment. What is the zodiac? If you are on a ship far off-shore, and you look around, you will see a very large circle surrounding you called the horizon. In the same way there is a great circle, or horizon, in the sky called the zodiac. Each sign, e.g. Libra, is a group of stars, a constellation, identifying a part of the circle that is the zodiac. To say that the Moon is in Libra means that if you look up at the sky and identify exactly where the Moon is, the constellation directly behind it would be Libra. (For the astrologically sophisticated reader let's ignore precession of the equinox for the moment.)

There is a natural association among the sign of Aires, the planet Mars, and the first house. 'Who am I' is the question. Let's taste experience, do something, to know what 'me' feels like. No strategy. Action. Now. The sign of Taurus, the planet Venus, and the second house, are similarly associated. What resources are necessary to support who I am? That is the new question. Resources include material possessions as well as attitudes / ideas / beliefs that I value. The third house, the sign of Gemini, and the planet Mercury are associated. How can I communicate and ask for the things that I need? The fourth house, the sign Cancer, and the Moon are associated. Where do I come from? Where do I belong? What is the ground of my being? And so on, all around the wheel of the zodiac.

I imagine by now you are beginning to see the complexity of this system called astrology. Sun sign astrology in the daily newspaper is fun. Or not. But the entire system of astrology is amazing.

The following table is an attempt to better understand what is being represented by the Moon in each of the twelve signs.

Moon in Aires	I need to make something happen. Anything is better than nothing. Get the juices flowing.
Moon in Taurus	I need to feel unrushed. I need to feel a sense of ownership with respect to personal objects, and a sense of loyalty with respect to personal relationships.
Moon in Gemini	I need to think about diverse possibilities. And gather as much information as possible.
Moon in Cancer	Security. Security. Security. I need to build safe haven.
Moon in Leo	I need to be recognized and appreciated. I need the spotlight.
Moon in Virgo	I need to get it right. Avoid mistakes. How can I see behind deception if I make mistakes.
Moon in Libra	I need to feel in harmony with others and with my environment. Confrontation hurts.
Moon in Scorpio	I need to get to the bottom of it. Keep digging deeper. And don't lose control in the meantime.
Moon in Sagittarius	I need to do it all. A missed opportunity is the definition of 'bad'.
Moon in Capricorn	I need to feel in charge. I need to strategize a long range plan that is capable of achieving realistic goals.
Moon in Aquarius	I need to be free. Don't try to limit me. I need to feel unique.
Moon in Pisces	I need to feel the sanctity of privacy. And the lack of obstacles to 'being in-touch' when I so choose.

The Moon's effect on our lives is instantaneous -- our first emotional actions and reactions -- and that which is guided by these first feelings.. How we handle stress, pre-verbally as well as later on in our lives, is closely associated with the Moon's placement in our chart – by sign, house, and aspect.

An aside:

A primary reason why newspapers offer daily columns on Sun sign astrology, and not Moon sign astrology, is because most days between the 20th of any month and the 20th of the next month the Sun sign is known without referencing an ephemeris or a chart. That is not true for the Moon sign. Most people do not know what sign the Moon was in when they were born. Moon signs must be looked up in an ephemeris or on an astrological chart.

Note: The Sun does not always move into the next sign on the 20th. Suppose two babies are born, one at 10 am on Dec 21 and the other at 6 pm on Dec 21. And further suppose that the Sun moves into Capricorn at 2 pm on that Dec 21. Then the first baby born will have a Sagittarius Sun sign, and the second baby born will have a Capricorn Sun sign, even though they are both born on the same day. If a person's birthday is within a couple of days of the 20th it pays to double check by looking up the Sun sign in an ephemeris or online.

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