

# Glossary of Astrological Terminology

IGLOSX

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**Arabic Parts:** A series of sensitive points largely defined and first used by Arabic astrologers. Generally calculated by adding the positions of two factors in the chart (*e.g.*, Moon and Ascendant) and subtracting the position of a third factor (*e.g.*, Sun).

**Ascendant:** The degree of the zodiac which is rising at the birthplace when an individual is born. Intersection of horizon and ecliptic in the east. On a horoscope, the cusp of the First House, in most house systems. Also called the Rising Sign.

**Aspects:** Angular distances between two factors in the horoscope, in celestial longitude. The most commonly used aspects are conjunction 0°, opposition 180°, square 90°, trine 120°, sextile 60°, quincunx 150°, semisextile 30°, semisquare 45°, sesquiquadrate 135°, quintile 72° and bi-quintile 144°. Aspects are interpreted to indicate themes of harmony, conflict, etc.

**Asteroids:** Thousands of small bodies, mostly between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The four major ones used by astrologers are Ceres, Pallas, Juno and Vesta (three of which are the largest and all among the first discovered). New ephemerides for other asteroids continue to be produced, including Amor, Dembowska, Diana, Duda, Eros, Frigga, Hidalgo, Icarus, Lilith, Pandora, Pittsburghia, Psyche, Sappho, Toro, Urania. Many asteroids also have personal names (*e.g.*, Alice, José) or geographic designations (*e.g.*, America).

**Birth Data:** The basic information needed to erect a horoscope is Place of Birth (latitude and longitude), Date of Birth (day, month, year), and Time of Birth (hour and minute). For Astro's purposes you give city & state for place — our computers have extensive data on coordinates for even the smallest towns.

**Chiron:** A small body (planetoid) between the orbits of Saturn and Uranus. Discovered by Charles Kowal in 1977; named for the mythical centaur noted for healing and teaching.

**Contraparallel:** An aspect in declination when two planets have (within a 1° orb) the same degree of declination, but one is north and the other is south. Read by most astrologers as similar to an opposition.

**Current Patterns:** Astro's preferred term for Predictive Astrology. We prefer it because we believe one can study various methods of moving the chart in time and prognosticate possibilities, or even probabilities. The chart, then, shows us "patterns" which we may choose to follow or to alter. The term "predict" suggests fated outcomes that will "happen." We believe that one's attitude has a strong influence on one's future.

**Cusp:** [1] The degree of the zodiac (celestial longitude) where one sign ends and the next begins. [2] The degree that marks the boundary of one House from the next.

**Declination:** A coordinate system measuring positions north or south of the celestial equator.

**Directions:** A system of studying current patterns that moves all factors in a horoscope a uniform amount symbolically forward or backward in time, according to a specified arc, such as the Solar Arc (Sun's progressed motion in one year). Another example is Ascendant Arc, which uses the movement of the progressed Ascendant in a year. Generally the "directed planets" are interpreted by comparing them with the natal planets.

**East Point:** A sensitive point defined as 90° east of the intersection of the meridian with the ecliptic; used by some astrologers as an auxiliary Ascendant. Should more correctly be called the Equatorial Ascendant, but the term East Point is in common usage.

**Election:** Refers to the method of "electing", or choosing in advance, a time that is astrologically favorable. One casts a chart for a time in which the current patterns would be interpreted as indicating success in the anticipated activity (such as opening a business, making an announcement, getting married, etc.), and then the individuals concerned strive to cause the event to happen at that exact time.

**Ephemeris:** A book which supplies the positions of the Sun, Moon and planets, usually daily. Positions are usually given in celestial longitude, latitude and declination. Other information (*e.g.*, sidereal time, the nodes of the Moon, ingresses) may also be supplied. Positions are usually given at either noon or midnight, for Greenwich, England.

**Equatorial Ascendant:** *see* East Point.

**Geocentric:** In reference to horoscopes, refers to Earth-centered astrology — seeing the cosmos from our perspective on Earth.

**Geocentric:** In reference to latitude, refers to using measurements based on the angle formed at the Earth's center between the line extending to the surface at the location and the line extending to the surface at the equator. (This can vary from geographic latitude by as much as 12 minutes.)

**Gregorian Calendar:** The calendar in general use in the world. Introduced by Pope Gregory XIII as a revision of the Julian calendar in 1582.

**Harmonics:** The astrological study of integral divisions of the circle (*e.g.*, by 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.).

**Heliocentric:** Charts using the perspective of the Sun as the center. In a Helio Chart, Earth appears instead of the Sun. The further a planet is from the Sun the less its geocentric position varies from its heliocentric one. Inner planets (Mercury and Venus) can vary by as much as 180°.

**Horary Astrology:** The art of answering questions through casting a chart for the moment a question is asked.

**Horoscope:** A chart of the solar system based on Birthplace, Date and Time. "Horo" comes from "hour." It is *not* correct to call newspaper Sun-sign columns "Horoscopes" because they are *not* based on individual Birth Data. One usually thinks of a horoscope as being that of a person, but anything that begins at a place, date and time can have a horoscope — person, event, business, etc. Sometimes bodies outside the solar system are included in a horoscope, such as Fixed Stars, but traditional astrology most generally uses only the Sun, Moon and bodies within our own solar system — not the "stars." "Horoscope," in Astro's literature, is most generally called "chart."

**Houses:** Mathematical divisions of the ecliptic into 12 sections. Most House Systems use unequal divisions. We offer nine different systems in our catalog. Houses are interpreted to represent various life areas.

**Interceptions:** Since most House divisions are unequal, at some latitudes it is quite common to have a chart where two opposite signs are entirely contained within houses, so that no degree of either sign appears on a House Cusp. In such a chart, two other opposite signs will appear on two house cusps each. A planet that is in a degree of a sign that is "intercepted" (contained within a house and not on a cusp) is said to be intercepted itself. Some astrologers interpret an intercepted planet as being somehow blocked in its expression, but this is not a universal opinion.

**Julian Calendar:** A calendar introduced in Rome in 46 BC. Established a year of 365 days with every fourth year having 366 days.

**Latitude, Celestial:** Angular distance, north or south of the ecliptic — measured in degrees, minutes and seconds.

**Latitude, Terrestrial:** Angular distance, north or south of the equator — measured in degrees, minutes and seconds.

**Local Sidereal Time:** The time of birth at the birthplace, converted to sidereal (star) time. It is the hour angle of the vernal point (0° ♈). This is the figure from which the house cusps of a horoscope are derived.

**Longitude, Celestial:** Angular distance, measured in degrees, minutes and seconds — east of 0° Aries, along the ecliptic. Astrologers are generally using Celestial Longitude when they speak of planetary or house positions in signs.

**Longitude, Terrestrial:** Distances measured east and west — in degrees, minutes and seconds. The 0° point is the Prime Meridian at Greenwich, England.

**Midheaven:** The point where the Meridian of the birthplace intersects the ecliptic. Defined as the cusp of the 10th house in most house systems.

**Midnight:** Can be defined as 00:00 hours, the beginning of the day — or as 24:00 hours, the end of the day. Where not specified by the customer, Astro assumes that “midnight” means 24:00 hours. Midnight ephemeris is always a zero hour ephemeris.

**Midpoints:** Sensitive points halfway between two factors in a horoscope.

**Natal Chart or Horoscope:** A chart of the solar system based on the Birth Data of an individual. (See also Horoscope.)

**Orb:** The amount allowed on either side of an aspect for that aspect to be considered valid. For example, a square is an aspect of 90°. If an orb of 5° is allowed, two planets within 85° to 95° of each other would be considered “in square.” Astrologers vary on how much orb to allow.

**Parallel:** An aspect in declination where two planets are in the same degree (with an orb of 1°), both north or both south of the celestial equator. Read by most astrologers as similar to a conjunction.

**Planets:** The “traditional” planets used in a horoscope are Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Sun is, of course, really a star. Moon is a satellite of the planet Earth. Earth is not included in the most commonly used Geocentric horoscope, because that horoscope is viewing the other planets as seen from the perspective of Earth. The Sun and Moon are often called “the Lights” to differentiate them from the planets, but most commonly, merely for convenience, they are lumped together with the others under the term “planets.”

**Predictive Astrology:** *see* Current Patterns.

**Progressions:** Systems of studying current patterns that move the chart symbolically forward or backward according to one unit of time equated with another. The most common form, secondary progression, equates one day with one year. Thus if a person is now 30 years old, the positions 30 days after birth are considered symbolic of that 30th year. Other systems of progressions equate a lunar month with a year, a day with a lunar month, and so on.

**Retrograde:** Apparent backward motion which occurs when Earth passes a slower-moving, outer planet or when Earth is passed by a faster-moving, inner planet. Designated by the symbol ♁ in the horoscope.

**Return Chart:** A chart calculated for the moment a planet returns to the same position it held in a Natal Chart. Used to interpret current patterns for the time period signified by the return, *e.g.*, Solar Return for one year, Lunar Return for about one month.

**Signs:** Twelve 30° segments of the ecliptic which can be defined tropically or sidereally. **Not** the same as constellations, which are unequal-in-degree star groups that can be seen beyond the general path of the ecliptic. The classical Greeks named the Tropical Signs for the constellations that, at that time, approximately coincided. Due to the Precession of the Equinoxes, the Signs and Constellations no longer coincide. (See Zodiac.)

**Solar Chart:** A horoscope sometimes used when the time of birth is unknown. The Sun’s position at noon is used as the Ascendant of the Solar Chart. Equal houses are used, with every subsequent cusp 30° later.

**Solar Return:** A horoscope cast for the moment when the Sun returns to the exact degree/minute/second of celestial longitude which it occupied at birth. This moment will be within a day or two of one’s birthday. The horoscope is considered symbolic of the coming year.

**Station:** The point at which a planet appears motionless from the perspective of the Earth, about to change from retrograde to direct (forward) or direct to retrograde.

**Sunrise Chart:** A horoscope calculated for sunrise on the day of birth at the birthplace. Used sometimes when the time of birth is unknown. The Sun’s position at sunrise defines the Ascendant. Other cusps are based on the house system used.

**Time Types:** In calculating a horoscope it is not enough to know the time of day a person was born (*e.g.*, 10:03 AM or 3:30 PM). It is also necessary to know in what type of time the birth was recorded. (Astro has this data in its computer, so you do not need to supply it. We make time adjustments when necessary.) Additionally, the mathematics of chart calculation involve the use of other time types that are not generally used by the public, such as sidereal time. The various time types are:

**Daylight**—Advancing clocks one hour during summer to take advantage of extra sunlight in order to increase industrial output and allow more daylight recreation time.

**Double Daylight**—In effect in Great Britain during some periods of World War II. Clocks were advanced two hours to utilize extra sunlight and conserve energy for essential, wartime activities.

**Local Mean Time**—The average (mean) solar time at any given location.

**Local Time**—Clock time.

**Solar Time**—Measured in reference to the Sun. Our clocks are based on mean (average) solar time because apparent solar time varies too much for precise timekeeping.

**Standard Time**—Introduced by law at the end of the 19th century (largely due to railroads in the US). Establishes zones of time, generally one hour wide and 15° of longitude. All the clocks within a zone centered (roughly) around a standard meridian (of longitude) use the local mean time of that meridian.

**Sidereal Time**—Measurements are based on the Earth’s rotation on its axis. A sidereal day is the interval of time it takes a particular star (sidereal) to cross the meridian of a location twice.

**Universal Time or Greenwich Mean Time**—refers to the local mean time at Greenwich, England (with 0° of longitude).

**War Time**—Advancing clocks one hour (during the two world wars) in order to conserve energy for key industries and activities.

**Transits:** [1] The actual positions of the planets on any given date. [2] The passage of a planet through a sign or house (*e.g.*, the Sun transits Aries from about March 20 to April 20). [3] The passage of a planet over any degree which forms significant aspects to any planet or important point in a chart.

**Transpluto:** Hypothetical planet said to orbit beyond Pluto. Sometimes called Bacchus (or Isis or Persephone), not to be confused with the asteroid Bacchus, which is physically observable.

**Uranian Planets:** Eight hypothetical (never observed) planets postulated by Alfred Witte and Friedrich Sieggrun — Cupido, Hades, Zeus, Kronos, Apollon, Admetos, Vulcanus, Poseidon. Also called Transneptunian Planets.

**Vertex:** Intersection of the prime vertical with the ecliptic in the west. Assumed by some astrologers to be like an auxiliary Descendant.

**Zodiac, Astronomical:** Constellations — groupings of stars that form a rough circle. Observable in an arc across the southern sky, beyond the invisible Great Circle that we call the ecliptic. The constellations are unequal in size, and should not be confused with signs.

**Zodiac, Sidereal:** The division of the ecliptic into twelve 30° segments, originally based on a Babylonian system using the fixed stars Aldebaran (in constellation Taurus) and Antares (in constellation Scorpio) as reference points.

**Zodiac, Tropical:** The division of the ecliptic into twelve 30° segments, based on the Earth’s seasons. The location of the Sun at the Vernal Equinox (when day and night are equal in the northern hemisphere’s spring) defines 0° Aries, as the beginning of the zodiac of signs. This is the zodiac most commonly used in western astrology.