



Astrology Basics

A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the Cosmos



*“Astrology is consciousness looking back at itself, reflecting
the blueprint the soul chose before its first breath.”*

~ Aikat

Aikat

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What is Astrology?

Astrology is the study of celestial bodies and their influence on human life and events. It is based on the belief that the positions and movements of planets, stars, and other celestial objects at the time of a person's birth can reveal information about their personality, life path, and future tendencies. Astrology operates through observation of cosmic patterns and their symbolic meanings in human experience.

It is my belief and understanding, from what I have been shown by the spirit world and through visions, that we designed our own Natal Wheel (birth chart) when we knew we were going to incarnate here.



Astrological Systems

Western Tropical Astrology

The most widely used system in the Western world. It uses the tropical zodiac, based on the seasons — the zodiac starts at 0° Aries on the first day of spring. It focuses on your psychology, motivation, and personal growth.

*Quick contrast: Tropical leans toward the **why** — why you're wired the way you are.*

Traditional Astrology

A practical, predictive approach (medieval and Renaissance roots). It looks at whether planets are strong or weak and gives clear answers about real-life events and timing. Good for “will this happen?” questions.

*Quick contrast: Traditional tells you **what + whether**.*

Hellenistic Astrology

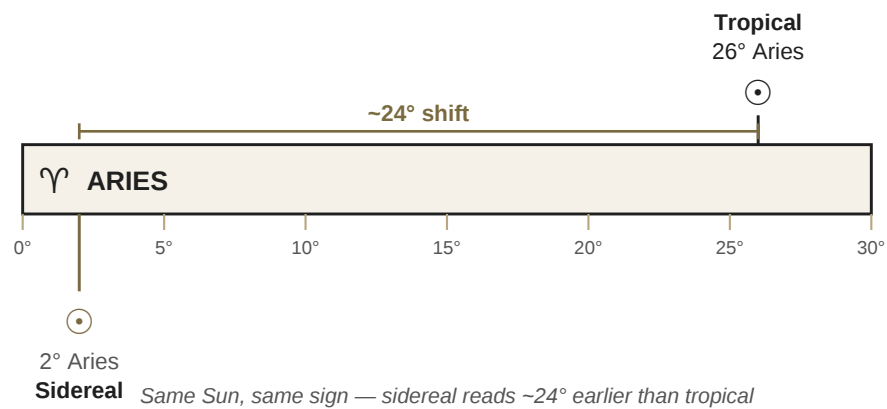
An ancient system developed around 2,000 years ago in Greco-Roman Egypt, drawing on even older Babylonian sky-knowledge. It reads your whole life as a story with chapters, and uses powerful timing methods to show *when* things activate.

*Quick contrast: Hellenistic shows you your **life's story + its timing**.*

Vedic Astrology (Jyotisha)

The ancient system from India. It uses the sidereal zodiac, based on the actual stars in the sky, which sits about 23–24° behind the tropical zodiac. It focuses on fate and concrete life events and their timing.

*Quick contrast: Vedic leans toward the **what + when**.*



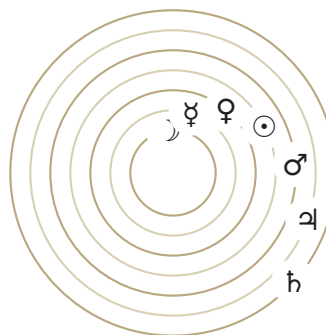
Example: a Sun at 26° Aries in tropical is 2° Aries in sidereal — same sign, ~24° apart

The Ancient Roots: Harmony of the Spheres

This way of seeing the sky goes back thousands of years. Around 2,500 years ago, the Pythagoreans taught the “harmony of the spheres” — the belief that each planet sounds its own tone or note (frequency) as it moves, and that the whole cosmos is held together by mathematical ratios and proportion.

In this view, the planets and signs aren't just symbols — they are living harmonies, and your chart is a kind of vibrational blueprint of the soul. The soul was described as being in attunement, tuned like an instrument to these cosmic harmonies.

They wouldn't have used the word “frequency” — that is modern language. Back then they spoke of **harmony**, **tone**, and **number**: the universe as music rather than as vibration. It is the same idea, simply worded for a different age.



each sphere its own tone

The seven classical spheres, each sounding its own note

The Big Three: Sun, Moon, Rising

Sun Sign

Your core identity and life purpose. The Sun represents your conscious self, ego, and the qualities you were born to express. It is determined by your birth date and remains in the same sign for approximately 30 days.

Moon Sign

Your emotional inner world and instinctive reactions. The Moon governs feelings, subconscious patterns, nurturing needs, and how you process emotions. It requires the exact time of birth to determine accurately.

Rising Sign (Ascendant)

Your outward personality and how others perceive you. The Ascendant is the zodiac sign on the eastern horizon at your exact birth time. It acts as a mask or persona, the first impression you give to the world.

How to Read a Placement

Every placement in your chart combines three things:

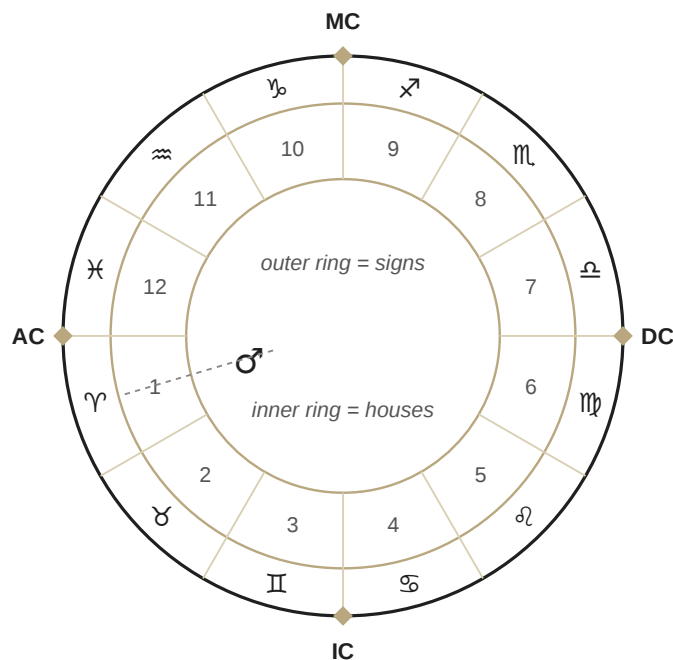
Planet = **what** energy is at play (e.g., Mars = drive)

Sign = **how** that energy expresses (e.g., in Aries = boldly)

House = **where** in life it shows up (e.g., 10th = career)

The Chart Wheel

A birth chart is drawn as a circle. The outer ring holds the twelve signs, the inner ring holds the twelve houses, and your planets are placed inside. Reading around the wheel is how all three come together.



Example: Mars in Aries in the 1st house — what (Mars), how (Aries), where (1st)

The Zodiac

*Signs = **how** energy expresses.*

The zodiac is a belt of 12 signs divided into four elements (Fire, Earth, Air, Water) and three modalities (Cardinal, Fixed, Mutable). Each sign has unique qualities and symbolic meanings:

Sign	Motto	Dates*	Element	Modality	Key Traits
♈ Aries	<i>I am</i>	Mar 21-Apr 19	Fire	Cardinal	Courageous, bold, pioneering
♉ Taurus	<i>I have</i>	Apr 20-May 20	Earth	Fixed	Grounded, stable, sensual
♊ Gemini	<i>I think</i>	May 21-Jun 20	Air	Mutable	Curious, communicative, adaptable
♋ Cancer	<i>I feel</i>	Jun 21-Jul 22	Water	Cardinal	Nurturing, intuitive, protective
♌ Leo	<i>I will</i>	Jul 23-Aug 22	Fire	Fixed	Creative, confident, generous
♍ Virgo	<i>I analyze</i>	Aug 23-Sep 22	Earth	Mutable	Analytical, practical, helpful
♎ Libra	<i>I balance</i>	Sep 23-Oct 22	Air	Cardinal	Balanced, diplomatic, social
♏ Scorpio	<i>I desire</i>	Oct 23-Nov 21	Water	Fixed	Intense, transformative, perceptive
♐ Sagittarius	<i>I see</i>	Nov 22-Dec 21	Fire	Mutable	Adventurous, optimistic, philosophical
♑ Capricorn	<i>I use</i>	Dec 22-Jan 19	Earth	Cardinal	Disciplined, ambitious, responsible
♒ Aquarius	<i>I know</i>	Jan 20-Feb 18	Air	Fixed	Innovative, humanitarian, independent
♓ Pisces	<i>I believe</i>	Feb 19-Mar 20	Water	Mutable	Intuitive, artistic, compassionate

**Dates vary by year; consult an ephemeris for exact transition times*

Elements & Modalities

Every sign is a blend of one **element** (its basic nature) and one **modality** (how it operates).

The Four Elements

Element	Signs	Keywords
Fire	♈ Aries, ♌ Leo, ♐ Sagittarius	Passion, action, energy, spirit, inspiration
Earth	♉ Taurus, ♍ Virgo, ♏ Capricorn	Practical, grounded, stable, material, reliable
Air	♊ Gemini, ♎ Libra, ♒ Aquarius	Thinking, ideas, communication, social, mental
Water	♋ Cancer, ♏ Scorpio, ♓ Pisces	Emotion, intuition, feeling, depth, sensitivity

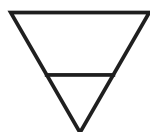
The Three Modalities

Modality	Signs	Keywords
Cardinal	♈ Aries, ♋ Cancer, ♎ Libra, ♏ Capricorn	Initiates, starts, leads, begins things
Fixed	♉ Taurus, ♌ Leo, ♏ Scorpio, ♒ Aquarius	Sustains, stabilizes, holds steady, persists
Mutable	♊ Gemini, ♍ Virgo, ♐ Sagittarius, ♓ Pisces	Adapts, changes, adjusts, goes with the flow



Fire

♈ ♌ ♐



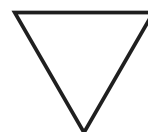
Earth

♉ ♍ ♏



Air

♊ ♎ ♒



Water

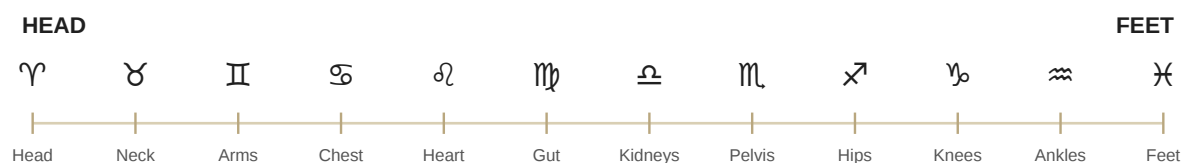
♋ ♏ ♓

The alchemical symbols: fire and air point up, earth and water point down; air and earth carry a bar

The Zodiac & the Body

In medical astrology, each sign rules a part of the body. You start at the head with Aries and work your way down through the zodiac, ending at the feet with Pisces.

Sign	Body Area
♈ Aries	Head, face, brain
♉ Taurus	Neck, throat, thyroid
♊ Gemini	Arms, hands, lungs, shoulders
♋ Cancer	Chest, breasts, stomach
♌ Leo	Heart, spine, upper back
♍ Virgo	Digestive system, intestines
♎ Libra	Kidneys, lower back, skin
♏ Scorpio	Reproductive organs, pelvis
♐ Sagittarius	Hips, thighs, liver
♑ Capricorn	Knees, bones, joints, teeth
♒ Aquarius	Ankles, calves, circulation
♓ Pisces	Feet, lymphatic system



Head to feet, in zodiac order

The Houses

*Houses = **where** in life it shows up.*

The 12 houses divide the birth chart into 12 sections, each governing different areas of life. They are determined by the time and location of birth.

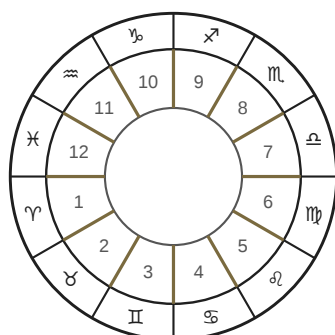
House	Area of Life	Key Themes
1st	Self	Identity, appearance, first impressions, self-perception
2nd	Finances & Values	Money, possessions, self-worth, resources
3rd	Communication	Thinking, learning, siblings, short journeys, writing
4th	Home & Family	Family, roots, property, private life, foundations
5th	Creativity & Romance	Children, romance, self-expression, fun, hobbies
6th	Health & Service	Work, health, daily routines, service, pets
7th	Partnerships	Marriage, relationships, contracts, open enemies
8th	Transformation	Shared resources, sexuality, psychology, rebirth
9th	Higher Learning	Philosophy, travel, religion, higher education
10th	Career & Public	Career, reputation, authority, public image
11th	Friendships & Hopes	Friends, groups, dreams, community, ideals
12th	Spirituality & Solitude	Spirituality, hidden matters, karma, institutions

House Systems: Whole Sign vs. Placidus

The 12 houses can be calculated using different systems. The two most common are:

Whole Sign Houses: The oldest system, used in Hellenistic and Vedic astrology. Each house equals one entire zodiac sign. The sign on your Ascendant becomes the whole 1st house, the next sign the whole 2nd house, and so on. All houses are exactly 30° and house cusps fall at 0° of each sign. Simple, clean, and increasingly popular in modern practice.

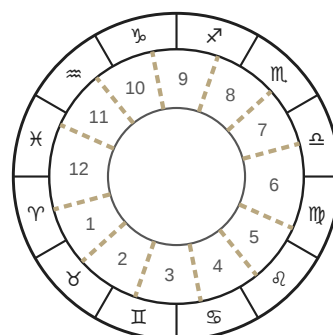
Placidus Houses: The most widely used system in modern Western astrology. It divides the houses based on time, tracking how degrees rise across the horizon. This produces houses of unequal size, and a single house can contain or span more than one sign. Placidus emphasizes the exact degrees of the Ascendant and Midheaven as house cusps.



Whole Sign

house lines sit ON the sign lines

outer ring = signs (always 30°) · inner ring = houses



Placidus

house lines cut mid-sign

Equal wedges versus time-based, uneven wedges

The Planets

*Planets = **what** energy is at play.*

In astrology, 'planets' include the Sun and Moon (called 'luminaries') and follow a hierarchical order in traditional astrology. Chiron and Black Moon Lilith are also used in modern astrology. Each celestial body represents different archetypal energies:

Body	Function	Time per Sign	Key Themes
☉ Sun	Core identity, will	~1 month	Vitality, purpose, conscious ego
☾ Moon	Emotions, instincts	~2.5 days	Feelings, subconscious, nurturing
☿ Mercury	Communication	~2-4 weeks	Thinking, speech, writing, learning
♀ Venus	Love, values	~3-5 weeks	Attraction, beauty, pleasure, worth
♂ Mars	Action, desire	~6 weeks	Drive, courage, sexuality, conflict
♃ Jupiter	Growth, luck	~1 year	Expansion, abundance, optimism
♄ Saturn	Limits, discipline	~2.5 years	Responsibility, structure, lessons
♅ Uranus	Innovation, rebellion	~7 years	Change, revolution, individuality
♆ Neptune	Dreams, dissolution	~14 years	Spirituality, intuition, illusion
♇ Pluto	Transformation	~12-30 years	Power, rebirth, hidden forces
♊ N. Node	Soul direction	~1.5 years	Destiny, growth path, future
♋ S. Node	Soul history	~1.5 years	Past patterns, innate talents
♎ Chiron	The Healer	~1-8 years	Wounds, healing, integration
♁ Black Moon Lilith	Shadow self	~9 months	Raw power, suppressed desires

Time per sign is approximate; some planets vary due to their orbits and retrograde motion.

Planetary Rulers

Each sign has a ruling planet — the planet most at home in that sign. Some signs have two rulers: an older **traditional** ruler (used for thousands of years) and a **modern** ruler (added after the outer planets were discovered).

Sign	Ruling Planet(s)
♈ Aries	♂ Mars
♉ Taurus	♀ Venus
♊ Gemini	☿ Mercury
♋ Cancer	☾ Moon
♌ Leo	☼ Sun
♍ Virgo	☿ Mercury
♎ Libra	♀ Venus
♏ Scorpio	♂ Mars (traditional) / ♇ Pluto (modern)
♐ Sagittarius	♃ Jupiter
♑ Capricorn	♄ Saturn
♒ Aquarius	♄ Saturn (traditional) / ♅ Uranus (modern)
♓ Pisces	♃ Jupiter (traditional) / ♆ Neptune (modern)



Key Points & Angles

Beyond the planets, your chart has special points and angles that carry deep meaning about your soul's journey and how you move through life.

The Lunar Nodes

The South Node and North Node sit exactly opposite each other. You walk *from* your South Node *toward* your North Node as you move through your chart.

South Node — your past life, your inborn gifts and natural abilities, what feels familiar and comfortable. This is what you are walking *away from*.

North Node — your potential and growth direction, what you are here to develop and move *toward* in this life.

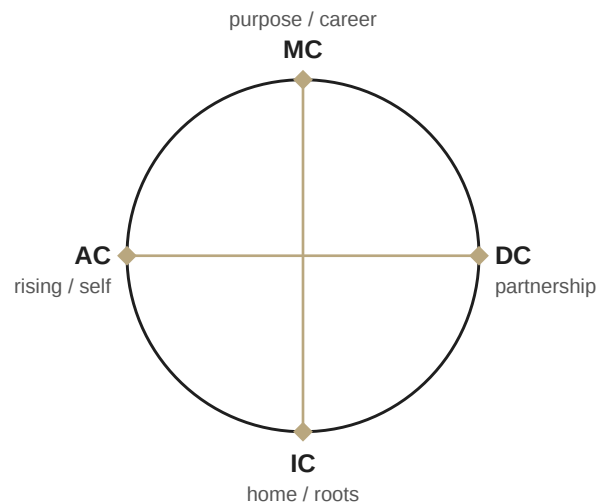
The Angles

AC (Ascendant / Rising) — your appearance and how you come across to others.

MC (Midheaven) — your life purpose, public role, and career.

IC (Imum Coeli) — your home, roots, and foundation.

DC (Descendant) — partnership, and what you meet in others.



The four angles frame the chart

Degrees and Minutes

Astrology uses precise degree measurements within each zodiac sign. Each sign spans 30 degrees (0° to 29°59'). Degrees are further divided into 60 minutes ('), and minutes into 60 seconds ("). The exact degree of a planet or point provides nuance and precision to interpretations.

Degree Meanings (within any sign):

0-10°: Early phase; initial expression, beginning energy

10-20°: Middle phase; developing and building momentum

20-30°: Late phase; culmination, refinement, integration

Critical Degrees:

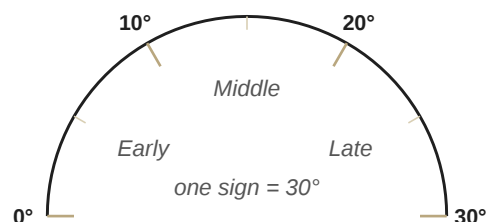
Certain degrees are traditionally called **critical degrees** and are read as emphasized. The usual set is:

Cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn): 0°, 13°, 26°

Fixed signs (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius): 8–9°, 21–22°

Mutable signs (Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces): 4°, 17°

The very last degree of any sign (29°), sometimes called the anaretic degree, is also treated as significant — a placement finishing its work in that sign.



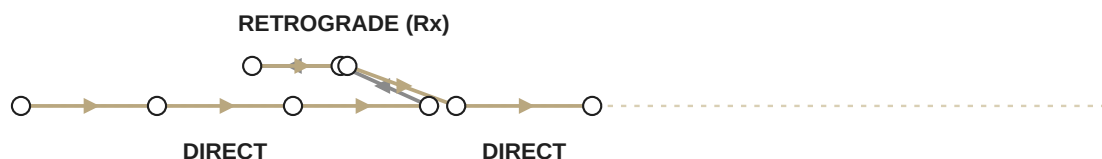
Retrograde (Rx)

Sometimes a planet appears to move *backward* through the zodiac from our view on Earth. This is called **retrograde**, shown in a chart with the symbol **Rx** (or **Px**) next to the planet.

The planet isn't truly moving backward — it's an optical effect, like a faster car passing a slower one on the highway.

Astrologically, a retrograde planet turns its energy **inward**: it's a time to review, revisit, reflect, and redo rather than push forward.

Mercury retrograde is the most famous, but **any** planet or point can be retrograde — and a planet that was retrograde at your birth carries that reflective, inward quality for life.



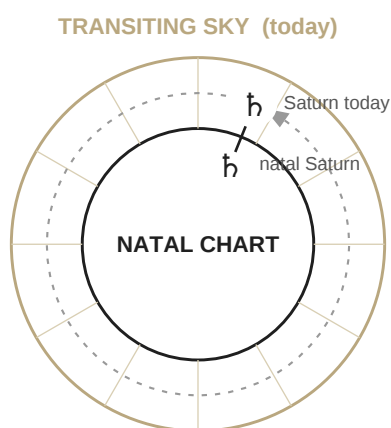
apparent backward motion as seen from Earth

Transits

A transit occurs when a planet in the current sky makes an aspect to a planet or point in your birth chart. Transits show the current cosmic influences affecting your life and can last from a few days to several years depending on the planets involved. Fast-moving planets (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars) create short-term effects, while slow-moving planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto) create longer-term cycles.

Example:

When transiting Saturn returns to the exact place it sat in your birth chart — transiting Saturn conjunct your **natal Saturn** — you are in a **Saturn Return**. Saturn takes roughly 29–30 years to circle the zodiac, so the first Saturn Return arrives around age 29, the second around 58. It is a time of maturation, testing, and stepping into a more accountable chapter of life.



Saturn Return: after ~29 years Saturn arrives back on its birth position

Aspects

An aspect is an angle formed between two planets or points. Aspects describe how planetary energies interact and influence each other. They are measured in degrees and can be harmonious (flowing), challenging (tension), or neutral.

Conjunction (0°)

Two planets occupy the same degree. Energy is merged and intensified. The effect depends on which planets are involved—it can be harmonious or challenging.

Sextile (60°)

Two planets are approximately 60 degrees apart. Harmonious and flowing. Brings opportunity and ease. Requires some action to realize its potential.

Square (90°)

Two planets are approximately 90 degrees apart. Challenging and creating friction. Brings growth through tension and effort. Motivates action and breakthrough.

Trine (120°)

Two planets are approximately 120 degrees apart. Harmonious and flowing. Brings ease, talent, and good fortune. The most fortunate aspect.

Opposition (180°)

Two planets are directly opposite each other. Creates polarity and tension. Requires balance and compromise. Can bring projection or awareness of shadow self.

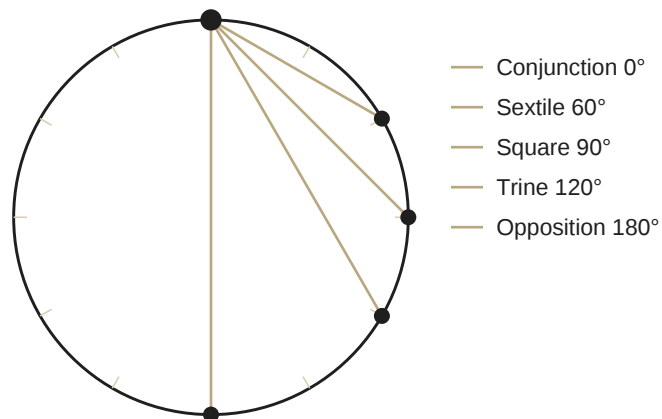
Other Aspects:

Quincunx (150°): Irritating tension; requires adjustment

Septile (51.4°): Spiritual or fated aspect

Semi-sextile (30°): Minor connection, slight harmony

Quindecile: 24° classically; many modern astrologers use 165° for this name — obsessive focus or compulsion



The major aspects, measured from one point on the wheel

Symbols & Glyphs

On a real chart, signs and planets are shown as small symbols called glyphs. Here are the ones you'll see most:

Zodiac Sign Glyphs

			
Aries	Taurus	Gemini	Cancer
			
Leo	Virgo	Libra	Scorpio
			
Sagittarius	Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces

Planet & Point Glyphs

				
Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars
				
Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
				
Chiron	Lilith	N. Node	S. Node	Retrograde

Note: Pluto is written two ways. The "PL" monogram is common in modern software; the orb-and-cross form is the older astronomical symbol. Both mean the same planet.

	
"PL" monogram	orb and cross
Both mean Pluto	

Quick Glossary

Term	Meaning
Natal chart	A map of the sky at the exact moment and place of your birth. Also called a birth chart or natal wheel.
Luminary	The Sun or the Moon (the two brightest 'lights,' not technically planets).
Ascendant (AC)	The sign rising on the eastern horizon at birth; your Rising sign.
Midheaven (MC)	The highest point of the chart; career, purpose, public role.
Transit	A planet in today's sky forming an aspect to a point in your birth chart.
Aspect	The angle between two planets, showing how their energies interact.
Orb	The allowed wiggle-room in degrees for an aspect to still 'count.'
Cusp	The dividing line between two signs or two houses.
Retrograde (Rx)	When a planet appears to move backward; energy turns inward and reflective.
Element	Fire, Earth, Air, or Water — a sign's basic nature.
Modality	Cardinal, Fixed, or Mutable — how a sign operates.
Ruler	The planet most at home in (and associated with) a given sign.
Lunar Nodes	The North and South Nodes; points of soul growth and past patterns.



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