

# The Wandering Hermit

## Star-ting Astrology

by Peter Denvi Wright

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P.O. Box 3571, Richmond, VA 23235

(804)-560-2820 / [denvi@poetic.com](mailto:denvi@poetic.com)

## What is Astrology?

Astrology is said to be the study of the stars and how their movements effect our life on Earth.

That is one simple way to define it, but it ignores several factors. It works as a sound bite definition, but it is not accurate. Although astrology does include studying the stars and where they are now or where they were when a person was born, most astrologers work more with the planets than the stars. Although some astrologers will say that it is the actual planet or star that influences what happens here, on Earth, most will generally agree or acknowledge that it is not the planets or stars or constellations themselves that cause events.

Let me present an explanation in a metaphor. Suppose you jump off a pier into a river. As you ride down the river, you have choices. Sometimes the current will carry you toward rapids, or you will get swept into a pool at the edge of the river bank and find yourself still, without any current pulling you anywhere. While you are going down the river you have choices. The current may carry you toward rapids, but you could also put in some effort and swim toward a calmer route. You also have choices while on different routes. If you are riding through rapids, you can enjoy the excitement and exhilaration or you can panic and let fear control you. If you take a calm route, you can relax and enjoy it, or you can complain of boredom.

Suppose you took a handful of sticks and threw them in the water before you jumped in. You could watch the sticks as they move ahead of you. They would tell you where the currents flow and you could decide how you want to work with the current. You can just ride with it, swim upstream against it, catch some cross currents to go to the other bank, or even get out of the river.

I am sure you've already figured out that the river is a metaphor for life. You can fight it, even get out of it, or make a choice of moving with the currents of life and see what they bring in for you to experience and learn. Astrology (and tarot and other methods of divination) are like the sticks. You can throw them out and watch them. While they don't tell you exactly what will happen, they do show the directions the current is going. They are markers and guideposts to help with the decisions in life. For example, a friend of mine was told when she could expect to meet her future spouse. It was a few

years down the road. Once she knew what to expect, she could make choices about what to do. She could chase after every man she met and hope they were The One, or she could sit at home and be miserable and wonder when she would meet Mr. Right (as opposed to Mr. Wright, the author of this tutorial), or she could use the time before then to enjoy life and do all the single person things she would not have time for once she was involved. She finished the renovations of her house, traveled a lot (leaving me to come by several times a day and walk her dog), and started taking swing and ballroom dance lessons. (Incidentally, it was through the dancing lessons and events that she met her partner.) Once she was told what was happening (like watching the sticks flow with the river), she was able to make informed choices on what she wanted to do with what life was bringing her.

What we see in the stars and the motion of the planets is a reflection of what is happening on Earth. There are many cycles in our lives, from the daily rotation of the planet, to the yearly revolution around the Sun, to even larger cycles. These are reflected in the planets and stars as well. It would be more accurate (in my opinion) to say the movement of the planets through the signs of the zodiac don't actually cause anything to happen, but that these movements are reflective of the cycles that are happening, on Earth and throughout the Universe. And, again, they don't predict specific events as much as they show us the influences that are happening around us.

My definition of astrology would be the study of the motions of the planets and stars and how they reflect the influences of forces and energies on our lives.

### **Astrology and Fate**

I someone who refuses to study astrology. She has said she doesn't believe in it because if it were true, it would mean she has no control in her life. My belief is that it enhances your choices. Astrology does not mean we don't have choices. Astrology just shows us the influences acting on us. It is still up to us to work with those influences. It's like the current in the river. Is this a good time to swim over to the other bank? What is influencing me now and how can I work with it? Those questions are healthy uses of astrology. In my life and in my readings (both ones I have done and readings from other professional readers) there are strong influences for career and writing now. There are little or no influences regarding romance. This does not mean that there will be no romance in my life or that I cannot bring it in to my life. It does, though, show that the currents are taking me through a career path now. It is my choice on how I deal with this. I can ignore it and focus my energy on finding someone to be with, or I can take advantage of the currents and influences and use them to my advantage. Personally, I have learned that fighting the current can be exhausting and counterproductive. Although I enjoy romance (who doesn't), I know that there is a time for everything, and if I take advantage of the influences around me, I can build the career I want and later worry about romance. I can try to do it in the opposite order, but my experience has taught me to use the strong influences while they are available.

## How Does Astrology Give Us Information?

Astrologers are concerned with what they call the ten planets, the Sun, Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. (We know the Sun and Moon are not planets, but the phrase ten planets is a generic label.)

Astrologers are also concerned with the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve houses, the positions of the stars, and also some other things, such as the nodes, aspects, and parts (like the Part of Fortune).

Astrologers look at planets and where they are in particular signs or houses. They also look at how the planets are positioned in relationship to each other. The locations and movements of the planets provide us with information. We can use this information to understand the influences in our lives. Astrologers read charts. A birth chart shows where the signs and planets are at the time of a person's chart. This tells about the person, their beliefs and attitudes, their likes and dislikes, and, in general, what the issues and focus of their life will be.










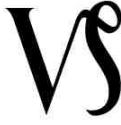
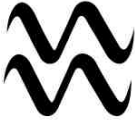

## Glyphs, Degrees, Cusps and Other Quick Notes

Since we will proceed to charts, then signs, planets and houses, and from there to a sample reading as quickly as possible, this is a catch-all section for all I need to review before we go on to those topics.

**Glyphs:** Do you remember in school when your science teacher said alchemists didn't know what they were doing and everything was made of four elements? Guess who is the one in the dark!? Alchemists were *not* trying to turn lead into gold. They were working on spiritual research, but if the Church had known, it would have done nasty things to the alchemists. So how do you solve that? Simple. Well, Mr. Priest-man, we're trying to find a way to make gold. Wouldn't that help the church? And all those squiggly things, well they're just abbreviations for our notes. Of course you don't tell them you're really exploring the spiritual world and studying what the Church has declared as a Bad Thing. They were so good at hiding the true nature of their studies, the Church and scientists still don't see the truth. One of the ways alchemists and astrologers kept their studies secret was in the shorthand they used. Instead of writing out Aries each time they referred to that sign, they would use the symbol of a ram's horns. These symbols are called glyphs. The Reference Section shows all the glyphs used to abbreviate both signs and planets. It would be a good idea to go to the Reference Section and print it out, not only for glyphs, but for the other information it contains. This will help you during the rest of the tutorial.









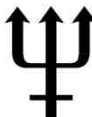

I have included a few paragraphs here on the tricks I used to memorize the glyphs. If they help you, use them. If they confuse you, don't use them.

## Sign Glyphs

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

**Sign Glyph Tricks:** Aries is a ram and the symbol looks like a ram's horns. Taurus the bull looks like a bull's face and horns. Gemini is the twins, so it is two sticks side by side. Cancer is a crab and the two figures look like crabs' claws. Leo doesn't look like a lion, but one side is almost looped, forming the lion's mane and the other is the lion's tail. I have no suggestion for Virgo. Libra is balanced, since Libra is a scale. Scorpio has a tail coming off an M. Scorpions are the only sign with a stinger on the tail. Sagittarius is an archer, so the symbol is an arrow. Capricorn is a goat with a fish tail. The V at the front is the goat's legs and the squiggle at the end is the fish's tail. Aquarius is an air sign, but is the water bearer. The waves could be air waves or water waves. Pisces is the fish, which is plural. The best I've come up with is that each side is one fish.

## Planet Glyphs

				
The Sun	Mercury	Venus	The Moon	Mars
				
Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto

**Planet Glyph Tricks:** (Not in any order): The Sun is the center, so it is a circle with a dot in the center. It looks like the Sun. The Moon looks like the Moon. Venus is the same as the symbol for female and Mars is the same as the symbol for male. Didn't someone write a book about females and males from Mars and Venus? Mercury is the female symbol with horns, but I think of them as wings, since Mercury was the winged messenger of the gods. Neptune is the god of the sea, so his symbol is a trident. The other symbols and hints tie in with the meaning of the planets they represent. Jupiter is abundance, but Saturn is restrictions and limits. Jupiter is almost like a 4 that points up, capturing abundance, Saturn points down and drains—it also looks like a sickle and Saturn limits, like the Reaper. Uranus represents technology and the unusual. It's like Star Trek. Before you think I'm making a joke, look at the symbol for Uranus. It looks like the Enterprise from the top, with the saucer section and two warp drives. If you don't like Star Trek, don't use this trick. I have no suggestion for Pluto.

**Degrees:** This is the math part of the tutorial. If you're not a math person, don't worry. This is not the old days when everything in astrology had to be painstakingly calculated by hand. All we will be talking about are circles, degrees, and, later, angles. You probably remember from school that a circle has 360 degrees. There are twelve signs, so each sign contains 30 degrees (we get that number by dividing 360 by 12). Remember, also, that there are 60 minutes in a degree. When we keep track of where the planets are, we do so by degrees. For example, a planet in Aries can be anywhere from 0 degrees and 0 minutes of Aries to 29 degrees and 59 minutes of Aries. Once it goes past 29 degrees and 59 minutes, it enters Taurus (the next sign) at 0 degrees and 0 minutes of Taurus. We have a shorthand way to write this. Say Jupiter is in Sagittarius at 12 degrees and 10 minutes, we say it is at 12-Sagittarius-10. We would write it as 12SAG10, which means 12 degrees and 10 minutes into Sagittarius. (Usually astrologers would use a glyph for SAG instead of writing it out. Due to font limitations on different systems, I am writing it out.)

**Cusps:** Each sign stretches for only 30 degrees, or 1/12th of the way around the full circle of the zodiac. When we use a chart, it contains not only the 12 signs, but 12 houses. Unless you're using a specific system, the houses are *not* all the same size. The cusps are the boundaries between signs or houses are cusps. If a planet is on one of those boundaries, it is on that cusp. A sign can be on a house cusp. For example, if the boundary at the beginning of the third house is in Leo, then we would say the third house cusp is in Leo or Leo is on the third house cusp.

(Note on cusp born: Many people think that if they are born within the first few or last few days of a sign, they are cusp born and have traits of both signs. That is not accurate. And, while I'm at it, you know those Sun-sign horoscopes in the paper every day? The reason they are so vague is because they are not done for a specific person and using that person's chart.)

**Sign, Planet, and House Relationships:** Each sign and house has a planetary ruler. There are also 12 signs and 12 houses – there is a direct correspondence. For example, Libra is the seventh sign of the zodiac and is about partnerships and people and the seventh house is about those same concepts. Both are ruled by Venus, which rules love as well as what we value. For another example, Cancer is ruled by the Moon. We can use this to see that the Moon and Cancer will represent many of the same things, as will the fourth house, which corresponds to Cancer, which is the fourth sign.

### **The Next Step**

Be sure to learn the glyphs. You can learn them as you learn the signs and planets, but it is important to learn them.

Next we will learn a little about birth charts. Once we have a general understanding of what a birth chart looks like, we'll go on to the signs and planets, then on to actually reading a birth chart.

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