

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHART READING

See Janet's "Astrologer's Apprentice Cheat Sheet" for keywords for the components of charts.

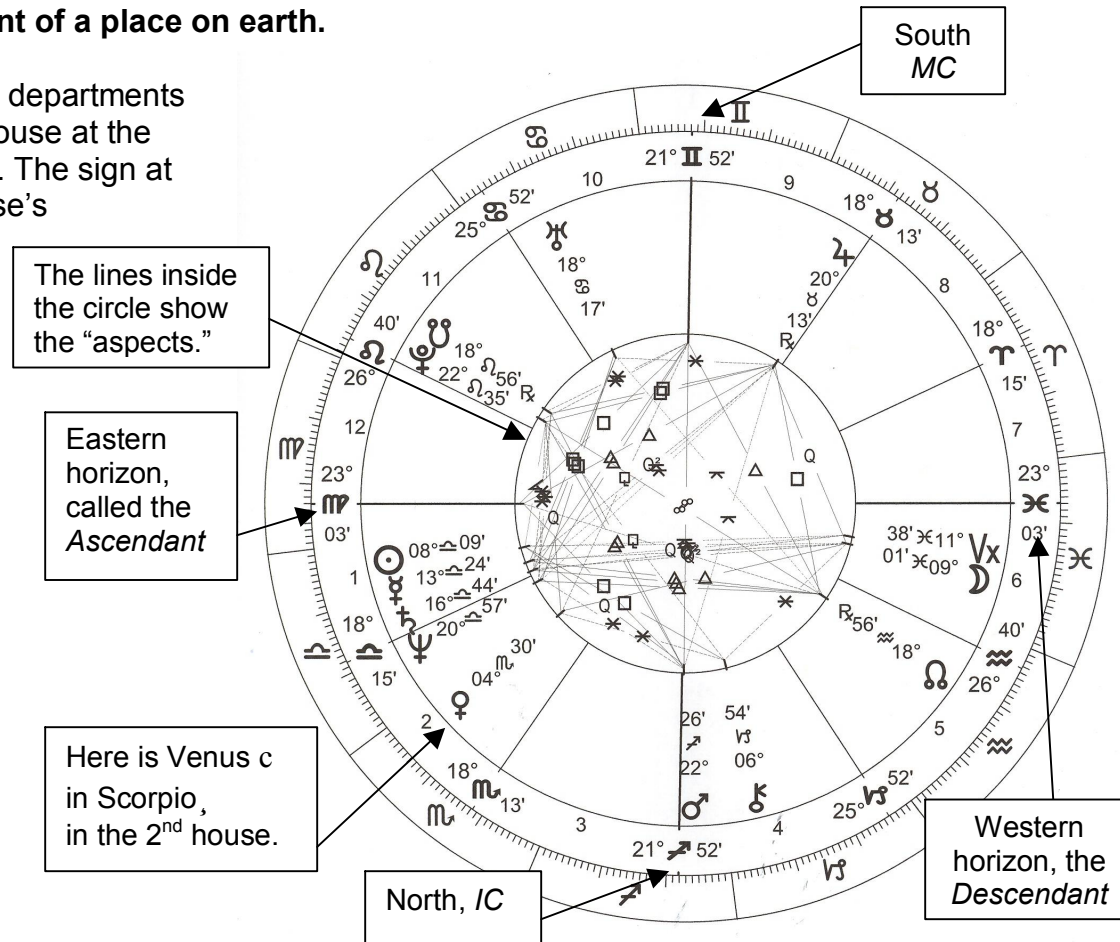
A chart is a map of a moment in time, from the viewpoint of a place on earth.

The 12 slices of pie of the sky (called "houses") are like the departments of your life. Their pattern is counterclockwise from the 1st house at the eastern horizon (where 9 o'clock would be on a clock face). The sign at the beginning of a house colors the way you act in the house's departments.

Planets represent the drives and urges humans have in common. We express those in our own ways, shown by the sign a planet is in, the house(s) in your chart that it occupies and "rules," and the connections (called "aspects") that it makes with other planets.

Aspects indicate how the planets get along, or not. They are dependent on the number of degrees between planets. On the chart, lines are drawn to show these connections, and that jumble of lines in the middle is kind of like your printed circuit board, how you're wired. There can be patterns between the planets, looking like boxes or triangles, with names like "T-squares," "Grand Crosses" (both very challenging) or "Grand Trines" (very favorable).

There is a range of influence for these connections between planets, meaning they have an effect even when they are not precisely a certain number of degrees apart. This range is called "orb" and it varies from 1-8 degrees from precision. You might see this expressed on a chart on a grid detailing the aspects. If it says a couple of numbers with an **A** or **S**, that's the number of degrees and minutes (1/60 of a degree) that the aspect is off from exact. **A** means applying, coming into exactness; **S** means separating, past exactness. Applying packs more of a punch. The closer the orb is to zero, the stronger the aspect.



The directions on a horoscope map are the opposite of those on an earth map, because we're looking up instead of down. South is at the top of the chart, beginning the 10th house, and is called the Midheaven (symbol "MC" from Latin for *middle of the sky*). North is at the bottom of the chart, starting the 4th house, and is called the IC (from Latin for *foot of the sky*). West is at the middle of the right-hand side of the chart, where a sign would be seen to set, at the start of the 7th house, and is called the Descendant.