

# The Traditional Astrology Quickstart Guide

## A Step-by-Step Method for Stronger, Clearer Chart Judgments

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### **What this guide will help you do**

This short guide introduces the traditional approach to astrology in a way that showcases its philosophical, practical, and concrete use. By the end, you will understand what “traditional astrology” means, how the traditional cosmos frames astrological meaning, and how to make a clear first-pass interpretation of key chart factors without getting overwhelmed. This guide assumes a general understanding of an astrology chart, however I will be offering a standard astrological course that takes you from little to no astrological understanding to being able to read a chart in a traditional fashion.

### **What this guide does not cover (on purpose)**

This is not the full training. I am intentionally leaving out the more advanced layers, such as detailed dignity tables, planetary and zodiacal delineation, full reception doctrine, finding chart rulers, length of life, lots and their calculation, and various timing techniques like profections, firdaria, and primary directions. Those belong in the complete methodology, which I will be teaching in my upcoming advanced course.

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## 1) What Traditional Astrology Means

When people say “traditional astrology,” they are referring to the older craft of astrology that developed through Egyptian, Babylonian, Hellenistic and medieval practice and continued in a Ptolemaic fashion into the Renaissance. It is a method that relies on clear rules for judgment rather than personal intuition or a modern psychological approach alone.

Traditional astrology works by identifying the correct significators, assessing their strength, evaluating their condition, and then weighing testimonies to form a coherent judgment. In other words, it is not simply about describing archetypes. It is a structured way of interpreting life topics through the chart to give real predictions. Medieval astrologers (those from the 7th

century to the 15th) in particular were known for their incredible predictions using these techniques.

Traditional astrologers typically begin with concrete questions. They want to know how resources form, how relationships develop, how reputation changes, what supports health, and what blocks or delays certain outcomes. The traditional astrologer approaches these questions through a combination of symbolism and technique, while keeping interpretation anchored to consistent principles.

In the full course, I will teach how to weigh testimonies when the chart gives mixed signals, how reception and dignity modify outcomes, and how to move from first-pass interpretation into full chart synthesis and timing.

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## 2) The Traditional Cosmos and the Descending Spheres

Traditional astrology rests on an older hermetic and platonic philosophical model of reality. In this view, reality is structured in levels: what is higher is more unified, while what is lower is more mixed and changeable. The cosmos is often pictured as a series of spheres, moving from the most subtle or ethereal to the most tangible and concrete.

At the highest level is the empyrean, sometimes described as the all-encompassing sphere beyond change. This is the realm in which God dwells, one beyond human understanding. Beneath that is the sphere of the fixed stars, which represents long-duration patterns and the “backdrop” of the heavens through which the planetary influences are modified. Below the fixed stars are the planetary spheres themselves, through which the seven classical planets mediate influence into human life.

*I highly recommend reading my free traditional interpretation of the planets themselves at my website to better understand the traditional meanings of the planets:*

<https://certifiedastrology.com/category/individual-planets/traditional-astrology/>

Beneath the planets is the sublunar realm (literally, below the moon), which contains the elements themselves which further modify the higher planetary influences. In these lower elemental spheres the four elemental qualities mix into weather, bodies, temperament, and events. At the center of it all is the Earth, where meaning becomes concrete and lived.

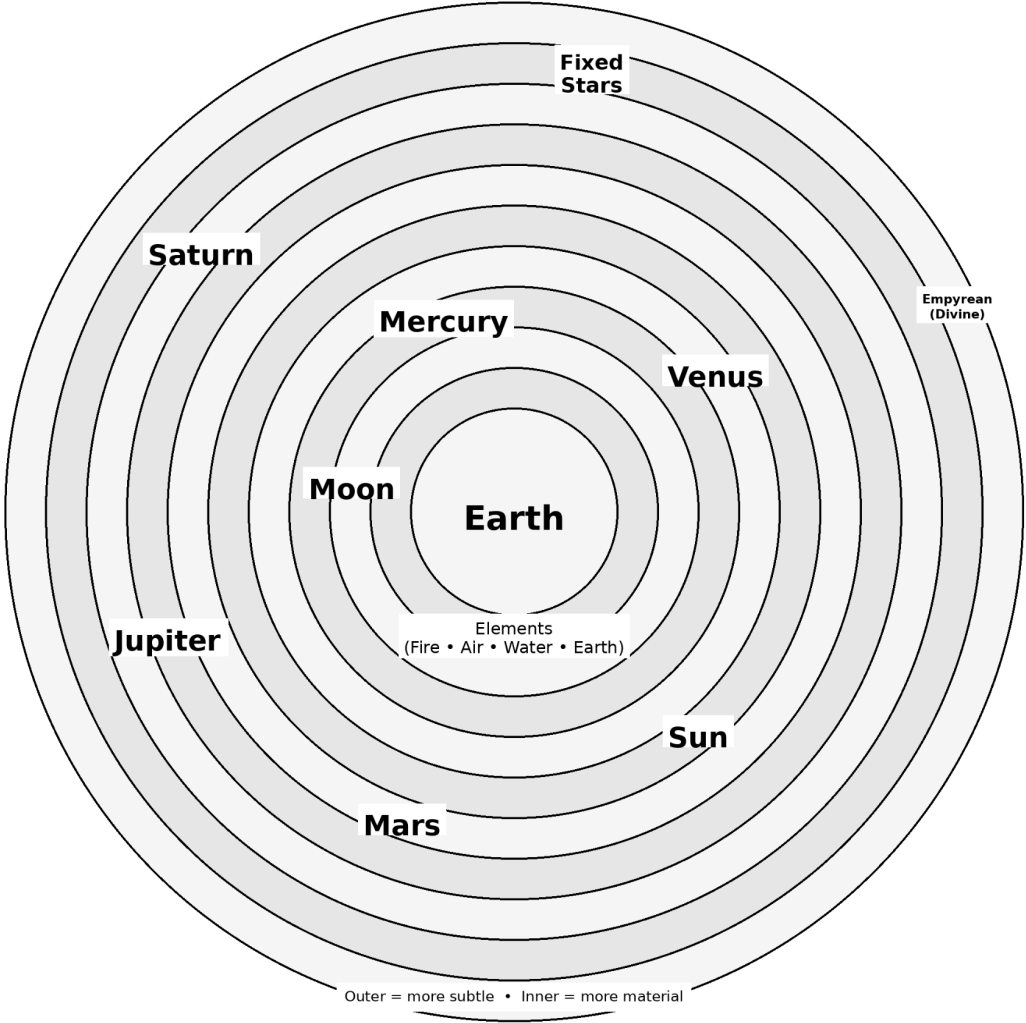
This model matters because it explains why the sky can be read as meaningful without reducing astrology to superstition. The tradition treats astrology as a bridge between patterns and manifestation. Higher levels describe form and order, while lower levels describe change and lived expression.

Many people notice that this “descending” model resembles certain Kabbalistic diagrams of emanation. The similarity is real in the sense that both are hierarchical maps moving from unity to multiplicity. Historically, these resemblances also make sense because medieval thinkers often worked within overlapping philosophical streams, especially Platonism and Neoplatonism, which then appeared in different religious languages.

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## The Traditional Cosmos (Descending Spheres)

Influence descends from the subtle to the dense: from the outer spheres toward the Earth.



## 3) The Ascendant and Primary Motivation

In traditional astrology, the Ascendant is not only a personality marker. It describes the basic orientation of the native's life and what the native is driven to secure. You can think of it as the underlying need that repeats throughout a person's choices.

A simple and effective approach is to begin with the Ascendant's element and modality. The element gives a broad sense of what is sought, while the modality describes how a person tries to secure it.

Fire rising signs often seek freedom of action, initiative, and the ability to move decisively. Air rising signs tend to seek freedom of movement and expression, as well as connection through ideas and relationships. Water rising signs frequently seek emotional security, bonding, and protection. Earth rising signs typically seek stability, physical security, and tangible results.

Modality refines this picture. Fixed signs pursue stability and maintenance, and they often focus on acquiring what they can hold. Mutable signs adapt, shift, and respond to changing conditions, and they may go through periods of uncertainty before finding a stable path. Cardinal signs initiate, start, and push events into motion, and they tend to feel most alive when something is moving forward.

After you establish element and modality, you can add a powerful traditional refinement: planets that closely aspect the Ascendant will color the motivation with their nature and will also bring the topics of the houses they rule into the story. This is one of the fastest ways to make the Ascendant feel personal rather than generic.

### **Try this with your chart:**

Find your Ascendant sign and write one clear sentence about what it is trying to secure. Then notice whether any planet strongly connects to the Ascendant by a close aspect. If so, write a second sentence describing how that planet's nature changes the tone.

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## 4) A Traditional Order of Delineation

Many people struggle in astrology because they do not have a reliable order of operations. They jump between details and end up with disconnected statements rather than a coherent judgment.

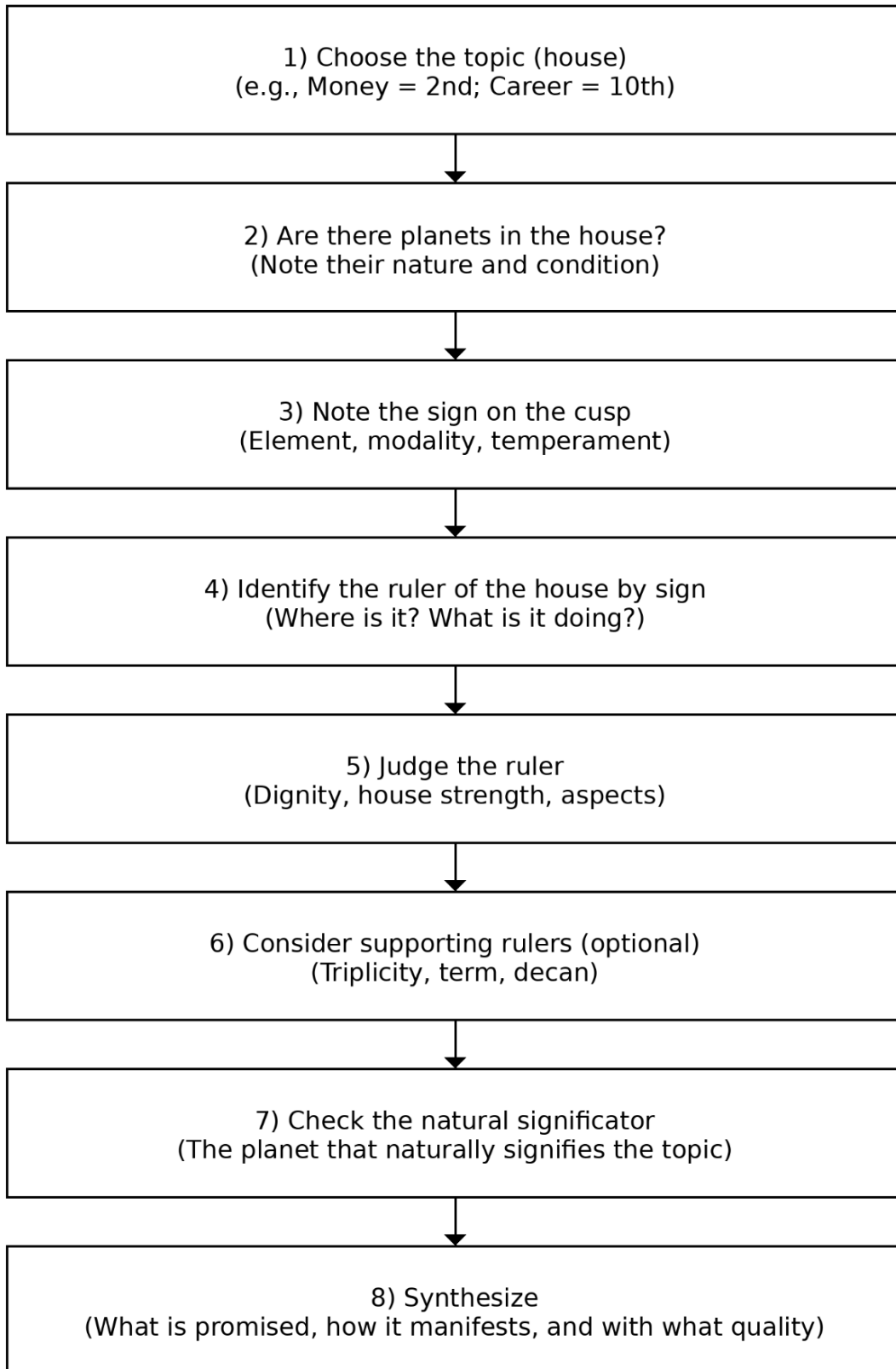
*A traditional workflow gives you a way to move step by step. It also prevents you from over-interpreting minor details while ignoring the major ones.*

A practical first-pass order looks like this:

First, choose a topic and locate the relevant house. For example, the second house is often used for money, resources, and livelihood. Then look for planets that are actually in that house, because planets in a house can act directly there and act as primary signifiers. After that, consider the sign on the cusp or the sign that begins the house, because it sets the style and quality of that area of life. Then identify the ruler of that sign, and examine where it is placed, how strong it is by house, and what its general condition suggests.

If you want one more layer that stays simple, you can also consider the natural signifier for the topic. For relationships this might be Venus; for wealth it might be Jupiter; for conflict it might be Mars. Natural signifiers add clarity to the overall interpretation. Finally, you synthesize the story in plain language. At this stage, clarity is more valuable than complexity.

## A Practical Traditional Delineation Order (First Pass)



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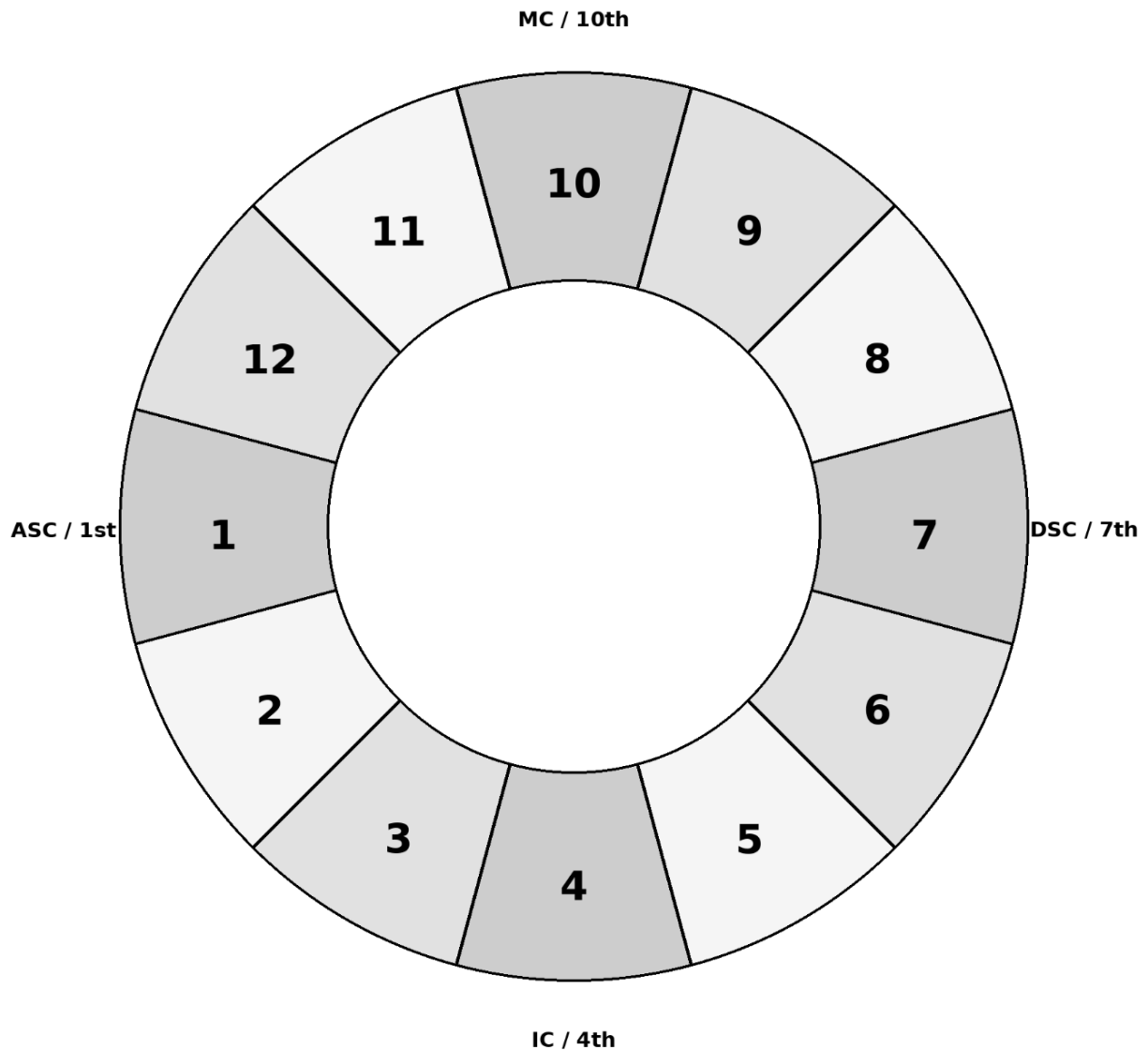
## 5) Strength by House: Angular, Succedent, and Cadent

Traditional astrology makes an important distinction between what a planet signifies and what it can actually accomplish. A planet may indicate a topic, but it can also be weak, obstructed, or forced to operate indirectly. House strength is one of the clearest ways to judge how strongly a planet can act.

Angular houses are generally the strongest. These are the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth houses. Planets here tend to be effective, prominent, and capable of producing results. Succedent houses are moderate. These are the second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh houses, and planets there often have steadiness and staying power, but with less immediacy than angular planets. Cadent houses are the weakest. These are the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth houses, and planets there frequently have a harder time manifesting directly. Their results can come with delays, detours, or circumstances that feel outside the native's control.

# House Strength: Angular, Succedent, Cadent

Houses increase counterclockwise starting from the 1st house.



- Angular houses (1, 4, 7, 10): strongest and most direct.
- Succedent houses (2, 5, 8, 11): moderate strength and stability.
- Cadent houses (3, 6, 9, 12): least direct; delay or indirect expression.

**Try this with your chart:**

Choose one planet that feels important in your chart. Determine whether it is angular, succedent, or cadent. Then write one sentence describing what that level of strength implies about how directly it can operate.

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## 6) The Ruler of the Ascendant and Dispositors

The ruler of a sign *in another sign* is “disposed” to follow the rules of the latter sign. For instance, the ruler of the Ascendant in another sign describes how the native tends to pursue the Ascendant’s drive. It often functions like a practical strategy or the main way the native tries to get what they want.

Dispositors deepen this by describing the chain of command in the chart. A planet in a sign is operating in another planet’s territory. That territory is governed by the sign ruler, which means the planet is “answering” to that ruler. If you follow the trail, you can often see why certain planets behave smoothly and why others struggle.

### House ruler in a house

One of the simplest and most valuable interpretive tools is understanding how a house ruler/dispositor works in the house and sign it finds itself in. This simple movement changes the meaning of the chart. It creates a clean sentence you can apply repeatedly:

The affairs of one house develop through the affairs of another house.

For example, if the ruler of the second house is in the ninth, money and livelihood may develop through ninth-house matters such as teaching, publishing, travel, spirituality, or philosophy. If the ruler of the seventh house is in the tenth, relationships may strongly connect to visibility, career, reputation, or public life. If the ruler of the tenth house is in the sixth, career may develop through service, work conditions, routines, skills, or the demands of daily labor.

**Try this with your chart:**

Choose the second, seventh, or tenth house. Identify the sign on that house and the ruler of that sign. Then find what house the ruler is located in and write one clear sentence about how that topic develops.

# Dispositor Example Interpretation

Chart used: Lisa Marie Presley — Feb 1, 1968, 5:01 PM, Memphis, TN (Whole Sign; Leo rising)

## Real-life outcome

In 1993, on her 25th birthday, she inherited control of her father (Elvis Presley)'s estate. That is a classic money-through-estate/inheritance signature.

**Step 1** We start with the 2nd house because it signifies money and personal resources.

**Step 2** With Leo rising, the 2nd house is Virgo. Virgo is ruled by Mercury (♿).

**Step 3** Mercury (♿), the ruler of the 2nd, is placed in the 8th house. The 8th is associated with estates, inheritances, and other people's resources.

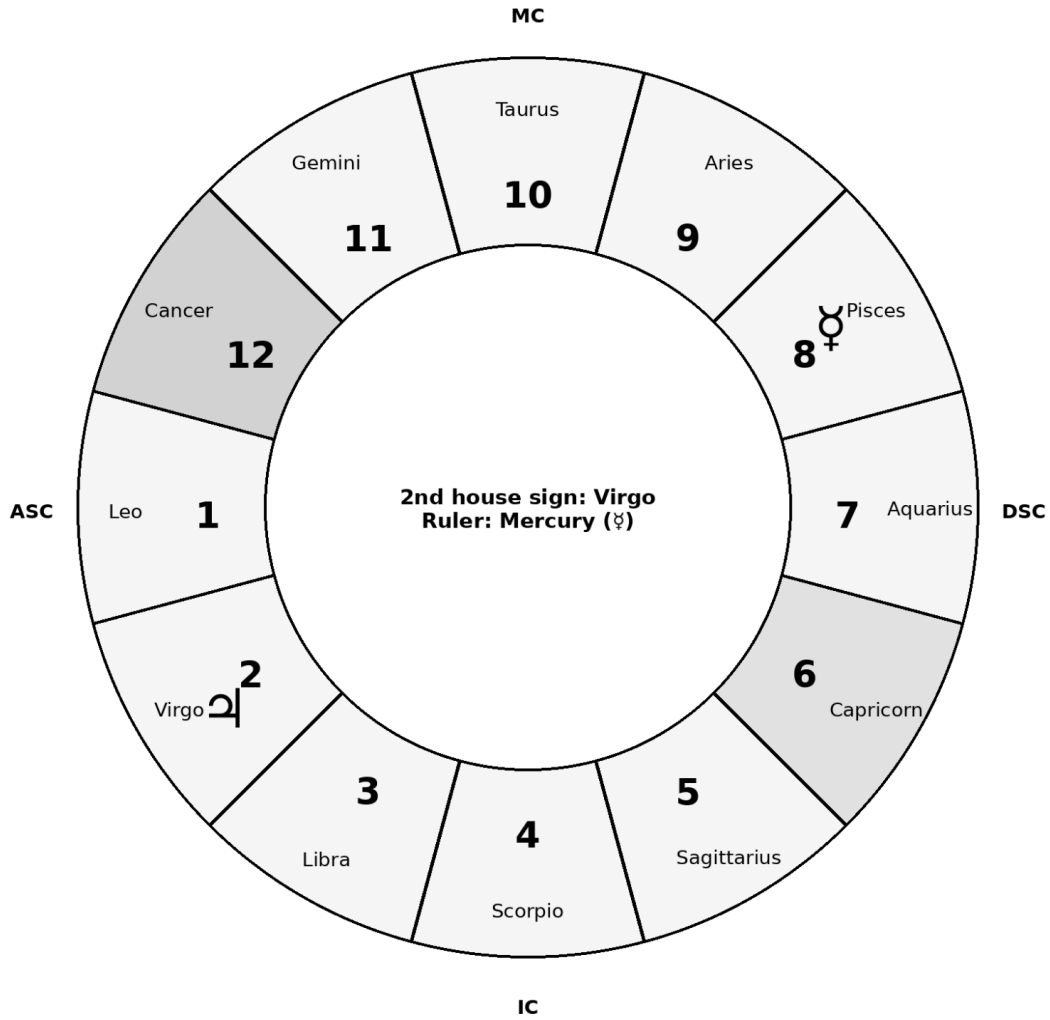
**Step 4** This placement describes how money tends to arrive: not only through personal income, but through inherited or shared-wealth channels.

**Step 5** Synthesis: The 2nd-house ruler in the 8th aligns closely with the documented inheritance story.

# Dispositors & House Rulership (2nd House Money Example)

We locate the ruler of the 2nd house, then interpret the house where that ruler is placed.

Chart example: Lisa Marie Presley — Feb 1, 1968, 5:01 PM, Memphis, TN (Whole Sign; Leo rising)



# 7) Natural, Zodiacal and Accidental Significators

Traditional astrology separates planetary meaning into three layers. This prevents one of the most common beginner mistakes: treating a planet as if it only means one thing.

## Natural significators

A planet signifies certain themes everywhere, in every chart, because of its nature. Venus naturally relates to harmony, attraction, union, and pleasure. Mars naturally relates to heat, conflict, cutting, urgency, and decisive action. Saturn naturally relates to limits, duty, delay, fear, deprivation, and endurance. Jupiter naturally relates to growth, protection, abundance, justice, faith, and meaning. Mercury naturally relates to learning, trade, messages, skill, analysis, and technique. The Sun naturally relates to vitality, authority, reputation, and recognition, while the Moon naturally relates to the body, flux, nurture, change, and the rhythms of life.

Natural significators answer the question: “**What kind of thing is this?**” They describe the basic category of experience.

## Zodiacal significators

A planet signifies zodiacally because of its **relationship to signs and degree rulers**, regardless of houses. This includes the planet’s dignities and debilities and the dignity rulers at a given degree.

Zodiacal signification includes:

- **Domicile and detriment** (a planet’s home vs. exile)
- **Exaltation and fall**
- **Triplicity rulers** (by element and sect) (Not covered in this booklet)
- **Bounds/terms** and **decans/faces** (degree-level rulers) (Not covered in this booklet)

A planet that is dignified has more capacity to act coherently and deliver its significations with fewer distortions. A planet that is debilitated tends to act with difficulty, cost, or instability.

So when you say “the ruler of the 2nd house Pisces,” what you really mean is Jupiter **rules the sign on the 2nd-house cusp**.

The rulership itself is zodiacal (sign-based). The 2nd-house topic is house-based. So it is cleaner to phrase it like this:

## Accidental signifiers

Finally, a planet signifies accidentally because of how it is situated in *this particular chart*. Accidental signification comes from factors like house placement, angularity (house strength), visibility, speed, sect, aspects, and whether the planet is configured to key houses and angles.

A planet can become a signifier of a topic simply because it is placed in a house. If Mars is in the 7th, Mars is tied to relationships and opponents whether or not Mars rules the 7th. If Saturn is in the 10th, Saturn becomes tied to career and reputation even if Saturn does not rule the 10th. If Venus closely aspects the ruler of the Ascendant, Venus becomes relevant to the life direction even if Venus has no direct rulership.

Accidental signifiers answer the question: “**Where does this show up, and how loudly does it show up?**” They tell you the stage on which a planet acts, and whether it has power to manifest quickly or strongly.

## Putting the three together

A clean traditional judgment often reads like this: **natural meaning** describes the type of thing, **zodiacal role** tells you who governs the topic and what condition they operate in, and **accidental factors** tell you where it manifests and how strong it is in real life.

This is why a single planet can carry multiple meanings at once without contradiction. Jupiter may be a natural signifier of growth and protection. Yet in another chart Jupiter may also be a zodiacal signifier of an abundance of siblings because it finds itself in the third house. Or in another chart, Jupiter may be an accidental signifier of a prosperous career because it is placed in the 10th or configured to the Midheaven. You do not pick one and discard the rest. You rank them by relevance to the question you are judging.

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# 8) The Operations of Planets and Signifiers

A useful traditional way to understand planet meaning is to think in layers.

First, planets have elemental qualities. They tend toward hot, cold, moist, or dry mixtures, which shape temperament and the way events unfold. Second, planets have a stable nature, meaning

they consistently bring certain kinds of outcomes. Venus tends to reconcile and attract, while Mars tends to sever and inflame. Jupiter tends to protect and expand, while Saturn tends to restrict and delay. Third, planets carry symbolic correspondences that appear in lived experience, such as social roles and life functions. Mercury often shows up in activities involving messages, commerce, learning, and skills. Mars often shows up in conflict, urgency, and decisive action. The Sun often shows up in visibility, authority, and leadership.

Then these meanings merge with two practical factors: placement and rulership. Placement shows where the planet is acting. Rulership shows what topics the planet is managing in the chart.

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## 9) Benefics and Malefics

Traditional astrology classifies planets by what they tend to do. Jupiter and Venus are called benefics because they tend to support, increase, reconcile, and protect. Mars and Saturn are called malefics because they tend to sever, deny, burden, delay, and create pressure.

However, “benefic” and “malefic” are not moral labels. They describe the kinds of results that tend to form. A planet can produce something, deny something, or destroy something after it has been produced.

For a first-pass approach, you can improve judgment by checking three things. You should consider how strong the planet is by house, whether it appears stable or compromised in its zodiacal or house position, and what topics it rules that it might be affecting. These checks keep interpretation grounded.

In the full course, I will teach the deeper rules that show when malefics can actually help and when benefics can cause problems, including the role of sect, reception, and context.

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# 10) One-Page Worksheet and Next Steps

## A) Primary Motivation

Write your Ascendant sign here: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the element and modality (fixed, mutable, tropical) of the Ascendant: \_\_\_\_\_

Now write a clear sentence about what you are trying to secure in life:

"My primary motivation is to secure \_\_\_\_\_, and I tend to pursue it through \_\_\_\_\_."

## B) Strategy Through the Chart Ruler

Write the ruler of your Ascendant here: \_\_\_\_\_

Write what house it is in: \_\_\_\_\_

Now write a clear sentence about how your motivation expresses itself:

"I pursue my core motivation through \_\_\_\_\_ house matters."

## C) Strength Check

Is the ascendant ruler in an angular, succedent, or cadent house? \_\_\_\_\_

Write one sentence about what that implies: \_\_\_\_\_

## D) One House Topic (Choose Money, Relationships, or Career)

Choose one house: 2nd / 7th / 10th

Write the sign on that house: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the ruler of that sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Write what house the ruler is in: \_\_\_\_\_

Now write the sentence:

"The affairs of the \_\_\_\_\_ house develop through the affairs of the \_\_\_\_\_ house."

## Bringing It All Together

If you have read this far, you already understand something that separates traditional astrology from most modern “keyword astrology.” Traditional astrology is not a collection of vague psychological meanings. It is a *method of judgment*. It has a philosophy of nature, a logic of causes, and a disciplined order of interpretation that produces coherent results.

The goal is not to memorize a thousand isolated definitions. The goal is to learn how to think like a traditional astrologer. When you do, the chart stops feeling like a pile of symbols and starts behaving like a structured system. You know what matters first, what matters second, and what can be ignored because it is not relevant to the question at hand.

If you take nothing else from this guide, take this: **traditional astrology rewards order and restraint**. You get better results when you make fewer claims, but make them based on clear testimonies.

### Why this matters for prediction

Traditional astrology is fundamentally interested in events, developments, and outcomes. That does not mean it is fatalistic. It means the chart is treated as a map of tendencies and causes, where some things are stronger, some are weaker, and some are simply not promised.

This is why the traditional framework leans so heavily on ideas like house strength, planetary condition, and the chain of rulership. These techniques reduce guesswork. They help you distinguish what is merely possible from what is truly likely, and they give you a reliable way to support your judgment with reasons.

Over time, you will start noticing something powerful: the chart repeatedly confirms itself through the same core logic. The more you practice, the less you need “intuitive guessing,” because the chart’s structure tells you what to prioritize.

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## A Note on the Courses

This guide is meant to give you a strong foundation and a usable framework. It is not meant to teach every technique, and it intentionally avoids some of the more advanced methods that require careful instruction and practice.

That is exactly what my upcoming courses are for.

### Certified Astrology: Traditional Foundations

This is my beginner-to-intermediate course designed to help you become fluent in the traditional method. You will learn how to:

- Read a chart in the traditional order without getting lost
- Evaluate planetary condition and strength in a consistent way
- Work with house rulers, dispositors, and testimonies clearly
- Build interpretations that are structured, testable, and repeatable

## **Certified Astrology: Traditional Mastery**

This is the advanced course for students who want to move beyond foundational delineation into full traditional predictive technique. It will cover higher-level methodology and show you how traditional astrologers actually build judgments that hold up over time.

If you want to be notified when enrollment opens, make sure you stay subscribed. When the courses go live, subscribers will receive early access and first notice.

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## **Final encouragement**

Traditional astrology is a craft. It improves the same way any real craft improves: with a method, repetition, and honest testing.

If you take the framework in this guide and apply it consistently, you will notice your readings becoming sharper, calmer, and more accurate. You will begin to trust your judgments because you will know *why* you are saying what you are saying.

And that is the whole point.

**Thank you for reading — and I'll see you in the course.**

**Best,**

**Chris Chulls**

**CertifiedAstrology.com**