

An Information Special from Astro Communications Services, Inc.

Aspects are angular relationships between the planets or between planets and points in the chart (such as the Ascendant or 1st house cusp). The relationships or aspects between the planets indicate the relationships between various drives and needs in our nature which are symbolized by the planets.

Every circle has 360 degrees and the circle of the zodiac is no exception. Thus each planet (or point in the horoscope) is separated from other planets (and points) by a specific number of degrees. Certain degree segments (0, 60, 90, 120, 150, 180) have traditional meanings in astrology.

The Conjunction

The aspect which is easiest to “see” in a horoscope is the conjunction, an aspect of zero degrees so the planets are seen together in the chart. (If, for example, a horoscope has the Sun at 13° Gemini 35' and Mercury is at 13° Gemini 55', we would say that the Sun is conjunct Mercury. We could also say that Mercury is conjunct the Sun.) The meaning of a conjunction is that the drives of the two planets are mixed. It is as if these planets are married or living together. In your horoscope, you do not get one without the other. The desires they symbolize are somehow melded in your personality. The blending may be comfortable or not so comfortable — depending on the nature of the drives involved.

Interpreting a conjunction is not very different from putting together the meanings of a planet in a house or a planet in a sign. Consider both sides: how might these two planets reinforce and support one another's themes and how might their basic drives conflict and compete with one other?

In terms of the meaning of a conjunction, the nature of the planets (or points) involved is the **most** significant. Certain planets stand for drives which “get along” easily, that is they tend to want the same sort of things, and tend to pull in the same direction. When such planets conjunct each other, they suggest inner agreement, reinforcement and harmony. (Examples would include conjunctions between the Sun and Mars.)

Other planets represent drives which are contradictory or at odds with one another. Where such planets conjunct each other, the individual must strive to somehow “make peace” between possibly warring factions. Integration takes more effort. (An example would include the Moon with Uranus.)

The picture is complex and you will meet a variety of opinions in different astrology texts. There are writers who consider all aspects to Jupiter to be “good” and all aspects to Saturn to be “bad.” It is true that Saturn calls for realism and effort while Jupiter encourages faith that we can have what we want without effort, but in the well-known parable of the grasshopper and the ant, the worker came out better than the one who trusted his luck. Of course, for fuller information, you would also consider the nature of the sign(s) and house(s) involved in your conjunction (and all other aspects that you analyze). Anything which is truly central in your nature will be repeated in the horoscope by different aspects or planet in house or planet in sign combinations. Notice what comes up again and again in a horoscope. Repetition reveals significance.

Ideally, conjuncting planets are separated by zero degrees. Few aspects, however, are exact to the degree. Astrology uses a concept called “orb” to handle that. The orb of an aspect refers to how many degrees **away** from exact the aspect can be, and still be considered relevant. (If, for example, an individual's Sun is at 5° Capricorn and the Moon is at 10° Capricorn, are the Sun and Moon conjunct? What if the Moon is at 15° or 20° or Capricorn?) Astrologers have differing opinions in regard to orb, but all agree that the tighter (closer to exact) an aspect is, the more

important it is! So closer aspects are given more weight in any analysis.

As has already been indicated, a conjunction is not the only aspect which exists, but the conjunction is the most significant of all aspects. Other aspects (angular separations between the planets) provide additional information regarding the drives represented by the planets. Aspects other than the conjunction fall roughly into two groups:

Harmonious, indicating parts of our nature which tend to combine easily, support and reinforce one another, where we may overdo; and...

Challenging, indicating parts of our nature which tend to be at odds with one another, where we have to work to make room for differing drives, for ambivalent needs.

With any aspect, the nature of the two planets involved is most significant, but some additional subtle shadings are implied, depending upon the aspect involved. One can consider the conjunction the fundamental aspect. Even if two planets make an aspect other than a conjunction, it is worthwhile to think of them first as a conjunction, as it will delineate the major issues and themes involved.

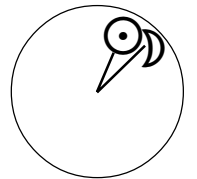
Six Major Aspects with Keywords

Five aspects other than the conjunction are considered important by many astrologers. Most are a division of the 360° circle by a whole number (e.g., division by 2, 3, 4, and 6). Following is a list of the six major aspects plus a few key words indicating the meaning of each aspect. Also listed is the symbol astrologers use for each aspect and the fraction of the circle which each aspect represents. The little diagrams graphically show the angular relationships between planets. (Other aspects exist besides those listed here, but these are the basics.)



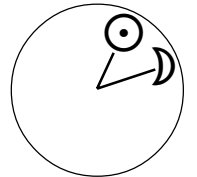
0° conjunction:

blending, combining, living together, role models, intensification, concentration, focus.



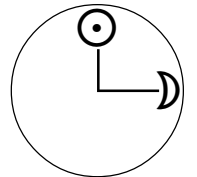
60° sextile (one-sixth of the circle):

mild harmony; compatibility; may be opportunity, attraction or support.



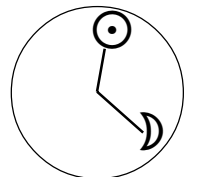
90° square (one-fourth of the circle):

conflict, competition, challenges, inner and/or outer tension, may point to turning points.



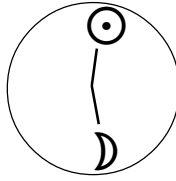
120° trine (one-third of the circle):

harmony, mutual reinforcement which could lead to excesses, easy flow, natural talents.

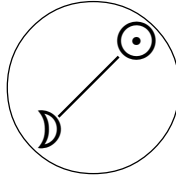




150° quincunx (five-twelfths of the circle): difficult to combine, very different desires, seeming incompatibility, may feel like a forced choice is necessary, tendency to pull apart, may need to improve/adjust or to figure out what to keep and what to throw away.



180° opposition (one-half of the circle): polarities, natural partners, seesaw tendencies, potential for awareness (and projection — attracting other people who express disowned parts of one's own nature), could flip from one extreme to the other until synthesis is reached.



Suggested Orbs of Aspect

0°	conjunction	8° orb (or 8 degrees + or -)
60°	sextile	3° orb (or 57 to 63°)
90°	square	6° orb (or 84 to 96°)
120°	trine	6° orb (or 114 to 126°)
150°	quincunx	3° orb (or 147 to 153°)
180°	opposition	6° orb (or 174 to 186°)

Experiment with Keyword Combinations

You can experiment with simple keyword combinations for your aspects. Some sentences might sound a bit awkward. If so, a little thought will clarify matters. If, for example, the Sun conjuncts Venus, you might say: "Your life force is tied to your drive for pleasure." This suggests the person feels most vital and alive when indulging the physical senses, aesthetic talents or engaged in activity with partners.

It is important to remember that all aspects can be reversed.

Think in terms of an automatic "and vice versa" at the end of all your sentences. Thus, a Sun conjunct Mercury could be interpreted as: "Your self-esteem is tied to your ability to communicate." (Reverse: "Your ability to communicate is tied to your self-esteem.") This gets across the idea that the person gains pride and feels best about him/herself when communicating effectively. It also implies that the individual will *not* communicate well when feeling low in self-esteem.

In addition to the many psychological principles which aspects symbolize, they can point to issues in different life areas in the outer world which are associated with each planet.

Aspects as Keys to Relating

Aspects can be keys to how you might (or might not) get along with other people in your life. Following is a list of the people/objects in your life who can be represented by the planets.

Sun: loved ones (especially children/lovers); husband; leader; father; seller/promoter.

Moon: home; family; mother (figure); women; wife; the public; immovable resources; land; food; commodities.

Mercury: relatives; neighbors; short trips; brothers and sisters; means of transportation; trade/commerce.

Venus: self-earned money; possessions; the arts; partners.

Mars: personal action; men; competition; accidents; energy; physical body, mechanical objects, metal tools and weapons.

Jupiter: in-laws; grandchildren; long trips; higher education; sports; churches, libraries, law courts, publishing.

Saturn: authority figures; boss; older people; time; rules and roles; father; societal structures, heights and falls.

Uranus: friends; groups; causes; science; technology; the new; progress; revolutions; astrology; sudden changes.

Neptune: mystical activities; drugs; glamor industries; film; secrets; illusions; psychic insights; inspired arts, healing arts.

Pluto: mates; hidden matters; occult studies; research; debts; pollution; obsessions; death/endings; unconscious complexes.

Harmony (sextiles, trines) and conflict (squares, quincunxes and oppositions) aspects tend to be more literally symbolic when other people are involved. Someone with a Moon-Mars square, quincunx or opposition, for example, is more likely to experience tension between men and women in his/her life (or at least be sensitive to such tension) than someone with a Moon-Mars trine or sextile.

People can and sometimes do attract outer conflicts as an unconscious mechanism for dealing with inner tension. Facing outer challenges may seem easier than dealing with inner ambivalences. If, however, we balance internally, outer relationships tend to flow more smoothly as well. Anyone with a Moon-Mars aspect (whether a conjunction, sextile, trine, square, quincunx or opposition) is facing inner issues around the integration of dependency and independence, separation and attachment, being alone and being together, spontaneous expression versus cautious holding in and anger versus tenderness. The individual with a harmony aspect is likely to find it somewhat easier to balance these different needs than the individual with a conflict aspect, but both must face the Moon-Mars issues.

By mixing and matching aspect keywords and planetary keywords you can come up with additional possibilities. Be open to seeing the variety of potentials that astrology pictures. As you create interpretations for the various "pieces" of your chart, bear in mind that certain pieces will tend to suppress others. As always, repeated themes that recur again and again are most likely to manifest in your psyche and in your life.

The text of this **Information Special** was excerpted from *Easy Astrology Guide*, a book by Maritha Pottenger. This is an excellent addition to Astro's line of basic astrology textbooks. **BEAG** **\$14.95**