



Astrology 101

A beginner's guide to reading your own birth chart

*Your star sign is only a third of the
story.*

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Start here



Most people know their star sign and stop there. That's the Sun sign, and it's about a third of the picture.

Your birth chart is a snapshot of the sky at the exact minute you were born. Date, time, place. It's the only one like it, and reading it isn't as complicated as it looks once someone shows you which three things to look at first.

That's all this guide does. Three things, where to find them, and what they mean. About fifteen minutes.

You don't need to believe anything to find it useful. I came at it the same way – I thought it was brunch small talk. Then I saw my full chart for the first time and it was like turning the lights on in a room I didn't know I'd been sitting in.



“As above, so below.”



Sun

1



Moon

2



Rising

3

Your Big Three



Think of your chart as a cosmic résumé. These three are the headline.

1



Sun — Who you are underneath

"Who am I when nobody's watching?"

2



Moon — How you feel, what keeps you safe

"Why do I react like that?"

3



Rising — The you people meet first

"Why do people always assume I'm ...?"

The Rising sign is the one that surprises people most. It's why the description of your star sign sometimes feels completely wrong — you've been reading for your Sun, when the thing people see is your Rising.

And your Moon explains the reactions you can't talk yourself out of. If you only look up one, make it that one.





How to find yours

Free, and it takes about two minutes. You need your birth date, your birth time, and the city you were born in.

- 1 Go to astro.com or astro-charts.com
- 2 Enter your birth date
- 3 Enter your birth time, as exact as you can get it
- 4 Enter your birth city
- 5 Generate the chart. You'll get a wheel and a list — the list is the readable part

✦ *Don't know your birth time?*

Check your birth certificate, or ask whoever was in the room. If you genuinely can't find it, enter 12:00pm — your Sun and Moon will be close to right. Your Rising changes roughly every two hours, so that one stays a guess until you find the real time.

Now find these three lines in the list:

Sun in _____ • Moon in _____ • Ascendant in _____

Ascendant is the same thing as Rising. Write all three down. That's your Big Three, and you now know more about your chart than most people ever will.



The words you'll keep seeing

Ascendant	Same as Rising sign
Houses	Twelve areas of life: money, home, work, relationships. Where things happen
Transit	Where a planet is right now, and how it's hitting your chart
Retrograde	A planet that looks like it's moving backwards. Usually a slow-down rather than a disaster
Aspect	The angle between two planets. How they get along
Natal chart	Same as birth chart
Big Three	Sun, Moon, Rising

Free tools:

astro.com — the most detailed, and free

astro-charts.com — easier to read at a glance

Co-Star / The Pattern — apps, if you want it on your phone

Where to go next:

I write about this and a lot more at chicsouljourneys.com — astrology, what happens to your body in your forties, the practice that keeps me steady, and the women who came before us. If you found your Big Three, come tell me what they are. I read everything.