

Chapter 1

Basics of the Horoscope

Astrology has been used since Vedic times to predict human behavior, weather, the outcome of wars, and to determine auspicious times for important activities. In more recent times, the renowned astrologer W. D. Gann applied astrological principles to forecasting commodity markets. The stock market has likewise attracted the attention of many astrologers, including Bill Meridian, Louise McWhirter, and Captain David Williams.

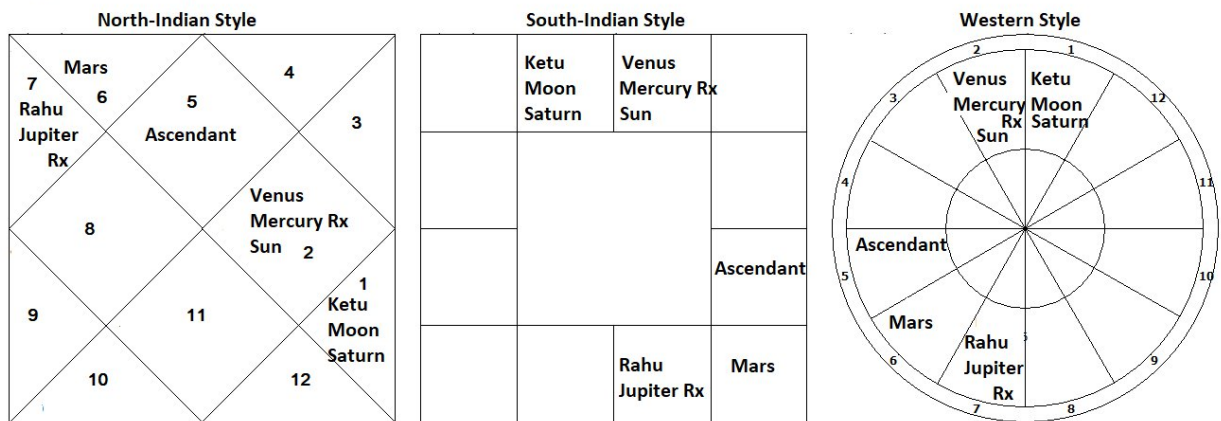
This book is an extension of that work. My objective is to apply the principles of Vedic astrology to the stock market. I have written this book for readers who may have little or no prior knowledge of astrology but are interested in using it, together with technical and fundamental analysis, to select stocks and better understand market direction.

Let us begin with the fundamentals.

The Horoscope (Birth Chart)

A horoscope, or birth chart, shows the positions of the planets at the exact time of birth. It can be drawn in several formats. Astrologers in North India usually represent it as a square or rectangle divided by diagonal lines, while South Indian astrologers use a rectangular arrangement of fixed blocks. Western astrologers generally draw the horoscope as a circle. Fig 1.1 illustrates each of these formats.

Fig 1.1 Example Chart 1



Although the appearance of these charts differs, the principles for interpreting them are the same. Whether the horoscope is presented in the North Indian, South Indian, or Western style, a proper interpretation requires a thorough understanding of three fundamental components:

1. The signs of the zodiac

2. The houses of the horoscope
3. The planets

Even a small misunderstanding of any one of these can lead to incorrect conclusions. Therefore, it is essential to understand all three before attempting to interpret a horoscope.

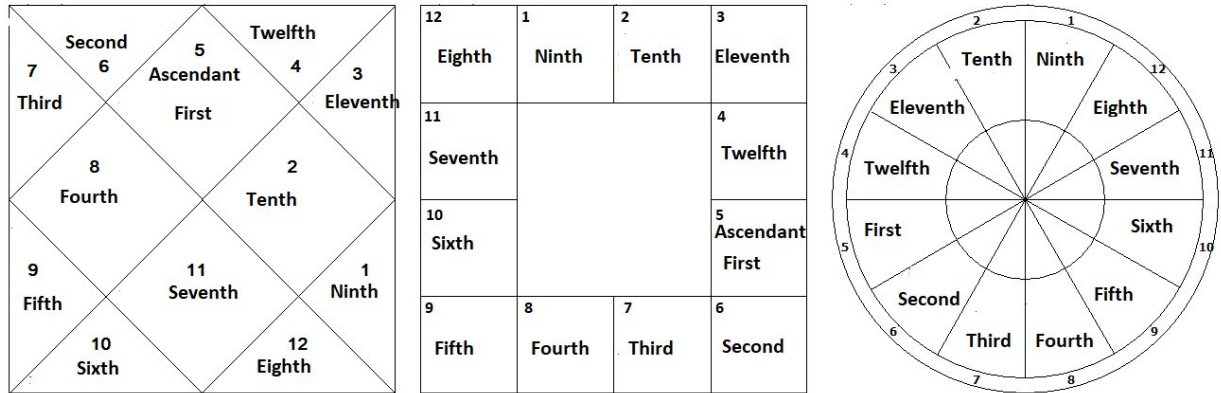
In this chapter, I briefly introduce these concepts. Later chapters examine each topic in much greater detail. This gradual approach allows beginners to become familiar with the principles of astrology without being overwhelmed by technical terminology or mathematical calculations at the outset.

I hope you will enjoy learning about this remarkable ancient Indian tradition as you progress through the book.

Houses of the Horoscope

As shown in Figure 1.1, every horoscope is divided into twelve sections known as **houses**. These houses are counted differently depending on the chart style. In the North Indian and Western charts, the houses are counted counterclockwise beginning with the First House. In the South Indian chart, they are counted clockwise, as illustrated in Fig 1.2.

Fig 1.2 The Twelve Houses of the Horoscope



The sequence of the houses never changes. The First House, also known as the **Ascendant** or **Janma Lagna**, is always the starting point for counting. In the charts shown in Figure 1.2, the First House is the one containing the digit **5**. The Second House contains the digit **6**, the Third House contains **7**, and so on until the Twelfth House, which contains the digit **4**.

It is important to understand that the digits shown inside the houses do **not** represent the house numbers. They represent the **zodiac signs**, which will be discussed shortly. Regardless of which digit appears in the First House, the numbering of the houses always begins with the Ascendant and proceeds counterclockwise in the North Indian and Western styles and clockwise in the South Indian style.

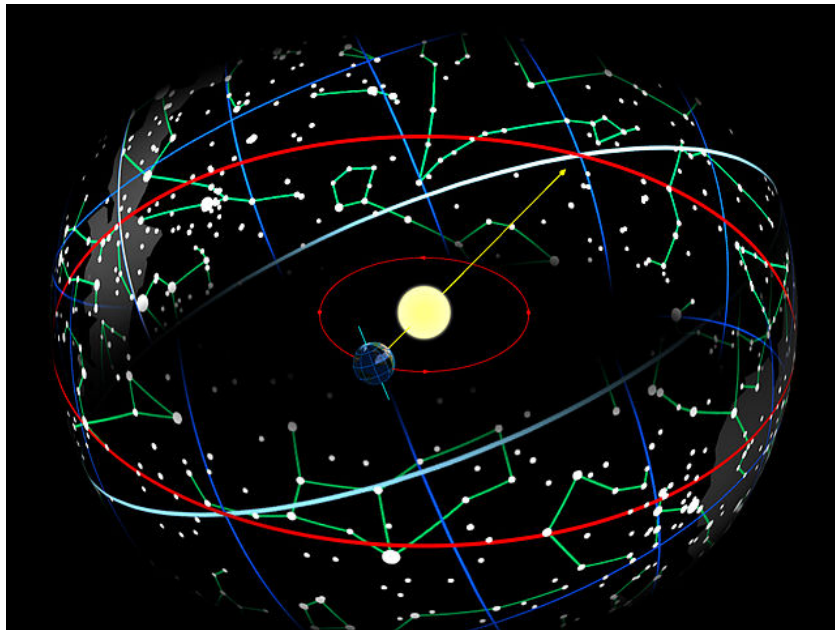
A more detailed discussion of the houses and their meanings is presented in Chapter 6.

Astrological Signs

The Earth and the other planets revolve around the Sun. Beyond the planets lie the distant stars. Because the planets are constantly moving while the positions of the stars remain relatively fixed, astrologers use the stars as a reference system for describing the positions of the planets.

The apparent path followed by the planets is known as the **zodiac**. Since this zodiac is based on the fixed stars, it is called the **Sidereal Zodiac**. Ancient astrologers divided the zodiac into twelve equal sections, as illustrated in **Fig 1.3**.

Fig 1.3 Sun, the Earth's revolution around the Sun, and the background stars.



Each of these twelve sections is called a **sign**. Every sign contains a group of stars that ancient astronomers and astrologers mentally connected to form recognizable figures, much like a child connects dots to create a picture. While visualizing these patterns, they associated the figures with human characteristics and behavior.

A detailed description of these figures will be presented in **Chapter 2**. For now, it is sufficient to become familiar with the names of the twelve astrological signs:

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

As a beginner, you should memorize not only the names of these signs but also their order.

Tropical and Sidereal Zodiacs

Before proceeding further, I should mention one point that often confuses beginning students. If you find the following discussion difficult, you may skip the next three paragraphs and return to them later.

Although the Zodiac is represented as a circular belt around the Earth, defining its exact starting point is not straightforward. To solve this problem, astrologers adopted a convenient reference point. In the **Tropical Zodiac**, the Sun is assumed to enter the first sign, **Aries**, at the **Vernal Equinox**, when day and night are approximately equal in length. The remaining eleven signs are then marked at **30-degree intervals**.

The Earth rotates once on its axis every day and revolves around the Sun once each year. In addition to these motions, its axis slowly wobbles, completing one cycle in approximately **26,000 years**. This slow movement is known as the **precession of the equinoxes**.

As a result of this precession, the Vernal Equinox gradually shifts westward by about **50 arc-seconds per year** (approximately **1° every 72 years**). Consequently, the Tropical Zodiac slowly drifts with respect to the fixed stars.

The angular difference between the **Tropical Zodiac** and the **Sidereal Zodiac** is called the **Ayanamsha**.

Most astrologers in India use the Sidereal Zodiac, whereas most Western astrologers use the Tropical Zodiac. Even astrologers who follow the Sidereal system usually calculate planetary positions in the Tropical Zodiac first and then subtract the Ayanamsha to obtain the sidereal positions.

After many years of research, I concluded that the **Tropical Zodiac**, interpreted through the principles of **Vedic astrology**, produces more reliable results in financial astrology. Throughout this book, I therefore use the Tropical Zodiac while applying Vedic astrological techniques. (See Note 1.)

The practical difference between the two systems can be understood by comparing the dates assigned to each zodiac sign.

Since the Earth completes one revolution around the Sun every year, the Sun appears, from our viewpoint on Earth, to move through the twelve zodiac signs at the rate of approximately one sign each month.

According to the **Tropical Zodiac**, the Sun occupies **Aries** from approximately **March 21 to April 19** before entering **Taurus**. In the **Sidereal Zodiac**, however, the Sun remains in **Aries** from approximately **April 13 to May 13** before moving into Taurus.

For convenience, **Table 1.1** compares the dates of the Sun's movement through the zodiac signs in both systems.

Table 1.1 The dates for the Sun's movement through various signs

Tropical Month	Sun Sign	Sidereal Month	Hindu month
March 21 - April 19	Aries	April 13 - May 13	Vaishakh
April 20 – May 20	Taurus	May 14 - June 14	Jyeshtha
May 21 – June 20	Gemini	June 15 - July 15	Asharada
June 21 – July 22	Cancer	July 16 - August 16	Shrawan
July 23 – August 22	Leo	August 17 - September 16	Bhadrapad
August 23 – September 22	Virgo	September 17 - October 16	Ashvin
September 23 – October 22	Libra	October 17 - November 15	Kartika
October 23 – November 21	Scorpio	November 16 - December 15	Margshirsha
November 22 – December 21	Sagittarius	December 16 - January 13	Paush
December 22 – January 19	Capricorn	January 14 - February 12	Magh
January 20 – February 18	Aquarius	February 13 - March 13	Phalgun
February 19 – March 20	Pisces	March 14 - April 12	Chaitra

People who read the daily or weekly horoscopes published in newspapers and magazines are generally reading predictions based on the **Tropical Zodiac**. For convenience, **Table 1.1** also lists the corresponding months in the Hindu calendar. These names serve a similar purpose to the familiar months of January, February, and so on. There is no need to memorize them.

Let us now return to our discussion of the astrological signs.

The Earth rotates on its axis once every 24 hours. As a result, a different zodiac sign appears over the eastern horizon approximately every two hours. The sign rising on the eastern horizon at the exact time of birth is called the **Ascendant** (or **Lagna**).

The Earth also completes one revolution around the Sun every year. From our viewpoint on Earth, the Sun appears to move through the zodiac at the rate of approximately one sign each month. The sign occupied by the Sun at the time of birth is known as the **Sun sign**, a term familiar to most readers.

Since there are twelve zodiac signs and twelve houses in every horoscope, each house contains one sign.

In the North Indian and Western styles of horoscopes, the signs are represented not by their names but by the numbers **1 through 12**, as follows:

Number	Sign
1	Aries
2	Taurus
3	Gemini
4	Cancer

Number	Sign
5	Leo
6	Virgo
7	Libra
8	Scorpio
9	Sagittarius
10	Capricorn
11	Aquarius
12	Pisces

For example, if the First House contains the digit **5**, as shown in Figure 1.1, the sign occupying that house is **Leo**. Likewise, if a house contains the digit **10**, its sign is **Capricorn**.

For this reason, it is important to memorize not only the names of the signs but also their corresponding numbers. The numbers are used simply as a convenient shorthand instead of writing the full names. Some astrologers use abbreviations such as **Ar, Ta, Ge, Cn, Le, Vi, Li, Sc, Sg, Cp, Aq, and Pi**.

Earlier, I explained that the order of the houses never changes, whereas the signs occupying them do. The sign rising on the eastern horizon at the time of birth determines the sign of the First House (Ascendant). Once the Ascendant is known, the remaining signs follow in their natural sequence.

For example, if the Ascendant is **Aquarius (11)**, as shown in **Fig 1.4**, the Second House will contain **Pisces (12)**, the Third House **Aries (1)**, the Fourth House **Taurus (2)**, and so on until the Twelfth House, which will contain **Capricorn (10)**.

Fig 1.4 illustrates this arrangement and identifies both the signs and the planets occupying each house.

Fig 1.4 North Indian Style Chart

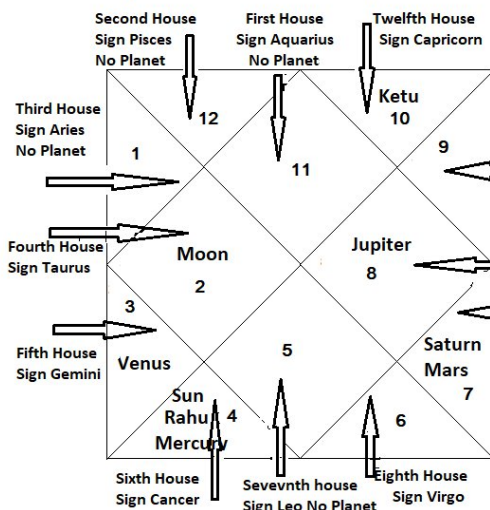
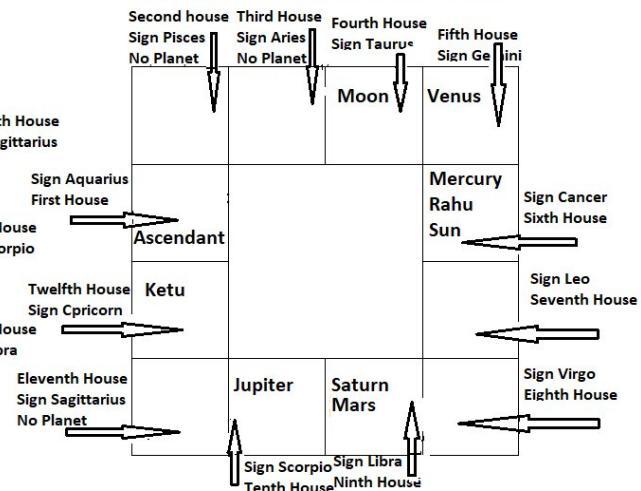


Fig 1.5 South Indian Style Chart



South Indian Horoscope

The South Indian style of horoscope is organized differently.

Instead of numbering the houses counterclockwise, they are counted **clockwise**. The chart is drawn as a rectangle divided into fixed blocks. The block marked **Birth**, or **Lagna**, represents the First House and therefore varies from one horoscope to another.

Unlike the North Indian chart, the zodiac signs are not written as numbers inside the houses. Instead, the signs occupy fixed positions. Aries is always assigned to the second block in the top row (see Fig 1.2), and the remaining signs follow in clockwise order.

Thus, in the South Indian style, the **signs remain fixed**, while the **Ascendant (First House)** changes from chart to chart.

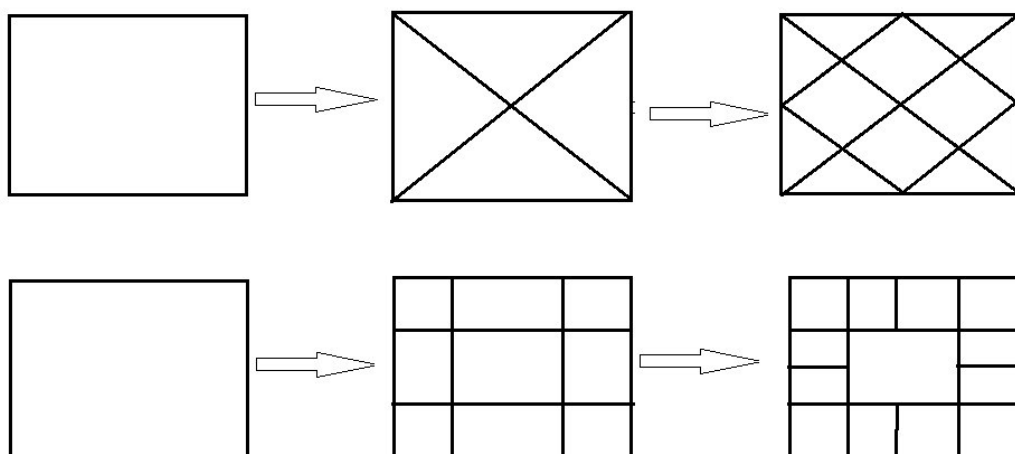
I grew up in North India and therefore learned the North Indian style of horoscopes. Nevertheless, readers are free to use the North Indian, South Indian, or Western style as they prefer. Throughout this book, I include examples of all three styles.

Today, horoscope software can generate any of these chart formats almost instantly. To prepare a horoscope, you need only the date, time, and place of birth, together with the appropriate time zone. You should also know whether daylight saving time was in effect on the date of birth. Most modern astrology programs include this information automatically.

Many websites also generate horoscopes free of charge.

Although computers now perform almost all horoscope calculations, you may occasionally wish to draw a chart by hand. Fig 1.6 illustrates the procedure for constructing both the North Indian and South Indian styles.

Fig 1.6 Steps to follow to draw charts by hand



Planets

Vedic astrology recognizes **nine planets (Navagrahas)**:

- Sun (Surya)
- Moon (Chandra)
- Mars (Mangal or Kuja)
- Mercury (Buddha)
- Jupiter (Brihaspati or Guru)
- Venus (Shukra)
- Saturn (Shani)
- Rahu (North Node)
- Ketu (South Node)

Fig 1.4 and 1.5 show both the full names and the abbreviations used for these planets:

Su, Mo, Ma, Me, Ju, Ve, Sa, Ra, and Ke.

Western astrologers generally use glyphs (planetary symbols) instead of abbreviations. They also include Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto in their study. We will discuss this later in **Chapter 9**.

The planets are discussed in detail in **Chapters 6-8**. The symbol **Rx** indicates a retrograde planet, and retrograde motion is explained in **Chapter 9**.

Note 1

My use of the Tropical Zodiac together with Vedic astrological principles should not be interpreted as a departure from the teachings of the ancient Rishis. Readers interested in this subject may wish to explore the historical evidence suggesting that early Vedic astrologers also employed the Tropical Zodiac. For readers interested in the historical background, a discussion is available at...

vicdicara.com/tropical_vedic_astrology.php

With this basic understanding of the houses, signs, and planets, we are now ready to begin a detailed study of each component of the horoscope.