

First steps in Astrology

An Introduction not only for kids, by Liz Greene



Have you ever looked up at a clear night sky, felt the magic of so many twinkling bright stars, and wondered whether there is any special meaning in the patterns they make? People throughout history have looked up at the night sky and felt that it contained a fascinating mystery. Long before man invented telescopes, or understood what the stars really are, he thought they were important to him in some way. He felt the stars were magical and so beautiful that they must have some special message.

Man's curiosity about the stars was the beginning of the science of astrology. Archaeologists have found records of the study of astrology in the ruins of almost every ancient civilisation, from Greece to Babylon, from China to Rome. It is the oldest science in the world.

Astrologers observed that most stars seemed to move round the sky together. But they also noticed that a few bright stars in the sky moved quite independently of the rest. They called these moving stars "wanderers". Today we call them planets. Our own Earth is a planet, and each planet moves in a circle, called an orbit, round the Sun, which is a true star. The Sun and its family of planets make up our Solar System.

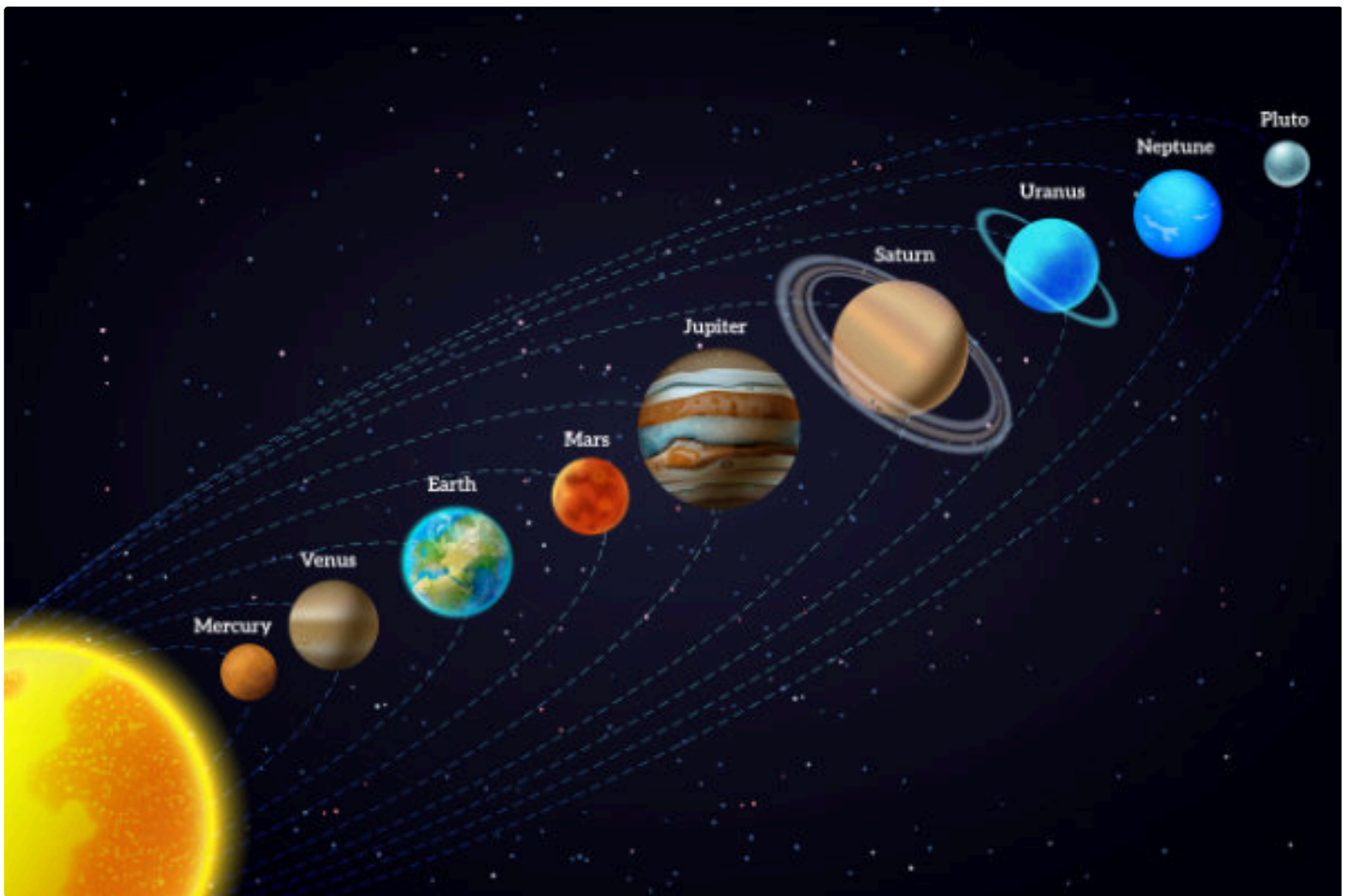
The astrologers identified five "wanderers", and these planets are still known by their ancient names: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. These are the names of gods, which is what the ancient astrologers believed the planets to be. Three more planets have been discovered during the last two hundred years, to which modern astronomers have given the names of other ancient gods: Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Some astronomers believe there is another planet in the Solar System still to be discovered.

Apart from the stars and planets, astrologers also observed that the Moon moved across the sky. We have known for a long time now that this is because the Moon moves round the Earth in an orbit of its own. The Sun, too, seemed to move, rising in the east and setting in the west. In this case we know it is the Earth which really moves, making one complete turn in space, or revolution, every twenty-four hours. When a part of the Earth is facing the Sun it is day. When that same part is facing away from the Sun, it is night.

Here are the symbols which astrologers use for the Sun, Moon, and each of the planets:

Sun	Mercury	Venus	Earth	Moon	Mars
Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto	

The astrologers wrote down all they knew about the movements of the Sun, Moon and planets. Today we continue this study with big telescopes, which is the science of astronomy. Astrology was the real mother of modern astronomy.



Today, we distinguish between astronomy and astrology. While astronomers are interested in finding out scientific facts about the Solar System, modern astrologers continue to study the connection between the movements of the planets and people's lives. The ancient astrologers thought that the planets were gods who ruled people's lives. Modern astrologers no longer believe this, but they do still believe that in some fascinating way there is a relationship between the Sun, the Moon, the planets and the lives of each one of us.