

AN ASTROLOGICAL SYSTEM FOR READING TAROT
John Gilbert, CTGM



800-372-1524

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PART ZERO INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended to assist students who already have a basic understanding of astrology. If you do not, the following books may be used to obtain a basic understanding of astrology:

"Linda Goodman's Sun Signs" by Linda Goodman, Pan Books
"Sun Sign, Moon Sign" by Charles and Suzi Harvey, Harper Collins
"Principles of Astrology" by Charles and Suzi Harvey, Thorsons
"Heaven Knows What" by Grant Lewis, Llewellyn Publications
"A New Study of Astrology" by John Addey, The Urania Press
"The Astrology of Personality" by Dane Rudhyar, Aurora Press
"The Twelve Houses" by Howard Sasportas, Thorsons

These books, indeed all modern books, can be obtained through your local library. Either they have the book on their shelves or they can find a copy for you through Inter-Library Loan. Your local book store can also obtain a copy for you as all of these books are currently in print.

There is no "one perfect system" for using astrology to read tarot cards. Indeed, there's no perfect system for doing anything. But there is a way for doing anything that works best for each of us. That way may be similar to other ways and it may even be the most common way used by lots of people. Or it may be completely different from any other way used by any other person.

It doesn't matter what method you use to read tarot cards in comparison to all the other tarot readers in the world. What matters is that you have a system for reading tarot cards which:

1. You understand
2. You feel comfortable using
3. You remember
4. Your subconscious mind remembers
5. Works for you

You understand, remember and feel comfortable using a system of your own creation much more easily than you understand, remember and feel comfortable using a system created by somebody else. This is because you really are unique. Nobody in the world has exactly the same heredity, environment, knowledge and life experiences as you. Nobody in the world understands these things as well as you. Nobody in the world knows better than you how you can best understand, remember and feel comfortable using the tarot.

Your subconscious mind remembers what you tell it to remember. The more you tell it something the more easily it remembers. So all you have to do is write down the key words, phrases and concepts you want to use for each tarot card and then practice using those key words, phrases and concepts by doing readings for yourself and others. Your subconscious mind will remember what the cards mean and it will always select the best card to communicate with you what it wants to communicate.

Simple? Yes it is, but most people try to make it complicated for themselves by trying to remember the key words, phrases and concepts chosen by another person. And the more they try to replicate the other person the harder it is for them to be the tarot reader they could be.

As you read this booklet, you will find it teaches you more if you do three simple things:

1. Write down everything that comes to you in a tarot journal or diary. Keep a separate page for each astrological sign, planet and aspect and for each tarot spread you want to remember.
2. Study the material in this booklet and your notes on a regular schedule. Twice a day is better than once a day. Once a day is a lot better than once every few days. The more often you study, the easier it is for you to develop your own system.
3. Use your tarot deck as you study and practice several times a day.

Then remember this simple secret of the tarot: The system for reading the tarot cards you develop for yourself is the best system for you to use!

PART ONE

THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

The twelve zodiacal signs come down to us from antiquity. Nobody really knows when the signs of the zodiac were named nor who gave them their names. But throughout written history astrologers have described the effect these signs have on our lives.

We're going to discuss an easy way to remember the signs and the meanings these signs have in our lives. This is not the only way of defining and describing the signs of the Zodiac and students are encouraged to research this subject in greater depth.

Eventually all astrologers come to define each sign in his or her own way. There may be a great deal of similarity but each of us sees things a little differently. We all have different life experiences and different ways of looking at life. This is reflected in how we understand astrology.

Don't let it bother you if you see things entirely differently than any author. The wonderful secret of tarot is it always works regardless of the definitions you choose for each card. Your subconscious mind always remembers the definitions you choose and will always cause the right card to appear to explain whatever it is you're attempting to explain.

So what really matters is not the definitions you choose for each card but that your conscious and subconscious mind are in agreement on that definition. Your subconscious mind always believes what you tell it until you tell it something different to remember. So, if you tell your subconscious mind The Emperor represents the sign Aries and Aries means "I act impulsively," your subconscious mind will always pull the Emperor card anytime it needs to communicate to you that your client is acting impulsively.

The great secret of the tarot is your subconscious mind always remembers what you tell it about anything. Whatever you tell your subconscious mind it will remember. The secret is for you to remember what you told your subconscious mind. To make it easier for you to remember what you tell your subconscious mind, write it down and review it often. At least, this is one way to do it in the beginning.

The great secret of all divination is your subconscious mind is in communication with the divine mind, and the divine mind is in communication with all other minds. When somebody asks you a question their subconscious mind already knows the answer. So does the divine mind. And so does your subconscious mind because it has access to the divine mind.

To bring this information to your conscious mind, your subconscious mind uses whatever tools it has available. Some of these tools are dreams, day dreams, intuition or inspiration, and any tool you and your subconscious mind agree to use. Tarot is one such tool.

Aries is the first sign of the Zodiac and relates to all beginnings. It is a fire sign and indicates being energetic in all things. The key words for Aries are "We'll do it my way" or simply "I am."

Aries has the following characteristics:

- Aggressive
- Energetic
- Headstrong
- Impulsive
- Pioneering

Taurus is the second sign of the Zodiac and is solidly rooted in the physical world. It is a fixed earth sign and related to stubbornness and this material world. The key words for Taurus are "It's mine, all mine" and "I possess."

Taurus has the following characteristics:

- Loyal
- Materialistic
- Possessive
- Practical
- Stubborn

Gemini is the third sign of the Zodiac and the last sign of spring. It is an air sign and represents our mental processes. The key words for Gemini are "I love to talk with people" and "I think."

Gemini has the following characteristics:

- Communicative
- Distracted
- Fickle
- Mental
- Sociable

Cancer is the fourth sign of the Zodiac and is often called the "World Mother." It is a water sign and relates to our emotions and feelings. The key words for Cancer are "I love my memories" and "I belong" or "I emote."

Cancer has the following characteristics:

- Dependent
- Illogical
- Maternal
- Nurturing
- Sensitive

Leo is the fifth sign of the Zodiac and is the creative influence of the universe. It is a fire sign and represents the center of our life force. The key words for Leo are "I create" and "I do it better."

Leo has the following characteristics:

- Attention-seeking
- Dramatic
- Honorable
- Self-centered
- Self-expressive

Virgo is the sixth sign of the Zodiac and the end of summer. It is an earth sign and represents our quest for perfection. The key words for Virgo are "I perfect" and "I love to serve you."

Virgo has the following characteristics:

- Analytical
- Critical
- Logical
- Nit-picking
- Worry-wart

Libra is the seventh sign of the Zodiac and strives for balance in all things. It is an air sign and represents our quest for being friends with everybody. The key words for Libra are "I balance" and "I unite."

Libra has the following characteristics:

- Artistic
- Diplomatic
- Impartial
- Indecisive
- Procrastinating

Scorpio is the eighth sign of the Zodiac and symbolizes the process of transformation. It is a water sign and represents spiritual growth. The key words for Scorpio are "I will" and "I regenerate."

Scorpio has the following characteristics:

- Compulsive
- Mysterious
- Secretive
- Sexual
- Vindictive

Sagittarius is the ninth sign of the Zodiac and the end of autumn. It is a fire sign and loves freedom in all things. The key words for Sagittarius are "I aspire" and "I seek."

Sagittarius has the following characteristics.

- Ethical
- Expansive
- Freedom-loving
- Judgmental
- Opinionated

Capricorn is the tenth sign of the Zodiac and symbolizes authority. It is an earth sign representing building what is practical and useful. The key words for Capricorn are "I build" and "I put things in order."

Capricorn has the following characteristics:

- Ambitious
- Disciplined
- Organized
- Restrictive
- Rigid

Aquarius is the eleventh sign of the Zodiac telling us to experiment. It is an air sign representing unconventional behavior and humanitarian ideals. The key words for Aquarius are "I reform" and "I experiment."

Aquarius has the following characteristics:

- Humanitarian
- Impractical
- Innovative
- Rebellious
- Visionary

Pisces is the twelfth sign of the Zodiac and the last sign of winter. It is a water sign representing spiritual harmony. The key words for Pisces are "I redeem" and "I merge."

Pisces has the following characteristics:

- Compassionate
- Imaginative
- Psychic
- Self-deceiving
- Sensitive

Remembering a key word, phrase or concept for each of the signs is the first step in learning how to read the tarot cards from an astrological perspective. Probably the best way to choose a key word, phrase or concept for yourself is to build a list of possibilities. This can be done by using a journal and dedicating one page in the journal to each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

You can always find a Thesaurus at your local library if you don't have one. The point is to develop a list of possibilities and then choose one or two key words, phrases or concepts that will trigger all these other meanings for you. That way you build a vast amount of knowledge about each of these signs in a short period of time. Here's one possible list you might consider as a starting point:

Aries	Headstrong
Taurus	Stubborn
Gemini	Sociable
Cancer	Maternal
Leo	Conceited
Virgo	Compulsive
Libra	Indecisive
Scorpio	Emotional
Sagittarius	Independent
Capricorn	Conformist
Aquarius	Unconventional
Pisces	Self-sacrificing

PART TWO THE PLANETS

According to astronomers there are nine planets in our solar system and Earth is one of them. According to astrologers there are ten planets in our solar system and Earth is not one of them. That's because astrologers look at the Earth as being the spiritual center of our universe. Then astrologers do a very curious thing. They call our moon and our sun both planets for astrological purposes.

Astrologers rank the planets according to the speed with which they appear to move around the Earth. Here's a list of the astrological planets from the fastest to the slowest:

Moon
Mercury
Venus
Sun
Mars
Jupiter
Saturn
Uranus
Neptune
Pluto

The moon appears to go around the Earth thirteen times a year. Mercury appears to go around us four times a year and Venus at least twice. The Sun appears to go around us once a year but we all know the Earth actually goes around the Sun. A Solar Year is the basis of our current calendar. The other planets go around the Sun more slowly the further away from the Sun they travel. A Plutarian Year, for example, is almost 250 Earth years long because it takes the planet Pluto almost 250 of our years to travel once around our Sun.

The Moon is the fastest astrological planet and represents all that is instinctive and automatic. Thus astrologers say the Moon rules our subconscious mind.

Some key words and concepts for the Moon are:

Dependent
Instinctive
Reactive
Subconscious
Unconscious

Mercury represents communication, speaking, writing, messages of all sorts and business. Thus astrologers say Mercury rules our mind.

Some key words and concepts for Mercury are:

- Communicator
- Gossip
- Great thinker
- Logical
- Messenger

Venus represents our affections, what we value and our relationships with others. Thus astrologers say Venus rules our feminine side, our desire nature. Venus is considered to be a beneficial planet.

Some key words and concepts for Venus are:

- Attraction
- Desirable
- Friendship
- Love
- Promiscuity

The Sun represents our individuality, the essence of who and what we are. Thus astrologers say the Sun rules our conscious mind.

Some key words and concepts for the Sun are:

- Consciousness
- Dictatorial
- Egotistical
- Individuality
- Vitality, will and drive

Mars represents energy which separates rather than unites. Thus astrologers say Mars rules our masculine side, our anger nature.

Mars is considered to be a malefic or negative planet.

Some key words and concepts for Mars are:

- Aggressive
- Assertive
- Controlled anger
- Hostile
- Motivated

Jupiter represents the expansion of energy in our universe. Thus astrologers say Jupiter rules our growth, expansion and development.
Jupiter is considered to be our good fortune.

Some key words and concepts for Jupiter are:

- Abundance
- Enthusiasm
- Exaggeration
- Expansiveness
- Optimism

Saturn represents the restriction of energy in the universe. Thus astrologers say Saturn rules our discipline, structure and learning.
Saturn is considered by some astrologers to be the Great Teacher.

Some key words for Saturn are:

- Conservative
- Disciplined
- Restricted
- Structured
- Wise

Uranus represents our higher mind that rules magic and invention as well as all sudden and unexpected changes. Thus astrologers say Uranus rules sudden changes of all sorts in our lives.

Some key words for Uranus are:

- Awakener
- Destroyer
- Inventive
- Innovator
- Unexpected change

Neptune represents our urge to create and symbolizes all that is unreal, ethereal, mystical and other-worldly. Thus astrologers say Neptune rules our creativity and inspiration.

Some key words for Neptune are:

- Addictive
- Creative
- Mystical
- Self-delusional
- Transcendental

Pluto represents our urge to regenerate ourselves and our world. Thus astrologers say Pluto rules our transformation processes and renewal.

Some key words for Pluto are:

- Fanatic
- Obsessive
- Regenerator
- Revitalizer
- Transformer

As with the signs the student is advised to keep a journal of the ten planets and write down several different key words, phrases or concepts before choosing some personal key words that will trigger a multitude of other meanings for each planet.

Here's one possible list you might consider as a starting point:

Moon	Our subconscious mind, how we remember
Mercury	Our communications, how we speak and write
Venus	Our emotional mind, how we love
Sun	Our conscious mind, how we think
Mars	Our anger, how we assert ourselves
Jupiter	Our searching mind, how we expand our knowledge
Saturn	Our fear, how we limit ourselves
Uranus	Our originality, how we change ourselves
Neptune	Our initiative, how we start new things
Pluto	Our regenerative ability, how we start over

PART THREE

THE SIGNS AND THE PLANETS

The planets are said to rule the signs and each sign has a planet ruler. By far the most common way of matching the planets as rulers of the signs is based on an ancient system attributed to the Chaldeans:

SIGN	RULER
Aries	Mars
Taurus	Venus
Gemini	Mercury
Cancer	Moon
Leo	Sun
Virgo	Mercury
Libra	Venus
Scorpio	Pluto
Sagittarius	Jupiter
Capricorn	Saturn
Aquarius	Uranus
Pisces	Neptune

When looking at a card in a reading which signifies one of the signs it may be helpful to also consider the card which represents the ruler of that sign. For example, If the Fool is Uranus and the Star is Aquarius, it might be helpful to consider the Fool as being part of the Star whenever the Star shows up in a reading.

Some signs are said to enhance the ability of the planet, to make the planet stronger and more beneficial. Astrologers say the planet is "exalted" in that sign. Here's one common list of exalted planets:

SIGN	EXALTED
Aries	Sun
Taurus	Moon
Gemini	none (some say the Moon)
Cancer	Neptune
Leo	Pluto
Virgo	Mercury
Libra	Saturn
Scorpio	Uranus
Sagittarius	none (some say the Sun)
Capricorn	Mars
Aquarius	Jupiter
Pisces	Venus

This concept of exaltation is very interesting. None of the planets are exalted in Gemini or Sagittarius. Thus these two signs are considered to be neutral with respect to all the planets. Mercury both rules and is exalted in Virgo. Saturn, which is often thought of as a negative planet, is very positive in Libra. Mars, which can also be a little negative, is quite positive in Capricorn. Even the disruptive planet Uranus is thought to be beneficial in Scorpio.

When a sign and its exalted planet both show up in a reading, things are always better than the cards might otherwise indicate. For example, when angry Mars shows up with a card signifying Capricorn, the anger goes away and Mars is pleasantly assertive. Capricorn is more positive as well and tends toward being more disciplined and organized instead of being restrictive and rigid. The negative aspect of Mars is gone. The same can be said if both Saturn and Libra show up in a reading. Saturn is seen in a more positive light as is Libra and its ruler Venus.

At the same time many astrologers teach that certain signs are inimical to certain planets. They call this "Detrimental" because the sign brings out the worst in that planet. Here's one list commonly used:

SIGN	DETRIMENT
Aries	Venus
Taurus	Mars
Gemini	Neptune
Cancer	Mercury
Leo	Uranus
Virgo	none (Some say the Moon)
Libra	Moon
Scorpio	Pluto
Sagittarius	Saturn
Capricorn	Jupiter
Aquarius	Sun
Pisces	none (Some say the Sun)

If both Leo and the Uranus appear in a reading they will tend to make things more difficult, more negative for each other. But if the Sun or Aquarius also appear things will resort to neutral because the Sun rules Leo and Uranus rules Aquarius. But notice Scorpio is ruled by Pluto and Pluto is at its detriment in Scorpio. People born in 1984 through 1995 under the sign of Scorpio (between about October 23 and November 21) when Pluto was in Scorpio have what astrologers call a "tough" Pluto.

What this means is Pluto tends to be more fanatic and obsessive instead of being a regenerator, revitalizer and transformer. Of course, Pluto is all these things but the more negative aspects seem to dominate in this situation when Pluto is the ruler and the detriment.

The signs are both related to the elements as discussed in Part One. The following attribution of signs to the elements is by far the most common one:

SIGN	ELEMENT
Aries	Fire
Taurus	Earth
Gemini	Air
Cancer	Water
Leo	Fire
Virgo	Earth
Libra	Air
Scorpio	Water
Sagittarius	Fire
Capricorn	Earth
Aquarius	Air
Pisces	Water

When it comes to relating the planets to the elements there are many more opinions about how it should be done. One way commonly used is:

PLANET	ELEMENT
Moon	Water (Moon rules Cancer which is Water)
Mercury	Air (Mercury rules Gemini which is Air)
Venus	Air (Venus rules Libra which is Air)
Sun	Fire (Sun rules Leo which is Fire)
Mars	Fire (Mars rules Aries which is Fire)
Jupiter	Fire (Jupiter rules Sagittarius which is Fire)
Saturn	Earth (Saturn rules Capricorn which is Earth)
Uranus	Air (Uranus rules Aquarius which is Air)
Neptune	Water (Neptune rules Pisces which is Water)
Pluto	Water (Pluto rules Scorpio which is Water)

There are two other signs not used in this table and both of them are Earth signs. Virgo is an Earth sign ruled by Mercury which also rules Gemini an Air sign. Taurus is an Earth sign ruled by Venus which also rules Libra which is another Air sign. Since Venus and Mercury are already assigned to the Element of Air, they cannot also be assigned to the Element of Earth.

Thus we have three planets in the three Elements of Fire, Air and Water but only one planet in the Element of Earth. This is exactly the way the ancients assigned the planets to the elements and it's the same system used by the Golden Dawn on the Tree of Life. The following table shows the same information in another format:

ELEMENT	SIGNS
Fire	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
Air	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
Water	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces
Earth	Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo

ELEMENT	PLANETS
Fire	Mars, Sun, Jupiter
Air	Mercury, Venus, Uranus
Water	Moon, Pluto, Neptune
Earth	Saturn

So there you have it, there are signs, planets, ruling planets, exalted planets, planets in their detriment, elements assigned to the signs and elements assigned to the planets. You can even make it more complicated if you want. Or you can keep it simple and just use the planets and the signs. In the beginning that's probably the best approach.

So what do you really need to know about the planets and the signs? One good key word, phrase or concept for each sign and each planet for a total of twenty-two key words, phrases or concepts. Then you need to know which signs and which planets are associated with which tarot cards. Finally, you need to know a few spreads.

Let's take this a step at a time.

By now you should have defined one key word or concept for each of the twelve signs and ten planets. If not, since that's the first step, you may want to complete that task before going on to step two.

PART FOUR THE PLANETS AND THE TAROT CARDS

Remember we said the planets can be arranged in order from the fastest to the slowest? Well, they can also be arranged in order from the slowest to the fastest. Then we can match the planets to the ten ranks of pip cards. Here's how, with one exception and that's putting Pluto at the end of the line:

PLANET	CARDS OF THE MINOR ARCANA
--------	---------------------------

Neptune	Aces
Uranus	Twos
Saturn	Threes
Jupiter	Fours
Mars	Fives
Sun	Sixes
Venus	Sevens
Mercury	Eights
Moon	Nines
Pluto	Tens

Wasn't that easy? Now, what does it all mean? It means the four aces are representations of the Neptune energy. What's that? It's whatever you defined it to be. Maybe you decided Neptune was new beginnings, or maybe you defined it as creativity. Let's see how that might work.

If Neptune is new beginnings, then the aces are new beginnings. If Neptune is creativity, then the aces represent creation. Beginnings or creation of what? The beginnings or creation of whatever the four suits represent.

The four suits are normally Pentacles, Coins, Circles or similar things for the Earth element; Swords, daggers or spears for Air; Cups, Caldrons or some other receptacle for Water; and Wands, Batons, or Staves for Fire. Here's one way to define these four elements:

Earth	Financial or material affairs
Air	Thoughts, ideas or attitudes
Water	Emotions, friendships or relationships
Fire	Intuitive insights, energy or careers

So to complete the second step not only do you need to define which planet is to be associated with which rank but what key words, phrases or concepts you're going to assign to each of the four elements. Here's a another suggestion:

UPRIGHT ELEMENT	KEY WORD, PHRASE OR CONCEPT
-----------------	-----------------------------

Earth	Finances, money, financial affairs
Air	Thoughts and ideas
Water	Relationships
Fire	Intuitive insights

REVERSED ELEMENT	KEY WORD, PHRASE OR CONCEPT
------------------	-----------------------------

Earth	Material things
Air	Attitudes
Water	Emotions
Fire	Career path

So, let's take another look at Neptune and the four aces. The Ace of Pentacles is new money or new creative financial deal. Inverted it's new material things like a new car, new refrigerator or something new or it's a new creative way of doing material things.

Let's try another one. Take Venus which we defined as our desire nature. The Seven of Pentacles could mean we desire money and inverted that we desire material things. The Seven of Swords means we desire new ideas and inverted new attitudes or at least a change in our attitude. The Seven of Cups means we desire a relationship. Inverted it means we desire an emotional response or maybe we desire to control our emotions. The Seven of Wands means we desire intuitive insights and inverted a career. Now all we have to do is relate this to the question asked by ourselves or our client. We'll discuss that later.

Here's what we've accomplished so far:

1. Defined a key word, phrase or concept for the signs
2. Defined a key word, phrase or concept for the planets
3. Defined a key word, phrase or concept for the elements
4. Defined a key word, phrase or concept for inverted elements
5. Assigned the planets to the ten pip cards

We have two more things to do to complete this part of the process. We need to assign the planets to the major arcana. Then we'll practice using the knowledge we've attained. Our subconscious mind learns what we intend each card to mean by doing this practice. First we'll look at assigning the planets to the major arcana.

As with all things in tarot, you get to decide which planets you're going to assign to which cards of the major arcana. Here's the way the Golden Dawn did it and that's the system adopted by most people using the Rider Waite or similar decks:

PLANET	CARD OF THE MAJOR ARCANA
--------	--------------------------

Moon	II	High Priestess
Mercury	I	Magician
Venus	III	Empress
Sun	XIX	Sun
Mars	XVI	Tower
Jupiter	X	Wheel
Saturn	XXI	World
Uranus	O	Fool
Neptune	XII	Hanged Man
Pluto	XX	Judgement

That's one way. You're free to invent your own system. But if you use this one and Neptune is a new beginning, then the Hanged Man is a new spiritual beginning. If Neptune is creativity then the Hanged Man is creative spirituality or something along those lines. Just use the definitions you've already chosen for the planets and remember the major arcana represents the fifth element which is Spirit.

If you want to use the elements instead then you have something that looks like this:

PLANET/ELEMENT	CARD OF THE MAJOR ARCANA
----------------	--------------------------

Moon (Water)	II	High Priestess
Mercury (Air)	I	Magician
Venus (Air)	III	Empress
Sun (Fire)	XIX	Sun
Mars (Fire)	XVI	Tower
Jupiter (Fire)	X	Wheel
Saturn (Earth)	XXI	World
Uranus (Air)	O	Fool
Neptune (Water)	XII	Hanged Man
Pluto (Water)	XX	Judgement

So then The Sun, The Tower, and The Wheel all have to do with Fire which is intuitive insights, determination, will power and things like that. The Magician, The Empress and The Fool all have to do with thoughts, ideas and possibly attitudes. The Moon, Hanged Man and Judgement all have to do with emotions or relationships and The World has to do with money, finances or material things.

Either system works. So do hundreds of variations of both. It's up to you which one you choose. It's up to you what key words, phrases or concepts you assign to each planet and each sign and each element. And it's up to you which cards you assign to which planets and signs.

PART FIVE

THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC AND THE TAROT CARDS

As you've already seen there are an infinite number of ways of assigning the planets and the signs to the tarot cards. We've been discussing one way, a way developed by the Golden Dawn and used in the Rider Waite and similar tarot decks. Here's one way of assigning the signs to the major arcana:

SIGN	ELEMENT	MAJOR ARCANA CARD	
Aries	Fire	IV	Emperor
Taurus	Earth	V	Hierophant
Gemini	Air	VI	Lovers
Cancer	Water	VII	Chariot
Leo	Fire	VIII	Strength
Virgo	Earth	IX	Hermit
Libra	Air	XI	Justice
Scorpio	Water	XIII	Death
Sagittarius	Fire	XIV	Temperance
Capricorn	Earth	XV	Devil
Aquarius	Air	XVII	The Star
Pisces	Water	XVIII	The Moon

This table already contains the information you'll need about the elements should you decide not to use the fifth element for the major arcana. But if you use the fifth element of Spirit for the major arcana, all you need to do is use the key words, phrases or concepts you've already adopted for the signs and apply them to spiritual aspects and/or spirituality.

Thus Strength spiritualizes whatever Leo means to you. The Devil spiritualizes whatever Capricorn means to you. Death spiritualizes whatever Scorpio means to you. The same holds true for all the cards. Whatever the sign means to you, that meaning is placed in a spiritual context when reading one of the major arcana cards.

There, that was easy! You already knew what the signs meant, all you had to do was assign a card from the major arcana (also called Trumps or Keys) to each one of the signs.

You could also assign a planet to each of these signs by assigning the ruler to each sign. We discussed rulers of the signs in Part Three. We also discussed exalted planets and planets in their detriment. You can use that information to expand the teaching here. In any event, here's one way of assigning ruling planets to the signs and their associated cards:

SIGN	MAJOR ARCANA		RULER	CARD	
Aries	IV	Emperor	Mars	XVI	Tower
Taurus	V	Hierophant	Venus	III	Empress
Gemini	VI	Lovers	Mercury	I	Magician
Cancer	VII	Chariot	Moon	II	High Priestess
Leo	VIII	Strength	Sun	XIX	Sun
Virgo	IX	Hermit	Mercury	I	Magician
Libra	XI	Justice	Venus	III	Empress
Scorpio	XIII	Death	Pluto	XX	Judgement
Sagittarius	XIV	Temperance	Jupiter	X	The Wheel
Capricorn	XV	Devil	Saturn	XXI	The World
Aquarius	XVII	The Star	Uranus	0	The Fool
Pisces	XVIII	The Moon	Neptune	XII	Hanged Man

This is a more advanced way of looking at the cards and it's certainly not required to use this astrological system for reading tarot cards. But it works like this:

Anytime you draw one of the major arcana cards associated with one of the signs, you apply your knowledge of both the sign and it's ruler to the reading. For example, say you drew The Hierophant, The Lovers and The Sun. For the first card you would consider both Taurus and it's ruler Venus which is represented by the Empress. For the second card you'd consider both Gemini and Mercury which is the Magician. And for the third card you'd consider both the Sun and Leo which is represented by the Strength card.

Now you have assigned the planets and the signs to each of the forty pip cards and to each of the twenty-two major arcana cards. All that's left is to define the court cards and look at some ideas for tarot spreads.

But before we move on to discuss the court cards, it's a good idea to practice doing readings with the other sixty-two cards you've already defined. You can do this with simple one card readings for yourself.

Phrase a question starting with one of the following words, shuffle the deck of pip cards and major arcana and draw one card. Interpret the answer to your question from that card. Write everything down for future reference. Later you can go back and glean more meaning from these readings. The words to use in stating your questions are: What, Who, When, Where, Which, Why and How.

PART SIX THE COURT CARDS

Astrologers speak in terms of one planet's aspect to another. These aspects are defined as follows:

ASPECT	DEGREES	USUAL MEANING
Conjunction	0 degrees	Fully empowered
Semi-Sextile	30 degrees	Creative
Sextile	60 degrees	Business and work
Square	90 degrees	Manifesting things
Trine	120 degrees	Synthesis
Quincunx	150 degrees	Mentally creative
Opposition	180 degrees	Opposing viewpoint
Quintile	72 degrees	Creative empowerment
Septile	51 degrees	Empowerment
Semi-Square	45 degrees	Manifestation
Nonile	40 degrees	Ideals
Decile	36 degrees	Career and profession

Of these, the conjunction, sextile, trine, square and opposition are most commonly used. But as with all things in this system, you may use as many of the aspects as you want and define them as you will.

Here's one simple system that works:

Sextile	slightly beneficial
Trine	really beneficial
Square	slightly negative
Opposition	really negative
Conjunction	both positive and negative

Now all you need to do is to assign the court cards to these aspects in a way you can remember. Here's one such way:

COURT CARDS	ASTROLOGICAL ASPECT AND MEANING
Pages	Sextiles = slightly beneficial
Knights	Squares = slightly negative
Queens	Trines = really beneficial
Kings	Oppositions = really negative
Two or more	Conjunctions = both positive and negative

So if a reading of three cards contained the Three of Wands (Saturn), the Nine of Cups (Moon) and the Queen of Pentacles (Trine) you'd know to read both the Three of Wands and the Nine of Cups with a really positive slant. But if the court card drawn just happened to be the Knight of Pentacles, you'd know to read the cards with a slightly negative connotation.

If two court cards happen to show up in a reading with the Five of Pentacles (Mars) you'd know to look for both the positive and the negative meanings of Mars as it relates to the Earth element. Let's say Mars means how well the client controls his or her anger and pentacles means financial affairs. Your client can be assertive in a positive manner about his or her financial affairs and he or she can also be downright angry about them. Both the positive and negative sides of this card come into play.

Forget about sextiles, squares, trines and oppositions when two or more court cards turn up in a reading because two or more court cards always means a conjunction and that's both good and bad. Unless you decide otherwise, no special meaning is attributed to the suit of the court card.

There is no other meaning given to the court cards in this system as it's being presented here. But you are free to bring in the meanings of the elements if you like. This makes it a little more complicated, but it's your system and you get to do it the way you want to do it.

So what happens when you have a court card with a planet and a sign? Use the planet which rules the sign for the second planet. Thus if you draw the Page of Wands, Hierophant and Two of Wands, the Sextile represented by the Page means things are a little better than one might suspect. The Hierophant is Taurus and Taurus is ruled by Venus. The Two of Wands is Uranus. So you're looking at Uranus and Venus both in a positive light and both related to Wands which could mean intuitive insights or careers or whatever you've defined Wands to represent.

So what happens when you do a three card reading and the unthinkable happens - all you draw is three court cards?

There's really no bad answer to this one. You know you have a conjunction but there are no planets involved. But there are elements involved because each of the court cards can also be assigned to the elements just like the pip cards. So one solution to this problem is to use whatever element you assign to each suit to understand a three-card reading composed only of court cards. So you address the elements of the suits and consider both the positive and the negative meanings of each card in the spread.

Or you could keep drawing additional cards until you reach a planet, or a sign card and use that card in the reading. Or you could just keep drawing cards until you obtain two or three planets and/or signs and do the reading using the conjunction concept. Thus you would look for both the strengths and weaknesses, the positive and negative slants for each card selected for the reading.

Or you could assign the planets to the court cards if you like:

COURT CARD	SIGN	PLANET (Ruler)
Page of Pentacles	Taurus	Venus
Knight of Pentacles	Virgo	Mercury
Queen of Pentacles	Capricorn	Saturn
King of Pentacles	Taurus	Venus
Page of Swords	Aquarius	Uranus
Knight of Swords	Gemini	Mercury
Queen of Swords	Libra	Venus
King of Swords	Aquarius	Uranus
Page of Cups	Scorpio	Pluto
Knight of Cups	Pisces	Neptune
Queen of Cups	Cancer	Moon
King of Cups	Scorpio	Pluto
Page of Wands	Leo	Sun
Knight of Wands	Sagittarius	Jupiter
Queen of Wands	Aries	Mars
King of Wands	Leo	Sun

Notice the Page always represents the fixed sign for any element. The fixed sign is the one in the middle of any of the four quadrants. The Knight always represents the mutable, or changeable sign of the triplicity and the Queen the cardinal sign. The King is always the same sign as the Page.

The problem with assigning sixteen court cards to the twelve signs is you have four extra court cards. The method shown solves this by assigning the King and the Page to the same sign. There are other possibilities.

But using the method shown you might decide to read the Page in a positive manner and the King in a negative one. Or you can read them the same way.

PART SEVEN ASTROLOGICAL SPREADS

The twelve houses of a horoscope define how we see the world, ourselves and other people in our world. As the planets move around the heavens they pass through the signs and the houses. The first house is on the left side of your horoscope chart. The other eleven houses are numbered counter-clockwise around the circle.

The twelve houses are defined in a slightly different manner by different astrologists. Here's one system of defining the houses that works very well with tarot cards:

HOUSE AND MEANING

- 1 Self = the client
- 2 Physical resources = money and financial affairs
- 3 Mental resources = thinking and communications
- 4 Emotional resources = family and relationships
- 5 Intuitive resources = pleasure, playing, loving and creating
- 6 Spiritual resources = work and service
- 7 Other people
- 8 Other people's money
- 9 Other people's thinking and communications
- 10 Other people's family and relationships
- 11 Other people's pleasure, playing, loving
- 12 Other people's work and service

As always, feel free to use the best and discard the rest as you develop your own system and your own tarot spreads. How you define the houses for your own purposes is immaterial. What matters is that you and your subconscious mind agree on the definitions.

Keep in mind the things about other people are as they relate to the life of your client and not the other people. This is an important concept to remember in divination of all kinds. The reading always speaks to the client about the client. It is never about other people. It's always about how other people impact the life of your client and your client's reactions to what it is the other people are and do.

You can build a twelve-card or smaller spread using this description of the twelve houses. Here's one way:

12	11	10	9	8	7
1	2	3	4	5	6

Another way is to arrange the cards in the form of a circle starting with the first card on the left and making the circle counter-clockwise up to twelve cards. Or you can lay them out in four rows of three cards one above the other. By laying them out in three rows of four cards in the order given, you have vertical rows for Fire, Earth, Air and Water in that order left to right.

You can make a simple five card spread by using houses two through six or eight through twelve. Choose any four houses for a four card spread, any three houses for a three card spread, any two houses for a two card spread, and any one house for a one card spread. Use your imagination to create your own spreads using this as a guide.

Change the names of the houses to fit your own system or use another system suggested by another author. Here's another commonly used system for the twelve houses:

HOUSE	MEANING
1	Self-awareness and self-image
2	Attitude toward the material world
3	Learning and exchanging information
4	Family
5	Creativity, what makes us feel good
6	Work and service
7	Relationships
8	Attitude towards passionate intimacy
9	Education, philosophy, religion
10	Vocational aspirations
11	Ideals, social values and friends
12	Endings and spirituality

As with most things associated with tarot, it doesn't matter what you define any tarot card or position in a tarot spread to be. What matters is both you and your subconscious mind remember whatever definitions you give these things.

Create a simple spread using one to five cards and defining the positions in the spread by the elements: Fire, Earth, Air, Water and Spirit. Use as many elements as you want to make spreads up to five cards, or use two cards for each element to create spreads of two to ten cards in length.

Create a spread by using one or more of the Seven Rays of Discernment which are: What, Who, When, Where, Which, Why and How. Start your question with one of these words and use a spread with positions for the same word. You can also use other words like Is? to start your question but these questions tend to be more difficult for beginners.

One card spreads are wonderful for teaching and learning to read the tarot. Just write out your question. Choose a card. Write down the name and meaning of the card. Then do your reading. Here's an example showing how this is done using the Question: "What's the most important thing for me to do today?"

Answer: Seven of Cups inverted

Meaning: Venus = relationships

Note: In my astrological system, inverted cards tell me there's a problem for me to resolve. Upright cards indicate there's no problem to resolve.

Reading: The inverted Seven of Cups tells me to resolve a relationship problem. Oops. Looks like this is an important thing for me to do today.

Outcome: The cards always tell me the truth and today was no exception.

Here's an example of a three-card Yes-No spread where inverted cards indicate problems to be resolved. The outcome of the reading is determined by the number of up right cards:

NUMBER OF UPRIGHT CARDS	MEANING
3	Absolutely yes!
2	Probably yes
1	Probably no
0	Absolutely no!

Question: "Is now the right time to buy a new car?"

Answer: Six of Wands, Devil, Four of Pentacles inverted

Reading: This is probably a good time to buy a new car if you resolve your (Four of Pentacles = Jupiter) overly optimistic attitude toward the purchase of a new car. Beware of paying too much.

Outcome: The client did not resolve his optimistic attitude toward the car and ended up paying too much for his used car compared to the rest of the market. Which raises the question: "Why ask for advice if you're not going to follow it?"

Here's another example of a Yes-No spread using just one card. In this system the card will always be read as though it is upright. Thus an inverted card does not mean there is a problem to resolve. What it does mean is "no" and the upright card means "yes."

Question: "Is this the best time for me to do such and such?"

Answer: Inverted Key XII The Hanged Man (Neptune = creating something new)

Reading: No, this is not a good time to start anything new and creative.

Time is an interesting element to use in a reading. The standard is the Past-Present-Future spread which can be used with the modification that anytime a court card is drawn, another card is drawn for the same position:

Question: How's the best way for me to handle my mother-in-law?

Answer: Past - King of Swords and Empress, Present - Eight of Pentacles, Future - Page of Cups, Inverted Queen of Wands and Ace of Cups

Notes: The Empress (Venus) means relationship, Eight of Pentacles is relationship with money, and Ace of Cups means new relationship. The inverted Queen indicates a problem in the future.

Reading: In the past your relationship with your mother-in-law has been both positive and loving and cold and hostile. Your current relationship is financially based. If you continue this financially-based relationship the future will mean a new and different relationship which will be just as rocky as it was in the past.

Outcome: The future of this young lady was just as predicted. Her mother-in-law was sometimes loving and caring and other times cold and hostile. Eventually the client decided to sell out her portion of the business. She feels better about her life but her mother-in-law still has a love-hate relationship with her.

Another way to handle time is in periods or chunks of time. You can choose between days, weeks, months or even years for any particular reading. For example, you might have a five card spread with the first card representing the present and the next four cards each representing a season or three months into the future.

The secret to handling events in the future is to always let your client know the future is not written in stone, that the future changes for the better or worse as your client changes for the better or worse. All changes today affect the future.

You now have all the basic information you need to build your own astrological system for reading the tarot. Take this basic information, revise it as you will, write it all down and practice with it daily until you and your subconscious mind both agree on the meanings of the cards.

You need to decide how you'll handle the situation where you have two cards in a reading representing the same planet. One way is to consider this as a future prediction for the time that planet transits its current position in the heavens. Another way is to consider this a conjunction of the planet to itself. A third possibility is to draw until you reach another planet card. Whatever you decide to do, write it down now so when the situation arises you'll know how to handle it.

Here's an outline of the basic system we've been discussing:

1. Define a key word, phrase or concept for each sign
2. Define a key word, phrase or concept for each planet
3. Define a key word, phrase or concept for each element
4. Define a key word, phrase or concept for each aspect
5. Define how you're going to use inverted cards
6. Assign the signs, planets and aspects to the cards
7. Design a few simple tarot spreads

Then there are three things you need to do to become a good tarot reader using your astrological system for reading tarot cards:

1. Practice
2. Practice
3. Practice

They say practice makes perfect. The lack of practice evidently makes us imperfect. In my experience this might be so. Those students who apply themselves to their studies and do practice readings on a regular basis all seem to become good tarot readers rather quickly. Those students who do not practice reading tarot cards rarely learn how to read them at all. And should they become tarot readers their readings are often weak and not well received.

So if you want to become a good tarot reader -- and what other reason would you have for reading this booklet? -- follow the first seven steps and then the last three on a regular basis.

Good luck and enjoy reading the tarot cards from an astrological perspective.

ATA CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND AUDIO TAPES

The American Tarot Association offers the following correspondence courses and audio tapes for its members:

- 1) Introduction to Tarot
- 2) Intermediate Tarot
- 3) Advanced Tarot

Members are assigned a Tarot Mentor to assist them with their studies. The courses are self-paced. Each student advances at his or her own pace. All correspondence courses and audio tapes come with a set of assignments to help the student learn and master the material. Completed assignments are sent to the student's Tarot Mentor for evaluation. These courses are more fully described on the inside back cover and elsewhere in this booklet.

COSTS

The cost of each of these three correspondence courses is \$15 for each book. Each set of four audio tapes is \$40.00 for members. Both the audio tapes and the correspondence courses cover the same material. Both the audio tapes and the correspondence courses come with a set of optional assignments which may be completed and turned in to a mentor for grading.

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TAROT 101 - PIP CARDS The student will learn key words, phrases or concepts for the forty pip cards

TAROT 102 - COURT CARDS The student will learn key words, phrases or concepts for the sixteen court cards

TAROT 103 - MAJOR ARCANA The student will learn key words, phrases or concepts for the twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana

TAROT 104 - BEGINNING TAROT SPREADS The student will learn how to use and devise his or her own one, two and three card spreads

INTERMEDIATE TAROT COURSE

TAROT 201 - REVERSALS AND DIGNITIES The student will learn key words, phrases or concepts for handling reversals or dignities

TAROT 202 - MENTORING TECHNIQUES The student will learn how to mentor other students

TAROT 203 - INTERMEDIATE TAROT SPREADS The student will learn how to use and devise his or her own four card and larger spreads

TAROT 204 - BUILDING A TAROT BUSINESS The student will learn the basics in starting his or her own business doing tarot readings in person, over the telephone, by mail and email and teaching the tarot to others.

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TAROT 301 - TAROT WRITING TECHNIQUES The student will learn how to write and publish a useable Code of Ethics, reviews of both Tarot books and decks, short informative articles, Tarot rituals and Tarot meditations.

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TAROT 303 - TAROT COUNSELING TECHNIQUES The student will learn how to use the Tarot as a tool for counseling others and helping clients resolve a crisis in their lives.

TAROT 304 - TAROT TEACHING TECHNIQUES The student will learn how to teach beginning, intermediate and advanced tarot courses using the ATA techniques and how to set up a business teaching tarot to others.