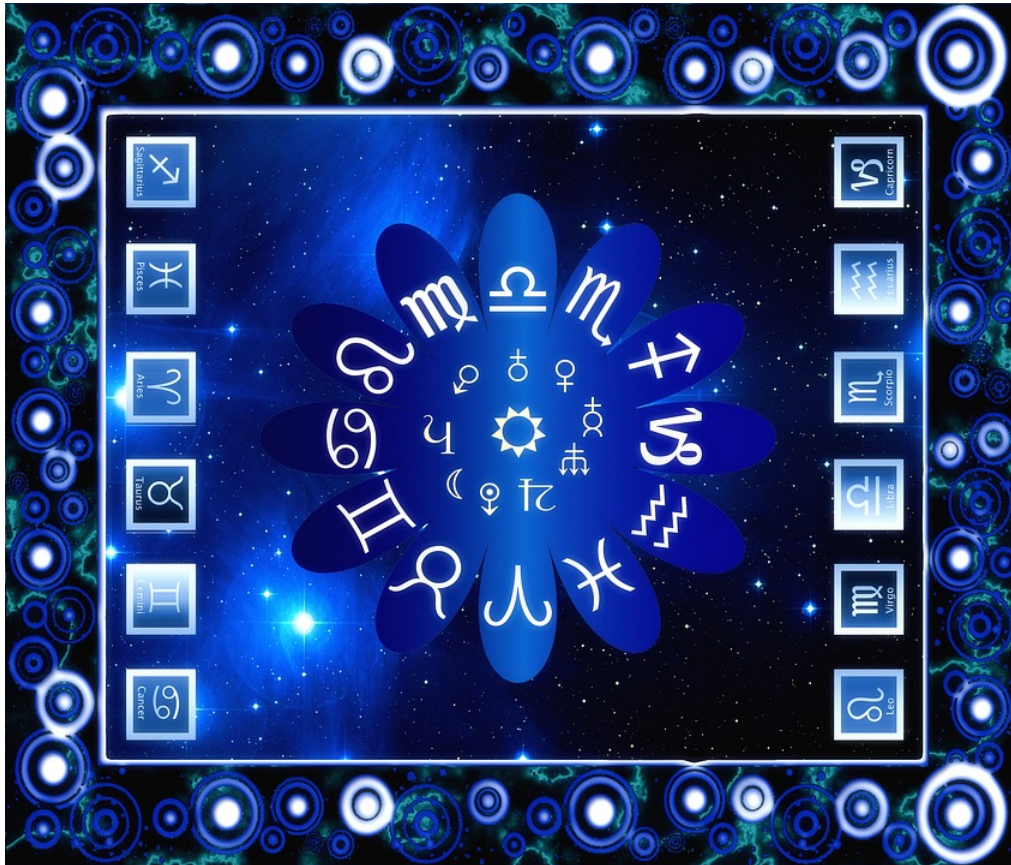


2.8: Astronomy and Astrology

Historically **Astronomy** and **Astrology** went hand-in-hand, but is there scientific evidence to support this theory? No. Astronomy is the scientific examination of the Universe, whereas Astrology attempts to predict one's future due to the positions of specific celestial bodies. The premise of astrology is that celestial objects affect us here on Earth. The question scientists and astronomers ask is what scientific evidence backs astrology?

First, do celestial objects affect us here on Earth? Yes, for example, the Sun and the seasons, daylight, the Moon and tides, asteroids, and comets affect us on Earth. *What does astrology claim?* Basically through unknown forces the arrangement of celestial objects can determine human characteristics and fates.



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Astrology today is based primarily on the influence of the planets on individual lives. Yet the planets are so far away that their gravitational influence is nil. For example Jupiter's gravitational influence on Earth raises our tides 0. 0001 inch! Why not include closer-by asteroids? And why do astrologers now include Uranus, Neptune and Pluto when they were not included prior to their discovery? And for Pluto: a planet or dwarf planet?

Sun-Sign Astrology is the most-popular form; this is based on the Sun's position in the sky relative to background stars. *What is your Sign?* Capricorn, Aquarius, Leo, Sagittarius, Ophiuchus? Astrologers claim you are born under the sign in which the Sun is in that constellation. However the Sun is *not* in that constellation due to the Earth's precession. **Precession** is the circular motion of a planet's tilted axis, much like a top or a gyroscope. For Earth this is a slow process— 26,000 years to complete one precession.

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