

Elements & modes are the raw ingredients that when combined create each of the twelve zodiac signs. Learn the basic features of each of these ingredients and you can make sense of any zodiac sign.

Earth, air, fire, water — these are the essential elements of life. They represent literal and metaphorical energies. The three modes — cardinal, fixed, and mutable — indicate how this energy moves. Elements indicate what *wants* to get done. Modes show *how* it gets done. So, for example, if you pour fire into the cardinal mode, you get a fast-moving fire, which creates the competitive and reactive style of Aries. Pour fire into the fixed mode and the fire is contained, making for warm, regal and possibly self-involved Leo. Mutable fire expresses as lively awareness, or the dancing fireflies and truth-seeking gypsies of Sagittarius.

You're not simply learning about concepts. You're educating your imagination. You're planting these ingredients as *sensory* experiences. You're getting a feeling sense for the essential archetypal energies. You're using your whole body, not just your mind. This helps you better recognize the archetypes in yourself and others. Knowing who's involved accelerates the intuitive messaging.

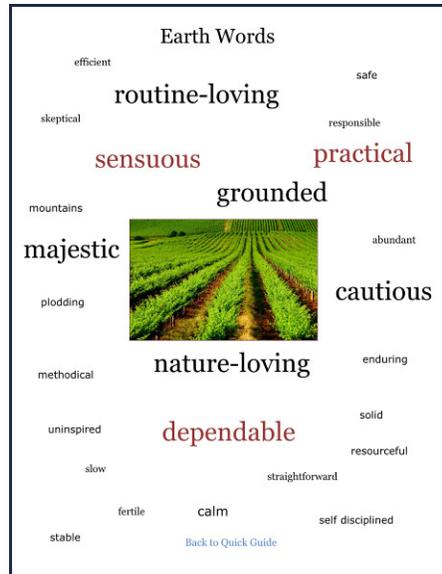


In learning about air signs, first get a wordless feel for them. Then link this sensing to the symbols (the glyphs for each sign). Signs in the same element are friends. They have a natural affinity. Wordlessly absorb what the “airy” pictures communicate. Allow the features of air to permeate you in some way. You may tune into the qualities of fluidity, lightness of being, or disorientation and groundlessness. Let these qualities saturate the glyphs.

The pictures for earth, fire, and water will inspire distinctly different sensations. Using a technique you’ll learn in this book, you’ll anchor the essential meanings of each energy in your imagination. Linking the signs visually as a group will help you recognize trines more easily. After you saturate the glyphs with their appropriate sensations, anytime you see an unfamiliar placement, underneath, you’ll soon recognize old friends.

You may have never met anyone with Mercury in Gemini, for example, but on seeing this symbol in a chart for the first time, you can quickly get your bearings: “Oh, this individual thinks (Mercury) with *air* and *mutability* (Gemini). I bet their mind is quick, restless, lively, and flexible. They probably keep changing their opinion. They likely hate routine and would be fun to go to coffee with. They probably love to talk.”

Without consulting the experts, knowing just the basic outlines of these archetypes gives you an immediate feel for this unfamiliar placement. Your imagination is already dialing in its essential features.



I call these the *word burst* pages. In the sample above, you'll see a splattering of words associated with earth. The words have escaped the usual linear patterns of text. Their floating positions help your right brain sort through them more intuitively. You can use the photograph to memorize these terms.

Memory athletes have long known this secret. When you connect ideas to internal pictures, you can quickly memorize an amazing amount of material. With the page above, for example, you would first study the photograph, then close your eyes, and somehow reproduce this image in your mind's eye. It doesn't need to be clear or even visual. You're summoning a sense of it. Ask your mind to create an imaginary field in which rows of something green are growing. Then notice how your mind responds. Be receptive to what happens naturally. Your way may not be visual at all, yet it will somehow suggest a field to you.

Once you have this picture anchored, you can start adding words. See the words as visual objects (or however you do this, perhaps they're sounds). Close your eyes, imagine the field, then bring in a word or two. See them as objects floating near your field. Take an internal snapshot, then test yourself. Can you see all the words you memorized? Add as many terms as you want. Find the way that's easiest for you. The photograph is an educational placeholder that helps you retain "earth" qualities in memory. Now your imagination is more informed.

The word bursts are good resource pages for chart interpretation. If you're contemplating the chart of a friend and you notice "Moon in Taurus," consult the "earth" and "fixed" pages. Let your eyes start bouncing. When you're looking at the chart of someone you know (always recommended in the beginning), let your eyes

jump around the words until they find one or more concepts that you recognize as being true of your Moon-in-Taurus friend. Look for similarities, not differences. Working with the right-brain, you'll go further by making positive connections than you will with negative judgments. To draw meaningful connections, you'll want to know more than key terms. You'll need insights into the psychology of each element and mode. You'll find this on the "Thoughts" pages.



On these pages, you'll see the now familiar floating text. These sentences are written in the first person, as though the archetype itself were speaking. This is purposeful. The right brain is more curious about what's alive than what is not (like "ideas," which just lie there, flat, not even breathing). The imagination is more interested in information that sounds as if it's coming from something living.

We can debate whether or not these archetypes actually *are* alive (see the *Naked Astrology* essays). But you don't need to believe they're alive for the technique to work. It's just a smart cognitive strategy. The more your imagination thinks of these energies as living beings, the more vividly your intuition will connect with them. (Advertisers work the same principle when they present stomachs and colons as talking cartoons in order to sell you their client's pills.)

The real fun of working with these pages will come when you start your inquiries in *The Planets Playbook*. *The Elements & Modes* is the resource book for the playbook's questions. The work you've done here will prepare you to meet the planets in a more confident, creative, and intuitive way.