

## The North and South Nodes of the Moon

The Sun and planets do not circle willy-nilly around the Earth. Instead, their apparent path around us inscribes a circle in the skies. This disk-shaped band of the sky is called the ecliptic. Astrology is geocentric, meaning that even though we realize the Sun does not orbit the Earth, the Earth is at the center of the astrological chart. Thus, Earth is our frame of reference.

The Moon's orbit around the Earth is not the same as the ecliptic. You could visualize them as two giant hula hoops, one inside the other, held at an angle. The Moon's orbit crosses the Ecliptic in two places— these are called the Moon's Nodes.

The North Node is where the Moon crosses the ecliptic going toward the northern hemisphere, and the South Node is where she crosses the ecliptic headed south. The North Node and the South Node are always directly opposite one another in the sky.

The Moon's Nodes nearly always move in retrograde, meaning they travel backwards through the Zodiac. They make a complete circle through the 12 signs every 18 years.

When the New Moons and Full Moons happen near the Moon's Nodes, [eclipses](#) happen. That is because the Earth, Sun, and Moon are lined up so precisely that a shadow is cast.

In a karmic sense, the Moon's Nodes represent lessons to be learned in this Earthly incarnation. These lessons almost always have to do with the way we connect with others. That's why the Nodes are associated with patterns of relating, and the wisdom to be found within them is often the key to recognizing and healing patterns of relating which stand in the way of our happiness.

The Nodes are a pair. The North Node is always directly opposite the South Node. If you want to really understand them, it's wise to study the 12 signs as pairs of opposites— Aries/Libra, Taurus/Scorpio, and so on. Like the yin/yang symbol, each sign contains the shadow of its opposite. For example, every Aries has a secret wish to be loved and accepted, and every Libra has a “gotta be me” side (or an angry side) that comes out no matter how nice she tries to be.



The South Node represents habit patterns from childhood or from past lives. These are comfortable patterns, but they often get in the way of you having the kinds of connections you want with other people. These are especially powerful if you have a planet conjunct the South Node in your chart.

The sign and house placement of the South Node tells where you have a tendency to totally overdo things. There is a longing there, a craving that is very strong. The nature of this longing is shown by the sign of the South Node. For example, in Taurus, the craving is for material security. In Leo, for recognition. In Gemini, for information.



The sign and house of the North Node represent circumstances and activities that usually feel unfamiliar. It's the "secret shadow" of the South Node sign, and it's the key to getting that craving met. That's why the North node reveals an area of massive growth potential in your life. It's the key to getting energy flowing.

Sometimes in the astrological literature, you will see interpretations that color the North Node as all positive, and the South Node as all negative. Sometimes they suggest that you should strive to move "toward" the North Node and shun the qualities represented by the sign of the South Node. (As if that were possible.) I do not think this is a constructive way to look at it. Your South Node indicates an area of longing, but also of massive talent and gifts. The trick is channeling those gifts properly.

Think of the North Node as the head, and the South Node as the stomach. The stomach has the hunger, but the head has the mouth. So you fulfill the desires of the South Node through the energy of the North Node.

### **North Node in ♈ [Aries](#), South Node in Libra:**

North Node in Aries represents a karmic drive to embrace your identity, to make your own decisions and live your own life. The South Node in Libra represents a longing for relationship. The longing is so strong and intense, that you often will try to make the connection by doing the Libra thing, trying to be the person you think your partner wants. This never works. You will find fulfilling relationships only when you embrace your own desires and wants (Aries), take the risk of being your own person, following your impulses. Only then can the right relationship appear.

### **North Node in ♉ [Taurus](#), South Node in Scorpio:**

North Node in Taurus represents a need to get in touch with your own self-worth, your values & awareness of comfort zones, what feels good, what doesn't, relying on your own talents and resourcefulness (Taurus). The South Node in Scorpio represents a longing for close bonding and mutual empowerment with another person. The old pattern is to attempt to do this by buying into another person's system of values and priorities (Scorpio). Your longing for a fulfilling intimate relationship will only be satisfied when you focus on your own strength, your own values, your own priorities. When you do so, the right people will appear to support your goals.

### **North Node in ♊ [Gemini](#), South Node in Sagittarius**

If your North Node is in Gemini, you are like a butterfly, here to sample many flowers and connect with people and things. The South Node in Sagittarius represents a longing to have all the answers, sharing truth and wisdom, "being right." If you don't do the Gemini part and listen to what others are saying, your Sagittarian optimism can get out of hand, and you assume they know what you know. It's true that you have great wisdom, but you mess up when you act without thinking things through, and dismiss other people's ideas without

hearing them out. You are able to share your wisdom and connect deeply with others when you truly listen to them, helping them through the “nitty gritty” aspects of life, and allowing them to help you.

### **North Node in ♋ [Cancer](#), South Node in Capricorn**

The South Node in Capricorn represents a strong drive to succeed. You mess up when you measure success by the “outward” symbols of success or achievement of a position in society (i.e. clothing, material status, titles, awards, the “right” friends, etc.). To gain these things, you may try to “cut off” or ignore the feeling side of things, yours and others’. Your North Node in Cancer shows that the true measure of your success is emotional fulfillment—if you aren’t feeling safe and content on the inside, you haven’t “made it.” This does not deny you success in your career, but it does mean that you find satisfaction in life only when you use your strong work ethic and management skill in a way that is emotionally suited to you, and responsive to others.

### **North Node in ♌ [Leo](#), South Node in Aquarius**

The South Node in Aquarius represents a strong urge to belong in a group. Your old pattern is to make your way by “fitting in,” letting go of your ego to promote a cause, and letting the energy of a group carry you. You try and find this sense of belonging by remaining a spectator in life rather than a participant. This doesn’t work, because Leo is an extremely creative sign, and to try to “blend in” cuts off a very real part of you that longs for expression. You find your true sense of belonging when you let your light shine, take the risk of standing out. Then you magnetically attract the right group of friends to you.

### **North Node in ♍ [Virgo](#), South Node in Pisces**

The South Node in Pisces represents an urge for immersion in spiritual oneness. You may try to do this by escaping from the world through addiction or other means, withdrawal from involvement with others, giving up, or choosing not to deal with the daily grind. You have a strong psychic and spiritual power. However, this power only works for you when you embrace the lesson of Virgo, serving yourself and others through active involvement with others, attending to the nitty-gritty details of life. “Spirit helps those who help themselves” is a good mantra for you. i.e., you have to clean up your own messes in life, nobody’s going to do it for you.

### **North Node in ♎ [Libra](#), South Node in Aries**

The South Node in Aries represents a competitive urge— you want to win. You may try to do this by being defensive, combative, and competitive with others. However, you only win big when you cooperate in mutually beneficial partnerships, openly share your feelings and intentions, listen to and accept the help of others. You have good relationship karma— involve others in your decisions, and give of yourself, share your talents and abilities with others. You only really benefit from win/win cooperative situations, not win/lose battles.

### **North Node in ♏ [Scorpio](#), South Node in Taurus**

The South Node in Taurus suggests a tendency to try to do everything yourself, your way. It can be hard to let go of possessions, for fear that you might need it someday. Following the Scorpio North Node path, sharing resources and responsibilities with other people, really opens up your world. It involves letting go and taking the risk of trusting and depending on another. Ironically, you only find the stability you want through letting others help you in their own way. The rewards are well worth the price.

### **North Node in ♐ [Sagittarius](#), South Node in Gemini**

The South Node in Gemini indicates that you can really “overthink” decisions, constantly second-guessing yourself. You got so good at seeing other people’s points of view, that you lost touch with your own. Your Sagittarius North Node indicates that the greatest rewards for you are in trusting your intuition, and being open and honest about yourself and what you want. Overthinking is problematic for you because you can never have enough information to satisfy your mind. You second-guess yourself and become confused, making it very difficult to make decisions you truly trust. Visualizing the outcome, rather than relying on factual, logical information, works much better for you. You have the gift of manifestation— your beliefs create your reality. Indulging in gossip drains your energy— don’t do it.

### **North Node in ♑ [Capricorn](#), South Node in Cancer**

The South Node in Cancer indicates an intense desire to care for people. However, overconcern with other people’s emotional well-being may be a sign of your fear of taking charge of your own destiny. This overconcern shows itself as dwelling on the past, being afraid to come out of your shell, making other people’s feelings your problem. You are here to rediscover the thrill of achieving your goals. You need to let other people work out their own problems, and develop and cultivate your own ambition. When you do this, eventually others will come in to support you! You are a natural born leader and manager. Because you have the gift of empathy, people trust you, and you find fulfillment when you set up structures that support everyone’s well-being. Focusing on your vision for the future will help you let go of the past.

### **North Node in ♒ [Aquarius](#), South Node in Leo**

With South Node in Leo, ego drives are very powerful, as the soul craves recognition and respect. Thus, at times you can be dominating, demanding, and willful. The North Node in Aquarius indicates that you find the respect and approval you want only when you work from a sense of equality with all creatures, inspiring rather than dominating. Because you, more than anyone, understand the value of appreciation, you are a natural born appreciator of others and can motivate others to achieve their best, especially when you work together for a common cause. Being involved in groups and humanitarian causes is very good for you.

## North Node in ♋ [Pisces](#), South Node in Virgo

The South Node in Virgo suggests an innate practicality and sense of order, but also a sense of panic and anxiety when things do not go as planned. Therefore, you may burden yourself and others with rigid expectations of proper behavior or “perfect” situations. The North Node in Pisces represents this lifetime’s mission: let go of worry and work on developing a sense of the connectedness of everyone and everything. Your longing for order and perfection is satisfied only through the realization that everything is in divine order, even if our limited human minds perceive only chaos.

### My Nodes are retrograde, what does that mean?

Nothing. The Nodes are nearly always retrograde. Neither is it significant if they are direct (not retrograde) in your chart— which only happens if you use the [True Node](#). The change in direction is due to an insignificant “wobble” or vibration in the Node’s path. It’s not the same as the process by which the planets change direction. If you use the Mean Node measurement, which averages out the Node’s position over time, it is always retrograde.

### Moon's Nodes:

In astrology, the [Moon's Nodes](#) are not planets in the strict astronomical sense, but rather sensitive points on the ecliptic, where the Moon crosses from north to south latitude and vice versa. The body of the "energy dragon" is the fourth-dimensional path of the Moon by declination, as she weaves her web around the earth. The nodes are commonly known as the Dragon's Head (Caput Draconis in Latin), the North Node, and Dragon's Tail (Cauda Draconis), the South Node, although in Indian Astrology they are known as Rahu and Ketu. The Dragon's Head, a "shadow planet" exalted in Gemini, is considered benefic (good), whilst the Dragon's Tail, exalted in Sagittarius, is considered malefic (evil) in influence. Their motion is normally retrograde at the rate of roughly one degree every 19 days (compare the 19 year cycle of lunation); periods of direct motion are therefore considered unfortunate.

The [placement of the Nodes](#) is important, because it illustrates a relationship between the Moon, the Earth and the Sun (eclipses can be calculated by the movement of the nodal axis). The significance of the Nodes has been widely underestimated in Western Astrology over the past fifty years or so, due to some extent to the rise of "psychological" or "humanistic" interpretative paradigms that have devalued many traditional features of the astrologer's toolkit. However, traditional Western astrology along with Vedic, or Indian astrology, places the Nodes on the same critical level of importance as the Sun, Moon and other visible planets. There is no doubt that this elevation of the Nodes to planetary status is justified, for experience shows that the movement of the Nodes has a very significant effect on human life and on the destinies of all beings who dwell on the surface of the Earth.

### ***The Dragon's Head (North Node):***

Aspects to the North Node concern or affect relationships to prevailing trends, attitudes and opportunities. The Dragon's Head represents your karmic objectives in this lifetime. It points the way towards soul growth and evolution. The sign holding your Dragon's Head reveals the flavour of your karma in this lifetime, while its house placement shows the area of life in which you need to develop, or become conscious of this karma. Positive aspects to the Dragon's Head are generally favourable from the benefics (Venus and Jupiter), Sun, Moon and Mercury, whilst sextile or trine from Mars, Uranus, Saturn, Neptune and Pluto also have beneficial effects. Square and opposition from the benefics and conjunction, square and opposition from the malefics are unfortunate, according to the matters signified by house and planet afflicted.

### ***The Dragon's Tail (South Node):***

Aspects to the Dragon's Tail display the results of innate unconscious tendencies and karmic patterns as they emerge in the life. They tend to be separative and destructive. Any aspect to the South Node from any planet is unfortunate for matters to do with the house and planet activated thereby. Past life hangovers are represented by the position and aspects of the Dragon's Tail. The position of the Dragon's Tail is generally indicative of past life connections or commitments in a relationship analysis. Aspects thereto are also most interesting, especially if a pre-natal eclipse falls there, either natively or in conjunction with a progression or major transit.

The best way to understand the astrological nature of the Nodes might be to envisage them as bubbling pools of karmic energy. These have a massive potency, which is associated with powerful events and feelings whenever they are activated by progressions or transits. Because the nodes are pools of karma associated primarily with the house in which they are located, the related effects are deep and often seem almost inevitable. It is not for nothing that they are called the Dragon's Head and Tail.