

Read the article "Written in the Stars" before answering Numbers 46 through 56.

Written in the Stars

At some point, you have probably flipped through a magazine or newspaper, looking for your horoscope. Most horoscopes use the month and day of an individual's birth to predict future events in that person's life. Many horoscope columns offer readers warnings as well as advice on love, friendship, and career opportunities. Although many people dismiss horoscopes as mindless entertainment, some truly believe in the power of their predictions. These people are not alone. Horoscopes are a part of astrology, an ancient practice that has been a part of history for thousands of years.

Once accepted as a science, astrology is the divination of the influences that celestial bodies have on human affairs. More simply, astrology is the belief that our everyday lives are affected by the alignments of the stars, sun, moon, and planets. Astrologers believe that they can "see" the future by reading the signs in the heavens. Using a complex system of numbers that includes dates and times, an astrologer can create charts that predict upcoming events. Though some might argue that these charts are created to tell people what they want to hear, astrologers have been using this system for centuries to foretell the future.

Astrology is an ancient practice that has existed since the beginning of recorded history. No one is certain where astrology began, though many scholars believe that its origins can be traced to the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Chinese practiced astrology. During the early years of these civilizations, people looked to the sky for omens of war, famine, prosperity, and peace. Even some great rulers were known to consult the stars before making strategic political or military decisions.

For thousands of years, many people considered astrology to be a branch of astronomy, the scientific study of celestial bodies. Interest in creating more-accurate astrological charts actually led to some important advances in astronomy. It was not until the seventeenth



century that the two practices were separated. During that time, astrological charts were found to be vague and often unreliable, while astronomical studies yielded results that could be scientifically proven. Eventually, astronomy was deemed a "true" science, but astrology was viewed as a form of entertainment. Nevertheless, astrology continues to be practiced by people all over the world. Dozens of astrological traditions are used in various countries. Each tradition interprets certain celestial movements in a different way. However, the one thing that they all have in common is that they believe the positions of heavenly bodies, including stars, meteors, and moons, have an effect on the world around us.



The most well known form of astrology is horoscopic astrology. This type of astrology is the form used by astrologers that write the horoscope columns in newspapers and magazines. Horoscopic astrology uses astrological charts to interpret the positions of stars and planets at a specific time to give individual readings. Based on the date and time of a person's birth, he or she is assigned a specific astrological sign. That sign is thought to provide insight into the person's personality and relationships and predict that individual's destiny. In most horoscopic traditions, there are twelve signs that represent the twelve houses of the zodiac. Each house is ruled by a specific planet. Depending on the alignment of a sign's planet, a person could experience a time of great power or weakness.

Chinese astrology is another popular form of this ancient practice. This type of astrology is based on a twelve-year cycle. In the Chinese zodiac, there are twelve corresponding animals for every year of the cycle. Each animal represents specific characteristics that can help explain individual personality traits and offer information about events occurring in the coming year. Also important in Chinese astrology is the principle of yin and yang, which represents the delicate balance of the universe. According this tradition, astrology can inform us of when this balance is upset and what can be done to correct it.

Astrology has become a major part of our world's culture. Famous authors like Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare used aspects of astrology in their works. Even our language has been affected by astrology. For example, word *influenza* comes from the Italian word for *influence*. *Influence* was once exclusively an astrological term, meaning the power that the stars had on human affairs. Doctors once believed that disease was

caused by an adverse alignment of the stars. It is from this belief that the word *influenza* originated.

Despite its contributions to our culture, the validity of astrology is often called into question. Many believe that astrology fails to accurately predict future events. Skeptics view any correct prediction as coincidence rather than proof that astrology is a legitimate study. Still, there is no denying astrology's popularity. Many people have a burning desire to know what's going to happen next. This accounts for the thousands of horoscopes that can be found in newspapers, magazines, and online every day. Despite what scientific experts might believe, astrology continues to fascinate those that truly believe that destiny is written in the stars.

Answer questions 46 through 56. Base your answers on the article "Written in the Stars."

- 46 How is astrology similar to astronomy?
- A. Both astrology and astronomy study celestial bodies.
 - B. Both astrology and astronomy use the movement of stars and planets to predict the future.
 - C. Both astrology and astronomy are considered valid scientific practices.
 - D. Both astrology and astronomy can offer people insight into their personalities.
- 47 Which phrase describes scientific experts' feelings towards astrology?
- F. It is historically significant.
 - G. It lacks accuracy.
 - H. It requires further investigation.
 - I. It is entertaining.
- 48 According to the article, why does astrology continue to be popular?
- A. Scientists have failed to prove its inaccuracy.
 - B. Astrology is a form of mindless entertainment.
 - C. Astrology has had an impact on our culture.
 - D. People will always be curious about what the future holds.

- 49 Which statement is correct, according to the article?
- F. Astrology has had an impact on human language.
 - G. Astrology was first practiced in Mesopotamia.
 - H. Horoscopic astrology is based on a twelve-year cycle.
 - I. The movements of meteors are not considered in astrology.
- 50 What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
- A. Astrological predications should be tested for validity.
 - B. Interest in astrology will continue, despite questions of accuracy.
 - C. Astrology is an important part of human history.
 - D. Astrological predications can help people better manage their personal lives.
- 51 Beginning in the seventeenth century, astrology and astronomy were separated because
- F. new evidence disproved many astronomical theories.
 - G. scientists believed that astrology deserved more individual study.
 - H. astrologers discovered a new, more accurate method of constructing charts.
 - I. astrological predications could not be scientifically proven.
- 52 How is Chinese astrology similar to the horoscopic traditions?
- A. Both traditions started in Mesopotamia.
 - B. Both include signs that are represented by animals.
 - C. Both include the principle of yin and yang.
 - D. Both traditions include twelve signs.
- 53 What is the meaning of the word *vague* as used in this sentence from the fourth paragraph?
- During that time, astrological charts were found to be vague and often unreliable, while astronomical studies yielded results that could be scientifically proven.**
- F. fuzzy
 - G. formless
 - H. ambiguous
 - I. hazy

- 54 Which statement provides the best evidence of astrology's historical significance?
- A. "Nevertheless, astrology continues to be practiced by people all over the world."
 - B. "Interest in creating more-accurate astrological charts actually led to some important advances in astronomy."
 - C. "Astrology is an ancient practice that has existed since the beginning of recorded history."
 - D. "Even some great rulers were known to consult the stars before making strategic political or military decisions."
- 55 What was the author's purpose in writing this article?
- F. to highlight some of the accurate predications astrologers have made
 - G. to present the reader with information on the history and practice of astrology
 - H. to inform readers how to construct their own astrological charts
 - I. to convince readers that astrology should be considered a "true" science
- 56 Which statement BEST expresses the main idea of this article?
- A. Astrology should be considered a real science.
 - B. Astrology is entertaining and easy to practice.
 - C. Astrology is an ancient practice that has had an impact on society in many interesting ways.
 - D. Using astrology to predict future events could help people avoid conflict and live harmoniously.

