

When does the Age of Aquarius begin?

Age of Aquarius begins when vernal equinox point moves out of constellation Pisces and into Aquarius. There's no definitive answer as to when that will be.

When does the Age of Aquarius begin? And what is the Age of Aquarius? The Age of Aquarius is not part of astronomy. It's an astrological age, which occurs because of a real motion of Earth known as the precession of the equinoxes, which, for example, causes the identity of the pole star to change over time. The cycle of precession lasts 25,800 years, and there are 12 constellations of the Zodiac. So, roughly every 2,150 years, the sun's position at the time of the March, or vernal, equinox moves in front of a new Zodiac constellation. The Age of Aquarius begins when the March equinox point moves out of the constellation Pisces and into the constellation Aquarius. When will that be? There's no definitive answer. Various interpretations give different answers to this often-asked question.

Age of Aquarius from astronomical perspective. First of all, we give the answer from an astronomical point of view. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) – which in the 20th century assumed the duty of officially naming and defining all things astronomical – created official constellation boundaries in 1930. From the perspective of astronomy, then, the beginning of the Age of Aquarius is based upon IAU constellation boundaries, which astrologers or New Age practitioners might or might not choose to use in their computations.

According to the Belgian astronomer and mathematical wizard Jean Meeus ([bio here](#)), who does adhere to the IAU's definitions, the sun at the March equinox passed from being in front of the constellation Aries and to being in front of the constellation Pisces in 68 B.C. Looking ahead, again according to Jean Meeus, the March equinox will cross over into the constellation Aquarius in 2597. Once again, these are the astronomical dates, based on IAU constellation boundaries established in 1930.

Other interpretations for the beginning of the Age of Aquarius. The constellations as defined by the IAU are different sizes. Astrologers often like to divide the Zodiac into twelve equal sections. For example, the constellation Pisces – as defined by the IAU – spans more than 300 along the ecliptic, or sun's annual path in front of constellations of the Zodiac.

Astrologers, though, might disregard the span of the constellation Pisces on the sky's dome, and instead regard an astrological age as a precise 300 shift of the March equinox in front of the backdrop stars.

But even if you equalize the size of the signs of the Zodiac, you need to consider when the Age of Pisces started to be able to know when the Age of Aquarius begins. Apparently, there's no firm consensus among astrologers as to when the Age of Pisces began, either. And thus there is no consensus as to when the Age of Aquarius begins. In *The Book of World Horoscopes*, Nicholas Campion suggests that approximated dates for entering the Age of Aquarius range from 1447 AD to 3597 AD. Campion also reviewed published material on the subject, from astrological sources. He says that most writers claim the Age of Aquarius arrived in the 20th century (29 claims). The 24th century is in second place (12 claims). Campion, by the way, is director of the Sophia Centre and Course Director of the MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology at the University of Wales, Lampeter. See Campion's credentials [here](#).

Some astrologers say the Age of Aquarius actually began in 2012. That's because they believe the star Regulus in the constellation Leo the Lion marked the ancient border between the constellations Leo and Cancer. This star moved to within 300 of the September equinox point in 2012, meaning that Regulus left the sign Leo to enter the sign Virgo in that year. Presuming equal-sized constellations in antiquity, that places the border of the constellations Pisces and Aquarius at 1500 west of Regulus, or at the March equinox point. By this reckoning, the Age of Aquarius started in 2012.

But again, although there is firm reckoning by many for the beginning of this astrological age, there is no agreement. Wikipedia lists what various writers have claimed.

The equinox point moves westward in front of the backdrop stars. Image credit: Wikimedia Commons

Definition of terms: March (or spring or vernal) equinox point. This is the point on the imaginary celestial sphere surrounding Earth at which the ecliptic – or path of the sun across our sky – intersects the celestial equator, or line around the sky directly above Earth's equator. It's sometimes called the First Point in Aries, because the sun used to be located in front of the constellation Aries at the time of the vernal equinox. For the past two thousand years, though, the sun has been located in front of the constellation Pisces at the time of this equinox. That's the significance of the so-called Piscean Age. At some point, the sun at the equinox will be in front of Aquarius. That's when the Age of Aquarius begins.

How did the Age of Aquarius enter popular culture? The Age of Aquarius in the U.S. is associated with the hippies of the 1960s and '70s, and now with the New Age movement. In both cases, the arrival of the Aquarian age has been associated with ... well, harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding. And that brings us to the 1967 smash-hit musical Hair, with its opening song Aquarius, by a musical group called the 5th Dimension. The song opened with the lines:

When the moon is in the Seventh House
And Jupiter aligns with Mars
Then peace will guide the planets
And love will steer the stars
This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius

It's hard to describe how Hair, which seems daring even today, affected people when it opened on Broadway in 1968. It subsequently ran for 1,750 performances on Broadway and 1,997 performances in London, with simultaneous productions in cities across the United States and Europe, and with accompanying recordings (the original Broadway cast recording sold three million copies). Almost single-handedly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this Broadway musical brought the Aquarian Age concept into the popular culture. The video below isn't the original, but you'll get the idea.

Bottom line: The Age of Aquarius is an astrological age, which shifts roughly every 2,150 years. It's defined by the sun's position at the time of the March, or vernal, equinox. The Age of Aquarius begins when the March equinox point moves out of the constellation Pisces and into the constellation Aquarius. But there's no definitive answer as to when that will be. This post explores some of the possibilities. -Via Monte Farber