#### Time

**Day** — Time between successive risings or settings of the Sun or a star.

**Month** — Time for the Moon to go through its phases or move around the sky once.

**Year** — Time for the seasons to repeat or for the Sun to move around the sky once.

Note: Each of these time definitions is actually for (at least) two distinct periods. (See Sidereal and synodic periods in the planets section below.)

#### Motion

**Daily motion** — Motion of celestial objects relative to the horizon.

**Annual motion** — Motion of the Sun, Moon, and planets relative to the stars.

**Direct motion** — The usual annual motion from west to east.

**Retrograde motion** — Annual motion east to west.

## **Celestial positions**

**Altitude** — The angle between a celestial object and the horizon.

**Azimuth** — The direction of the horizon directly below a celestial object.

**North celestial pole** — (NCP) The point in the northern sky about which all stars revolve. It's an extension of the Earth's rotation axis.

**Meridian** — The curve running from the northern horizon through the zenith to the southern horizon. It divides the sky into eastern and western halves.

**Transit** — When an object in the sky crosses the meridian.

**Celestial equator** — The curve through all the stars in the sky which rise exactly in the east and set exactly in the west. It's an extension of the Earth's equator.

**Ecliptic** — The path of the Sun's annual motion through the stars.

**Summer solstice** — The location of the Sun furthest north on the ecliptic.

**Winter solstice** — The location of the Sun furthest south on the ecliptic.

**Equinox** — The location of the Sun when it rises exactly in the east and sets exactly in the west; where the ecliptic crosses the celestial equator.

### Stars

**Circumpolar stars** — The stars which are always above the horizon and never set.

**Heliacal rising** — The first visible rising of a star after it has disappeared behind the Sun.

**Constellations** — Arbitrary groupings of stars.

**Zodiac** — The band of stars along the ecliptic through which the planets move.

## **Planets**

Conjunction — When a planet is closest to the Sun in the sky.

Opposition — When a planet is opposite to the Sun in the sky.

Inferior planets — The planets which stay close to the Sun.

Superior planets — The planets which can be at opposition.

Sidereal period — The period as measured with respect to the stars.

Synodic period — The period between successive oppositions, conjunctions, etc.

# Finally ...

**Precession** — The slow motion of the NCP and celestial equator with respect to the ecliptic and stars.