Pluto & Charon

Pluto was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh, and first visited by the New Horizons spacecraft in 2015. We originally thought the Solar System only had two zones: the inner rocky planets and the outer gas and ice giants. Pluto didn’t fit. Pluto and the other small icy bodies discovered afterward define what we now know as the Solar System’s third zone, called the Kuiper Belt. New Horizons showed us that Pluto has tall mountains made of water ice, very bright areas, and dark reddish spots. Sputnik Planitia® is a big low plain of frozen nitrogen, and nitrogen glaciers. Flow it from the East, Charon’s water ice surface expanded long ago, stretching apart to leave big cracks and cliffs.

*The names on Pluto and Charon aren’t yet official, but include characters, creatures and places from the underworld; explorers that crossed 'new horizons' in their own ways; scientists and engineers that have studied Pluto; fictional explorers, vessels and places; and artists and authors associated with space exploration.

**SOLAR DISTANCE [AU] [EARTH YRS]**

Earth 1

**AIR PRESSURE [Pa] TEMPERATURE [°C]**

Earth: 101000 15

Pluto: -230

**MASS**

Pluto: 13 M

**GRAVITY**

Pluto: 0.61 M

**AXIAL TILT**

Pluto: 23.4°

**ORBIT**

Pluto: 510 M

**AREAS**

Pluto: 17 M

**REVOLUTION**

Pluto: 24 years

**AXIS**

Pluto: 177°