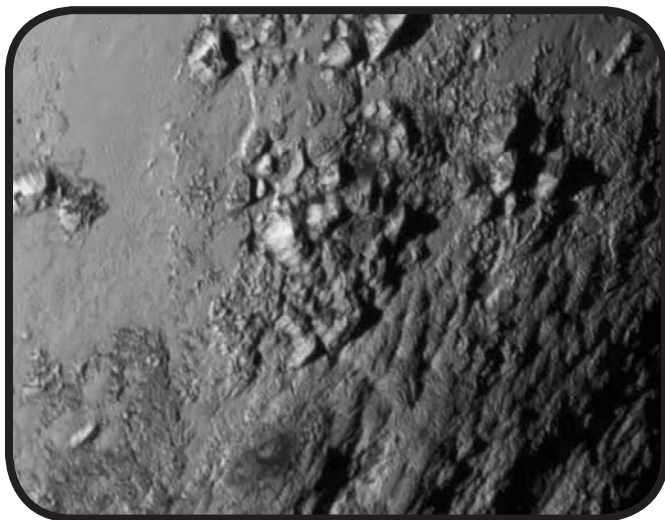


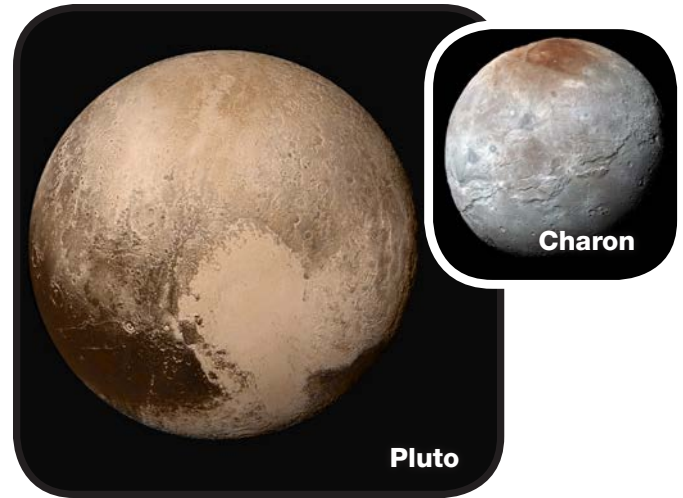
# Pluto

In 1930, a young American astronomer saw something in space. It was a small object beyond the planet Neptune. It was smaller than Earth's Moon. This little world became the ninth planet of our solar system. It was given the name Pluto.

But then astronomers were finding other objects like Pluto. They said these objects were too tiny to be called planets. They said that Pluto shouldn't be called a planet either. Astronomers decided that these objects would be called *dwarf planets*.



The surface of Pluto has mountains and frozen valleys.



Left: A photo of Pluto taken by a camera on the *New Horizons* spacecraft; Right: *New Horizons*'s view of Charon, one of Pluto's moons

Dwarf planets beyond Neptune would be called *plutoids*. They got that name from Pluto.

In 2015, the *New Horizons* spacecraft flew past Pluto. It took pictures and collected information about this faraway world.

Astronomers learned that Pluto is mostly rock. The rock is covered with different kinds of ice. Pluto even has five moons.

## ✓ Brain Check

- What is Pluto?
- When was it discovered?
- Why did astronomers decide Pluto was no longer a planet?