



What are those things we see in the night sky?

01 Look at the images below. What do they have in common?



02 Read "Space Oddity" and underline the best text summary.

1. Astronomers follow strict rules when classifying celestial bodies.
2. The same rules classify all celestial bodies.
3. The classification rules never change.

03 Read the text again and complete the sentence prompts with information from the text.

1. Pluto was _____

2. Pluto is _____

3. The IAU _____

4. Classifying celestial bodies _____

Space Oddity

If Pluto's not a planet, what is it? Today, we're going to answer that question, but first we need to highlight that the classification and organization of these various bodies are based on highly refined rules.



Planets, dwarf planets, meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets are some of the main types of celestial bodies in our Solar System.

As in other branches of science, classification is essential to our field of study. Not only does it help with research, but it also helps transmit ideas—in places like planetariums and other academic sites—and advances our understanding of space.

So, what makes Pluto NOT a planet? In 2006, using new information discovered by scientific satellites, the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the governing body of all astronomy, rigorously applied three criteria to reclassify Pluto.

To be a planet, a celestial body must:

1. orbit the Sun.
2. be spherical.
3. have a gravitational pull that can move all other bodies from its orbital path, meaning it's the biggest in the area.

While Pluto meets the first two criteria, it fails on the third; therefore, Pluto is a dwarf planet. After learning more about Pluto's neighborhood, we discovered it was not alone! Little did the IAU know how publicly debated and controversial this reclassification would be; in fact, debates on social media continue to this day. Celestial bodies must be categorized based on highly specialized criteria, and these criteria are constantly evolving as we learn more.

Let's close by reiterating that categorizing and classifying celestial bodies is essential to advancing our knowledge of our Solar System. And as in other scientific realms, the more we advance our knowledge, the better we understand the world around us.

04 Choose one of the other celestial bodies from the text and find out how they are classified. Present your findings to the class.





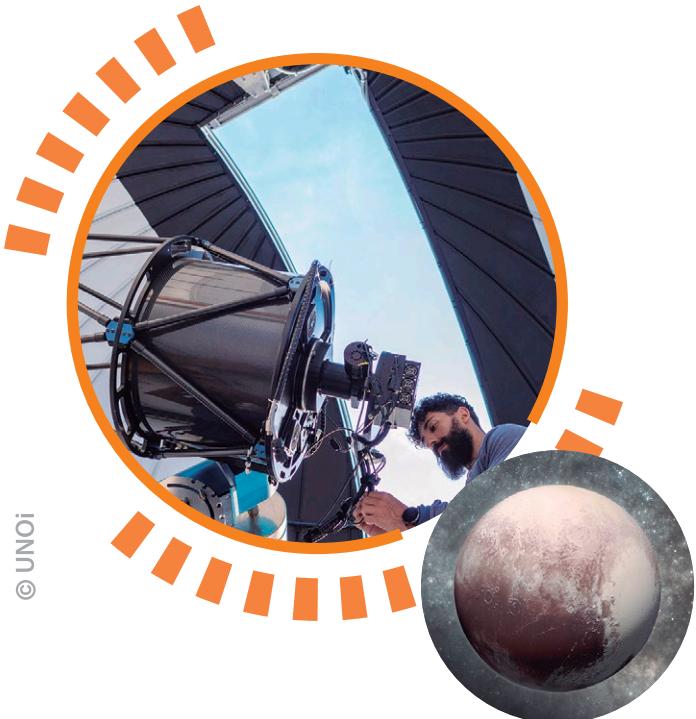
05 Unscramble the words to form sentences.

- debate / as Pluto's / rarely has a / status / as much / public / change in / planetary / scientific decision / sparked

- could be removed / little did the / list so suddenly / a beloved planet / from the official / public expect that

- understand the structure / the reclassification of / System / so significant was / reshaped how we / of our Solar / Pluto that it

- as a dwarf planet / than Pluto was reclassified / the IAU introduced / no sooner had / of other celestial / a planet / the new definition of



06 Use inversions to complete the sentences.

- Rarely / scientific classification / cause / controversy /

- No sooner / IAU / announce / reclassification

- Little / astronomers / realize

- So significant / new data



07 Use the sentences in Exercises 5 and 6 to create an opinion paragraph about Pluto.



Imagine you are a group of astronomers. Discuss the impact of the constantly advancing understanding of space through satellites, telescopes, and human and machine-run space voyages. Then, present your conclusions to your class.