

PLUTO

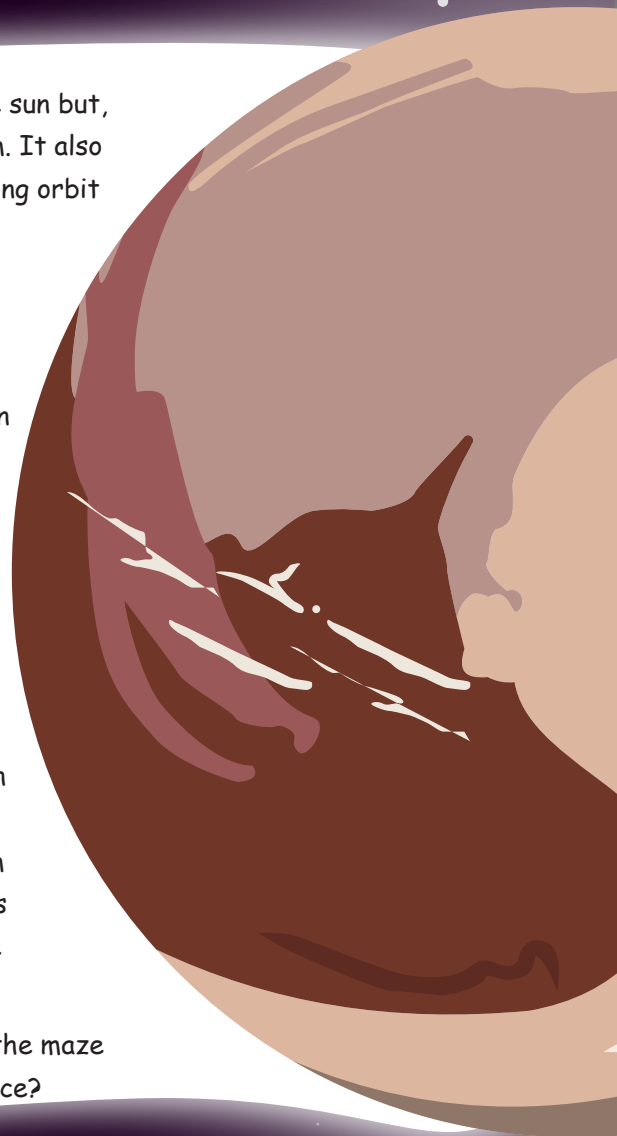
A DWARF PLANET

Pluto was once considered the 9th and most distant planet from the sun but, since 2006, it has been the largest dwarf planet in our solar system. It also has an elliptical orbit so for 20 years out of its 248-Earth-years-long orbit it is actually closer to the Earth than Neptune.

American astronomer Percival Lowell first suggested that Pluto existed in 1905 based on the fact that the orbits of Neptune and Uranus seemed to be affected by the gravity of another planet. It was not until 1930 that Clyde Tombaugh confirmed its exact location and as recent as 2015 that it was confirmed to have 5 moons.

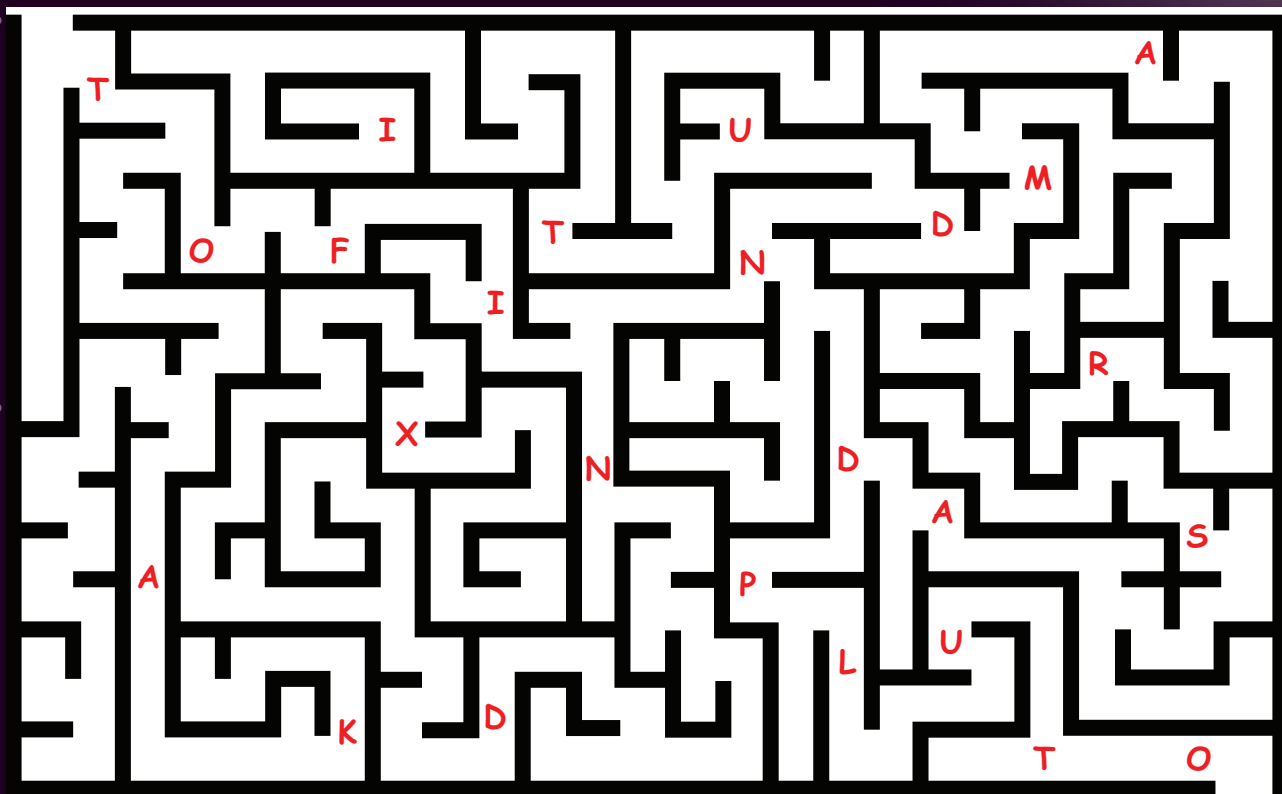
Pluto was named by 11-year-old Venetia Burney who suggested to her grandfather, Tombaugh, that it be named after the Roman god of the underworld. This name also honours Percival Lowell, whose initials are the first two letters of Pluto.

Due to Pluto's distance from Earth, little was known about it until 2015, when NASA's New Horizons space probe made a close flyby. New Horizons showed that Pluto has a diameter of 2,370 kms which is less than one-fifth the diameter of Earth and about two-thirds as wide as Earth's moon. It is the coldest planet in the solar system at minus 225 degrees Celsius and has water ice mountains as high as 3,500 metres with the rest of the planet being covered in methane and nitrogen ice.



See if you can help the New Horizon probe get to Pluto. As you solve the maze the letters you pass will tell you why Mickey Mouse went into space?

START



FINISH