

Name: _____

Date: _____

Poor Planet Pluto

When Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto in 1930, the world celebrated the finding of a ninth planet. But seventy-six years later, in August of 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) decided there needed to be a new definition for planets. These scientists voted and said that a planet is an object that orbits (travels around) a star. It is large enough for its gravity to have formed it into a round shape, and it needs to be big enough so that no other objects are cluttering up its orbit. Compared to the other planets, Pluto is very small. It's rather lumpy, and its orbit travels a very different path from the eight planets of our solar system. Most importantly, Pluto's orbit is full of other enormous chunks of ice and rock. Some of these objects may be even bigger than Pluto! These objects, including Pluto, are known as "Kuiper Belt Objects." So what did the scientists do after voting on a new definition for planets? They announced that Pluto would no longer be considered a planet. They gave it a new title, a dwarf planet. Poor Pluto.

1. In what year was Pluto discovered? _____

2. What are some things that make Pluto different from the eight planets? _____

3. Do you think Pluto should still be considered a planet? Why or why not? _____

4. In the song "Poor Planet Pluto," the scientists tell Pluto that he is no longer a planet. How do you think Pluto feels about this? What does Pluto say or do to make you feel this way?

5. Think about a time when you felt left out. What did you do about it? _____

6. When you know someone feels "out of place," what can you do to make them feel better?
