

Knit Kit 9 - Pluto's Heart



Cold hearts need love too

The Story

When the planet was discovered in 1930, there was a big deal made of naming the new-found (then) planet. Planets in our Solar System are all named after the gods of ancient Rome. The new planet needed a Roman god's name too. Percival Lowell, the astronomer who found Pluto, heard suggestions from Atlas to Zeus, he even turned down his own wife's suggestions.

An 11-year old girl in Oxford suggested the name Pluto. Lowell liked it, partly because the first two letters (PL) were his initials. In Roman myth, Pluto was the king of the underworld, and his personality was said to be cold and distant, just like this cold, distant planet.

I like this story, because it shows that every person has access to change the landscape of science. There is plenty of room for personality, humanity and character in space science!

The Science

Pluto was discovered in 1930. It's so small and far away that we had to know exactly where to look before we could find it. If you unfolded Pluto's surface into a flat map, it would be smaller than Russia! In 2006, we stopped calling it a planet (like the Earth, or Mars) and

changed it to a dwarf planet. Dwarf planets are like small planets, round rocky things in space, except way smaller than planets. They are usually found within asteroid belts, unlike full-size planets.

In 2018, the New Horizons probe flew by Pluto, and snapped some great pics - the most detailed we've ever seen. The heart shape that you can see on Pluto is actually split into two areas. The left is an ice sheet about four times bigger than Edinburgh. The right hand side is all icy mountains

This is an easy knit. You will need:

- 4 colours of wool - we used black, white, cream and pink.
- A pair of knitting needles

And that's it!

You don't have to use the colours that we used - just use whatever you or your family have lying around. In this knit, we used around 25g of black, and 10g of white, cream and yellow, and knitted on 4mm knitting needles.

Skills used include: Cast On, Knit, Purl, Change Colour (fair isle), and Cast Off. Go to our website www.knittheuniverse.co.uk for links to handy YouTube videos to learn these skills. Remember: After casting on, knit odd-numbered rows, changing colours as you go, and purl even numbered rows, changing colours as you go.

