

Make a Model of the Pluto/Charon System

It is quite easy to make a model of the Pluto/Charon system — all you need are a pair of plastic foam balls and a dowel. The balance point is center of mass.

Materials:

- 2 polystyrene balls (4-inch and 2-inch)
- wooden dowel (1/4-inch diameter, 34 inches long)
- glue (to stick the balls onto the ends of the dowel)



New Horizons Co-Investigator Fran Bagenal demonstrates how Pluto and Charon orbit each other using a model she constructed and painted. Because Pluto is 8 times more massive than Charon, the center of mass (the pivot point) is 8:1 of the distance separating them.

