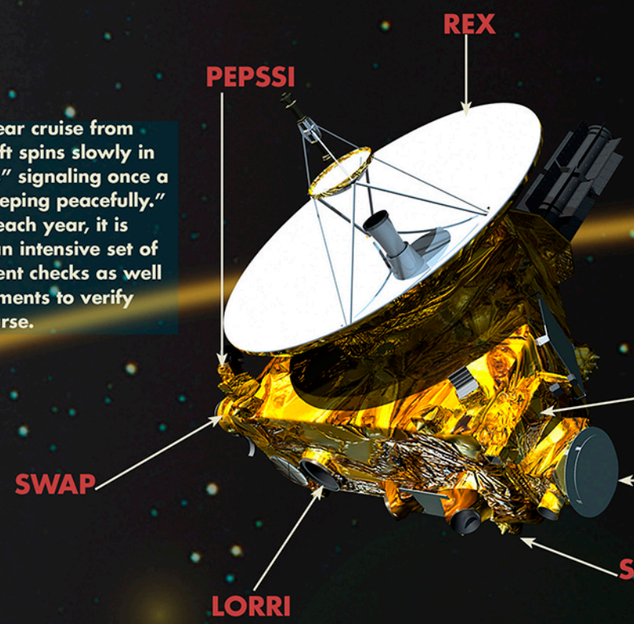
Ten Years and Three Billion Miles...

January19, 2006:
New Horizons spacecraft launches from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

February 28, 2007:
Spacecraft flies by Jupiter for a gravity assist that saves three years of flight time. The team conducts significant science in preparation for the Pluto encounter.

2007–2014
For most of the eight-year cruise from Jupiter to Pluto, the craft spins slowly in a state of "hibernation," signaling once a week to assure it's "sleeping peacefully." But for about 50 days each year, it is awakened to conduct an intensive set of spacecraft and instrument checks as well as navigation measurements to verify the spacecraft is on course.



December 2014
The spacecraft is awakened from its final planned hibernation. Intensive preparations for the Pluto encounter continue.

2017–2020
With NASA's approval, New Horizons can explore suitable, recently discovered Kuiper Belt Objects beyond Pluto.

July14, 2015.
New Horizons makes its closest approach to Pluto.

Alice: An ultraviolet imaging spectrometer used primarily to analyze the composition of Pluto's atmosphere.

LORRI: A high-resolution optical telescope and camera that will start monitoring Pluto regularly about 200 days out.

Ralph: A combination optical/infrared instrument that will be used to provide color maps of the surfaces of Pluto and Charon, plus compositional and thermal information on the surfaces.

PEPSSI: Particle detection instrument used to detect molecules and atoms escaping from Pluto's atmosphere.

SWAP: Particle instrument used to measure the properties of the solar wind around Pluto.

REX: Radio experiment to study Pluto's atmosphere by observing the bending of radio waves beamed up to the craft by giant antennas on Earth.

Student Dust Counter: Devised by undergrads at University of Colorado; will count dust particle impacts from Earth all the way into the Kuiper Belt.