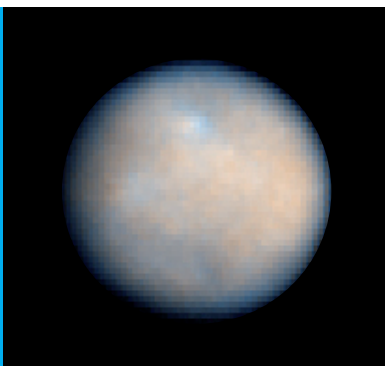


## Ceres asteroid and dwarf planet

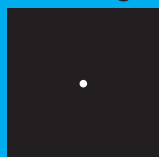


The first asteroid to be discovered, on 1 January 1801. Since 2006 Ceres belongs to the dwarf planets.

distance to the Sun:	414,700,000 km
diameter:	959 km
orbital period ('year'):	4 years, 214 days
rotational period ('day'):	9 h, 4 m, 27 s
temperature:	-106°C

100 x larger:

distance  
(scale)  
**4.15 m**



size  
(scale)  
**0.01 mm**

## Ceres

Ceres is by far the largest asteroid, containing 30% of the total mass of all asteroids. Since 2006 Ceres is a member of the new class of **dwarfplanets**. Ceres is clearly different from the other asteroids, with a high percentage of water ice. It may harbour an ocean of liquid water underneath its surface.

Astronomers believe that Ceres may be a surviving **protoplanet**, a huge building block of planets. Apparently it was not able to merge with other protoplanets to form a new planet. However, it may also be that Ceres formed within the Kuiper Belt and moved to the inner Solar System later.

Although Ceres is visible with an ordinary pair of binoculars the picture on the front side is the best we have of its surface at the moment. That should change when the space probe Dawn, that was launched in 2007, reaches the dwarf in 2015. It will then enter into orbit around Ceres. Before that, Dawn will fly past the asteroid Vesta in 2011.

Scale 1:100 billion: 1 cm in your model represents 1 million km in reality; explanation of abbreviations: d = days; m = minutes or metres; h = hours; s = seconds; dist. = distance

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scale model  
solar system  
1:100 billion

Ceres

Ceres