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EP003

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EP002 : *Pokémon Emergency!*

Original series

EP004 : *Challenge of the Samurai*

→

Ash Catches a Pokémon (Japanese: ポケモン ゲットだぜ！ *I Caught a Pokémon!*) is the third episode of the Pokémon animated series. It was first broadcast in Japan on April 15, 1997, and in the United States on September 10, 1998.

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Spoiler warning: this article may contain major plot or ending details.

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Blurb

Ash discovers and catches a Caterpie—his first Pokémon capture! Though Ash is excited, Misty is grossed out by Bug-type Pokémon, so she is repulsed by its attempts to be friends with her. At night, as Ash and Misty sleep, Caterpie shares with Pikachu its dream of evolving into a Butterfree.

Ash Catches a Pokémon



EP003	
ポケモン ゲットだぜ！ <i>I Caught a Pokémon!</i>	
First broadcast	
Japan	April 15, 1997
United States	September 10, 1998
English themes	
Opening	Pokémon Theme
Japanese themes	
Opening	めざせポケモンマスター
Ending	ひゃくごじゅういち
Credits	
Animation	Team Ota
Screenplay	富岡淳広 Atsuhiro Tomioka
Storyboard	浅田裕二 Yūji Asada

The next day, Ash is able to capture a Pidgeotto after battling it with Pikachu. Before Ash can celebrate too wildly, Misty reminds him that his success is due more to luck than skill.

Team Rocket shows up to steal Pikachu—they realize that there's really something special about this Pokémon—and Ash vows to defend himself. Pikachu and Pidgeotto are weakened by Koffing and Ekans, so he reluctantly sends out Caterpie. To the surprise of Jessie and James—not to mention Ash—Caterpie's String Shot is able to defeat the Team Rocket Pokémon, including Meowth!

When Misty tries to make nice with Caterpie, it evolves into a Metapod. Could a Butterfree Evolution be far behind?

Plot

Look Out, It's A Bug-Type Pokémon!

Picking up right where the previous episode left off, Ash throws his Poké Ball at a Caterpie in Viridian Forest. He attempts to break free but is unsuccessful. Ash celebrates catching his first Pokémon, holding the Poké Ball, and running in circles out of joy. When Ash holds the Poké Ball closer to Misty's face, she reveals that she has a fear of bugs, even if they are contained in a Poké Ball. Pikachu is happy to have Caterpie along, and Ash decides to bring Caterpie out, scaring Misty away. Caterpie wants to make friends with Misty, but she prefers Pikachu. Ash is offended by Misty's discomfort and complaints, which hurt Caterpie's feelings. Ash reassures Caterpie and continues traveling without Misty. However, Misty has other plans, as she is still upset about her ruined bicycle and wants Ash to replace it. Because of this, she continues following Ash.

Early Worm Gets The Bird

Later that night, Ash sets up camp for the night. Misty, also getting ready to go to sleep, exchanges a few smart remarks with Ash, upsetting Pikachu and Caterpie. While Ash and Misty sleep, Pikachu and Caterpie get to know each other a little better. In the morning, Misty remains frightened of Caterpie, causing the Pokémon to become subdued and return to his Poké Ball. Although Ash is angry, a wild Pidgeotto captures his attention.

Wanting to catch Pidgeotto, Ash throws a Poké Ball, but Pidgeotto simply swats it away. Misty retorts that a Trainer needs to battle and weaken a wild Pokémon to capture it. She mentions that he caught Caterpie only because he was weak, irritating Ash, who summons Caterpie to battle it despite the type disadvantage against Pidgeotto, of which both Misty and Pikachu are aware. Ash recalls Caterpie just in time, causing Pidgeotto to get its beak stuck in a tree.

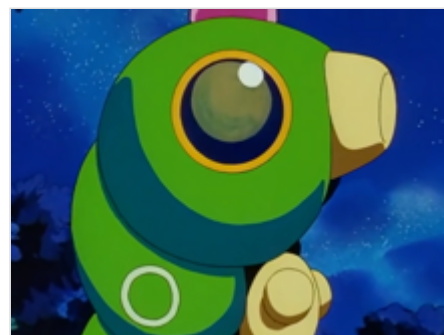
Ash sends Pikachu after Pidgeotto just as it frees itself. Pikachu uses Thunder Shock to hit Pidgeotto, weakening it and allowing Ash to toss a Poké Ball. The Ball takes Pidgeotto in and drops to the ground and starts swaying. After a few moments, the Ball stops

Assistant director 浅田裕二 Yūji Asada

Animation director 玉川明洋 Akihiro Tamagawa

Additional credits

- Screenshots on Filb.de (<https://www.filb.de/anim/e/pm/003>)
- ポケモン ゲットだぜ! (<https://youtu.be/zXSnlIwwUfo>) on the official Japanese Pokémon YouTube channel
- Ash Catches a Pokémon (<https://youtu.be/ObtS79k2NM4>) on the official Pokémon TV YouTube channel



Caterpie dreaming about evolving into a Butterfree



Pidgeotto being caught by Ash

moving; Ash has captured the Pidgeotto. Despite the success, Misty continues to berate him for his lack of knowledge about strategy and rebukes his idea that simply trying hard enough would make things work out.

Team Rocket Wants Pikachu?

Team Rocket intrudes on their argument, reciting their motto. They decide to target Ash's Pikachu, mentioning his incredible power, which causes them to become distracted in a short internal argument before they decide to attack. They send out Koffing and

Ekans to battle, despite a double-team being considered against the Pokémon League rules. Misty wants to jump in, but Ash does not want to break the rules. Koffing's Sludge attack blinds Pikachu, taking him out of the battle. While he hands Pikachu off to Misty, he sends out his newly caught Pidgeotto, which dodges both Koffing and Ekans's attacks before going into a Quick Attack. Ekans avoids the attack by going underground, forcing Pidgeotto to come to a sudden stop. Koffing fires a Smog attack, which Pidgeotto splits with its wings before dodging multiple Sludge attacks and Ekans's retaliation. Despite soaring high into the sky, both Ekans and Koffing are able to keep up with Pidgeotto. Pidgeotto tries to hit Koffing with Gust but misses and is defeated.

Caterpie, You're My Only Hope

Ash recalls Pidgeotto and tries to fight Team Rocket with his fists, but James easily holds him back. In a final attempt, Ash sends out Caterpie, which only amuses Team Rocket. Ekans and Koffing attack and Caterpie cowers, but Ash orders him to use String Shot. The attack completely incapacitates Koffing before Caterpie muzzles Ekans. Caterpie Tackles Koffing, knocking it into Ekans and taking them both out. Meowth tries to intervene, but he is also wrapped in String Shot. Taken by surprise, Team Rocket flees but promises they will be back.

Ash congratulates Caterpie on coming through, and after some encouragement, Misty pats Caterpie's head. At that moment, Caterpie begins to spray silk from his mouth, startling her. Ash puts Caterpie down as the thread covers his body, signaling his evolution. Caterpie evolves into Metapod, and Ash's Pokédex notes that he has reached this stage more quickly than any other Caterpie on record. In addition, Misty shows approval of Ash's strengthening bonds with his Pokémon. Despite having fewer reservations about Metapod, the sight of a Beedrill scares Misty, who looks forward to leaving the forest.

Major events

- Ash catches the Caterpie from the end of the last episode, making him his first caught Pokémon.
- Ash also catches a Pidgeotto.
- Team Rocket reveals to Ash their intention to steal his Pikachu.
- Meowth is revealed to know Fury Swipes.
- James's Koffing is revealed to know Sludge.
- Jessie's Ekans is revealed to know Dig.
- Caterpie is revealed to know String Shot and Tackle.
- Ash has his first, although unofficial, Trainer battle, and wins.
- Ash's Caterpie evolves into Metapod.

For a list of all major events in Pokémon the Series: The Beginning, please see the timeline page.

Debuts

Pokémon debuts

- Pidgeotto (Ash's)
- Metapod (Ash's)
- Butterfree
- Beedrill



Ash after catching Caterpie

Characters

Humans

- Ash
- Misty
- Jessie
- James

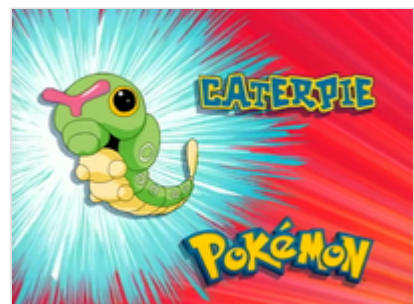
Pokémon

Who's That Pokémon?: Caterpie

- Pikachu (Ash's)
- Meowth (Team Rocket)
- Caterpie (Ash's; new; evolves)
- Metapod (Ash's; newly evolved; debut)
- Pidgeotto (Ash's; new; debut)
- Ekans (Jessie's)
- Koffing (James's)
- Butterfree (fantasy; debut)
- Beedrill (debut)



Dare da?



Who's That Pokémon?

Trivia

- This is the first episode in which evolution is shown.
 - This is the first time a main character catches a Pokémon that would later evolve in the same episode. This scenario would not be repeated until more than 500 episodes later, in *The Thief That Keeps on Thieving!*.
- This is the first episode in which a main character catches more than one Pokémon of different species. This wouldn't occur again until *Working My Way Back to Mew!*, 1,088 episodes later.
- According to this episode, Misty cannot stand carrots or peppers, and her fear of Bug-type Pokémon is established here.
- Misty mentions in the Japanese version that she is ten years old.
- Misty owns a red sleeping bag decorated with bubbles, while Ash owns a blue sleeping bag with "Satoshi" (Ash's Japanese name) appearing on the name tag.

- This is the first episode where type advantages are mentioned: Flying-type moves are effective against Bug-type Pokémon.
- A real-world animal appears in this episode, as Pidgeotto is seen eating a regular worm.
- Despite the episode title saying "a Pokémon", Ash catches *two* Pokémon.
- Both of the Pokémon Ash catches in this episode are released by the time Ash travels to the Orange Islands.
- This is the first episode where Ash uses his signature catchphrase and pose when successfully catching a Pokémon.
 - Each of Ash's traveling companions would attempt to copy this during the original series.
- Caterpie's fight with Pidgeotto and Ash's capturing of the latter was shown on the VHS *A Sneak Peek at Pokémon*.
- In this episode, when Caterpie evolves into Metapod, it shoots a shower of white silk string from its mouth onto itself and sheds its skin in the process, similar to a real caterpillar going into pupation. Later episodes show Caterpie evolving like the rest of the Pokémon do.
- Ash mentions that the Pokémon League has regulations stating that Trainers may only use one Pokémon at a time in battles. This rule may have changed years later in *Pokémon the Series: Ruby and Sapphire*, in which two-on-two battles are not considered unusual.
- This was for a long time the episode with the lowest number of human characters appearing, featuring only Ash, Misty, Jessie, and James. 672 episodes later, *Sewaddle and Burgh in Pinwheel Forest!* matched this record.
 - Coincidentally, both of these episodes take place in a forest and feature Ash catching a Bug-type Pokémon.
 - 1,013 episodes later, the record was broken by *Guiding an Awakening!*, which features only three human characters.
- After Misty bluntly makes clear her fear of insects, Ash demands to know whether Misty's parents taught her any manners, with her simply turning away without answering Ash's question. *Pocket Monsters: The Animation* would reveal that Misty and her sisters had been abandoned by their parents thanks to the excessive standards towards Gym Leaders.

Errors

- In *Pokémon Emergency!*, Ash says "Poké Ball, go!" while throwing a Poké Ball at Caterpie. In this episode, he instead says, "Caterpie, you're mine!"
 - In the same scene in *Pokémon Emergency!*, he is wearing his bag, but in this episode, it is missing.
- When Ash runs to Caterpie's Poké Ball, his hat has its colors reversed.
- Caterpie's Poké Ball has its outer ring colored white instead of black when Ash shows it to Misty.
- Just before Caterpie dashes over to Misty, she is partially hiding behind a tree and the trees behind her are obscured by bushes, but when Misty backs away from Caterpie, the bushes and the trees disappear.
- During the scene when Ash and Misty are sleeping and Pikachu and Caterpie are "talking," Pikachu starts bouncing back and forth on his two feet. He suddenly stops on his left foot, but the bouncing noises can still be heard.
- Pikachu freezes in midair while doing two backflips in front of Caterpie.
- When Ash and Pikachu are startled awake by Misty's scream, Caterpie's Poké Ball starts off facing away from Misty, but when Caterpie goes back in it, it is facing towards Misty, but upside down when Ash picks it up.
- When Caterpie is about to attack Pidgeotto, one of its right feet is green.
- When Ash throws the Poké Ball at Pidgeotto, both halves of the Poké Ball are red.
- When Jessie says that Team Rocket is here to steal Pikachu, the tip on Meowth's tail is missing.

- After Ash says that two Pokémon against one is unfair, part of the background turns the same color as Jessie's hair for a split-second.
- In a couple of scenes, Ekans's underbelly is colored purple like the rest of its body instead of yellow.
- When Ekans and Koffing knock out Pidgeotto and they go in to attack Caterpie, Ekans's Japanese voice can be heard.
- In the Russian dub, several Polish words can be heard throughout the episode.



Ash's miscolored hat



The Poké Ball error



Meowth's miscolored tail

Dub edits

- Kanto Pokérap: Day 3
- In the English version, Misty reads the title card instead of Ash, while in the Japanese version, Ash reads the title card .
 - This is justified in that, in the dub at least, Ash is busy gloating over his caught Caterpie, and thus is unable to read the title card like he usually does.
- In the scene before Misty tells him about the three things she hates, Ash complains about girls and their selfishness. In the dub, after she says that bugs are one of the three things most disgusting things in the world, Ash asks her what the disgusting things are *aside from herself*.
- When Caterpie is looking sad due to Misty telling him to stay in his Poké Ball, the katakana for "Ga~n" (a Japanese sound effect) moves across the screen. This was painted out for the dub.
- How Misty and Ash commented on Caterpie is different between the versions (mostly due to religious censorship). In the English version, Ash was mentioning how he loves Caterpie, and Misty sarcastically responds how it takes a worm to love a worm; whereas in the original version, Ash comments that he and Caterpie are the same kind of Heaven and Misty retorts that their Heaven is *her* Hell.
- When Misty is telling Ash that birds eat worms, there is a shot where she slaps him for putting his Pokémon in danger. This was cut from the dub.
 - Oddly, the sound effect of the slap is kept in.
 - Ron London, the ADR engineer editor who recorded the English voices for this episode, doesn't recall the exact reason why the sound of the slap was retained. He believes that it may have been because the music and effects audio tracks were not separated, so removing the slap effect would have required replacing the music. However, voice director and dub writer Michael Haigney noted that at the moment the slap was heard, there was no music and almost no ambient forest sound effects in the background. So, the slap could have been mixed out without affecting the music or ambient sound effects.^[1]
- While Ash tells Caterpie "Counter", some have taken this to mean the move, which Caterpie cannot learn. In the original, Ash merely told it to "counter-strike".



The cut shot

- In the English version, the scenes where Ekans and Koffing each tackle Pidgeotto, knocking it out in the process, were slowed down, while in the Japanese version, they each tackle Pidgeotto at a fast pace.

In other languages

Language Title [show]

References

1. Haigney, Michael. "Ep. 3 Ash Catches a Pokémon." *Original Pokémon*, Buzzsprout, 23 Mar 2022. <https://originalpokeman.buzzsprout.com/1663597/10305057-ep-3-ash-catches-a-pokemon> (<https://originalpokeman.buzzsprout.com/1663597/10305057-ep-3-ash-catches-a-pokemon>), 20:00–25:41

← EP002 : *Pokémon Emergency!* Original series EP004 : *Challenge of the Samurai* →



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