by [Shogakukan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shogakukan" \o "Shogakukan). Since 2009, The Pokémon Company International (TPCi) subsidiary of TPC has managed the franchise in all regions outside of Asia.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Daswani_(2009)-9)

Name

The [contracted term](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_abbreviated_and_contracted_words) *Pokémon* derives from a [syllabic abbreviation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syllabic_abbreviation) of the franchise's full name, ***Pocket Monsters*** (**ポケ**ット**モン**スター, ***Poke****tto****Mon****sutā*). When the franchise began to be released internationally, the short form of the title was used, with an [acute accent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute_accent) (´) for pronunciation.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tsukayama_(2016)-10)

*Pokémon* refers both to the franchise itself and the creatures within its fictional universe. As a noun, it is [identical in both the singular and plural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_plurals#Nouns_with_identical_singular_and_plural), as is every individual species name;[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11) it is grammatically correct to say "one Pokémon" and "many Pokémon", as well as "one [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu)" and "many Pikachu". In English, *Pokémon* may be pronounced either /'powkɛmon/ (*poe-keh-mon*) or /'powkɪmon/ (*poe-key-mon*).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-12)

General concept

*Main articles:*[*Pokémon universe*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_universe)*and*[*Gameplay of Pokémon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gameplay_of_Pok%C3%A9mon)

The *Pokémon* franchise is set in a world in which humans coexist with creatures known as Pokémon. *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* introduced 151 Pokémon species, with new Pokémon being introduced in subsequent games; as of February 2023, [1,015 Pokémon species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon) have been introduced.[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-13) Many Pokémon are designed to resemble real-world animals; for example, [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu) is a yellow mouse-like Pokémon with a lightning bolt-shaped tail, and possesses electrical abilities.

The [player character](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Player_character) takes the role of a Pokémon Trainer. The Trainer's three primary goals are to explore the Pokémon world, complete their Pokédex―an electronic handheld encyclopedia―by obtaining all available Pokémon, and to train a team of up to six Pokémon at a time and engage them in battle. To obtain most Pokémon, the Trainer uses a spherical device known as a Poké Ball. Once the opposing Pokémon is sufficiently weakened, the Trainer throws the Poké Ball against it, and it is then transformed into a form of energy to be transported into the device. Once the Pokémon is successfully caught, it is under the Trainer's command from then on. If the Poké Ball is thrown again, the Pokémon re-materializes into its original state. The Trainer's Pokémon can engage in battles against opposing Pokémon, including those in the wild or owned by other Trainers. Because the franchise is aimed at children, these battles are never presented as overtly violent and contain no blood or gore.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Liu_(1999)-14)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-15)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Thomas-Lester_(1999)-16)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mallory_(2001)-17) Pokémon never die in battle, instead [fainting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syncope_(medicine)) upon being defeated.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Plotz_(1999)-18)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Howe_(2000)-19)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Burkeman_(2000)-20)

After a Pokémon wins a battle, it gains [experience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience_point) and becomes stronger. After gaining a certain amount of experience points, its level increases, as well as one or more of its statistics. As its level increases, the Pokémon can learn new offensive and defensive moves to use in battle. Many species of Pokémon can evolve into a different species, with increased stats compared to its pre-evolved form. Most species will evolve at a certain level, while others evolve through different means, such as exposure to an evolution stone.

History

*For a chronological guide, see*[*Timeline of Pokémon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Pok%C3%A9mon)*.*

**Origins**

The concept behind *Pokemon* was originated by [Satoshi Tajiri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satoshi_Tajiri). Tajiri grew up in [Machida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machida,_Tokyo), a suburb of [Tokyo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokyo); and in his youth, enjoyed discovering and catching insects and other small creatures in the various ponds and fields that surrounded his town.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-21)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-22) As [Japan's economic miracle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_economic_miracle) began, many cities, including Machida, were significantly expanded, consequently encroaching the nature of the town. In his second year of [junior high school](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_education_in_Japan#Junior_high_school),[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-23)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-24) an [arcade hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amusement_arcade) opened in Tajiri's neighborhood, and he developed an interest in [video games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game). While studying electrical engineering at [Tokyo College of Technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tokyo_College_of_Technology&action=edit&redlink=1) [[ja](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%9D%B1%E4%BA%AC%E5%B7%A5%E6%A5%AD%E9%AB%98%E7%AD%89%E5%B0%82%E9%96%80%E5%AD%A6%E6%A0%A1)], Tajiri began publishing a [*doujinshi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doujinshi) magazine titled *Game Freak*.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-25) The title was inspired by the 1932 film [*Freaks*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freaks_(1932_film)), of which Tajiri was a fan.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-26) He self-published the first issue of the magazine in March 1983, at the age of 17.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-AMWC_p55-57-27) [[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-28) At the time, video game magazines were not yet published in Japan, allowing *Game Freak* to fill a [gap in the market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gap_in_the_market).[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-29)[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-30) Concurrently, Tajiri was contacted by aspiring [manga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manga) artist [Ken Sugimori](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Sugimori), who became *Game Freak'*s illustrator.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-31) *Game Freak* folded in the late 1980s,[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-AMWC_p55-57-27) by which point Tajiri had become a respected [game journalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_journalism) in Japan's fledgling video game industry.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-32)

Tajiri's knowledge of video games brought him into contact with [Tsunekazu Ishihara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsunekazu_Ishihara" \o "Tsunekazu Ishihara). Ishihara had studied Arts and Science at [Tsukuba University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsukuba_University), and was trained in [CGI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-generated_imagery). After working in advertisement for two years, Ishihara joined a company named Sedic in 1983, which created video graphics and software,[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon" \l "cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p82-33) including one video game, *[Otocky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otocky" \o "Otocky)* (1987).[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-34)[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-35) As video games became popular, Sedic also produced a number of game-related television shows for [Fuji Television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuji_Television)'s late-night slot.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p82-33) Ishihara, who became a TV producer, befriended Tajiri, as well as [ShigesatoItoi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigesato_Itoi" \o "Shigesato Itoi), who would later become CEO of Ape, Inc.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-36)[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._30-37) Ishihara was also the general director of the world's first gaming encyclopedia, *TV Games: Encyclopedia of Video Games* (テレビゲーム―電視遊戯大全, *Terebigēmu ― Denshi Yūgi Taizen*).[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-38)[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-39) In 2000, Kenji Hatakeyama & Masakazu Kubo wrote that, at the time, Ishihara was probably the most well-connected man in the industry,[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_p._97-98-40) with a knowledge of games "beyond comparison".[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-41) Ishihara was also interested in [playing cards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_card),[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kawaguchi_interview-42)[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Masuda_2019_interview-43) and contributed to the development of at least three simple [card games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Card_game) designed by Itoi for Ape.[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-cardgames-50)

In 1986, Tajiri, Sugimori, and a small group of fellow enthusiasts started an informal development team, named Game Freak, after the Tajiri's magazine. During the next three years, they [independently developed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indie_game) the puzzle game [*Quinty*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mendel_Palace), working on it alongside school or their other jobs.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-51) However, no one within the group could compose its [music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_music). After consulting all his contacts, Tajiri came into contact with [Junichi Masuda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junichi_Masuda), who became the group's composer.[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-52) *Quinty* was finished in 1989, and published by [Namco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namco).[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-53) Tajiri officially incorporated [Game Freak Co., Ltd.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Freak) on April 26, 1989.[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-54)

**1989 – 1995: Development of *Red* & *Green***

*Further information:*[*Pokémon Red and Blue § Development*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Red_and_Blue#Development)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Duo_gameboy.JPG)Two [Game Boy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy) consoles connected with a [Game Link Cable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Link_Cable).

Tajiri began developing ideas for *Pokemon* as development on *Quinty* neared its end. During this period, [Nintendo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo) announced the handheld [Game Boy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy) console. Tajiri learned that the device would have a [link port](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_port_(hardware)), and with the corresponding [Game Link Cable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Link_Cable), two Game Boy unites could be connected.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-55) Tajiri also remembered an incident while playing [*Dragon Quest II*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_Quest_II)*,* in which in-game items of varying rarities randomly appeared, including the rare Mysterious Hat.[[d]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-56) Tajiri did not encounter any, while Sugimori, who was also playing the game, encountered two. Upon recalling this experience, Tajiri realized that the cable now made it possible to transfer data from one cartridge to another.[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-57)[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Encylo_p140-58)[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-59)[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-60) Until that point, the Game Link Cable was only used for competing.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-61) Combining his inspiration with his childhood memories, Tajiri developed his idea into a virtual recreation of these experiences,[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-62) and an attempt to "regain the world that he had lost".[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-63) He would later state that the game represents "the story of a boy's summer day".[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-64)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gachapon.jpg)[*Gashapon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gashapon) capsules have been cited as an inspiration for Pokemon.

Tajiri and his staff began developing a game centered on capturing creatures of differing rarity. Because the Game Boy is a handheld console, these creatures could be exchanged with other players in real life. Once the player caught one of these creatures, it was to be stored in miniaturized form in a special capsule. This facet of the game was inspired by *[Ultraseven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultraseven" \o "Ultraseven)*, a *[tokusatsu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokusatsu" \o "Tokusatsu)* show that Tajiri had enjoyed as a child.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tajiri_Time_interview-65) [The series' titular character](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultraseven_(character)) owns a number of capsules containing miniaturized [*kaiju*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiju)*,* which come out and return to their original sizes when the capsule is thrown into mid-air. *Kaiju* media were an important influence to the developers, as many Game Freak staff members grew up with them.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Encylo_p140-58)[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-66) Other cited influences include *[gashapon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gashapon" \o "Gashapon)*, capsules with toy figures in them that can be drawn from vending machines;[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-67)[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-68) [collectible cards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectible_card), such as [baseball cards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baseball_card), [*Ultraman*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultraman) cards and *[menko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menko" \o "Menko)*;[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-69)[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-70)[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-71)[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-72) [*The Final Fantasy Legend*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Final_Fantasy_Legend);[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan1_page02-73) and [petting in Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet_culture_in_Japan), with Tajiri noting that having Pokemon is similar to having [pets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet).[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-74) Tajiri initially named his project *Capsule Monsters*, which GF's staff [commonly shortened](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_abbreviated_and_contracted_words) to *Capumon*.[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p65-66-75) However, *Capsule Monsters* could not be [trademarked](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trademark), and it was subsequently decided to title the game *Pocket Monsters*, which was shortened to *Pokemon*.[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p65-66-75)[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-76) Author Akihito Tomisawa wrote that the Game Freak staff devised with several alternatives, before settling on "Pocket Monsters".[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p65-66-75)

In March 1989, Nintendo co-founded Ape, Inc. with Itoi. Ape's principal work was [*Mother*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_(video_game)) (1989), a role-playing game written by Itoi, but it was also founded with the intent to give outside talent a chance to pitch new, innovative games.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kawaguchi_interview-42)[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._30-37) At the time, Ape was housed in the same [Kanda-Sudachō](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanda-Sudach%C5%8D) office building as Nintendo, located in [Tokyo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokyo).[[73]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-77) Ishihara, a friend of both Itoi and Tajiri, was involved with Ape's management and became vice president of the company in 1991.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._30-37)[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_p._97-98-40) Tajiri's relationship with Ishihara prompted the former to present his pitch at Ape's office.[[74]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan2_page01-78)[[75]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-79) Present during Tajiri's pitch was Takashi Kawaguchi, who worked at Nintendo's General Affairs Department and was also a manager at Ape.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kawaguchi_interview-42)[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-80) Kawaguchi brought the idea to Nintendo president [Hiroshi Yamauchi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshi_Yamauchi), who reportedly said, "This is it. This is the idea I've been waiting for."[[77]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-81) Coincidentally, Ishihara had conceived an idea for a game similar to that of Tajiri, and was also discussing it with Ape. The planned title, *Toto,* involved "using the Game Boy as an insect cage". Game Freak and Ape subsequently agreed to develop their projects as one.[[78]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._31-32-82) According to Tajiri, the two teams initially collaborated on the project, but the work proved difficult, one of the reasons being that Ape was busy developing *[EarthBound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EarthBound" \o "EarthBound)*.[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Miya_Tajiri_(2004)_p104-83)[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-84) Tajiri eventually figured that "rather than working with Ape, we had to do something on our own, or the project would never get finished".[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Miya_Tajiri_(2004)_p104-83) Ape, Inc. was subsequently not credited on the final product.

The development contract was signed at the beginning of 1990, with a planned delivery of the game in October.[[81]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._32-33-85) Tajiri directed the project, working under Ishihara.[[82]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-86) Ishihara was the producer – he managed the budget, staff, and work schedule, monitored the game's overall progress, and served as a liaison between Game Freak and Nintendo.[[83]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-87)[[78]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._31-32-82) Ishihara also contributed ideas to the development,[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Masuda_2019_interview-43) and helped with [debugging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debugging).[[84]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-88)[[85]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-89) Sugimori was in charge of the graphics and character design.[[86]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-90) Masuda composed the score and sound effects, and did additional programming.[[87]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-91) The budget that Nintendo granted to Game Freak was low.[[81]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tomisawa_p._32-33-85) Thus, *Pocket Monsters* was initially planned as a small, compact game, based primarily around Tajiri's core idea of exchanging.[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan1_page02-73)[[88]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-92) However, as development progressed, GF's ideas and ambitions for the game grew.[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan1_page02-73) It became clear that their idea would not be easy to realize. Sugimori admitted that, at the time, no one on the staff had much knowledge of RPGs.[[89]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-93) The project was consequently suspended indefinitely. While developing their second game, [*Smart Ball*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smart_Ball) (1991), Game Freak was commissioned by Nintendo to develop [*Yoshi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoshi_(video_game)) (1991), a simple puzzle game, the idea for which was suggested by Ishihara.[[90]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-94) *Yoshi* sold over three million copies worldwide,[[91]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-95) and both Tajiri[[92]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-96) and Masuda[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Masuda_2019_interview-43) said that this success allowed Game Freak to survive. Over the next three years, GF developed four more games: *Magical Tarurūto-kun* (1992), [*Mario & Wario*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_%26_Wario) (1993), *Nontan to Issho: KuruKuru Puzzle*, and *[Pulseman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulseman" \o "Pulseman)* (both 1994).

It is commonly stated that development for the initial game took six years.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11)[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97)[[94]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-98)[[95]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-99)[[96]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-65535_versions-100) This is, in fact, the total time passed from planning to finish—the game did not take six straight years to complete.[[97]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-101) After the initial development phase in the early 1990s,[[98]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-102) the staff "tinkered with it from time to time", as Sugimori put it.[[99]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-103) By October 1992, many Pokemon had already been designed, and a poll was held that month among all staff members to gauge the popularity of the different species. Several more such votes followed to determine collectively which Pokemon should be included.[[100]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-104) Still, development was largely suspended until the summer of 1994, after the release of *Pulseman*, upon which Tajiri decided it was time to make a serious effort towards finishing the game.[[101]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-105) By this point, Game Freak's experience had grown considerably, and many new staff members had joined the company, one of these being [Atsuko Nishida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atsuko_Nishida), a graphic designer who created [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu), among others.[[102]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-106)[[103]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-107)[[104]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-108) Ishihara used his knowledge of card games to add more depth to the battle system and suggested that the creatures should have types. Ishihara also came up with the idea of the Pokédex, a portable encyclopedia which players can use to keep track of their Pokemon.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Masuda_2019_interview-43) Throughout the years, Tajiri had several conversations with [Shigeru Miyamoto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigeru_Miyamoto),[[105]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-109) Nintendo's senior game designer who Tajiri described as a mentor figure.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tajiri_Time_interview-65) However, in a 2018 retrospect, Miyamoto downplayed his role, and stated that his contributions to *Pocket Monsters* were limited.[[106]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-110)

Both Tajiri and Ishihara sought to 'individualize' the player's experience, to make each game slightly different so as to create a unique experience.[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p153-154-111) At an early stage, Tajiri had the idea of having the software generate a random number on the first playthrough, ranging from 00001 to 65535 (the highest possible value of an [unsigned](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signedness) 16-bit [integer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integer)).[[108]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Miya_Tajiri_(2004)_p125-112)[[109]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Encyclopedia_p142-113) When a player catches a Pokemon, it is assigned the game's ID and the player's name, which are retained after it is traded.[[110]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-114) Based on the unique ID, Game Freak intended for the game to render slightly different landscapes and present the player with different Pokemon,[[96]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-65535_versions-100)[[109]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Encyclopedia_p142-113)[[111]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-115) which ultimately proved impossible.[[e]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-116) When Tajiri discussed these with Miyamoto, the latter opined that it was slightly difficult to understand. Miyamoto also suggested using different colored cartridges, which would make the differences between versions more visually clear.[[112]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-117) According to Tajiri, "five or seven colors" were considered[[113]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-118) before they settled on two: a *Red* version and a *Green* version. Both games were identical, but each had Pokemon not found in the other, so as to encourage trading between players.[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p153-154-111)

Ishihara aspired to create games of his own.[[114]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-119) As *Pocket Monsters Red* and *Green* were nearing completion, Ishihara founded [Creatures, Inc.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creatures,_Inc.) on November 8, 1995, originally headquartered in the same [Sudachō](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanda-Sudach%C5%8D" \o "Kanda-Sudachō) office building as the Nintendo Kanda Building in Tokyo.[[115]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Creatures_profile-120) Co-ownership of the *Pocket Monsters* property was subsequently assigned to Creatures. This resulted in the intellectual property having three legal owners: Game Freak, the main developer; Creatures, representing producer Ishihara; and Nintendo, the publisher, which acquired the property upon completion.[[116]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-121) Hatakeyama & Kubo (2000) wrote that *Pocket Monsters* is probably the only property in the world today for which the original rights are not concentrated in a single company."[[117]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p476-122) Tajiri and Ishihara briefly considered merging Game Freak and Creatures, before Tajiri decided against it, believing that it would erase what he had built up since he was a teenager. "I felt threatened by the idea of changing how Game Freak was operating, and starting back over with Mr. Ishihara", he said. "It was an identity problem. If Game Freak ceased to exist, then so would I". Tajiri noted that, since Game Freak and Creatures both focus on *Pocket Monsters*, it sometimes felt more like different departments than different companies.[[74]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan2_page01-78)

Development on *Pocket Monsters Red* and *Pocket Monsters Green* was completed in December 1995.[[118]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-123) They were originally announced to release on December 21, 1995,[[119]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-124) before being delayed to February 27, 1996 after a sufficient amount of cartridges, manuals, and packaging was produced. [Copyright notices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright_notice)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Legal-7) on merchandise display 1995 as the copyright date, despite no Pokemon product having actually been released that year.

**1996 – 1998: Rise in Japan**

**Release of *Red* & *Green***

Nintendo had low expectations of *Pocket Monsters Red* and *Green*, and media largely ignored the games.[[120]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-125) The [Game Boy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy) console was in production for seven years at this point and was nearing the [end of its lifecycle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End-of-life_product).[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97)[[121]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-126)[[122]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-127)[[123]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-128). However, the console was widespread and readily affordable to children,[[124]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-129) and had experienced a small amount of renewed interest due to the success of [*Mario's Picross*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario%27s_Picross). Coincidentally, this game directed by Isihara and co-developed by Ape. The popularity of *Mario's Picross* inspired Nintendo to develop the [Game Boy Pocket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy_Pocket),[[125]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-130) a slimmer and improved version of the Game Boy, released in Japan in July 1996.[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sato_(1998)_p118-131) Due to the timing of the products, some believed that the Game Boy Pocket was created to promote *Pocket Monsters*, while others noted that it was purely coincidental timing that nonetheless benefitted them both.[[127]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-132)

***CoroCoro* manga and promotions**

The monthly [CoroCoro Comic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CoroCoro_Comic" \o "CoroCoro Comic) and bimonthly *BessatsuCoroCoro Comic* magazines are published by [Shogakukan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shogakukan" \o "Shogakukan), a long-term business partner of Nintendo, and have featured manga based on Nintendo properties. The magazines have long played a part in the franchise's popularity. At the time of *Red* and *Green*'s release, *CoroCoro Comic* was read by one in four elementary school students.[[128]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-133) *CoroCoro'*s deputy editor-in-chief was [Masakazu Kubo](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Masakazu_Kubo&action=edit&redlink=1) [[ja](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E4%B9%85%E4%BF%9D%E9%9B%85%E4%B8%80)]. On Ishihara's suggestion,[[129]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-134) Kubo commissioned the creation of a manga series titled *[Pokemon Pocket Monsters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Pocket_Monsters" \o "Pokémon Pocket Monsters),* written and illustrated by [Kosaku Anakubo](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kosaku_Anakubo&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Kosaku Anakubo (page does not exist)) [[ja](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E7%A9%B4%E4%B9%85%E4%BF%9D%E5%B9%B8%E4%BD%9C" \o "ja:穴久保幸作)]; its first chapter was published in the March/April issue of *BessatsuCoroCoro Comic*, released on February 28, 1996, one day after the release of *Red* and *Green*.[[130]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-135) In a survey of their target groups, Shogakukan determined that the *Pocket Monsters* manga was well received.[[131]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-136)

As a tie-in, the May 1996 issue of *CoroCoro* announced the "Legendary Pokemon Offer", centered around the secret Pokemon, [Mew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mew_(Pok%C3%A9mon)).[[132]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-137)[[133]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-CoroCoro_May_96-138) Mew was a last-minute addition to *Red & Green,* unobtainable through normal means, and was intended to be used at a later point in some post-launch activity.[[134]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_1-139) To participate in the promotion, *CoroCoro* readers had to send in a postcard, and from the entrants, 20 were selected at random. The winners then had to send in their cartridge for Mew to be included in their game.[[134]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_1-139) The lottery was a success and increased [word-of-mouth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word-of-mouth_marketing)–by September, sales of *Red* and *Green* had surpassed 1 million units.[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97)[[134]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_1-139)[[135]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-140)

**Development and release of *Blue***

After the release of *Red* and *Green*, Game Freak continued to grow, hiring many new employees. For training purposes, they were ordered to study bugs and fix the [source code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_code) of *Red* and *Green*, as well as to create new [sprites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprite_(computer_graphics)).[[136]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-141) The upgraded version, *Pocket Monsters Blue*, was not intended for sale; few copies were made, intended as a special gift to upwards of 100 people.[[137]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-142) After Kubo learned of it, he encouraged Tajiri and Ishihara to officially release *Blue*. President [Hiroshi Yamauchi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshi_Yamauchi) initially rejected the proposal, expressing concern that it would confuse people into thinking that it was an entirely new game. Kawaguchi then suggested an alternative, which Yamauchi agreed with: *Blue* would only be made available through a limited-time mail order.[[138]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-143) It was announced in the November 1996 issue of *CoroCoro*, which explicitly stated that *Blue* was not a new game, rather a special, limited edition to celebrate the millionth sale of *Red* and *Green*.[[133]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-CoroCoro_May_96-138) It was an unexpected success–300,000 units were initially produced, but over 600,000 were ordered.[[139]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-144)[[140]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-145)

**Release of the trading card game**

The *[Pokemon Card Game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokemon_Trading_Card_Game" \o "Pokemon Trading Card Game)* was one of the first [collectible card games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectible_card_game) developed in Japan. It was influenced by [*Magic: The Gathering*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic:_The_Gathering), the first-ever collectible card game,[[141]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p153-146)[[142]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Pokemon_Business_Study_Group_(1998)_p112-117-147)[[143]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kimura_2006-148) and can be considered a simplified version of *MTG*.[[144]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-149)[[145]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-150) First released in the United States in 1993, *Magic* had gained popularity not only in North America and Europe, but also in Asia.[[146]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-151) Ishihara was a fan of [playing cards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_card),[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Masuda_2019_interview-43) and had contributed to the development of at least three simple card games designed by [ShigesatoItoi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigesato_Itoi" \o "Shigesato Itoi) and released through Ape, Inc.[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-cardgames-50) At the time, Ishihara was particularly interested in *Magic: The Gathering*.[[141]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p153-146) While developing the *Red* and *Green*, he realized that the concept behind it could be adapted into a card game similar to *Magic*.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kawaguchi_interview-42) The *Pokemon Card Game* was designed by Ishihara, Akihiko Miura, Kōichi Ōyama, and Takumi Akabane.[[147]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-152)[[148]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-153) All were former staff members of Ape and had previously worked on *[EarthBound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EarthBound" \o "EarthBound)* (1994): Miura was its main designer, Ōyama was its art director, and Akabane was one of its chief debuggers.[[149]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-154)

Card games [have a long history in Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karuta), but a collectible card game was a relatively novel concept there.[[150]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-155) Consequently, Ishihara had difficulties finding distributors. He proposed his idea to Nintendo in 1995. They agreed to manufacture the cards, subcontracting an unidentified printing company; however, Nintendo did not want the hassle of developing their own distribution system, and sought retailers willing to sell the game.[[151]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-156) Ishihara was eventually contacted by Satoshi Kayama, the director of [Media Factory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_Factory). Kayama was also a fan of card games, and he felt that CCGs would soon rise to prominence in Japan, gathering information on the possibility of developing one. When Kayama learned of the card game, he contacted Ishihara and offered to distribute it, signing the contract near the end of 1995.[[152]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-157)

The *Pokemon Card Game* was first announced in the November 1996 issue, alongside *Pocket Monsters Blue*.[[153]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-158) The issue included two promo cards: one of [Jigglypuff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jigglypuff) and one of [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu). Surveys showed that they were respectively the most and second-most popular Pokemon at the time.[[154]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-159) The initial set of cards was released on October 20, 1996.[[155]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-160) [Booster packs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booster_pack) were also released, containing 10 cards.[[156]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-161) Expansions to the card game continue to be released. Outside Japan, the booster packs contained 11 cards.[[f]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-boosters-162) The original set would be named the [Base Set](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Pok%C3%A9mon_Base_Set) in English. Despite being ignored by media other than *CoroCoro*, the card game was immediately successful.[[157]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-163) 87 million cards were shipped by the end of March 1997, six months after launch. The success of the anime series later further increased that of the cards: by March 1998, a total of 499 million cards had been produced in Japan.[[158]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p246-247-164)

**Development of the anime**

By August 1996, Kubo was convinced of *Pokemon*'s potential, and believed that Shogakukan should produce a *Pocket Monsters* [anime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime).[[159]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-165) Nintendo executives were hesitant, realizing that should the anime fail, it would negatively affect the popularity of the game.[[160]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-166) Ishihara also initially opposed the idea, because he thought it would harshly hasten the 'consumption' of the property: he feared that if the series would end, people would assume that Pokemon has ended and move on from the franchise.[[161]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-167) At the time, Creatures and Game Freak were planning sequel(s) to *Red* and *Green*, [*Pocket Monsters Gold* and *Silver*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Gold,_Silver,_and_Crystal), and Ishihara did not want the anime to end before they could release the new titles.[[162]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_2-168)[[163]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-169) Kubo was ultimately able to resolve the concerns of all parties involved. An important aspect to this success was the [Mini 4WD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mini_4WD) fad and its accompanying series, *[BakusōKyōdai Let's & Go!!](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakus%C5%8D_Ky%C5%8Ddai_Let%27s_%26_Go!!" \o "Bakusō Kyōdai Let's & Go!!)*. Kubo had an important role in the creation of both, which impressed the stakeholders.[[164]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-170) To appease Ishihara, Kubo promised him that the anime would last for at least one and a half year. This was unusually long for a debuting anime, and required a substantial investment.[[162]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_2-168)[[165]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-171) Kubo's proposal for the anime was officially approved on September 26, 1996.[[166]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-172) It marked the first instance of Nintendo licensing their IP for a television anime.[[167]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-173) Kubo assigned independent producer [Choji Yoshikawa](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Choji_Yoshikawa&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Choji Yoshikawa (page does not exist)) [[ja](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%90%89%E5%B7%9D%E5%85%86%E4%BA%8C" \o "ja:吉川兆二)] to lead the project.[[168]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-174)

[Shogakukan Productions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shogakukan_Productions) (ShoPro), Shogakukan's production company, commissioned [Oriental Light & Magic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OLM,_Inc.) (OLM) to animate the series, on Kubo's suggestion.[[169]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-175) [Kunihiko Yuyama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kunihiko_Yuyama), one of OLM's founding members, served as director. ShoPro assembled a team of five writers and two supporting writers.[[170]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-176) All key people involved with the production of *Pokemon* were well-experienced and had proven track records within Japan's anime industry. Yoshikawa felt that the team "got lucky": "The probability of so many great people coming together at the same time is very low", he said.[[171]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p340-177) Per Tajiri's explicit condition,[[172]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-178) every member of the cast and crew had to play the game extensively, including the illustrators and voice actors.[[171]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p340-177) The anime staff "unanimously agreed that the game was interesting"[[173]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-179) and "felt connected with each other through the world of Pokemon",[[171]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p340-177) feeling positively challenged to make an anime that would match the game's quality.[[174]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-180)

A production council was formed to produce the *Pocket Monsters* anime. Multiple meetings were held, with Ishihara, Sugimori, Yuyama, and Yoshikawa (the first three respectively representing Creatures, Game Freak, and OLM) usually in attendance and Yoshikawa having the final say. The council decided on the anime's worldview, characters, general storyline, and various important details. The early meetings, which were also attended by Tajiri, usually started with a Q&A session in which Tajiri and Ishihara were asked about the Pokemon universe.[[175]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-181) The council was careful to have the anime be in concordance with the video game. Inevitably, there had to be differences between the two, but all agreed that the overall worldview as envisioned by Tajiri should not be disturbed.[[176]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-182) At the start of the video game, the player has the choice between three Pokemon: Fushigidane, Hitokage, or Zenigame ([Bulbasaur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulbasaur" \o "Bulbasaur), [Charmander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charmander" \o "Charmander), or [Squirtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squirtle" \o "Squirtle)). The council did not want to unfairly popularize either of those three, and suggested that the protagonist start with a different Pokemon.[[177]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-183)[[178]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-184) By coincidence, three people: Kubo, Yuyama, and Keisuke Iwata of [TV Tokyo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TV_Tokyo)'s Film Department independently agreed that a [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu) should be one of the main characters.[[179]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-185) All parties later agreed that Pikachu should be one of Pokemon's central icons. They expected Pikachu to appeal to both young boys and girls, as well as their mothers. This would expand *Pocket Monsters*'s audience, a core objective of the anime.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-186)[[181]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-187)

During the council's first meeting, Yoshikawa brought up the issue on whether the Pokemon in the anime could speak, and if not, how they could communicate. In the video games, each Pokemon has a specific cry. In *[Pokemon Pocket Monsters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Pocket_Monsters" \o "Pokémon Pocket Monsters)*, most Pokemon could speak. At first, the council believed there should be Pokemon that both could and could not speak, but the idea was eventually rejected. The council agreed that Pokemon were like animals, and while people and Pokemon should be able to understand each other in the series, they should not speak each other's language.[[182]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-188) It was decided that Pikachu would repeatedly say its own name in various intonations. The role of Pikachu was given to [Ikue Otani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ikue_Otani). During try-outs, Yuyama had Otani voice Pikachu in normal Japanese, as well as in 'Pikachu talk', in which she only voiced the syllables of Pikachu's name. Yuyama realized that, even in the latter style of limited communication, Otani was experienced enough to still convey the messages and emotions needed.[[183]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-189)

ShoPro paid half of the production cost of *Pocket Monsters*. TV Tokyo paid the other half and was made a co-owner of the anime.[[184]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-190) The ads during commercial breaks were managed by advertisement agency [JR Kikaku](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=JR_Kikaku&action=edit&redlink=1) [[ja](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%82%B8%E3%82%A7%E3%82%A4%E3%82%A2%E3%83%BC%E3%83%AB%E6%9D%B1%E6%97%A5%E6%9C%AC%E4%BC%81%E7%94%BB" \o "ja:ジェイアール東日本企画)], which was in turn paid by sponsors buying advertisement space.[[185]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-191) In negotiating with TV Tokyo, Kubo managed to secure the 19:00 – 19:30 timeslot on Tuesdays.[[186]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-192) *Pocket Monsters* premiered on April 1, 1997. By November, it had become the highest-rated program on TV Tokyo.[[187]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-193) The anime succeeded in its goal of widening the franchise's Although the video games cards remained mostly of interest to boys, more young girls also interested in the franchise, and their purchases of *Pokemon* products increased.[[188]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-194) This was partly credited to Pikachu, who gained widespread popularity among children.[[189]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-195) The success of this character would later lead to the development of *Pocket Monsters Pikachu*, released in Japan on September 12, 1998,[[190]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-196)[[191]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-197) modified from its predecessors to closely resemble the anime series.[[192]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-198)

**Copyright counsel formed, merchandising expands**

Initially, Nintendo was the contractual representative for the franchise, and thus the central contact point for all *Pokemon*-related [licensing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_licensing).[[193]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-199) Around the time that the anime began production, licensing requests for Pokemon started to increase, which Nintendo had difficulties handling due to a lack of experienced staff.[[194]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-200) Nintendo consequently granted ShoPro exclusive licensor rights. This was the first time that Nintendo granted licensor rights to another company, aside from its overseas subsidiaries Nintendo of America and Nintendo of Europe.[[195]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-201)

A copyright council was formed, headed by Ishihara. Beginning in April 1997, the council met every Tuesday in the conference room of Creatures' office at the Nintendo Kanda Building in Sudachō.[[115]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Creatures_profile-120)[[196]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-202)[[197]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-203) Attendees usually included Ishihara and his secretary, representatives of Nintendo, Game Freak, ShoPro, TV Tokyo, and JR Kikaku, as well as head of the anime Yoshikawa.[[198]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-204) Each meeting had three types of agenda items: discussing *Pokemon*-related events and basic policies in Japan, discussing Shogakukan publication plans, and considering [merchandise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merchandise) proposals.[[199]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-205) Strongly protective of *Pokemon*'s [brand equity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_equity), Ishihara was unwilling to approve an item only because it had Pokemon on it. To avoid the market being flooded with low-quality goods, Ishihara had highly specific demands for the products he evaluated.[[200]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-206)[[162]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_2-168) Furthermore, in most cases, the council opted to contract one company for each product category.[[201]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-207) Because of this, most merchandise proposals were rejected: of the approximately 7,500 applications submitted in 1997, only about 5% was approved.[[202]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-208)

By March 1998, 35 companies offered licensed *Pokemon* goods, and there were approximately 700 *Pokemon* products.[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sato_(1998)_p118-131)[[203]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-209) [Tomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomy" \o "Tomy) manufactured *Pokemon* toy figures and plush dolls.[[204]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-210) [Bandai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandai) made *Pokemon* *[gashapon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gashapon" \o "Gashapon)*, dolls and *[ramune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramune" \o "Ramune)*-flavored candy in a plastic box in the shape of a Game Boy.[[205]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-211) [Meiji Seika](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meiji_Seika) produced *Pokemon* chocolate snacks and pudding.[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sato_(1998)_p118-131)[[206]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-212) The success of the franchise provided a much-needed boost to Japan's economy, which was stagnating in what would later be called the [Lost Decade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Decades).[[207]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_p._194,_236-213)[[208]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-214) One firm that benefited greatly was food manufacturer [Nagatanien](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nagatanien&action=edit&redlink=1) [[jp](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%B0%B8%E8%B0%B7%E5%9C%92" \o "jp:永谷園)]. From May 1997, the company began selling *Pokemon*-branded [curry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_curry), *[furikake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furikake" \o "Furikake)*, and [baking mixes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baking_mix).[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sato_(1998)_p118-131)[[209]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Magic_p61-215) In December 1997, Nagatanien was harshly affected by the collapse of one of its largest sales channels, [Toshoku](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%82%AB%E3%83%BC%E3%82%AE%E3%83%AB%E3%82%B8%E3%83%A3%E3%83%91%E3%83%B3#%E6%9D%B1%E9%A3%9F), in what was then the third-largest bankruptcy in Japan's postwar history.[[210]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Pokemon_Business_Study_Group_p._266-216)[[211]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-217) Nonetheless, due to their *Pokemon* products, Nagatanien reported net profits in fiscal years 1997 and 1988, despite having forecasted losses.[[209]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Magic_p61-215)[[210]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Pokemon_Business_Study_Group_p._266-216)[[212]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-218)

**"Dennō Senshi Porygon" incident**

*See also:*[*Pokémon episodes removed from rotation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_episodes_removed_from_rotation)

On December 16, 1997, the episode "[Dennō Senshi Porygon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denn%C5%8D_Senshi_Porygon" \o "Dennō Senshi Porygon)" was watched by approximately 4.6 million households.[[213]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-219) In the episode, Satoshi ([Ash Ketchum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Ketchum)) and his friends are transported into a virtual world, accompanied by the digital, man-made Pokemon [Porygon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porygon" \o "Porygon). While traversing through cyberspace, the characters are at one point attacked by an anti-virus program which mistakes them for viruses and launches vaccine missiles at the group, resulting in explosions of bright, rapidly swapping red and blue flashes.

The intense stimuli triggered many adverse health effects in more than 10,000 viewers,[[214]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-220) primarily irritated eyes, headaches, dizziness, and nausea.[[215]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-K%C5%8Dsei-sh%C5%8D_report-221) A small percentage suffered a [photosensitive epileptic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photosensitive_epilepsy) [seizure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seizure), manifested in loss of conscious and/or convulsions.[[215]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-K%C5%8Dsei-sh%C5%8D_report-221)[[216]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-222) Hundreds[[g]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-228) of children were taken to hospitals, although some had recovered enough upon arrival that they did not need to be hospitalized. No deaths were reported. The broadcast of the anime was halted, and new guidelines were initiated to help prevent similar events from happening.[[222]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-229) During the hiatus, ShoPro and OLM worked on a feature-length *Pokemon* film. By the time of the incident, its script was already written, and the film was in the storyboard stage. In January 1998, the staff resumed creating new episodes.[[223]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-230) The anime series resumed broadcast on April 16, 1998.[[224]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-231) The film, *Pocket Monsters the Movie: Mewtwo Strikes Back*, was released on July 18, 1998. It became that second-highest grossing Japanese film of 1998, and fourth-highest grossing film overall.[[225]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-232)[[226]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-233)

Ultimately, the incident did not damage the franchise–rather it grew further during and after the anime's hiatus. While video rental tapes were removed from shelves,[[227]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-234)[[228]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-235) all other Pokemon products continued to be sold as usual, and customer demand remained high.[[229]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-236)[[230]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-237) This success was facilitated by a general understanding among businesses that the *Pokemon* anime was not canceled, but rather suspended, and many executives correctly expected it to resume after precautions had been taken. Supermarkets and other distribution outlets responded calmly to the crisis, and did not remove the Pokemon products from their sales floors.[[231]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-238)

**1998 – 2000: International expansion**

**North America**

"When we started this project in Japan, one of the first things I was told was that this kind of thing would never appeal to American audiences. They said, 'Because the characters are in a very Japanese style, you cannot sell them to Americans'. So from the very beginning, I never thought there would be an English version. Now, it's just as popular in the United States [as in Japan], and I realized that we shouldn't always believe the opinions of conservative marketers."

[Shigeru Miyamoto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigeru_Miyamoto), August 1999[[232]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-239)

Possibly the first person to show interest in a North American release was [Minoru Arakawa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minoru_Arakawa), founder and then-president of [Nintendo of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_of_America). Arakawa visited Japan to participate in [Shoshinkai 1996](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Space_World" \l "Shoshinkai_1996" \o "Nintendo Space World), held in late November, where he first played one of the three *Pokemon* titles. He thought the games were promising, but there were no plans at the time to release them outside Japan. He returned to the United States with some cartridges and tested the game on his employees, who did not believe the game would succeed in the US.[[233]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-240) [Role-playing games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_video_game) were not very popular outside Japan,[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241) and NoA executives believed that American children did not have the [attention span](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention_span) for such a complex game.[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242) Americans were said to be more interested in sport- and action-oriented games, preferably with realistic graphics.[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Gellene_(1998)-243)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11) Japanese people, by contrast, were alleged to care more about characters and plot.[[237]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Eisenberg_(1998)-244) Up to that point, few Japanese properties had been successfully mainstreamed in the US, and those that were had been highly localized–chief among such properties was [*Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mighty_Morphin_Power_Rangers).[[238]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-245) Aesthetically, *Pokemon* was believed to be too [*kawaii*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawaii), or [cute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuteness). It was assumed that *Pokemon* could not succeed on *kawaii* alone–it must also be [cool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_(aesthetic)).[[239]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan1_page03-246)[[240]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p407-408-247) In an effort to enhance the franchise's coolness, NoA considered a graphical redesign of the franchise and contracted a few external artists to create some test-designs for the American market.[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242)[[240]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p407-408-247) The [mockups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mockup) they proposed included 'graffiti style' drawings,[[240]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p407-408-247) more muscular looking Pokemon,[[241]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-248) and a new Pikachu that looked like "a tiger with huge breasts".[[239]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-taidan1_page03-246) Arakawa concluded that this "didn't work",[[240]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p407-408-247) and by that time, the anime had begun its production in Japan, leading NoA to conclude it was too late for a graphical revamp anyway.[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242)

Of pivotal importance to *Pokemon*'s global expansion was [Alfred R. Kahn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_R._Kahn), CEO of US-based [4Kids Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4Kids_Entertainment), NoA's licensing agent since 1987.[[242]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-4Kids_History-249)[[243]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Rogers_(2000)-250) Convinced of *Pokemon*'s potential, Kahn agreed to invest an undisclosed sum in return for both the anime and licensing rights.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241) *Pokemon* became one of the first Japanese media franchises in which both the localization of the anime and the licensing of merchandise was handled by a single company, as well as a non-Japanese company.[[244]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Stewart_(2004)-251) Kahn suggested adding an [acute accent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute_accent) (´) to the e to assist with pronunciation, thus rendering the title as "Pokémon."[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tsukayama_(2016)-10) [Hiroshi Yamauchi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshi_Yamauchi), president of Nintendo of Japan, officially approved the project in late November,[[245]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-252) and subsequently announced it at [Space World 1997](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Space_World#Space_World_1997).[[246]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-EGM_124-253) However, this was hindered by the "Dennō Senshi Porygon" incident three weeks later, which Kubo felt made even more people resistant to the idea of an overseas introduction.[[247]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-254)

[Market research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_research) turned back negative: American kids reportedly did not like *Pokémon*.[[248]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-255) Arakawa ignored the study and, convinced of the franchise's potential, allocated an enormous budget to *Pokémon*'s launch. The exact amount was not disclosed, but was reportedly equal to or more than $50 million (roughly $89.77 million in 2022), approximately the same amount as the launch budget of the [Nintendo Entertainment System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Entertainment_System) in 1985. Arakawa admitted that it was "quite a bit of money", but NoA "had been doing well for several years, so we had a lot of money to spare". He opined that if Pokémon would be as successful in the US as it had been in Japan, "an investment of 1 would turn into 100."[[249]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-256) NoA and 4Kids thus devised a strategy on how to localize Pokémon for the United States.[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242) Arakawa appointed [Gail Tilden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gail_Tilden) to lead the project, prompting her to leave her position at [*Nintendo Power*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Power) magazine.[[250]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-257) Tilden said that they "decided to make an all-out effort to repeat the phenomenon in the Western world".[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97) In two press releases, NoA self-described Pokémon's marketing campaign as "aggressive".[[251]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-258)[[252]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-259)

The [localization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editing_of_anime_in_distribution#Localization) of the [*Pokémon* anime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series)) was done by 4Kids, and directed by [Norman J. Grossfeld](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_J._Grossfeld). Grossfeld strongly believed that the anime should be [Americanized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americanization).[[253]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-260) At [NATPE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATPE) 1998, he asked ShoPro for a "kind of carte blanche, to let me change the show as I think would work for this market," to which ShoPro agreed.[[254]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p43-44-261) However, no television networks were interested in buying the anime or financing its localization.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tsukayama_(2016)-10) Kahn thus decided to self-finance *Pokémon'*s production costs, despite realizing this "could very well bring down 4Kids" if the show would fail.[[254]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p43-44-261) According to Kahn, they "spend a fortune" on the localization.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mallory_(2001)-17) To have it [broadcast in syndication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadcast_syndication), 4Kids offered the show for free to local TV stations across the country, in exchange for a portion of the advertising revenue.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tsukayama_(2016)-10) NoA assisted, persuading dozens of stations to carry the series by offering to buy some of their advertisement space, spending a total of $5 million (c. $8.98 million in 2022).[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Gellene_(1998)-243)[[254]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p43-44-261) Still, most broadcasters were still reluctant to carry *Pokémon*, with Grossfeld experiencing difficulties getting through their "preconceived notions or their snobbery for Western-produced animation over something from Asia".[[254]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p43-44-261) At the time, anime had not yet found mainstream popularity in the West, with [*Sailor Moon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sailor_Moon)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mcfarland_Parvaz_(1999)-4)[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Gellene_(1998)-243)[[255]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-262)[[256]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Keveney_(1998)-263) being an example.[[h]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-267) 4Kids eventually succeeded in contracting 112 broadcasters for *Pokémon*,[[260]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-268) reaching "about 85 to 90 percent"[[261]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Saunders_(1998)-269) of television households. However, many broadcasters gave it off-peak time slots, with scheduled times including 06:00 or 06:30.[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Gellene_(1998)-243)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Tsukayama_(2016)-10) Prior to the late 1990s, this was the case for many anime in the US.[[244]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Stewart_(2004)-251)

Grossfield created the [slogan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising_slogan) "Gotta catch 'em all!" as the English equivalent to the Japanese *Pokemon GET daze~!* (ポケモンゲットだぜー！, Get (the) Pokémon!).[[262]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-270)[[263]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Van_Luling_(2017)-271) The phrase "miraculously managed to gain approval" by the [Federal Communications Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Communications_Commission) (FCC), which normally prohibits the use of injunctions in [ads directed at children](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising_to_children). FCC reasoned that the act of *catching* is at the core of Pokémon's play, which facilitated their approval of the otherwise commanding slogan.[[264]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-272) [The series' theme song](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Theme) was written by [John Loeffler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Loeffler) and John Siegler.[[265]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-273) In commissioning the track, Grossfeld specifically requested the song's chorus to be written around the "Gotta Catch 'Em All" phrase, firmly embedding the slogan into the theme.[[263]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Van_Luling_(2017)-271)

While NoA and 4Kids were allowed a degree of liberty in their localization of Pokémon, the Japanese copyright council, headed by Ishihara, had final approval over all advertising and promotion.[[266]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-274) This included all of the merchandise, for which a 'two-step system' was created: All potential licensees in North America were to send their merchandise proposals to 4Kids.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241) Staff at both 4Kids and NoA would then make a pre-selection and send the approved proposals to Japan, where the council made the final decision. Many submissions were bounced at the US stage, and thus never got sent to Japan. Tilden noted that processing all license applications, and mailing all approved prototypes and their documentation to Japan, took great effort. Arakawa briefly considered streamlining the process by moving a staff member from Japan to the US, but no person could be found who was as competent as Ishihara.[[267]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-275)

The *Pokémon* anime was first broadcast on September 7, 1998.[[268]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-276)[[269]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-277) [*Pokémon Red Version* and *Pokémon Blue Version*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Red,_Blue,_and_Yellow) were released three weeks later, on September 28, 1998.[[270]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-278) To localize the card game, Nintendo contracted [*Magic: The Gathering*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic:_The_Gathering) publisher [Wizards of the Coast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizards_of_the_Coast).[[271]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-279) The [*Pokémon Trading Card Game*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game) was officially launched nationwide on January 9, 1999, although pre-sold in select stores in December.[[272]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-280) Coinciding with the North American launch of *Pokémon* was the release of the [Game Boy Color](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy_Color) on 23 November 1998.[[273]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-281)

**Other regions**

The American version of the *Pokémon* anime started broadcasting in [Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) and [New Zealand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand) on September 28, 1998. *Red* and *Blue* were subsequently released there on October 23. Various territories in Asia followed: the anime series debuted in [Hong Kong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) on November 16, in [Taiwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan) on November 23, in [Shanghai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai) on November 24, in [Beijing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing) on January 10, 1999, and in [South Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) on July 14, 1999.[[274]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-282)

Outside North America, 4Kids distributed the anime in cooperation with [Brian Lacey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Lacey_(entertainment_executive)) of [Lacey Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lacey_Entertainment).[[275]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dinoff_(1999)-283)[[276]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-284) The series was presented at [MIP TV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIPTV_Media_Market), in Cannes, France, from April 3–8, 1998.[[277]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-285) Broadcasters were initially not interested due to its Japanese origins, and preferred to wait and see how the anime would succeed in the US. After the anime's success, Lacey received inquiries about the series throughout 1999 from multiple international broadcasters.[[275]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dinoff_(1999)-283)[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-proves_to_be_gold-286) Lacey noted that, in Europe, this was a stark contrast compared to previous years: "I was trying to sell this sort of stuff for years and buyers would tell me they were moving away from [Japanese animation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime) shows", he said.[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-proves_to_be_gold-286) In October 1999, the franchise was launched in the European key markets of [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), the [United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), and [Spain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain).[[279]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-287) The anime started broadcasting in [Denmark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denmark), [Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway), and [Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden) in December 1999.[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-proves_to_be_gold-286) In 2000, broadcasting rights for the first season were secured by TV stations in [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa), [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), [Iceland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceland), and [Finland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland).[[280]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-288) In [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), the anime debuted in February 2000, while *Red* and *Blue* were not officially released there and were thus [imported](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Import). The Israeli *Pokémon* release still became successful, through the release of other associated media.[[281]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-289)[[282]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-290)

By the end of 2000, *Pokémon* games had been released in 70 countries, the anime was broadcast in 51 countries, the films were released in 33 countries, and the cards had been translated into 11 languages.[[283]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-291)

**1999 – 2000: "Pokémania"**

*Pokémon* became immediately successful in North America. *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* sold 200,000 copies in its first month. By December, the [*Pokémon* anime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series)) had become the highest-rated syndicated children's show during the weekdays.[[275]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dinoff_(1999)-283) This attracted the attention of two media companies: [Warner Bros.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.), joint owner of [The WB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_WB) channel; and [Saban Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saban_Entertainment)/[Fox Family Worldwide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_Family_Worldwide), owners of the [Fox Kids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_Kids) channel. A bidding war ensued between the parties, which was won by Warner Bros.[[284]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-292) On February 13, 1999,[[285]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Adalian_(1999)-293) *Pokémon* debuted on The WB's [Kids' WB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kids%27_WB) block, where it was broadcast exclusively from then on.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241) The first episode to air on the block, "The Problem with Paras," became the most watched premiere in Kids' WB's history.[[285]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Adalian_(1999)-293) In European countries, the anime received similar levels of success. In [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), a highly competitive market for children's programming, *Pokémon* was purchased by [RTL 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RTL_Zwei). Its popularity bolstered RTL 2's entire program block, more than tripling its viewers. Andrea Lang, RTL 2's editor of cartoons and children's programs, said: "We were speechless. We've never had a comparable success".[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-proves_to_be_gold-286) By March 1998, six months before *Pokémon*'s overseas launch, 499 million Pokémon cards had been produced. By March 1999, the total number of cards shipped reached 764 million. By March 2000, this figure would grow further to 4.255 billion cards, manufactured in both Japanese and American factories.[[158]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p246-247-164)

By April 1999, there was a general consensus in the US that Pokémon had become a phenomenon and the newest children's [fad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fad).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mcfarland_Parvaz_(1999)-4)[[286]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-294)[[287]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-295)[[288]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-296) By some, the fad was referred to as "Pokémania",[[289]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-297)[[290]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-298)[[291]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-299)[[292]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-300) including journalists of [*Time*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_(magazine))[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97) and [*USA Today*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA_Today).[[293]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-301) In the US, severe [scarcity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarcity) occurred of Pokémon goods,[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Thomas-Lester_(1999)-16) especially Pokémon cards,[[294]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-302) causing companies to miss profits.[[295]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-303) A [*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milwaukee_Journal_Sentinel) article, published on 3 August 1999, cited a [Toys "R" Us](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toys_%22R%22_Us) manager as saying that a supply of 600 [booster packs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booster_pack) would last 24 hours. The CEO of one card distributor stated that they were "thousands of boxes behind" on orders. In the same article, a Wizards spokeswoman stated that more employees and printers had been hired to increase card production.[[296]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-304) However, near the end of the month, a different Wizards spokeswoman told [*The Washington Post*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Washington_Post) that they had "exhausted most of the card-printing capacity of the United States".[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11) Similarly, *USA Today* reported in November 1999 that factories making [Hasbro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasbro)'s *Pokémon* toys had expanded production by 20 times, but demand still exceeded supply.[[297]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-305) In Europe, scarcity of *Pokémon* merchandise also occurred.[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-proves_to_be_gold-286)

In part due to the fad, Nintendo saw a 250% increase in profits in 1999 compared to the previous year,[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11) reaching a six-year high.[[298]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-306) The *Pokémon* franchise accounted for over 30% of Nintendo's revenue that year.[[299]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-307) *Pokémon*'s popularity also caused a sharp increase in sales of the Game Boy line.[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242)[[300]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-308)[[301]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-309) The financial windfalls came at a time when Nintendo lost dominance in the home console market, due to the [Nintendo 64](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_64) being outsold by [Sony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sony)'s [PlayStation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_(console)).[[302]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-310)[[303]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-311)[[304]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-312) The global success of *Pokémon* compensated this loss somewhat.[[305]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-313)[[306]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-314)[[307]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-315)[[308]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-316) Buckingham & Sefton-Green went even further, writing in 2004: "while Nintendo is now among Japan's most profitable corporations, it could be argued that the company would have struggled to survive without Pokémon".[[309]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-317)

4Kids, initially a little-known firm,[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lippman_(1999)-241)[[242]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-4Kids_History-249) expanded thirty times in revenues,[[310]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p455-318) and was named the fastest-growing company in America in the September 4, 2000 issue of [*Fortune*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortune_(magazine)) magazine.[[243]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Rogers_(2000)-250)[[311]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-319)[[312]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-320) Many businesses that timely obtained a *Pokémon* license reaped considerable profits.[[310]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p455-318)[[313]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-321) In the summer of 1999, a massive run on stocks of publicly traded *Pokémon* licensees caused their value to increase dramatically. However, by November, most investors were [shorting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_(finance)) their shares. Knowing that the *Pokémon* fad would peak and fall at some point, investors were [bearish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bearish) about its prospects.[[314]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-322)

[*Pokémon: The First Movie*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon:_The_First_Movie) premiered in North America on November 12, 1999, and in Europe the following year. Despite being negatively received by critics, it became one of the most successful Japanese animated films of all time.[[315]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sammut_(2023)-323) In the United States, November 1999 was estimated to have been the peak of the *Pokémon* fad.[[316]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Yano_(2004)_p121-324)[[317]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-325)[[318]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-326)[[319]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-327) Supporting the American release of *The First Movie* was a promotional action with [Burger King](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burger_King), one of the largest in the [fast-food industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast_food) history.[[320]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-328)[[321]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-329)[[322]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hernandez_(1999)-330) The success of the promotion resulted in supply issues; restaurants often ran out of Pokémon toys to include with their meals.[[322]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hernandez_(1999)-330)[[323]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-331)[[324]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-332)[[325]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-333) On December 27,[[326]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-334) Burger King [recalled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burger_King_Pok%C3%A9mon_container_recall) its Poké Ball toy after a 13-month-old girl died suffocating on one.[[327]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-335)[[328]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-336)

On October 15, 2000, [*Pokémon Gold* and *Silver*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Gold,_Silver,_and_Crystal) were released in North America. Within the week, they had become the fastest selling games of all time, an accomplishment it kept for two years until [*Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto:_Vice_City).[[329]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-337) In Europe, *Gold* and *Silver* were released on April 6, 2001.[[330]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-338)

**The Pokémon Company and Pokémon USA established**

On April 23, 1998, Pokemon Center Co. Ltd. was founded as a [joint venture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_venture) by Nintendo, Creatures, and Game Freak.[[331]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-339) It was initially formed for the management of specialized merchandise stores called Pokemon Centers, of which the first location opened in [Nihonbashi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihonbashi), [Tokyo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokyo), on July 18, 1998.[[332]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Company_History-340)[[333]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-341) Throughout the years, multiple Japanese Pokémon Centers would open and close. As of May 2023, a total of 22 Pokémon merchandise shops exist in Japan.[[334]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-342) An American Pokémon Center also existed in [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) from 2001[[335]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-343) to 2005.[[336]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-344) It then reopened as Nintendo World,[[337]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-345) later renamed [Nintendo New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_New_York).[[338]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-346)

After the release of *Gold* and *Silver*, Tsunekazu Ishihara began setting out a number of long-term goals for the Pokémon franchise, which included releasing a movie every year (a condition which Shogakukan mostly kept). As part of Ishihara's plan, the Pokemon Center Co. Ltd. was reformatted into [The Pokémon Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company) (TPC), which was officially established in October 2000.[[332]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Company_History-340)[[339]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_3-347) The goal of TPC is to centralize and streamline the global management of Pokémon.[[340]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-4Kids_another_5_Years-348) [Satoru Iwata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satoru_Iwata), who had joined Nintendo of Japan in June, was involved with the company's creation, which was one of his first jobs at Nintendo.[[339]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Iwata_Asks_3-347)

In February 2001, [Pokémon USA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_USA) (PUSA) was established, an affiliated firm of The Pokémon Company.[[332]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Company_History-340) The company's first president was [Tatsumi Kimishima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatsumi_Kimishima" \o "Tatsumi Kimishima) (who would later become president of NoA, and subsequently president of NoJ). In 2002, Kimishima was succeeded by [Akira Chiba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akira_Chiba).

**2001 – 2006: "Pokémania" ends, business reforms**

In North America, the *Pokémon* franchise experienced its heyday in 1999. Throughout the next year, the US Pokémania began slowing down.[[341]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-349) On April 29. 2000, the anime was bumped off [Kids' WB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kids%27_WB)'s #1 spot after holding it for 54 weeks. Around the same time, *Pokémon* was surpassed at [Fox Kids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_Kids) by its rival [*Digimon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digimon_Adventure).[[342]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-350) In late 2000, [Wizards of the Coast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizards_of_the_Coast) laid off 100 employees, owing in part to the weakening demand for Pokémon cards.[[343]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Cook_(2003)-351) Its parent company [Hasbro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasbro) reported a loss over 2000 and the first half of 2001,[[344]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-352)[[345]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-353) partly due to an overly optimistic forecast regarding the demand for Pokémon cards and toys.[[346]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-354)[[347]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-355)[[348]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-356) In Europe, Pokémania peaked in 2000, which offset some of Hasbro's losses.[[349]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-357)[[350]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-358) On January 20, 2001, *The New York Times* reported that Pokémon's trading card market had collapsed in the US.[[351]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-359) A June 2001 survey in the United Kingdom confirmed that Pokémon's popularity was waning there.[[352]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-360) Tobin (2004) wrote: "By the summer of 2001, Pokémon's shelf space in Japanese and U.S. toy stores was but a fraction of what it enjoyed in the fall of 1999".[[353]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-361) By the end of 2001, "Pokémania" was fading globally, and by 2002, the fad was largely over.[[354]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-362)

From 2000 to 2002, Game Freak developed [*Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Ruby_and_Sapphire), the successors to [*Gold* and *Silver*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Gold,_Silver,_and_Crystal), for the newly released [Game Boy Advance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_Boy_Advance). Masuda was promoted to director, succeeding Tajiri, who appointed himself executive director.[[355]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-363) Masuda was concerned that the end of Pokémania indicated the end of Pokémon as a whole: "After Gold and Silver came out, it was a huge hit around the world, but shortly after everyone was saying, 'That’s it. The Pokémon fad is over! It’s dead!'."[[356]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hilliard_(2017)-364) Determined to keep the franchise going, GF not only wanted to "prove people wrong" with *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, but already started planning their sequels: [*Diamond* and *Pearl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Diamond_and_Pearl) (2006). They also began planning remakes of older installments, starting with *[FireRed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_FireRed_and_LeafGreen" \o "Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen)*[and](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_FireRed_and_LeafGreen" \o "Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen)*[LeafGreen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_FireRed_and_LeafGreen" \o "Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen)* (2004), recreations of the original [*Red* and *Green*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Red,_Blue,_and_Yellow).[[356]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hilliard_(2017)-364)

*Ruby* and *Sapphire* were released in Japan on November 21, 2002, and in the rest of the world the next year. The games introduced 135 new Pokémon, bringing the total amount to 386. Because of this, [Golin Harris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golin_Harris" \o "Golin Harris), NoA's ad agency,[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Moss_(2019)-242) advised them to move away from the "Gotta catch 'em all!" slogan. They reasoned that if new, younger players were drawn into the franchise with *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, they would find the concept of "catching them all" to be a daunting, if not impossible, task if they didn't also have *Red/Blue/Yellow* and *Gold/Silver/Crystal*.[[357]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p197-365) Author Daniel Dockery (2022) noted that "from both a marketing perspective and, really, a legal perspective, it would not be to the company’s advantage to keep pushing that slogan. The phrase was referenced and used sparingly from time to time in the coming years, but never again was it at the forefront of Pokémon’s marketing".[[357]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Dockery_(2022)_p197-365) However, the slogan did occasionally resurface in a prominent manner, including in the English theme songs of [season 17](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_the_Series:_XY) (which was a remake of the first theme song)[[358]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-366) and [season 19](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_the_Series:_XYZ).[[359]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-367)

By 2002, the relationship between PUSA and Wizards of the Coast had deteriorated. That year, at least seven high-profile employees were [poached](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_poaching) from Wizards by PUSA: Wizard's former art director, senior graphic designer, business manager, events marketing director, project management director, and two vice presidents. All employees had signed [NDAs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-disclosure_agreement).[[343]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Cook_(2003)-351)[[360]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Engleman_(2003)-368) In March 2003, PUSA told Wizards that their contract would not be renewed, and that Wizards would not be distributing the new *Ruby & Sapphire* card set.[[361]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-369) Later, Wizards was also prohibited from releasing the sets *Jamboree* and *Legendary Collection II*.[[362]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-370) Notably, *Jamboree* was the first set containing cards designed by Wizards themselves. As considerable time and money was invested into creating them, Wizards was upset when they were barred from putting them out. On October 1, 2003, the day after their agreement expired, Wizards filed suit against Pokémon USA, alleging that the defendant had seized their intellectual property and trade secrets, and illegally tried to gain advantage over them in the competitive trading card market.[[343]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Cook_(2003)-351)[[360]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Engleman_(2003)-368) The case was settled out of court.[[363]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-371) *Jamboree* and *Legendary Collection II* have remained unreleased.

In October 2001, [4Kids Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4Kids_Entertainment) signed a new contract with PUSA, continuing to serve as Pokémon's exclusive licensing agent and anime localizer.[[340]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-4Kids_another_5_Years-348) On December 23, 2005, it was announced that the agreement would not be renewed and would expire on December 31, with PUSA moving all licensing in-house.[[364]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-372)[[365]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-373) The localization of the anime would be done by PUSA in cooperation with TAJ Productions. PUSA proceeded to replace almost all of the original English voice actors, who were still under contract with 4Kids.[[366]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Oak_Interview-374) This decision "raised the ire of fans and the actors themselves".[[367]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-375) According to [Stuart Zagnit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuart_Zagnit), who voiced [Professor Oak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor_Oak), the recasting was done to cut back on costs.[[366]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Oak_Interview-374)

In March 2003, Pokémon UK was established in London as a British representative of [The Pokémon Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company).[[332]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Company_History-340)

**2006 – 2015: Generation 4 – 6, TPCi established**

In Japan, [*Pokémon Diamond* and *Pearl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Diamond_and_Pearl) were released for the [Nintendo DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_DS) on September 28, 2006. On the same day, [season 10](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_the_Series:_Diamond_and_Pearl) of the anime started, which is the first season of the *Diamond and Pearl* series (S10 – S13). The *Diamond* and *Pearl* video games were released in the West in 2007.

In 2009, Pokémon USA and Pokémon UK merged to form [The Pokémon Company International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company_International) (TPCi).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Daswani_(2009)-9) This subsidiary of [The Pokémon Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company) (TPC) has since managed the Pokémon franchise outside of Asia.

In Japan, [*Pokémon Black* and *White*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Black_and_White) were released on September 18, 2010, again for the Nintendo DS. In the West, the games were released the next year. The anime followed suit with [season 14](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_the_Series:_Black_%26_White), the first season of the *Black and White* series (S14 – S16).

[*Pokémon X* and *Y*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_X_and_Y) were released worldwide for the [Nintendo 3DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_3DS) on October 12, 2013. It was followed by [*Pokémon Sun* and *Moon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Sun_and_Moon), for the same console, on November 18, 2016.

**2016: *Pokémon Go***

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pokemon_go_fest.jpg)Players during the *Pokémon Go* Fest in [Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago) in 2017

In 2016, the *Pokémon* franchise spawned a second worldwide fad with the release of [*Pokémon Go*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Go), a mobile [augmented reality game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augmented_reality_game). The app originated as a [Google April Fools's Day joke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Google_April_Fools%27_Day_jokes) in 2014: the "[Google Maps Pokémon Challenge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Google_April_Fools%27_Day_jokes#Google_Maps_Pok%C3%A9mon_Challenge)". The prank was conceived by [Tsunekazu Ishihara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsunekazu_Ishihara" \o "Tsunekazu Ishihara) and [Satoru Iwata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satoru_Iwata).[[368]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-376) On Ishihara's initiation,[[369]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon" \l "cite_note-Takahasi_(2015)-377) the hoax was turned into an actual video game developed by [Niantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niantic_(company)). Ishihara was a fan of Niantic's previous [transreality game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transreality_game" \o "Transreality game), [*Ingress*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ingress_(video_game)), and saw the game's concept as ideal for *Pokémon*.[[369]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Takahasi_(2015)-377)

Through in-game purchases, the game generated more than $160 million by the end of July 2016,[[370]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-378) with App Annie reporting that *Pokémon Go* had generated around $10 million in revenue every day that month.[[371]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-379) The same month, Sensor Tower reported that the game had passed more than $200 million in worldwide revenue, beating every existing record set by [*Clash of Clans*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clash_of_Clans) and [*Candy Crush*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy_Crush) by a wide margin.[[372]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-380) The average daily usage of the app on Android devices in July 2016 exceeded that of [Snapchat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snapchat), [Tinder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tinder_(app)), [Twitter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter), [Instagram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram), and [Facebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook).[[373]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-381) By September 2, 2016, *Pokémon Go* had generated more than $440 million in worldwide revenue, according to Sensor Tower.[[374]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-382) By September 30, it had received 500 million downloads and grossed $470 million in 80 days, according to market research firm Newzoo.[[375]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-383) *Pokémon Go* reached the milestone of $600 million in revenue after only 90 days on the market, becoming the fastest mobile game ever to do so.[[376]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-384)

**2017 – present: Generation 7 – 9**

[*Pokémon Let's Go, Pikachu!* and *Let's Go, Eevee!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Let%27s_Go,_Pikachu!_and_Let%27s_Go,_Eevee!) were released worldwide for the [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch) on November 16, 2018. The games are remakes of [*Pokémon Yellow*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Yellow).

[*Pokémon Sword* and *Shield*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Sword_and_Shield) were released on November 15, 2019 for the Switch. Its follow-up, [*Pokémon Legends: Arceus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Legends:_Arceus), followed on January 28, 2022, again for the Switch.

The most recent installments of the franchise's video game series are [*Pokémon Scarlet* and *Violet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Scarlet_and_Violet), released for the Switch on November 18, 2022.

Media

**Video games and other software**

*Main articles:*[*Pokémon (video game series)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(video_game_series))*and*[*List of Pokémon video games*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_video_games)

*Pokémon* video games have been released in multiple genres. As of June 2023, a total of 122 *Pokémon* games have been published. According to *Pokémon*'s official website, as of March 2023, over 480 million Pokémon game units have been sold worldwide.[[377]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-In_figures-385)

**Core series**

The core series [role-playing games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_video_game) are the central installments of the franchise, and are commonly classified in generations. For example, *Pokémon* director [Junichi Masuda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junichi_Masuda) referred to [*Diamond* and *Pearl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Diamond_and_Pearl) (2006) as the fourth generation,[[378]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-386) and [*X* and *Y*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_X_and_Y) (2013) as the sixth generation.[[379]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-387)

The first generation, and the franchise as a whole, began with *Pocket Monsters Red* and *Green* (1996), released outside Japan as [*Pokémon Red* and *Blue*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Red,_Blue,_and_Yellow) (1998). A special 'Pikachu version', [*Pokémon Yellow*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Yellow) (1998), followed. The second generation began with [*Pokémon Gold* and *Silver*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Gold,_Silver,_and_Crystal) (1999). A special edition, [*Pokémon Crystal*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Crystal) (2000), was released later. This pattern was repeated in the third and fourth generations: [*Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Ruby_and_Sapphire) (2002) were followed by [*Pokémon Emerald*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Emerald) (2004); and [*Pokémon Diamond* and *Pearl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Diamond_and_Pearl) (2006) were followed by [*Pokémon Platinum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Platinum) (2008).

The fifth generation includes [*Pokémon Black* and *White*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Black_and_White) (2010) and [*Pokémon Black 2* and *White 2*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Black_2_and_White_2) (2012) for the [Nintendo DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_DS). The sixth generation began with [*Pokémon X* and *Y*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_X_and_Y) (2013) for the [Nintendo 3DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_3DS). [*Pokémon Sun* and *Moon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Sun_and_Moon) (2016) and [*Pokémon Ultra Sun* and *Ultra Moon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Ultra_Sun_and_Ultra_Moon) (2017), also released for the Nintendo 3DS, comprise the seventh generation. With the launch of the [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch) came the Gen 8 games [*Pokémon Sword* and *Shield*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Sword_and_Shield) (2019) and [*Pokémon Legends: Arceus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Legends:_Arceus) (2022). The most recent core Pokémon RPGs are [*Pokémon Scarlet* and *Violet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Scarlet_and_Violet) (2022), comprising the ninth generation, for the Switch.

Throughout the years, a number of [remakes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_remake) of previous core series games have been released: [*FireRed* and *LeafGreen*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_FireRed_and_LeafGreen) (2004), [*HeartGold* and *SoulSilver*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_HeartGold_and_SoulSilver) (2009), [*Omega Ruby* and *Alpha Sapphire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Omega_Ruby_and_Alpha_Sapphire) (2014), [*Brilliant Diamond* and *Shining Pearl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Brilliant_Diamond_and_Shining_Pearl) (2021), and [*Let's Go, Pikachu!* and *Let's Go, Eevee!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Let%27s_Go,_Pikachu!_and_Let%27s_Go,_Eevee!) (2018). The latter pair of games are remakes of *Pokémon Yellow*.

**Side series**

*Pokemon Stadium* (1998) is considered the first Pokémon side game. In Japan, it was followed by *Pokemon Stadium 2* (1999), which was later released internationally as [*Pokémon Stadium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Stadium) (2000). The original *Pokemon Stadium* has never been released outside Japan. It was followed by *Pokemon Stadium Gold & Silver* (2000), which was released outside Japan as [*Pokémon Stadium 2*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Stadium_2) (2001). The games allow players to use a [Transfer Pak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfer_Pak) to load their Pokémon from their Game Boy cartridge onto their [Nintendo 64 memory card](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_64_accessories#Controller_Pak) and into the game. None of the *Stadium* titles feature a storyline like the RPGs, focusing mainly on Pokémon battles.

[*Pokémon Colosseum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Colosseum) (2003) and [*Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_XD:_Gale_of_Darkness) (2005) are RPGs for the [GameCube](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GameCube), developed by [Genius Sonority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genius_Sonority). [*Pokémon Battle Revolution*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Battle_Revolution) (2006), released for the [Wii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wii), was also developed by Genius Sonority. Unlike *Colosseum* and *XD*, *Battle Revolution* has no storyline, focusing on battles. [Via WiFi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Wi-Fi_Connection), the game can connect with the [Nintendo DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_DS) and transfer Pokémon between *Battle Revolution* and Pokémon DS games.

**Spin-offs**

Pokémon [spin-off](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spin-off_(media)) games have been created since the beginning of the franchise. [*Hey You, Pikachu!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hey_You,_Pikachu!) (1998) is a [virtual pet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_pet) simulator in which the player can communicate with the titular character through a microphone bundled with the game. In [*Pokémon Snap*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Snap) (1999), the objective is not to catch Pokémon, but to photograph them. [*Pokémon Puzzle League*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Puzzle_League) (2000) and [*Pokémon Puzzle Challenge*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Puzzle_Challenge) (2000) are based on [*Tetris Attack*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetris_Attack). Other early spin-offs include [*Pokémon Trading Card Game*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_(video_game)) (1998) and [*Pokémon Pinball*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Pinball) (1999). [*Pokémon Channel*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Channel) (2003) combines elements of the [adventure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventure_video_game), virtual pet, and [simulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulation_video_game) genres and is a [spiritual successor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_successor#In_video_games) to *Hey You, Pikachu!*.

The [*Pokémon Mystery Dungeon* series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Mystery_Dungeon) are [roguelike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roguelike) RPGs in which the player controls various Pokémon instead of a human trainer. The series is notable for featuring randomly generated dungeons, making every playthrough unique. The [*Pokémon Ranger* series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Ranger) are [action RPGs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_RPG). It consists of three titles, all released for the [Nintendo DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_DS). In the games, the player catches Pokémon by drawing circles around them on the DS's touchscreen, using the stylus. After catching, the Pokémon befriends the player and follows them around, aiding them in catching other Pokémon and solving puzzles. Befriended Pokémon will leave after a while and return to their habitat.

The [*Pokémon Rumble* series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Rumble) are [beat 'em up](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beat_%27em_up) games featuring melee battles. *[PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9Park_Wii:_Pikachu%27s_Adventure" \o "PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure)* (2009) and its sequel *[PokéPark 2: Wonders Beyond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9Park_2:_Wonders_Beyond" \o "PokéPark 2: Wonders Beyond)* (2011) are [action-adventure games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action-adventure_game). The player controls Pikachu and travels through the titular park, engaging in battles, completing minigames, and making friends with the various Pokémon that live there. [*Detective Pikachu*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detective_Pikachu_(video_game)) (2018) is an [adventure game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventure_game) for the [Nintendo 3DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_3DS) in which Tim Goodman and his Pikachu friend solve various mysteries. The game was adapted into [a live-action film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detective_Pikachu_(film)) that premiered in 2019.

Three [crossover games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossover_(fiction)#Games) with Pokémon have been released: [*Pokémon Conquest*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Conquest) (2012) is a [tactical RPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_role-playing_game) crossover with [*Nobunaga's Ambition*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobunaga%27s_Ambition); *[Pokkén Tournament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokk%C3%A9n_Tournament" \o "Pokkén Tournament)* (2016) and *[Pokkén Tournament DX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokk%C3%A9n_Tournament_DX" \o "Pokkén Tournament DX)* (2017) are [fighting game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fighting_game) crossovers with [*Tekken*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tekken).

[The Pokémon Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company) first entered the mobile phone game market in 2011 with *Pokémon Say Tap?*, a Japan-only, rhythm-based game for iOS and Android. Since then, a large number of Pokémon mobile games have been released, most notably [*Pokémon Go*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Go) (2016), an [augmented reality game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augmented_reality_game) developed by [Niantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niantic_(company)) that spawned a worldwide craze in the summer of 2016. [*Pokémon Duel*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Duel) (2016) is a discontinued [digital tabletop game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_tabletop_game) based on the [Pokémon Trading Figure Game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Figure_Game). [*Pokémon Quest*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Quest) (2018) is an [action-adventure game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action-adventure_game) with a *[Minecraft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minecraft" \o "Minecraft)*-esque graphical design. *Pokémon Café Mix* (2020), later renamed [*Pokémon Café ReMix*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Caf%C3%A9_ReMix), is a [puzzle game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puzzle_video_game) in which players needs to swipe and match various icons within a time limit. [*Pokémon Unite*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Unite) (2021) is a [multiplayer online battle arena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiplayer_online_battle_arena) game.

**Other software**

A number of 'transfer programs' have been released to move Pokémon in between games and other storages: [*Pokémon Box: Ruby and Sapphire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Box:_Ruby_and_Sapphire) (2003) for the [GameCube](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GameCube); [*My Pokémon Ranch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Pok%C3%A9mon_Ranch) (2008), a discontinued [WiiWare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WiiWare" \o "WiiWare) app; and [*Pokémon Bank*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Bank) (2014), a discontinued [Nintendo eShop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_eShop) app for the [3DS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_3DS). The most recent transfer program is [*Pokémon HOME*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_HOME) (2020) for [iOS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IOS), [Android](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Android_(operating_system)), and the [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch). *HOME* allows transferring Pokémon to and from *Sword/Shield*, *Scarlet/Violet*, the *Let's Go* games, and *Pokémon Go*.

[*Pokémon Sleep*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Sleep) is a [sleep-tracking app](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep_tracking) that rewards the user with Pokémon depending on the quality of their sleep.

**Trading card game**

*Main articles:*[*Pokémon Trading Card Game*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game)*and*[*List of Pokémon Trading Card Game sets*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DP01_011_Palkia.jpg)[Palkia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palkia) card from the [*Diamond and Pearl Base Set*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Diamond_and_Pearl_Base_Set)

The [*Pokémon Trading Card Game*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game) (PTCG) was one of the first [collectable card games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectable_card_game) (CCGs) in Japan. It was inspired by [*Magic: The Gathering*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic:_The_Gathering).[[141]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p153-146)[[142]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Pokemon_Business_Study_Group_(1998)_p112-117-147)[[143]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Kimura_2006-148) As with all CCGs, it is played with a deck – in this case, consisting of 60 cards. Players can build their own deck or use a pre-constructed one. There are various types of cards, including Basic Pokémon, Evolved Pokémon, Energy cards, and Trainer cards. The player who wins a coin toss begins by drawing seven cards from their shuffled deck. From the cards in their hand, the player has to put one Basic Pokémon (i.e. an unevolved Pokémon) on the field. This is the Active Pokémon, which the player will attack with. If the player did not draw a Basic Pokémon, they will need to reshuffle their deck and try again ("[taking a mulligan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mulligan_(games))").[[380]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-388) Aside from placing a Basic Pokémon on the field, players can also place dormant Basic Pokémon on the Bench. When the Active Pokémon is Knocked Out, the player must put that Pokémon in the Discard Pile and put a new Pokémon from their Bench in the Active Spot. For each subsequent turn, the player draws one card from their deck.[[381]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Rulebook-389)

To attack, players must place Energy cards from their hand to their Active or Benched Pokémon (putting them underneath them, with the top part sticking out). All attacks require a certain amount of Energy cards, some of specific types. One of the main difficulties of the game is that players need to strategize which Energy cards they should give to which Pokémon. With each turn, the player can evolve one Pokémon if they have an Evolved Pokémon card in their hand. Evolved Pokémon are stronger: they have more HP (Health Points) and their attacks deal more damage. However, they also require more Energy cards. Damage is indicated using damage counters (small plastic cards placed on top or right next to the card). Trainer cards have various effects. They include healing items, items to be held by Pokémon, as well as cards that allow the player to draw more cards from their deck.[[381]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Rulebook-389)

The *Pokémon Trading Card Game* was designed by [Creatures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creatures_(company)), which continues to develop new cards and card sets to this day. According to [The Pokémon Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pok%C3%A9mon_Company) website, 43.2 billion cards have been produced as of March 2022.[[377]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-In_figures-385) As of June 2023, the fan site Bulbapedia documents 96 main card sets, 13 special editions, and 36 promotional sets.[[382]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-390)

**Anime**

*Main articles:*[*Pokémon (TV series)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series))*,*[*List of Pokémon films*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_films)*, and*[*List of Pokémon special episodes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_special_episodes)

The [*Pokémon* anime series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series)) premiered in Japan in April 1997, and in other regions beginning in 1998. As of 2023, the anime consists of [over 1,200](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_episodes) episodes across 26 seasons, with the latest, [*Pokémon Horizons: The Series*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Horizons:_The_Series), premiering in April 2023. The anime originally focused on [Ash Ketchum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Ketchum) and his travels across the Pokémon world with his partner, [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu). They were retired as protagonists after the 25th season,[[383]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-391) and *Pokémon Horizons* introduced two new protagonists, Liko and Roy.[[384]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-392)

A total of [23 anime films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_films) have been released, the most recent being [*Pokémon the Movie: Secrets of the Jungle*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_the_Movie:_Secrets_of_the_Jungle) (2020).

Spin-off series from the anime have also been produced. The first of these, the *Weekly Pokémon Broadcasting Station* (週刊ポケモン放送局, *Shūkan Pokemon Hōsōkyoku*) aired on [TV Tokyo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TV_Tokyo) from 2002 to 2004. The [variety show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variety_show) featured anime episodes focusing on various characters featured in the series. Select episodes from this series were aired in English as episodes of [*Pokémon Chronicles*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Chronicles). [Three television specials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_special_episodes#Television_specials) were also released: [*Pokémon: Mewtwo Returns*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon:_Mewtwo_Returns), *The Legend of Thunder!*, and [*Pokémon: The Mastermind of Mirage Pokémon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon:_The_Mastermind_of_Mirage_Pok%C3%A9mon). Several [short films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_special_episodes#Pikachu_shorts) focusing Pikachu and other Pokémon have been released, primarily preceding the films.

[*Pokémon Origins*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Origins) (2013), [*Pokémon Generations*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Generations) (2016), [*Pokémon Twilight Wings*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Twilight_Wings) (2020), *[Pokétoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9toon" \o "Pokétoon)* (2020), [*Pokémon Evolutions*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Evolutions) (2021), and [*Pokémon Hisuian Snow*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Hisuian_Snow) (2022) are separate animated mini-series. Most of these are more faithful to the core series RPGs, while *Pokétoon* consists of segments of various styles.

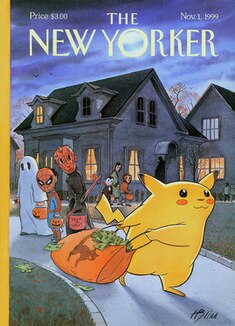
An upcoming [stop motion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_motion) series, *Pokémon Concierge*, is scheduled for a December 2023 release on Netflix.[[385]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-393)

**Live-action film**

A live-action film [*Detective Pikachu*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detective_Pikachu_(film)), based on the video game [of the same name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detective_Pikachu_(video_game)), was released in 2019.

Reception

**1999–2000**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pikachu_on_New_Yorker_cover,_Nov_1_1999.jpg)November 1, 1999 cover of [*The New Yorker*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Yorker), which depicts a [Pikachu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikachu) carrying away a bag overflowing with money as a few [trick-or-treaters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trick-or-treating) stand and watch.

In 1999 and 2000, *Pokémon* was an unprecedented, ubiquitous fad in the Western world. [*Time*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_(magazine)) magazine described it as "a multimedia and interactive barrage like no other before it".[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Chua-Eoan_Larimer_(1999)-97) The franchise, which is primarily aimed at children, elicited mixed responses from parents and teachers, some of them critical. Yano (2004) even wrote that the reactions at one point constituted a [moral panic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_panic).[[386]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-394)

The bulk of the criticism was directed at [the trading cards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game),[[387]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Broug%C3%A8re_(2004)_p187-188-395) in particular the [booster packs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booster_pack), sealed packages of 11[[f]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-boosters-162) randomly inserted cards that were sold separately from the main sets. The cards are of varying scarcity, the most valuable being the "holofoil cards" (also called "holographic" or "foil cards"), in which the illustrations of the Pokémon have a shiny overlay effect. The rare cards can only be found in booster packs, and the rarest ones are very infrequently included. Tobin (2004) notes that rarity in this case is "artificially created", and "effectively a form of [gambling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gambling)" in which children need to repeatedly purchase booster packs to get more rare cards.[[388]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-396) Brougère (2004) described a cynicism among adults that corporations could apparently, "out of thin air", ascribe value to cards which they saw as valueless, thereby "deceiving vulnerable young consumers and garnering excessive profits".[[387]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Broug%C3%A8re_(2004)_p187-188-395)

As the franchise's popularity grew, children began taking their Pokémon cards to school for trading and playing. Soon, the cards were alleged to be "disrupting learning, poisoning playground friendships and causing such distraction that some children forget their homework, tune out in class and even miss school buses as they scramble to acquire one more card".[[389]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-397) The fad "turn[ed] the playground into a black market",[[390]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-398) with card swaps sometimes inciting conflicts. Certain children engaged in "aggressive trading",[[391]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-399) tricking other (often younger) kids into unfair deals, forcing teachers to arbitrate.[[392]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-400)[[393]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-401)[[394]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-402)[[395]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-403) Some parents expressed their concerns about the cards, but feared that their children would be ostracized if they were to deny them Pokémon products.[[396]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-404)[[397]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-405)[[398]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Schools_ban_Pok%C3%A9mon_cards-406) In the US, the Pokémon cards ended up "almost universally banned" from school grounds.[[399]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-407) Similar bans occurred in Canada,[[400]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-408)[[401]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-409) Australia,[[402]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-schoolyard_bad_behaviour-410) New Zealand,[[403]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-411) and European countries.[[398]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Schools_ban_Pok%C3%A9mon_cards-406)[[404]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-412)[[405]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-413) In September 1999, US-based law firm [Milberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milberg) filed a [class-action lawsuit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Class-action_lawsuit) against Nintendo of America, Wizards of the Coast, and 4Kids. The suit claimed that the booster packs constitute a form of lottery and promote gambling in kids.[[406]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-414)[[407]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-415) [Susan Estrich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Estrich) noted that similar lawsuits had been filed against trading-card makers in the US, without success.[[408]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-416) The Pokémon card suit is not known to have gone to court, and is believed to have been settled.[[i]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-418)

The [*Pokémon* anime series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series)) was criticized by some as "cheap Japanese animation"[[410]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_(2006)_p261-419) that is "violent"[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Plotz_(1999)-18)[[411]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-420)[[412]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-421) and has "little educational value".[[413]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-422) Michelle Orecklin of *Time* dismissed the TV series as "less a cartoon than a half-hour exercise in Pokémon product placement".[[414]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-423) Allison (2006) wrote that even those within Pokémon's US marketing team agreed that the anime's visuals were "not especially sophisticated" compared to [Disney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney) cartoons.[[410]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_(2006)_p261-419) [*Pokémon: The First Movie*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon:_The_First_Movie) premiered in the United States on 12 November 1999, and in European countries in February 2000. While it was a huge box-office success, the film was received negatively by several Western film critics.[[415]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-424)[[416]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-425) [*The Guardian*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian) decried it as a "contemptuously cheap animated cash-in on the monster kids' craze".[[417]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-426) The American adult animated series [*South Park*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Park) satirized *Pokémon* in the episode "[Chinpokomon"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinpokomon" \o "Chinpokomon), aired on November 1, 1999. In the episode, a franchise titled "Chinpokomon" is portrayed as a low-quality line of products that is part of an evil plan by the Japanese government to invade the US. *South Park* co-creator [Matt Stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Stone) commented that, at the time, *Pokémon* was "scary huge".[[418]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-427)

Kohler (2016) wrote that at the time Pokémon was considered "ruthlessly commercial", and that it "program[med] children to be consumers of anything and everything Pokémon".[[419]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-428) [CNN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN) quoted child psychiatrist John Lochridge as worrying that "Pokémon's creators and marketers deliberately set out to create a fantasy world so compelling that children would quickly become obsessed". He believed that kids were being "brainwashed", and said, "I have had parents tell me that they cannot get their kids to do anything except Pokémon, so this stuff seems to really capture their minds, in a way".[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lockridge_(1999)-5) These concerns were countered by psychologist [William Damon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Damon), who told [*Newsweek*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsweek) that obsessing is in fact a normal part of a child's neurological development. It should concern parents only when the obsession gets dangerous or excessive.[[420]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-429) An [op-ed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op-ed) in the New Zealander newspaper [*The Dominion Post*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dominion_Post_(Wellington)) claimed that the anti-Pokémon sentiment was particularly American: "The backlash, which seems largely confined to the United States, may be no more than the sound of the world’s leading cultural imperialist gagging on a taste of its own medicine".[[421]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-430)

As "Pokémania" built, Western media started reporting on several crimes associated with *Pokémon*. These included violence[[402]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-schoolyard_bad_behaviour-410)[[422]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Cox_(1999)-431) (including two reported stabbings),[[423]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-432)[[424]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-433) burglaries,[[425]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-434)[[426]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Pokemon_card_crime-435) robberies[[422]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Cox_(1999)-431)[[427]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-436) (some at knifepoint),[[428]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Clothier_(2000)-437)[[429]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-438) and shoplifting.[[430]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-439)[[431]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-440) Almost all these incidents were connected to the Pokémon cards, and the individuals involved were almost always underage. In the US, these incidents peaked in November 1999.[[316]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Yano_(2004)_p121-324) In England, Pokémon-related delinquency reached a head in April 2000.[[428]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Clothier_(2000)-437)[[432]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-441) High prices on the [grey market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_market) were a motive behind some of the crimes, "posing a great temptation for older kids and bullies to take advantage of weaker children".[[433]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-442) At specialty shops and online auctions, rare Pokémon cards could be bought and sold for prices of $50 or more (c. $88 in 2022).[[434]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-443)

Aside from the negative reactions, many media also cited alleged beneficial effects of *Pokémon*.[[435]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-444)[[436]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-445)[[437]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-446) It was noted that the video games and the cards require children to read, memorize, calculate, and plan out a strategy.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mcfarland_Parvaz_(1999)-4)[[158]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Hatakeyama_Kubo_(2000)_p246-247-164)[[438]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-447) Both encourage socialization, and trading Pokémon requires negotiating skills.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lockridge_(1999)-5)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Baylis_(1999)-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Liu_(1999)-14) [Stephanie Strom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephanie_Strom) wrote in [*The New York Times*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times) that the *Pokémon* anime taught children "traditional Japanese values -- responsibility, empathy, cooperation, obedience, respect for elders, humility".[[439]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-448) [Anne Allison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Allison) interviewed various American parents during the initial fad. She found that while most of them were "utterly mystified" about Pokémon, few were overly worried about it, instead meeting the craze with "befuddled acceptance". Allison also notes that the [Columbine High School massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbine_High_School_massacre) occurred during the height of the fad (on April 20, 1999), causing violent television, music, and games to be scrutinized. Compared to these media, she notes, *Pokémon* is in fact rather tame.[[440]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-449)

In contrast, *Pokémon* was much more positively received in its native [Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan). Yano (2004) attributes this to [cultural differences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_differences), which includes: greater acceptance of exuberant [consumerism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumerism) – to buy is to be a good citizen; less focus on [media influence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_influence) – instead, [Japan's educational system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Japan), [bullying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Japan#Bullying), and dysfunctional families are more often the target of attention; less separation between child- and adulthood – what is suitable for adults is not necessarily considered unsuitable for kids; Pokémon being permeated with *[kawaisa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawaisa" \o "Kawaisa)* ([cuteness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuteness)), a hallmark of Japanese culture; Japan's core religions, [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) and [Shinto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinto), are less moralizing in nature.[[441]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-450) However, [Oliver Burkeman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Burkeman) wrote in [*The Guardian*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian) that the Pokémon cards were also banned from some Japanese schools.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Burkeman_(2000)-20)

Legacy and influences

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pokemon_Jets.jpg)Two [Pokémon Jets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Jet) of All Nippon Airways

*See also:*[*Cool Japan*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_Japan)*and*[*Anime and manga fandom*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime_and_manga_fandom)

After [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), Japan experienced [a period of unprecedented growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_economic_miracle) and became well-known in the Western world for its consumer products, such as [radios](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transistor_radio#Japanese_transistor_radios) (e.g. [Panasonic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panasonic), [Toshiba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toshiba)), [cars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automotive_industry_in_Japan) (e.g. [Toyota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyota), [Mitsubishi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitsubishi)), and [Sony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sony)'s [Walkman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walkman).[[442]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-451) From 1991 onwards, [its economy stagnated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Decades), causing the country to lose its status as an economic superpower. However, during the 1990s and 2000s, Japan re-emerged as a source of 'cool' cultural goods, embraced by a growing international audience interested in [Japanese culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_culture).[[443]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-452)[[444]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-453)[[445]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-454)[[446]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-455) [Nintendo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo), [Sega](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sega), and Sony launched several popular video game consoles and franchises.[[237]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Eisenberg_(1998)-244)[[447]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-456)[[448]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-457) In terms of children's properties, the success of [*Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mighty_Morphin_Power_Rangers) changed perceptions on the viability of such Japanese imports in the West.[[449]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-458)[[450]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-459)[[451]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-460) The [Tamagotchi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamagotchi) fad (1997–98),[[452]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-461) centered around a portable [digital pet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_pet) device, was said to have "paved the way for Pokémon".[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Gellene_(1998)-243)

[Anne Allison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Allison) (2006) wrote that, before the 1990s, Japan figured little in the face of the worldwide hegemony of Euro-American cultural industries, in particular that of the US. "Hollywood has been hostile to imports", she wrote, "and foreignness has largely been, and been seen as, an impediment to mass popularization in the United States".[[453]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-462) The surprise success of *Pokémon* was "an undeniable breakthrough in the homeland of [Disney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney)" that "changed preexisting assumptions about the US marketplace at the same time that it was constantly resisted for deviating from them".[[454]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-463) *Pokémon* was a welcomed boon to Japan's faltering economy,[[207]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_p._194,_236-213) and positively influenced the country's [soft power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_power).[[455]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-464)[[456]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-465) Kamo (2000) interviewed various American children and found that kids who thought *Pokémon* was cool, were more likely to believe that Japan was a cool nation.[[457]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-466) Allison (2003) gave a similar finding: all the children she interviewed knew where *Pokémon* originated, and "many said that, as a result of *Pokémon* and other 'cool' Japanese goods, they have developed an interest in Japan. A number said that they now wanted to study Japanese and travel there one day".[[458]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-467) Kohler (2016) wrote: "Japanese are proud of *Pokémon*, the most successful export of Japanese popular culture ever".[[459]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-468) Although, Iwabuchi (2004) questioned to what extent *Pokémon* really is 'Japanese', and to what extent it is simply a good property with universal appeal. He noted that [Japanese nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_nationalist) commentators celebrated *Pokémon*'s global success and retrospectively attributed this to its "Japanese cultural power",[[460]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-469) while ignoring the localization of *Pokémon* overseas,[[461]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-470) as well as decades of increasing cooperation and cultural exchange between countries ([globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization)).[[462]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-471)

In the 20st century, [Japanese animation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime) found some relatively small-scale popularity in North-America and Europe in series ([*Astro Boy*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astro_Boy), [*Kimba the White Lion*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimba_the_White_Lion), [*Speed Racer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speed_Racer)) and films ([*Akira*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akira_(1988_film)), [*Ghost in the Shell*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_in_the_Shell_(1995_film))).[[256]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Keveney_(1998)-263)[[261]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Saunders_(1998)-269)[[463]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-472)[[464]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-473) The [*Pokémon* TV series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(TV_series)) and [films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_films) marked a breakthrough for anime, contributing to the growing worldwide success of 'Japanimation' at the turn of the 21st century.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Mallory_(2001)-17)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Howe_(2000)-19)[[465]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-474)[[466]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-475) For some children, *Pokémon* was their introduction to anime,[[467]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-476) serving as a "gateway" to other anime, manga, and Japanese culture in general.[[468]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-477)[[469]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-478) [*Pokémon: The First Movie*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon:_The_First_Movie) became one of the most successful Japanese animated films in history.[[315]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Sammut_(2023)-323) After [*Princess Mononoke*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Mononoke), *Pokémon: The First Movie* became the second anime film to open at mainstream cinemas in the West, as opposed to the usual art house venues.[[470]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-479) Pioneering anime importer [John Ledford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ledford) noted that *Pokémon* "underscored the commercial potential of anime", thus making it interesting from a business perspective.[[471]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-480)

The success of *Pokémon* encouraged companies to look for other popular Japanese properties that might be localized for Western markets.[[244]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Stewart_(2004)-251)[[472]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-481)[[473]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-482) The importing of at least three similar franchises were confirmed by business executives to have been partly inspired by *Pokémon*: [*Yu-Gi-Oh!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yu-Gi-Oh!),[[474]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-483) [*Digimon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digimon),[[475]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-484) and [*Monster Rancher*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Rancher).[[476]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-485) The import of *[Cardcaptors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardcaptors" \o "Cardcaptors)* might also have been prompted by *Pokémon*.[[477]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-486)[[478]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-487)

Footnotes

* 1. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-1) [Japanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_language): ポケモン, [Hepburn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepburn_romanization): *Pokemon*
  2. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-13) This number excludes different forms of Pokémon.
  3. ^ [Jump up to:***a***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-cardgames_50-0) [***b***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-cardgames_50-1) Four[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-44) original card games are known to have been designed by Itoi: *Slot Brothers*,[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-45) *Edoka*,[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-46) *Hanamaru*,[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-47) and *Rameka*.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-48) The 1998 book *The Secrets of Pokemon* states that the last three games were contributed to by Ishihara.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-49)
  4. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-56) In [*Dragon Quest II*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_Quest_II), the item is called ふしぎなぼうし, *FushiginaBōshi*, i.e. Mysterious Hat. The Japanese *Pokemon* RPGs feature an item called ふしぎなアメ, *Fushigina Ame*, i.e. Mysterious Candy. This item raises the level of a Pokemon by one. In the English games, it is called Rare Candy.
  5. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-116) Randomly-generated layouts would later be used in the [*Pokémon Mystery Dungeon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Mystery_Dungeon) series of spin-off games, beginning with [*Blue* and *Red Rescue Team*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Mystery_Dungeon:_Blue_Rescue_Team_and_Red_Rescue_Team) (2005).
  6. ^ [Jump up to:***a***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-boosters_162-0) [***b***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-boosters_162-1) From the original [Base Set](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Pok%C3%A9mon_Base_Set) to the [Neo Destiny sets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Neo_Destiny), the booster packs contained 11 cards. After that and throughout the [third generation 'EX' sets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Third_Generation_Sets), the booster packs contained 9 cards. From the [fourth generation *Diamond and Pearl* sets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Fourth_Generation_Sets) onwards, the packs contained 10 cards. Since the [seventh generation *Sun and Moon* sets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_Trading_Card_Game_sets#Seventh_Generation_Sets), the packs have again contained 11 cards.
  7. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-228) The exact number varies between sources. The [Fire and Disaster Management Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_and_Disaster_Management_Agency) announced that a total of 685 people had been taken to hospitals. Of these, 208 people were actually hospitalized.[[217]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-223) However, different figures have been stated by different sources.[[218]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-224)[[219]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-225) According to Hatakeyama & Kubo (2000), "approximately 750 children" were taken to hospitals, of which 135 were hospitalized.[[220]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-226) It has been reported that, due to the incident catching the country off-guard, different methods of surveying were used throughout Japan, and these methods were not always accurate.[[221]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-227)
  8. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-267) However, [*Sailor Moon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sailor_Moon) had gained a cult following.[[257]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_(2006)_p154-264) After being pulled from syndication in spring 1996 due to low ratings,[[258]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-265) it was broadcast again on [USA Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA_Network) from 9 June '97 to March '98.[[259]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lenburg_(2009)_p613-266) The anime subsequently had a successful run on [Cartoon Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartoon_Network)'s [Toonami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toonami" \o "Toonami) [block](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Block_programming) from June 1998 to July 2002.[[257]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Allison_(2006)_p154-264)[[259]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-Lenburg_(2009)_p613-266)
  9. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_ref-418) In her 2006 book *Millennial Monsters*, [Anne Allison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Allison) mentions the card suit and writes, within parentheses, that it "was eventually settled out of court".[[409]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon#cite_note-417) However, she does not cite a source for this. The full sentence does contain an inline citation to a [*New York Times*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times) piece, but this article doesn't state that the case was settled