

= Pokémon , I Choose You ! =

" Pokémon - I Choose You ! " ( ????? ? ?????? ? , Pokémon ! Kimi ni Kimeta ! ) is the first episode of the first season of the Pokémon anime series . It was first broadcast in Japan on April 1 , 1997 and was first broadcast in the United States on September 8 , 1998 .

In the episode , Ash Ketchum gets his Pokémon journey off to a rough start when he receives his first Pokémon , the reluctant Pikachu . After many failed attempts at capturing some Pokémon , Ash throws a rock at a Spearow , which gets angry and starts attacking Ash and Pikachu . Soon , an entire flock of Spearow start chasing them , and Pikachu is the only one who is able to step in and stop the flock .

Nintendo , which publishes the Pokémon video games , asked for changes to be made to the English adaptation of the episode . Some graphic sequences involving punching were taken out , including one where Misty slaps Ash on the cheek . The script was translated by Paul Taylor . Veronica Taylor , who provided the English voice of Ash in this episode , said she enjoyed the script and recording Ash 's lines .

Since airing , the episode has received negative reviews from television critics . Andrew Wood of The Plain Dealer praised the episode for staying true to the games , but thought it focused too much on the character Ash . A children 's book adaptation of " Pokémon - I Choose You ! " was released in July 1999 , and the episode was released on Game Boy Advance Video in 2004 .

= = Plot = =

Ash Ketchum is about to receive his very first Pokémon from Professor Oak . At the age of ten , boys and girls like Ash can get the license to become Pokémon trainers . On the day he is supposed to get his first Pokémon , Ash accidentally breaks his alarm clock and oversleeps . When he wakes up , he runs in his pajamas to Professor Oak 's laboratory , but when Ash enters to receive his Pokémon , he is told that all three starter Pokémon have already been taken . Ash pleads for one and Oak replies that he still has one left , but there is a slight problem with it . Ash does not care and receives the Pokémon , which turns out to be the electric @-@ type Pokémon Pikachu . Ash thinks that it is cute , but it gives him an electric shock when he picks it up to hug it . Oak gives Ash a Pokédex and six Poké Balls before he heads out on his journey to become the greatest Pokémon trainer of all time .

As Ash carries the reluctant Pikachu , he hopes that they can be friends , but Pikachu acts aloof and openly shows his distrust of Ash . Just then , a Pidgey flies by and Ash unsuccessfully tries to catch it by throwing his Poké Ball . Ash uses his Pokédex and finds out that in order to catch a Pokémon , a trainer must first use their Pokémon to battle it , thereby weakening it , to be caught by a Poké Ball . With Pikachu being uncooperative , Ash tries to fight the Pidgey himself , but is easily beaten , much to the amusement of Pikachu . Frustrated , Ash throws a rock at what he believes is the Pidgey . However , it turns out to be a Spearow , which starts attacking Pikachu and Ash . Pikachu shocks Spearow , and in the process alerts a whole flock . Ash grabs Pikachu and dives down a waterfall in order to escape from the flock of Spearow , and the two are fished out by a young girl named Misty , who tells Ash to take the injured Pikachu to the Pokémon Center in Viridian City . Seeing the Spearow flock approaching , Ash escapes with Pikachu by " borrowing " Misty 's bike .

When the Spearow flock find Ash and Pikachu on the way to Viridian City , Ash risks his life by protecting Pikachu from the attacking Spearow . Pikachu , after seeing how much Ash cares for it , performs a powerful Thunder attack which drives the Spearow away , but also destroys Misty 's bike . Ash carries Pikachu into Viridian City , and Pikachu licks Ash 's cheek to signify the new bond they share as good friends . As the rain @-@ clouds part , a mysterious golden bird flies over the rainbow .

= = Production = =

" Pokémon - I Choose You ! " was the first episode of the Pokémon anime to be made and aired in Japan . The episode was written by Shoji Yonemura , and directed by Masamitsu Hidaka . When the production staff started on the anime , they wanted a specific character to focus on . They chose Pikachu because it was relatively popular compared with the other Pokémon and the staff thought that " potentially both boys and girls would like it " . The episode was animated by Shogakukan in Japan , and it was aimed at elementary school students .

= = = English adaptation = = =

Just before 4Kids Entertainment revealed that they were planning on producing an English adaptation dub of the anime in the United States , the episode " Denn? Senshi Porygon " caused controversy when it aired in Japan on December 16 , 1997 . In the episode , there was a scene with a huge explosion that flashed red and blue lights . At this point , viewers started to complain of blurred vision , headaches , dizziness , seizures , blindness , and lost consciousness . A total of 685 viewers were taken to hospitals by ambulances . Alfred R. Kahn , chief executive of 4Kids Entertainment , announced on January 1 , 1998 , that the anime would be edited for the American market . Many American parents worried about the safety of their children now that the anime would air in the United States , but Kahn said : " We 're confident it won 't be a problem . [ ... ] We 've taken the problem seriously and fixed it . "

Nintendo asked for changes to be made to the original Japanese show in the English adaptation . " We tried not to have violence or sexual discrimination or religious scenes in the United States , " said Masakazu Kubo , executive producer of Shogakukan . Some graphic sequences involving punching were taken out , including one from " Pokémon , I Choose You ! " where Misty slaps Ash on the cheek . The names of the characters and monsters were Westernized : Satoshi became Ash , and Shigeru became Gary , and the Pokémon were given descriptive names . For example , of the three starter Pokémon , Hitokage , a salamander with a ball of fire on its tail , became Charmander ; Fushigidane , a dinosaur with a green garlic bulb on its back , became Bulbasaur ; and Zenigame , a turtle who squirts water , became Squirtle .

= = = Voice acting = = =

Veronica Taylor , who provided the voice of Ash in this episode and all episodes from season one to eight , said that recording Ash 's lines for the episode was " really great " for her . " Playing a 10 @-@ year @-@ old boy with that energy and excitement , and the battles that he 's in , and his low , husky voice was really terrific , " she said .

I really enjoy playing [ Ash ] and he ? s really a great character , [ ... ] but I feel that after the first ten episodes everything has kind of loosened up . The script 's loosened up , the characters were able to come into their own a bit more , and I think everyone has relaxed a bit ; we 're able to play with it more , whereas in the first ten episodes , I think it was so new , and everyone was trying to make sure it was done right . I enjoy playing him now much more than I did in the very beginning because I can have fun with him more , and we know him and can work out how he really would react .

Taylor explained the process of recording an episode in an interview with Animerica Magazine ; first , the script is translated from Japanese into English , it is then adapted to fit the lip flap ( movement of the mouth ) . Taylor said that she is the only one in the recording booth when she works , as they record each voice separately throughout each episode . Taylor added that she is often the first one to record so she has to imagine how the previous line would be said . " Luckily , I work with a great director who helps with the interpretation of the line , matching of the lip flap , and consistency of the voice , " she said .

= = Reception = =

The episode first aired in the United States on September 8 , 1998 . Since then , it has received mixed to positive reviews from television critics . Andrew Wood of The Plain Dealer had mixed

feelings for the episode , stating the episode did a good job of setting up the world of Pokémon , and that it was faithful to the game . However , Wood thought it was " apparent " in this episode that without a traveling partner , " Ash just isn 't all that interesting " . Andrew Tei of Mania.com said that " one great thing about listening to early dubs is how the voice actors haven 't completely gotten into their roles yet . Ash 's and James ' voices are much deeper than where they end up at . " Louis Bedigian of GameZone believed the best moment of the episode to be the Pokémon battle on television at the beginning , stating that " the Pokémon battle side @-@ to @-@ side in black and white . Their movements are slow and appear to be turn @-@ based . It emulates the game perfectly , then quickly transforms into a more realistic , full @-@ color battle . Few game @-@ based anime series incorporate the game elements so well . " X @-@ Entertainment considered the best part of the episode to be the moment when Ash spots the mysterious Ho @-@ Oh , a Pokémon whose data was not included in the Pokédex at the time .

= = Book adaptation and re @-@ releases = =

A children 's book adaptation of the episode was released in July 1999 . It was published by Scholastic Corporation and written by Tracey West . The episode was released on VHS and DVD on November 24 , 1998 , and December 13 , 1998 , respectively .

Nintendo announced on September 24 , 2004 , that two Game Boy Advance Video cartridges , featuring " classic " episodes from the early days of the Pokémon series , would hit stores on September 27 that year . The Pokémon episodes were packaged in two separate packs containing two episodes each , and the four episodes available were " Pokémon , I Choose You ! " , " Here Comes the Squirtle Squad " , " Beach Blank @-@ Out Blastoise " , and " Go West Young Meowth " , all from season one .