

= Pikachu =

Pikachu (Japanese : ?????) are a species of Pokémon , fictional creatures that appear in an assortment of video games , animated television shows and movies , trading card games , and comic books licensed by The Pokémon Company , a Japanese corporation . The Pikachu design was conceived by Atsuko Nishida and finalized by Ken Sugimori . Pikachu first appeared in Pokémon Red and Green in Japan , and later in the first internationally released Pokémon video games , Pokémon Red and Blue , for the original Game Boy .

Like other species of Pokémon , Pikachu are often captured and groomed by humans to fight other Pokémon for sport . Pikachu are one of the most well @-@ known varieties of Pokémon , largely because a Pikachu is a central character in the Pokémon anime series . Pikachu is regarded as a major character of the Pokémon franchise as well as its mascot , and has become an icon of Japanese pop culture in recent years .

= = Concept and design = =

Developed by Game Freak and published by Nintendo , the Pokémon series began in Japan in 1996 , and features several species of creatures called " Pokémon " that players , called " trainers " , are encouraged to capture , train , and use to battle other players ' Pokémon or interact with the game 's world . Pikachu was one of several different Pokémon designs conceived by Game Freak 's character development team . Artist Atsuko Nishida is credited as the main person behind Pikachu 's design , which was later finalized by artist Ken Sugimori . According to series producer Satoshi Tajiri , the name is derived from a combination of two Japanese sounds : pika , a sound an electric spark makes , and chu , a sound a mouse makes . Developer Junichi Masuda noted Pikachu 's name as one of the most difficult to create , due to an effort to make it appealing to both Japanese and American audiences .

Standing 1 ft 4 in (0.4m) tall , Pikachu are mouse @-@ like creatures , and were the first " Electric @-@ type " Pokémon created , their design intended to revolve around the concept of electricity . They appear as mouse @-@ like creatures that have short , yellow fur with brown markings covering their backs and parts of their lightning bolt shaped tails . They have black @-@ tipped , pointed ears and red circular pouches on their cheeks , which can spark with electricity . In Pokémon Diamond and Pearl , gender differences were introduced ; a female Pikachu now has an indent at the end of its tail , giving it a heart @-@ shaped appearance . They attack primarily by projecting electricity from their bodies at their targets . Within the context of the franchise , a Pikachu can transform , or " evolve " into a Raichu when exposed to a " Thunderstone " . In later titles an evolutionary predecessor was introduced named " Pichu " , which evolves into a Pikachu after establishing a close friendship with its trainer .

Initially both Pikachu and the Pokémon Clefairy were chosen to be lead characters for the franchise merchandising , with the latter as the primary mascot to make the early comic book series more " engaging " . However , with the production of the animated series , Pikachu was chosen as the primary mascot , in an attempt to appeal to female viewers and their mothers , and under the belief that the creature presented the image of a recognizable intimate pet for children . Its color was also a deciding factor , as yellow is a primary color and easier for children to recognize from a distance , and with consideration to the fact the only other competing yellow mascot at the time was Winnie @-@ the @-@ Pooh . Though Tajiri acknowledged that the character was relatively popular with both boys and girls , the idea of Pikachu as the mascot was not his own , and stated he felt the human aspect of the series was overlooked by Japanese children who embraced Pikachu by itself more readily .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In the video games = = =

In the video games , Pikachu is a low @-@ level Pokémon , which has appeared in all of the games except Black and White naturally without having to trade . The game Pokémon Yellow features a Pikachu as the only available Starter Pokémon . Based on the Pikachu from the Pokémon anime , it refuses to stay in its Poké Ball , and instead follows the main character around on screen . The trainer can speak to it and it displays different reactions depending on how it is treated . An event from April 1 to May 5 , 2010 allowed players of Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver to access a route on the Pokéwalker which solely contained Pikachu which knew attacks that they were not normally compatible with , Surf and Fly . Both of these attacks can be used outside battles as travel aids .

Aside from the main series , Pikachu stars in Hey You , Pikachu ! for the Nintendo 64 . The player interacts with Pikachu through a microphone , issuing commands to play various mini @-@ games and act out situations . The game Pokémon Channel follows a similar premise of interacting with the Pikachu , though without the microphone . Pikachu appear in almost all levels of Pokémon Snap , a game where the player takes pictures of Pokémon for a score . A Pikachu is one of the sixteen starters and ten partners in the Pokémon Mystery Dungeon games . PokéPark Wii : Pikachu 's Adventure features a Pikachu as the main protagonist . Pikachu has also appeared in all four Super Smash Bros. games as a playable character . Pikachu is an amiibo character . Pikachu appears as a playable fighter in Pokkén Tournament , along with " Pikachu Libre " , based on " Cosplay Pikachu " from Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire . Meitantei Pikachu : Shin Konbi Tanj? features a talking Pikachu who becomes a detective and helps to solve mysteries .

= = = In the anime = = =

The Pokémon anime series and films feature the adventures of Ash Ketchum and his Pikachu , traveling through the various regions of the Pokémon universe . They are accompanied by a group of alternating friends , including Misty , Brock , Tracey , May , Max , Dawn , Iris , Cilan , Bonnie , Serena , and Clemont .

In the first episode , Ash Ketchum , a young boy from Pallet Town turns 10 years old and is ready to acquire his first Pokémon . Hopeful to become a Pokémon Master , the night before he receives his starter Pokémon (either Squirtle , Charmander or Bulbasaur) he has a dream where he is catching a Pokémon and actually while sleeping , physically breaks his alarm clock . Ash quickly runs to Professor Oak 's lab , where he finds out all the starter Pokémon have been given away . Professor Oak tells Ash there is one more Pokémon , a Pikachu . At first , Pikachu largely ignores Ash 's requests , shocking him frequently and refusing to be confined to the conventional method of Pokémon transportation , a Poké Ball . However , Ash puts himself in danger to defend Pikachu from a flock of wild Spearow , then rushes the electric mouse to a Pokémon Center . Through these demonstrations of respect and unconditional commitment to Pokémon , Pikachu warms up to Ash , and their friendship is formed . However , it still refuses to go into its Poké Ball . Soon after , Pikachu shows great power that sets it apart from Pokémon , and other Pikachu , which causes Team Rocket to constantly attempt to capture it in order to win favor from their boss , Giovanni . Only once had Ash almost released Pikachu , and that was in the episode Pikachu 's Goodbye , because Ash thought Pikachu would be happier living in a colony of wild Pikachu , but Pikachu chose him instead . Pikachu also has his very own segment in the first two seasons called " Pikachu 's Jukebox " , which included songs from 2.B.A. Master .

Other wild and trained Pikachu appear throughout the series , often interacting with Ash and his Pikachu . The most notable among these is Ritchie 's Pikachu , Sparky . Like most other Pokémon , Pikachu communicates only by saying syllables of its own name . It is voiced by Ikue ?tani in all versions of the anime . In Pokémon Live ! , the musical stage show adapted from the anime , Pikachu was played by Jennifer Rissler .

= = = In other Pokémon media = = =

Pikachu is one of the main Pokémon used in many of the Pokémon manga series . In Pokémon Adventures , main characters Red and Yellow both train Pikachu , which create an egg that Gold hatches into a Pichu . Other series , including Magical Pokémon Journey and Getto Da Ze also feature Pikachu while other manga series , such as Electric Tale of Pikachu , and Ash & Pikachu , feature the most well known Pikachu belonging to Ketchum in the anime series .

Collectible cards featuring Pikachu have appeared since the initial Pokémon Trading Card Game released in October 1996 , including limited edition promotional cards . The character has also been used in promotional merchandising at fast @-@ food chains such as McDonald 's , Wendy 's and Burger King .

= = Promotion and legacy = =

As a mascot for the franchise , Pikachu has made multiple appearances in various promotional events and merchandise . In 1998 , then @-@ Mayor of Topeka , Kansas Joan Wagnon renamed the town " Topikachu " for a day , and a " got milk ? " advertisement featured Pikachu on April 25 , 2000 . A Pikachu balloon has been featured in the Macy 's Thanksgiving Day Parade since 2001 . The original balloon was flown for the last time publicly at the Pokémon Tenth Anniversary " Party of the Decade " on August 8 , 2006 in Bryant Park in New York City , and a new Pikachu Balloon that chases a Poké Ball and has light @-@ up cheeks debuted at the 2006 Parade . In 2014 's parade , a new Pikachu balloon was wearing a green scarf and holding a smaller Pikachu snowman .

During the first episode of the eleventh series of Top Gear , presenter Richard Hammond compared an image of the Tata Nano to one of Pikachu stating " they 've saved money on the styling ' cause they 've just based it on this . " In the episode " Dual " of the third season of Heroes , Hiro Nakamura is nicknamed " Pikachu " by Daphne Millbrook , much to his chagrin . He is called this again by Tracy Strauss , after which he excuses himself before punching her in the face . A Pikachu spoof called Ling @-@ Ling was a main character in the Comedy Central show Drawn Together . An image of Pikachu has also been featured on the ANA Boeing 747 @-@ 400 (JA8962) .

Pikachu has appeared multiple times on The Simpsons . In the 2002 episode " Bart vs. Lisa vs. the Third Grade " , Bart Simpson has a hallucination while taking a test in class and envisages his classmates as various television characters , one of which is a Pikachu . Maggie Simpson appeared as a Pikachu in a couch gag during the opening animation of the 2003 episode " ' Tis the Fifteenth Season " . The couch gag was utilized a second time for the 2004 episode " Fraudcast News " . In the 2010 episode " Postcards from the Wedge " , Bart is distracted from his homework by an episode of Pokémon . After watching Ash Ketchum talk to his Pikachu , he muses how the show has managed to stay fresh over the years .

Pikachu was ranked as the second best person of the year by Time in 1999 , who called it " The most beloved animated character since Hello Kitty " . The magazine noted Pikachu as the " public face of a phenomenon that has spread from Nintendo 's fastest selling video game to a trading @-@ card empire " , citing the franchise 's profits for the year as the reason for the ranking ; behind singer Ricky Martin but ahead of author J.K. Rowling . The character placed eighth in a 2000 Animax poll of favorite anime characters . In 2002 , Ash 's Pikachu received fifteenth place in TV Guide 's 50 greatest cartoon characters of all time . GameSpot featured it in their article " All Time Greatest Game Hero " . In 2003 Forbes ranked Pikachu as the eighth top @-@ earning fictional character of the year with an income of \$ 825 million . In 2004 the character dropped two spots to tenth on the list , taking in \$ 825 million for a second straight year . In a 2008 Oricon poll Pikachu was voted as the fourth most popular video game character in Japan , tying with Solid Snake . The character has been regarded as the Japanese answer to Mickey Mouse and as being part of a movement of " cute capitalism " . Pikachu was listed 8th in IGN 's " Top 25 Anime Characters of All Time " . Nintendo Power listed Pikachu as their ninth favourite hero , stating that while it was one of the first Pokémon , it is still popular to this day . Authors Tracey West and Katherine Noll called Pikachu the best Electric type Pokémon and the best Pokémon overall . They added that if a person were to go around and ask Pokémon players who their favourite Pokémon was , they would " almost always " choose Pikachu . They also called Pikachu " brave and loyal " . On a less positive note , Pikachu

was ranked first in AskMen 's top 10 of the most irritating 1990s cartoon characters . Similarly , in a poll conducted by IGN , it was voted as the 48th best Pokémon , with the staff commenting " despite being the most recognized Pokémon in the world ... Pikachu ranks surprisingly low on our top 100 " .

A newly discovered ligand believed to provide better visual acuity , discovered by Osaka Bioscience Institute Foundation (?????????????) , is named " Pikachurin " , borrowed from the nimbleness of Pikachu . The name was inspired due to Pikachu 's " lightning @-@ fast moves and shocking electric effects " .

Pikachu and ten other Pokémon were chosen as Japan 's mascots in the 2014 FIFA World Cup .