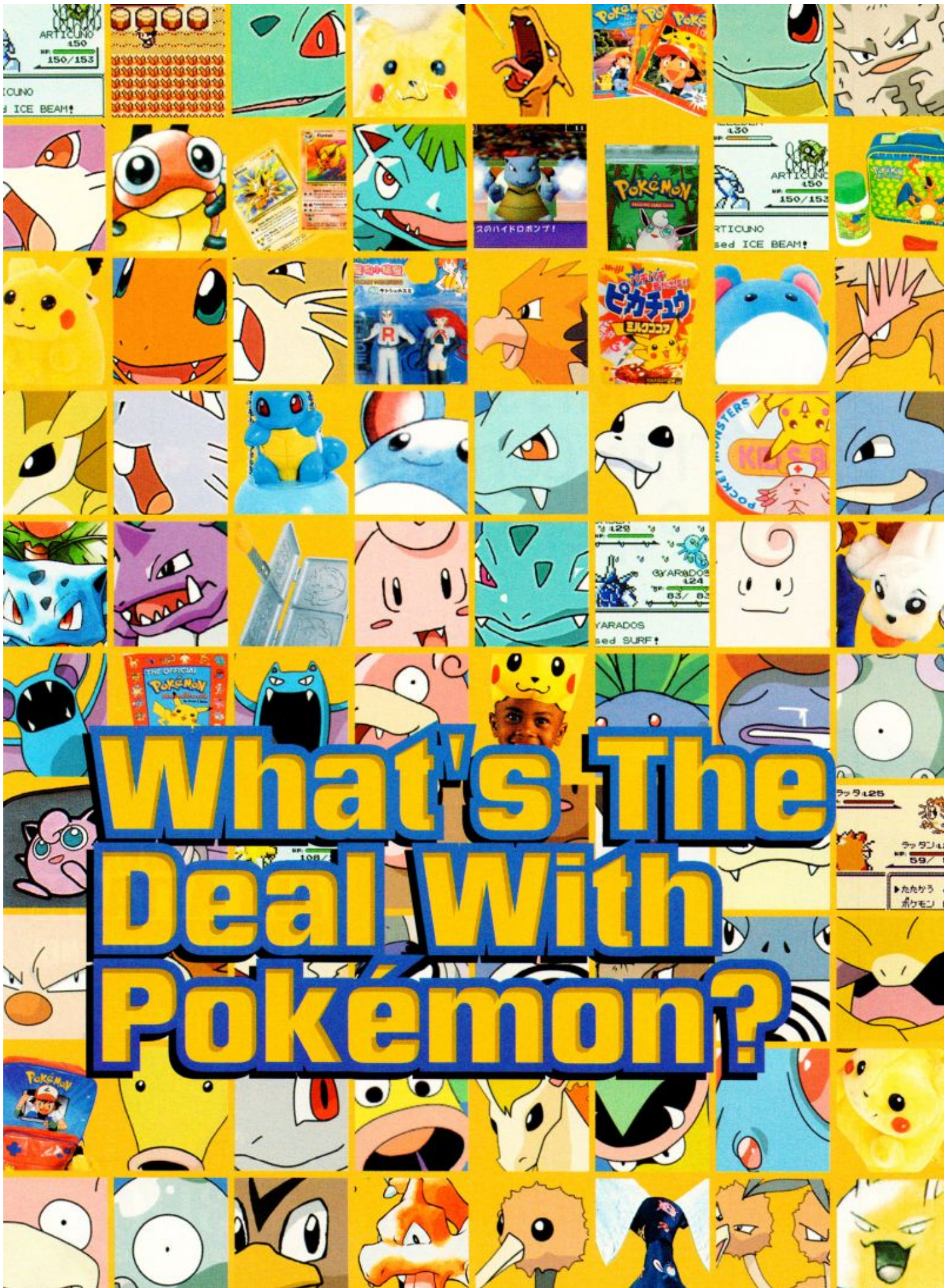


# What's the deal with Pokemon

Article scanné dans le magazine Electronic Gaming Monthly n°124 (Novembre 1999)

Sujet de l'article : Pokemon Stadium

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**It started as a Game Boy game. Now it's a billion-dollar business for Nintendo. Just what is all the fuss about? EGM examines the Poké-phenomenon.**

**T**he story something goes like this: When he was a kid in Japan, Satoshi Tajiri would stalk bugs. He'd capture them. He'd collect them in jars. He wanted to make them fight like the rubber-suit monsters of his favorite flicks. He wanted to catch them all.

Sound familiar?

Now in his 30s, Tajiri, the founder and president of Game Freak, has taken this hobby and turned it into something bigger than a game, bigger than a movie, bigger than a toy line. The inventor of Pokémon, Tajiri has unleashed a global pop-culture phenomenon that has made more money than Poké-icon Pikachu can shoot sparks—\$5 billion in worldwide merchandising sales. American gamers have bought 4 million copies of Pokémon Red and Blue. The animated series, now in its second season, is the top-rated kids' show in the country. Nintendo's Pokémon training tour crams malls with 10,000 kids at every stop.

And, yes, even though the number of Pokémon licensees is up to 90, the craze is still growing. "I don't even think the property has been fully taken advantage of by the industry," said Ed Roth, president of the NPD Group's Leisure Activities Tracking Services. "I don't think it's anywhere near its upside potential. There's a lot of pent-up demand." At this point, Pokémon faithful can get their hands on nearly anything emblazoned with Pikachu or his too-cute kin, including toys, T-shirts, comic books, ball caps, pajamas, backpacks, novels and lunch boxes—all items from heavy-hitter licensees such as Hasbro, Topps, General Mills, Viz and Pioneer. Nearly all the

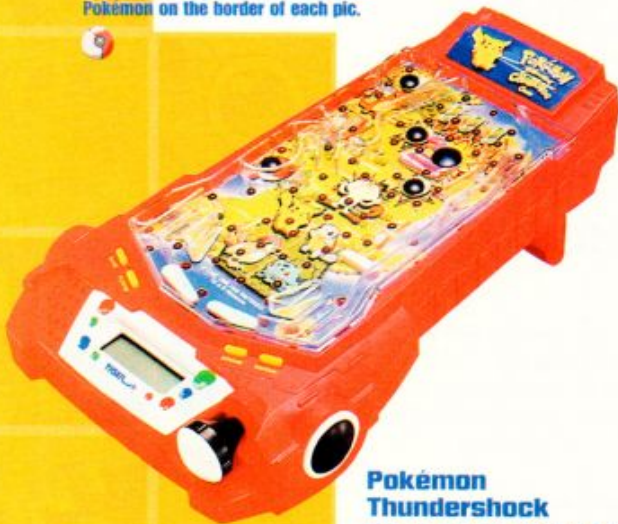
# Poké-Stuff

You can't walk into the grocery store without seeing a dozen Pichachus staring at you from as many different products. More than 90 companies are churning out Poké-wares, and we've scoured the globe for the best, the oddest and the rarest items. We even rate the stuff on our weirdness scale (right). Can you get it all?

what the?!  
 freakish  
 sorta odd  
 hmm...  
 tame



**Pokémon Camera**  
 It's a standard 35mm camera and a whole lot more...well, not really. Mainly, it just prints all 150 Pokémon on the border of each pic.



**Pokémon Thundershock**  
 It's basically a little Pokémon one- to two-player pinball game, with Pokémon sounds and graphics on it.

**Pikachu Milk Cocoa**  
 This Japanese Pokémon milk chocolate treat is loved by all children. The Japanese Pikachu spoon is sold separately.



licensees are expanding their Pokémon lines. The first Pokémon flick—*Mewtwo Strikes Back*—hits theaters across the U.S. Nov. 12. Current speculation in the toy industry is that Pokémon could easily become this season's Furby. And, of course, Pokémon Yellow, Gold and Silver are on the way.

Not bad for a Game Boy game crafted by a skeleton crew of programmers and artists. Tajiri's first step into the world of video games came in 1981, when he won first prize in the TV Game Idea Awards, a Sega Enterprises-sponsored design contest. Later he became a game-industry analyst, writing about and critiquing games for his own magazine called *Game Freak* in 1982. In April 1989, he incorporated Game Freak, which has since designed and created games for the likes of Sony, Sega and Nintendo. In 1990, Tajiri began designing the concept and code for Pokémon. That's also when he started working with Tsunekazu Ishihara, president of Creatures, the Japanese game company that among other things produced the artwork for Pokémon and its 151 critters. During the six years it took to develop the project, Nintendo invested in the game and became co-owner of Pokémon in Japan.

The Red and Green versions hit Japan on Feb. 27, 1996. Accompanying merchandise included a weekly comic series but little else. Nintendo hoped Pokémon would boost the original Game Boy's lagging sales. It did a bit more than that. It sold nearly 4 million copies in 1997, topping newer titles like Square's *Final Fantasy VII* and the mega-popular horse-racing title *Derby Stallion*. To date, more than 12 million copies—split across four "color versions"—have been sold in Japan, putting Pokémon sales ahead of other high-profile PlayStation titles like *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Metal Gear Solid*. Japanese fans have bought more than a billion cards from the Pokémon trading card game, also designed by Ishihara. The animated series, which gained notoriety after one episode's strobe-light-like scene threw a few hundred kids into seizures (turns out the whole thing was blown out of proportion), is just as big a hit in its home country. It's spawned two feature films, the second of which has just finished a run in Japanese theaters. Japan's two toy-filled Pokémon Centers have lines out the door and down the block on weekends and holidays. And All Nippon Airways painted way-larger-than-life Poké-critters and logos onto several



# Game Freak Gameography

Most gamers probably aren't familiar with Pokémon developer Game Freak, but in its 10-year history this company—and its founder, Satoshi Tajiri—has designed games for the likes of Sega, Namco, Sony and Nintendo. Not bad for a small team that started in a tiny one-room studio. You may have played some of these titles, but none of them reached the kind of popularity in the states that Pokémon has. Here's a rundown of Game Freak's pre-Pokémon work:



**Stuffed Pokémon**  
Cute, cuddly, collectible.  
Perfect for regular and  
hardcore Pokémon fans.

**Quinty** (Famicom)  
Released: June 1989 (Japan)  
Publisher: Namco  
An odd-looking puzzle game.

**Jerry Boy** (Super Famicom)  
Released: September 1991 (Japan)  
Publisher: Sony/Epic Records  
This puzzle game stars an odd-looking blob of goo.

**Yoshi's Egg** (Famicom/Game Boy)  
Released in the U.S. as Yoshi  
Released: December 1991 (Japan)  
Publisher: Nintendo  
Yep, it's another puzzle game, except this time you line up monster eggs.

**Magical Tarurot-kun** (Sega Mega Drive)  
Released: April 1992 (Japan)  
Publisher: Sega Enterprises  
A cutesy side-scrolling platform game based on a popular anime.

**Mario & Wario** (Super Famicom)  
Released: 1993 (Japan)  
Publisher: Nintendo  
A puzzler similar to Lemmings, this game supported the mouse. It was supposed to come to the U.S. but never did.

**Nontan and Issho Kuru Kuru Puzzle**  
(Super Famicom)  
Released: April 1994 (GB, Japan), November 1994 (Super Famicom, Japan)  
Publisher: Victor Entertainment Inc.  
You guessed it—another obscure puzzle game.

**Pulseman** (Mega Drive)  
Released: July 1994 (Japan)  
Publisher: Sega Enterprises  
A side-scrolling action game similar to Sonic the Hedgehog.

**Bazaar de Gozaru's Game** (PC Engine)  
Released: July 1996  
Publisher: NEC Home Electronics Ltd.  
One of Game Freak's most obscure titles.



Yoshi's Egg



Mario & Wario



Pulseman



**Pokémon Figures**  
 Toy figures are always a popular item. Pokémon toy figures are even more popular. These Tomy figures are available in Japan.



**Pokémon Band-Aids**

These bandages feature popular Pokémon. But there's something not right about associating these cute creatures with bloody wounds.



**Pokémon Candy**

This flavored Japanese Pokémon Piffre candy is delicious and nutritious. Perfect while you're on the go playing some Pokémon.



**Pokémon Toy Plane**

This Japanese toy plane is based on the real-life Pokémon jet from All Nippon Airways. Rev it up and it rolls.



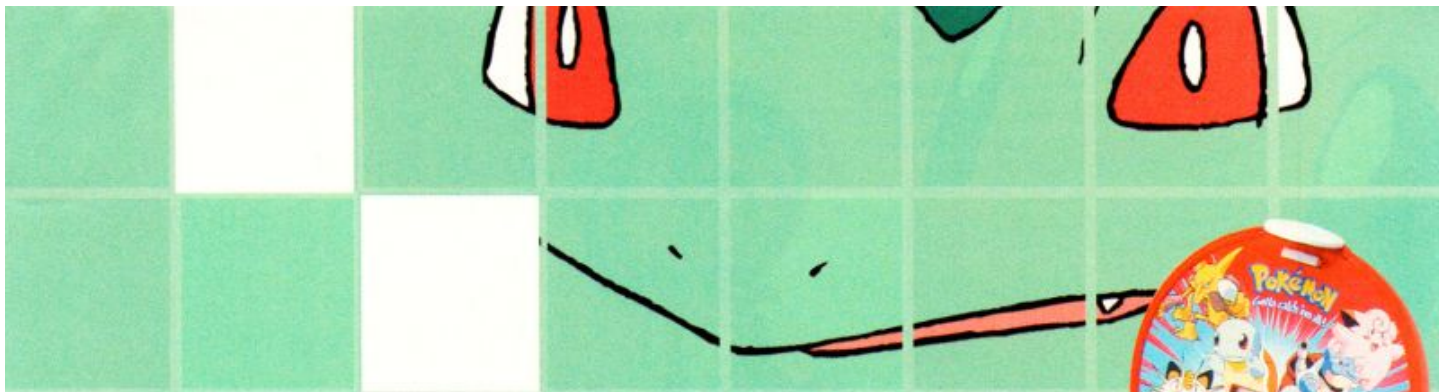
planes in its fleet to lure family travelers.

If the thought of a 30-foot Pikachu staring down at you from the hull of an airliner doesn't strike you as odd, consider this: Pokémon has followed the standard franchise formula backward. Instead of starting as a popular movie, TV show or comic book and then moving on to become a game (like Spawn, Batman, South Park, etc.), Pokémon started as a hit game and went on to become a hit TV show, movie and merchandising phenomenon. Few saw that coming, and when the Pokémon craze did hit hard, even the experts were surprised by the big Poké-boom. Roth said, "I expected when the concept was launched in the U.S. last year, not just the video game but the toys in general, it would probably be a nice success and generate 25 to 50 million retail on an annual basis, and then it would just fade as most of these fads do."

So what is the deal with Pokémon? There's gotta be something about this crude-looking black-and-white Game Boy RPG that captivates millions of pre-teen boys and adults, not to mention an unusually large audience of girl gamers. "I think it's the amount of depth and overall quality," said Gail Tilden, Nintendo's vice president of Product Acquisition and Development, who left her position as head of *Nintendo Power* to launch Pokémon in America. "It took six years for the creators to complete the game and all the original ideas and concepts and things about the RPG, the evolve system, the battling, the trading. It has so much depth and it's so carefully and creatively thought out, and I think that's appreciated."

We won't argue with that (we gave Pokémon great reviews, after all). But when it comes to the merchandising blitz, we have our own theory on why so many gamers want to buy so much Pokémon stuff: The game programs you to collect things. After spending 50 hours gathering 150 pocket monsters, the average player's probably pretty keen to get his hands on as much other Pokémon-related gear as he or she can afford.

The game's creators, however, say Pokémon's merchandising bonanza is more of a happy accident than part of any sinister plan to turn kid gamers into Poké-addicts. "Mr. Tajiri didn't start this project intending to make something which would become very popular," Pokémon producer and master game designer Shigeru Miyamoto told us. "He just



**Pokémon Pokéball**  
A little five-game ball that you tilt around and play with. It allows you to "capture" all 150 Pokémon.



wanted to make something he wanted to play himself. There was no business sense involved, only his love involved in the creation. Somehow, what he wanted to create for himself was appreciated by others in this country and is shared by people in other countries."

**"Mr. Tajiri didn't start this project intending to make something which would become very popular." —Shigeru Miyamoto**

One of the main reasons Pokémon has become so popular with a mass audience of younger players is its emphasis on trading and battling. It's a social game that gets kids out of the house. Parents can't complain that their kids sit in front of the TV all day because, unlike traditionally popular home video games, you can take Pokémon anywhere. Nintendo Co. Ltd. President Hiroshi Yamauchi told a crowd at the company's Space World '97 exhibition, "I want people all over the world to play Pokémon. First in the U.S. But people in different countries have different tastes. So changes must be made, and we are working on that."

Even though Yamauchi was steadfast, Nintendo was never sure Pokémon's appeal in Japan would translate to American gamers. After all, it is a fairly complicated and unusual game, and Nintendo of America had few raw materials to build a Pokémon hype machine back when Red and Blue launched here last September. "We didn't have any artwork or TV shows as a reference," Tilden said. "We just had a Game Boy game. So we went to great lengths to localize the game, to make it just as intriguing for American players as in Japan." Tilden added that Nintendo actually had to reprogram Pokémon Red and Blue instead of just translating the Japanese text (which would explain many of the subtle differences between the U.S. and



**Stuffed Marrow**  
This Pokémon is from the upcoming Gold and Silver versions of the game. But for \$60, you have to be pretty hardcore to order one.





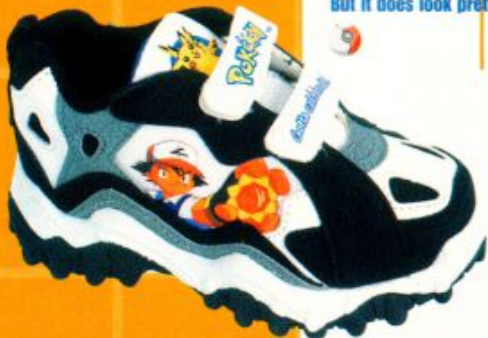
### Pokémon Keychain

This little wind-up Japanese Pokémon keychain is both silly and lame at the same time. The little Pokémon inside barely move!



### Pokémon Sneaker

This one is for kids, so not all Poké-freaks will be able to enjoy it. But it does look pretty cool.



Japanese versions). "Because the original creators, Game Freak and Creatures, had taken six years to build the game, the code was somewhat fragile, so we couldn't directly port the game to English."

One of the first steps was changing the names of the 150 Pokémon into names that kids in the U.S. would understand. While Pikachu was still called Pikachu ("pika" in Japanese means a flash of light), American kids might not have accepted Fushigidane as much as the altered name—Bulbasaur. To make sure that each name was unique only to Pokémon, Nintendo trademarked all 150 monster names.

A small team at NOA's Redmond, Wash., headquarters came up with the names for the U.S. versions' monsters. Headed by Hiro Nakamura, they eyeballed each Pokémon's appearance

**"...I was told was that this kind of thing would never appeal to American audiences." —Shigeru Miyamoto**

and characteristics, then submitted names to the game's creators in Japan for approval. "It's not just the way the Pokémon look that determines what they're called," Tilden told us, "It's also their attacks and powers and what kind of Pokémon they are. Like Snorlax has a sleep spell. And if they evolve, you have to think of how the name fits the first, second and third phase of this character."

Meanwhile, Nintendo of America purchased the rights to all things Pokémon, thus locking up the rights to the TV show, merchandise and the Pokémon name everywhere in the world except Asia. Then NOA kicked off a \$20 million marketing campaign to support the launch of Pokémon Red and Blue, the animated series, the toy line—everything. Nintendo held its first and most spectacular publicity stunt in Topeka, Kan., which the mayor renamed ToPikachu for one day while cargo planes carpet bombed 10,000 kids with Pokémon toys. From there, Nintendo reps piled into 10 Volkswagen Beetles painted like oversized Pikachus and zoomed to 10 cities across the country. Nintendo also mass mailed more than 1 million videotapes to open-minded gamers that explained the game's



### Pyramid Poké-Bags

The regular backpacks are acceptable but there's just something wrong about having a Pikachu strapped to your back.







### Pokémon Bubbles

Adorable. Unscrew the lids and blow the tiniest little bubbles. So darned cute, even an agitated Mankey will enjoy them.



workings, introduced some of its 150 monsters and previewed the animated series.

All Nintendo could do was wait for Pokémon's release date—Sept. 27, 1998—to come and go to see if the preparation paid off. As we all now know, it did. In the first two weeks of its availability, Pokémon became the fastest-selling Game Boy title ever, selling 200,000 copies. Pokémon's success even took Nintendo's top brass in Japan by surprise. "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," Miyamoto told us. "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."

Today, Nintendo is pushing the competitive aspect of Pokémon—the link-cable feature that lets you battle your best pocket monsters against a pal's—by holding special tournaments across the country. The tour hit malls in 19 cities this summer, with tens of thousands of Pokémon fans earning badges by participating. Nintendo recently extended the tour and is now giving away the 151st Pokémon, Mew, at these events. Check [www.pokemon.com](http://www.pokemon.com) for a listing of tour dates and cities.

And, of course, Nintendo is readying several new Pokémon titles for U.S. launch. First up is Pokémon Yellow. Hitting the



### Pokémon Books

This one's pretty straightforward—books based on the TV show.



### Pokémon Lunch Box

Kids will love this durable lunch box from Thermos. Some come with a thermos and special pringle container inside. Cool.



There are two Pokémon Center stores in Japan, in Tokyo and Osaka, respectively. Each one is filled to the brim with Pokémon goods. The shops are so popular with kids all around Japan that people come from all around just to shop here.



### Pokémon Figurines

Stuff like this is always fun to have around. Especially if you're a Pokémaniac. And they're cheap.



### Pokémon Challenge

A two-player spinning top game from Tiger. How do you win? Well, basically the last top spinning is the winner. Uh...fun?



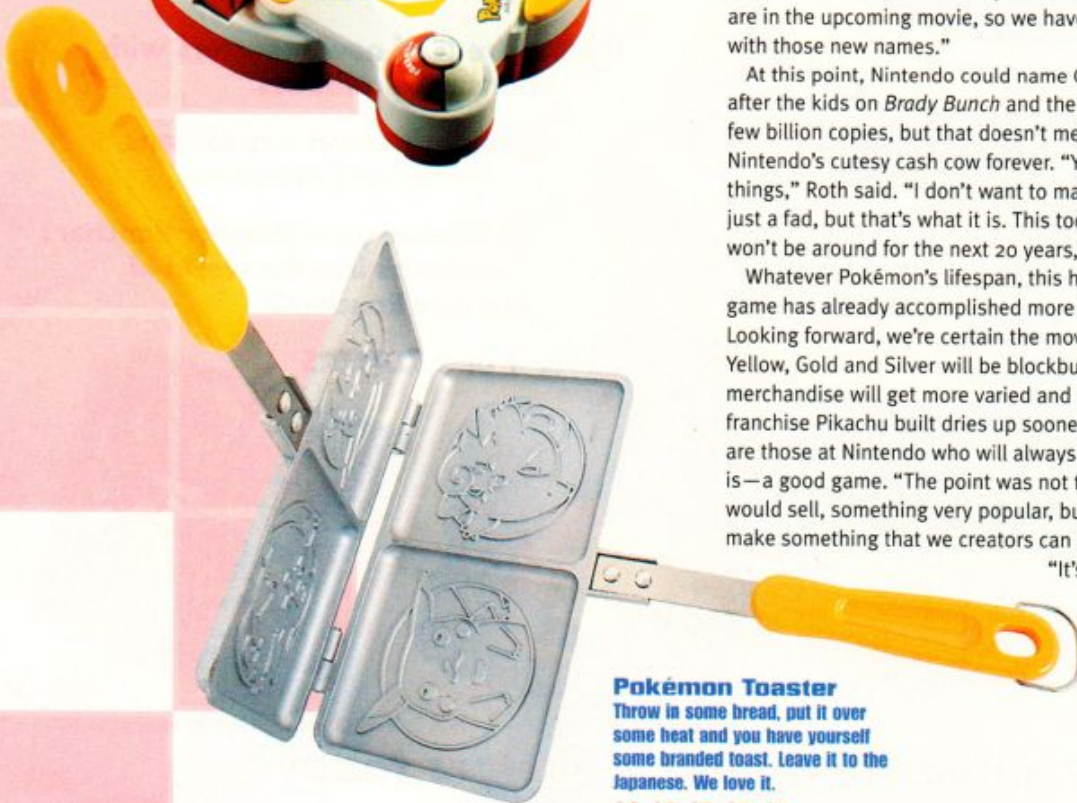
Game Boy in October (it doesn't take advantage of the Game Boy Color's full palette), Yellow follows the TV show more closely than the original, but has the same gameplay as Red and Blue at its core. Pokémon Stadium for the Nintendo 64 will hit in March, and Nintendo's still evaluating Pikachu Genki De Chu—the Japanese N64 game that lets you talk to Pikachu with a special microphone peripheral—to see how hard it would be to alter the voice-recognition system so it understands English.

But it's the sequel—Pokémon Gold and Silver—that have Poké-freaks in an I-can't-wait frenzy. These Game Boy Color titles are the true sequels to Red and Blue in every way, with a new story, new characters, a new world to explore and 120 new monsters. You won't get to play them for a while, though. Gold and Silver aren't due in the U.S. until at least next fall, and Nintendo has barely begun localizing the games. "Translation work hasn't begun on the game itself," Tilden said, "but some of those Pokémon are already featured in the show, and a few are in the upcoming movie, so we have worked on coming up with those new names."

At this point, Nintendo could name Gold and Silver's critters after the kids on *Brady Bunch* and the games would still sell a few billion copies, but that doesn't mean Pokémon will remain Nintendo's cutesy cash cow forever. "You don't know with these things," Roth said. "I don't want to make a cop-out and say it's just a fad, but that's what it is. This too will have its peak. It won't be around for the next 20 years, I don't think."

Whatever Pokémon's lifespan, this humble little Game Boy game has already accomplished more than anyone expected. Looking forward, we're certain the movie will be a hit; Pokémon Yellow, Gold and Silver will be blockbusters; and the merchandise will get more varied and bizarre. But even if the franchise Pikachu built dries up sooner rather than later, there are those at Nintendo who will always like Pokémon for what it is—a good game. "The point was not to make something that would sell, something very popular, but to love something and make something that we creators can love," Miyamoto said.

"It's the very core feeling we should have in making games."



### Pokémon Toaster

Throw in some bread, put it over some heat and you have yourself some branded toast. Leave it to the Japanese. We love it.



Electronic Gaming Monthly - 180 - [www.videogames.com](http://www.videogames.com)

# TV Show Pokédex

Although missing the infamous seizure-inducing scenes, Pokémon debuted on TV screens in nearly every market in the U.S. on Sept. 7, 1998, and quickly became a top-rated syndicated show. Funny thing: When Nintendo and 4Kids Productions launched the series here, the game wasn't even available, but the show helped build hype toward its release a few weeks later. Not only is the show based on the game, it actually follows the game's events (with some divergence to mix things up a bit and keep it fresh) and gives players tips on how to become a better trainer. Heck, you can almost use the show as a strategy guide. For instance, Ash learns in the show that rock-type Pokémon are weak against water-type. And if you're playing and watching the show at the same time, but not quite sure which town you should be traveling to next, you can find out by following the show's continuity.

Monsters from Gold and Silver have been introduced slowly into the TV show in Japan, mainly because the release date of the game has been pushed back so many times. But on Oct. 14, the show will start to have a more Gold and Silver slant, introducing the new monsters. Don't worry: Ash is likely to remain the main character.

Kids WB has taken over airing the show in the U.S., and will run the original 52 episodes in addition to 52 brand-new episodes. So if you're a Poké-freak who needs your daily Pikachu fix, you can get it six times a day on your local WB affiliate.

If you're getting into the TV show late, or are slowly watching all of the first 52 episodes, we've compiled this handy Episode Guide of the first season. Have you seen 'em all?



**The Heroes: Ash, Misty, Brock and Pikachu.** Ash is on his way to becoming the world's greatest Pokémon master, whereas Brock wants to become a skilled Pokémon breeder and Misty hopes to be the best at everything.

## 1: Pokémon, I Choose You!

**Who's That Pokémon:** Pikachu  
Ash begins his Pokémon training. He receives a Pikachu from Professor Oak, but this Pika-pal is a stubborn Pokémon, refusing to be friends with him. A run-in with a horde of nasty Spearows puts Pikachu in danger.

## 2: Pokémon Emergency!

**Who's That Pokémon:** Koffing  
Ash races to the Pokémon Center in Veridian City, where Pikachu is nursed back to health. Team Rocket bursts onto the scene to steal the rare Pokémon staying in the Center, but with the help of Pikachu, they are blasted.

## 3: Ash Catches A Pokémon

**Who's That Pokémon:** Caterpie  
After plenty of trying, Ash catches a Caterpie. It takes an immediate liking to Misty, who hates bugs (but loves other types of Pokémon). Caterpie helps defeat Team Rocket and evolves into Metapod.

## 4: Challenge of the Samurai

**Who's That Pokémon:** Metapod  
Just as Ash is about to catch a Weedle, a Samurai challenges him. Their battle is interrupted by a swarm of Beedrill, and in the confusion Ash loses Metapod. Will he be able to get Metapod back without getting stung?

## 5: Showdown in Pewter City

**Who's That Pokémon:** Onix  
Misty and Ash travel to Pewter City, where Ash challenges the city's Gym Leader, Brock. After a loss, and with the help of Flint, Ash energizes Pikachu and goes back to take care of Brock. In the end, Brock joins the two on their Pokémon journey.

## 6: Clefairy and the Moon Stone

**Who's That Pokémon:** Clefairy  
The adventurers run into Seymour the Scientist, who is studying Clefairy and the fabled Moon

Stone. When Team Rocket show up, they help the Clefairy defeat them and protect their precious stone.

## 7: The Water Flowers of Cerulean City

**Who's That Pokémon:** Seel  
Our friends end up in Cerulean City, where Ash challenges the three Sensational Sisters to a Pokémon match to gain his second badge. Misty counterchallenges Ash to a battle, but Team Rocket intervenes.

## 8: The Path to the Pokémon League

**Who's That Pokémon:** Sandshrew  
After leaving Cerulean City, Ash & Co. drop by A.J.'s private training gym. A.J. trains his Pokémon extra hard (and is undefeated in 99 matches). After his 100th win he'll start going for badges. Ash, a little too proud of himself for already acquiring two badges, thinks he'll beat A.J., but gets proven wrong.

## 9: The School of Hard Knocks

**Who's That Pokémon:** Cubone  
While Ash is learning how to be a Pokémon trainer as he goes along, some actually go to school for it. Ash and Pikachu stumble on a group of Pokémon Tech students picking on a younger student, and our friends stick up for him. Turns out Team Rocket are Pokémon Tech flunkies, too. But Jezelle, the top student at Pokémon Tech challenges them to a match.

## 10: Bulbasaur and the Hidden Village

**Who's That Pokémon:** Bulbasaur  
Ash, Misty and Brock come across an Oddish while wandering through the forest, and try to capture it. But a Bulbasaur appears and stops them, and the two Pokémon disappear into the woods. After Brock falls into the river, our friends come across a Pokémon rest center, where Melanie nurses injured Pokémon back to health—



**The Enemies: Team Rocket blast off at the speed of light! Surrender now, or prepare to fight. Jesse, James and Meowth want to steal Ash's Pikachu and other rare Pokémon so they can get in their boss' favor.**

Bulbasaur being their guardian. And, Team Rocket to capture those Pokémon for themselves.

### 11: Charmander – The Stray Pokémon

**Who's That Pokémon:** Charmander  
Finding a Charmander that is stubbornly waiting for its trainer, our friends stop at a local Pokémon Center to rest and eat. They overhear the Charmander's trainer talking about how he left it out in the forest. As it's raining, there's a danger that Charmander's flame will go out and it'll die. So our friends save it from danger, and it must decide whether to go with them or its old, neglecting trainer.

### 12: Here Comes The Squirtle Squad

**Who's That Pokémon:** Squirtle  
Our friends meet up with the Squirtle Squad, a gang of prank-playing Squirtles who're terrorizing the local town. Jessie and James strike a deal with the pranksters to help capture Ash's Pikachu. Having captured them successfully, Ash tries to convince them that not all Pokémon trainers or humans are bad. The Squirtles see the light of day and help defeat Team Rocket and a new Pokémon joins Ash's team.

### 13: Mystery at the Light House

**Who's That Pokémon:** Crabby  
On the way to Vermillion City, Ash & Co. stop at a mysterious light house. There they meet Bill, a researcher studying extinct and rare Pokémon. Bill has been hoping to meet a faraway Pokémon for years, and when it comes to visit the light house, Team Rocket are there to try to capture it. But they only succeed in scaring it away.

### 14: Electric Shock Showdown

**Who's That Pokémon:** Raichu  
Will Ash evolve Pikachu into a Raichu? That's the dilemma at hand in this episode, when they arrive at Vermillion City. Ash does battle with Lt. Surge, the town's Gym Leader, for a Thunder Badge but Pikachu is defeated. Surge taunts Ash, saying that he should evolve him into the stronger Raichu, but Pikachu's got some attacks that Surge's quickly evolved Raichu doesn't.

### 15: Battle Aboard the St. Anne

**Who's That Pokémon:** Raticate  
Setting sail on the trainer-filled St. Anne, our friends head toward trouble as the ship's overrun by Team Rocket members who start nabbing everyone's Pokémon. Ash trades Butterfree for a Raticate but starts to regret his choice, and James buys a worthless Magikarp. Ash gets his Butterfree back and the ship begins to sink...

### 16: Pokémon Shipwreck

**Who's That Pokémon:** Magikarp  
Trapped in the still-sinking ship, our friends use their water Pokémon to escape. Team Rocket's only water-type monster is Magikarp, which helps them to escape. Marooned in the middle of the ocean without food, Team Rocket try to fry up their fishy Pokémon, but kick it off the makeshift

raft after finding out it's all bone. It evolves into Gyarados and exacts some harsh revenge.

### 17: Island of the Giant Pokémon

**Who's That Pokémon:** Slowbro  
Perhaps the best idea for a Pokémon episode— subtitle what the Pokémon are saying! When our friends and Team Rocket land on an island, they get separated from their Pokémon. They quickly discover that this is no ordinary island, but infested with giant-sized Pokémon. As Pikachu and the rest of the Pokémon try to find their trainers, we find out that the island is really an amusement park.

### SKIPPED JAPANESE EPISODE!

### 18: Holiday at Aopulco

**Who's That Pokémon:** Obaba  
In this episode, Ash and friends find themselves in a sunny summer paradise. After enjoying a boat ride they accidentally smash into a dock, damaging it. The dock's owner isn't too pleased, either, so they offer to help out at his restaurant. Team Rocket steps in, helping to promote a competing restaurant. Discovering they still don't have enough cash to help pay for the damage to the dock, they enter Misty in a Pokémon trainer Swimsuit Competition. Team Rocket—with James in a rubber, pump up suit—and Gary's entourage (Shigeru) compete in it too. There is a flashback to this episode in episode 26 (Hypno's Naptime), which did air in the U.S.

### 18: Tentacool & Tentacruel

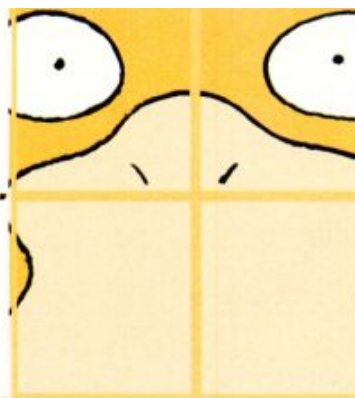
**Who's That Pokémon:** Horsea  
After saving a group of construction workers and a Horsea from imminent doom, our friends find themselves in Porta Vista. There they meet Nastina, who's building an amusement park but having a problem with unruly Tentacool meddling in her plans. She tries to get Ash & Co. to help, but Misty (who likes the water-type Pokémon) refuses to help. Team Rocket, though, isn't against it.

### 19: The Ghost of Maiden's Peak

**Who's That Pokémon:** Gastly  
After hearing the legend of a beautiful maiden that hangs out near the seaside, Brock and James begin a fruitless search to find her and capture her heart. The legends turn out to be false when our friends find out that the image of the maiden is just a Gastly. They do battle, but the Gastly retreats as the sun rises.

### 20: Bye Bye Butterfree

**Who's That Pokémon:** Butterfree  
A very heartwarming episode of Pokémon where Ash bids farewell to the first Pokémon that he captured and trained as it evolved. A Butterfree festival gives Ash the chance to let his roam free, and it finds a girlfriend, but is rejected. Ash gives him a little bow to wear, but it doesn't please the girl Butterfree. After Butterfree saves the whole flock of Butterfree from Team Rocket's clutches, she warms up to him.



SKIPPED JAPANESE EPISODE!  
18: Holiday at Aopulco



### 21: Abra and the Psychic Showdown

Who's That Pokémon: Abra

Beating Sabrina, the Saffron City Gym Leader, isn't going to be as easy as Ash thinks. Our three adventurers get shrunk down to miniature size and are used as dolls in Sabrina's dollhouse when Ash loses the match against her. They escape and find out that the only way to beat her is to use a ghost Pokémon in Lavender City.

### 22: The Tower of Terror

Who's That Pokémon: Gengar

The three arrive at Pokémon Tower to nab a ghost Pokémon so that Ash can defeat Sabrina. Ash, Pikachu and Charmander venture in alone after one ghostly experience scares off Brock and Misty. After a run-in with the ghosts, Ash and Pikachu become ghosts themselves to have some fun. In the end, Ash does get a ghost-type Pokémon. We also get an inkling that Misty might actually care about Ash.

### 23: Haunter Vs. Kadabra

Who's That Pokémon: Haunter

Ash and Haunter return to the ring against Sabrina, but Haunter deserts Ash when called upon for battle. Brock and Misty are turned into dolls, while Ash escapes. He finds Haunter, and goes back to battle Sabrina, but Haunter deserts again. But Haunter does help Sabrina find her true self, and Ash gets a Marsh Badge in the process.



### 22: The Tower of Terror



### 24: Primeape Goes Bananas



### 32: The Flame Pokémon-athon

### 24: Primeape Goes Bananas

Who's That Pokémon: Primeape

On their way to Celadon City, our adventurers run into a wild Mankey. Determined to get more new Pokémon, Ash tries to capture it, but only ends up making it angry (driving it to steal his Pokémon League Expo Hat). When Team Rocket appear and kick Mankey, it makes him evolve into Primeape—and Ash has to figure out how to beat him.

### 25: Pokémon Scent-sation

Who's That Pokémon: Gloom

Something smells fishy in Celadon City, and it's Ash! After declaring that he hates perfume, he's banned from battling the Gym Leader (so he can't get the next badge). He teams up with Team Rocket, for the moment, and disguises himself as a girl to get into the Gym. He's soon found out, but still gets to battle the Gym Leader and save the gym from Team Rocket.

### 26: Hypno's Naptime

Who's That Pokémon: Psyduck

As our friends arrive in Hop Hop Hop Town, Ash is attacked by a Mother who thinks he's her missing son Arnold. They find out that Hypno was making the kids (Misty too!) act like Pokémon, and help them snap out of it after getting rid of Team Rocket. Misty gets Psyduck, too!

### 27: Pokémon Fashion Flash

Who's That Pokémon: Vulpix

Team Rocket puts their fashion knowledge to use by opening a Pokémon Beauty Salon as a front to steal rare Pokémon. Ash & Co. meet with Susie, a Pokémon breeding expert, and Brock falls in love—asking her to accept him as her pupil. Misty gets kidnapped by Jessie and James, but Ash and Brock battle them and save her. Brock gets Vulpix.

### 28: The Punchy Pokémon

Who's That Pokémon: Hitmonchan

Our friends come across what they think is a wild Hitmonchan, and Pikachu tries to box it, but gets the bejezus beaten out of him. They find out Hitmonchan belongs to Anthony, the city's Gym Leader. After promising his daughter that they'll get him to retire from Pokémon training, they enter the P-1 Fighting Pokémon tournament. Ash says goodbye to Primape, for now.

### 29: Sparks Fly for Magnemite

Who's That Pokémon: Magnemite

As they arrive in the aptly named Gringey City, Pikachu starts losing energy and gets seriously ill. They take him to the city's Pokémon Center, but the power goes out because hordes of Grimer have clogged up the hydroelectric power intakes. Magnemite, attracted to Pikachu for some strange reason, give our friends a helping hand.

### 30: Dig Those Diglett!

Who's That Pokémon: Diglett

On their way to Fuchsia Gym, our friends stumble upon a Dam Construction Site, who's got a little problem with interfering Diglett. But no Pokémon will battle the Diglett! They discover that the reason is that the Dam is being built on top of Diglett and Dugtrio's homes, Koffing and Ekans evolve into Wheezing and Arbok.

### 31: The Ninja Poké-Showdown

Who's That Pokémon: Venonat

Ash and friends arrive at Fuchsia Gym by accident as they enter a mysterious house filled with booby traps. As Ash goes for a Soul Badge against Koga, the Gym Leader, Team Rocket bursts onto the scene. Psyduck knocks Team Rocket into orbit in time for Ash and Koga to continue their battle.

### 32: The Flame Pokémon-athon

Who's That Pokémon: Ponyta

Welcome to the Big P Ranch, where the Laramie family raises fire-type Pokémon in their natural habitat. The group befriends Lara Laramie, whose Ponyta is a contender in her family's festival Pokémon Race. But Dario, a Dodrio trainer, is up to no good. He hires Team Rocket to sabotage Lara. Ash takes her place with Ponyta in the race, but can he avoid Jessie and James' traps and win?

### 33: The Kangaskhan Kid

Who's That Pokémon: Kangaskhan

Arriving at the Safari Zone, our friends are apprehended by Officer Jenny, who mistakes them for Pokémon poachers. After explaining that they're in a Pokémon reserve, our friends go with

her to stop Team Rocket from capturing a herd of Kangaskhan. Tommy, a young boy who was raised by the Kangaskhan, throws a wrench into all their plans (helping to defeat a mechanical Kangaskhan), and Ash reunites him with his parents.

**SKIPPED JAPANESE EPISODE!**

**35: Legend of Dratini**

Who's That Pokémon: Dratini  
Still in the Safari Zone, the group finds itself at the Warden's house. The Warden's a strange fellow who's just a little trigger-happy (pointing guns at just about everyone). But he did catch a Dratini once, and when Team Rocket finds out about it, they want a piece of that action. They torture him to find out where the Dratini is, and Ash, Misty and Brock arrive just in time to stop them from capturing it.

**34: The Bridge Bike Gang**

Who's That Pokémon: Cloyster  
Finally out of the Safari Zone, they arrive at the bridge to Sunny Town. They can't cross on foot, but Nurse Joy sends them on an errand so they can bike across. They run into a gang of bikers and start battling when Jessie and James (who are infamous biker gang members) show up. Officer Jenny breaks it up, and they continue across the bridge.

**35: Ditto's Mysterious Mansion**

Who's That Pokémon: Ditto  
There's trouble at the House of Imite! Ash and friends stumble upon a mysterious house during a rainstorm, meeting up with Duplica and her Ditto. But her Ditto can't transform into other Pokémon perfectly. That is, until Team Rocket gets ahold of it! Contains one of the funniest moments in the show—the good guys doing their version of the Team Rocket theme.

**SKIPPED JAPANESE EPISODE!**

**38: Electric Soldier Porygon**

Who's That Pokémon: Porygon  
Our friends get transported into the Pokémon Transfer System to check out a bug, but find Team Rocket's inside up to no good. They're able to vanquish team rocket, ending with the flashing blue and red sequence that gave hundreds of kids seizures in Japan. While one of the better episodes of the show, this one won't be seen again in Japan, but 4Kids Productions does want to translate and edit it to run in the U.S.

**SKIPPED JAPANESE EPISODE!**

**Holiday Special: Jynx's Christmas**

Who's That Pokémon: Jynx  
This episode was originally supposed to air the week after Electric Soldier Porygon, but, because of the epileptic seizures incident, it never aired on TV (Pokémon was taken off the air for a few months). Jessie is haunted by a memory she has of a Jynx short-changing her on Christmas. She mistakes the Jynx as the real Santa Claus, so she goes on a quest to exact her revenge. Ash and

friends show up at the North Pole just in time to save the real Santa from being nabbed by Team Rocket, and the Jynx send Jessie, James and Meowth flying.

**36: Pikachu's Goodbye**

Who's That Pokémon: Pikachu  
As they're walking through the forest, our friends run across a group of wild Pikachu frolicking. They're scared of Ash and the rest of the group, until Ash's Pikachu saves one of them from a watery grave. Team Rocket shows up and tries to nab them all, but there are some holes in their plan (or their net). Will Ash say goodbye to his Pikachu, leaving him with the pack of wild Pikachu? A new song is debuted in this episode.

**37: The Battling Eevee Brothers**

Who's That Pokémon: Eevee  
After finding an Eevee tied up, our friends travel to Stone Town (known for its evolution stones) to return it to its owner. Mikey, its trainer, can't decide which Pokémon to make his Eevee evolve into—and gets pressure from his brothers (who have three different kinds of Eevee evolutions) to make up his mind. Team Rocket shows up to nab all the evolved Pokémon, but Mikey and his brothers foil their plans.

**38: Wake Up Snorlax**

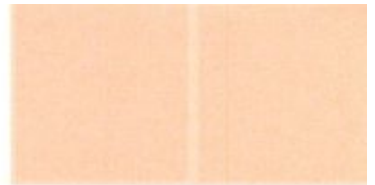
Who's That Pokémon: Snorlax  
An old man by the side of the road plays the group a song on his Pokéflute, expecting something in return. The town they stop in is running out of food because the river that flows through their town has stopped flowing. They find out that a snoozing Snorlax is the cause of the problem, and after trying everything possible to awaken it—even with Team Rocket's "help"—they get the old man to help them move him and restore the river to normal.

**39: Showdown at Dark City**

Who's That Pokémon: Scyther  
Rival Pokémon trainer gangs? Dark City is terrorized by battling gangs of trainers, the Yaz Gym and the Kaz Gym, who want control of the town's Gym purely for the money to be made. To teach them a lesson, they're covered in ketchup so that their Pokémon (who are enraged by red) turn on them. But that only makes the gangs combine efforts and attack Ash & Co.

**40: March of the Exeggcutor Squad**

Who's That Pokémon: Exeggcutor  
Melvin the Magician's carnival magic act is in serious need of help. After Misty helps him, he shows them his tricks and hypnotizes Ash to make him do his dirty work and capture some Exeggcutor. But things go awry and the Exeggcutor go on a stampede through the carnival. Melvin and Charmander save the day, and Charmander evolves into Charmeleon!



**35: Ditto's Mysterious Mansion**



**38: Wake Up Snorlax**



**39: Showdown at Dark City**



#### 41: The Problem With Paras

Who's That Pokémon: Paras  
This is the first episode of Pokémon run on Kids WB. We meet up with Cassandra, a Pokémon good samaritan whose Paras is a real wimp. She wants it to evolve into Parasect so she can make a potion to help Pokémon everywhere. Everyone (even Team Rocket) helps Cassandra meet her goal, but a disobedient Charmeleon makes things difficult.

#### 42: The Song of Jigglypuff

Who's That Pokémon: Jigglypuff  
Jigglypuff can't get any respect. Everytime it sings its song, it puts people to sleep! When that happens, he likes to draw all over the snoozing audiences' faces. And, this particular Jigglypuff doesn't like Pikachu much, either. Team Rocket tries to harness Jigglypuff's power, but it puts everyone to sleep, no matter how hard they try to stay awake.

#### 43: Attack of the Prehistoric Pokémon

Who's That Pokémon: Kabutops  
Our friends take part in the Great Fossil Rush, but end up getting more than they bargained for. They end up accidentally in a cave that's full of prehistoric Pokémon that haven't been seen for millions of years. Aerodactyl takes Ash for a ride, and Charmeleon evolves into Charizard to "help" Ash escape its clutches. And what's this? Ash wakes up to find a mysterious egg...what could it be?

#### 44: A Chansey Operation

Who's That Pokémon: Arbok  
After Pikachu chokes on an apple (that's what you get when you eat 'em whole), they rush to get help. Finding no Pokémon Center in the area they're forced to take him to a human hospital. After being taken care of comes word of a big accident which involved many Pokémon. Ash and friends help treat the Pokémon while thwarting Team Rocket's attempts at capturing them.

#### 45: Holy Matrimony!

Who's That Pokémon: Growlithe  
If James doesn't marry his fiancée, Jezebel, within 24 hours, he won't collect his inheritance, or so the plot goes. His parents fake their own death to try to trick James into marrying Jezebel (who looks like Jesse). He refuses, turning to his childhood Pokémon friend Growlithe as well as Ash for assistance in fending off the advances of Jezebel.

#### 46: So Near, Yet So Farfetch'd

Who's That Pokémon: Farfetch'd  
The trio are all excited after seeing a Farfetch'd in the forest. But things aren't always as they seem, as this Farfetch'd is helping a thief rob trainers of their monsters. He even fools Team Rocket, stealing their Pokémon too. Will they be able to get them all back?

#### 47: Who Gets to Keep Togepi?

Who's That Pokémon: Aerodactyl  
Now that they've been carrying around that egg for four episodes, we get to find out what's in it. It's a game of hot potato as our friends and Team Rocket try to be the ones who keep the mysterious egg (and get it to hatch). It hatches into Togepi and after battling for it, Ash wins, but Misty did see it first.

#### 48: Bulbasaur's Mysterious Garden

Who's That Pokémon: Ivysaur  
Bulbasaur's bulb starts to glow, indicating that it's about to evolve. As part of its evolution, it makes a pilgrimage to the Mysterious Garden. Ash and friends follow it to a garden filled with other Bulbasaur, Ivysaur and Venusaur. Bulbasaur doesn't want to evolve, and Ash tries to convince the others to accept his choice.

#### 49: Case of the K-9 Caper

Who's That Pokémon: Vileplume  
After seeing a Police K-9 trainer in "action," Ash and Pikachu decide to take part in the training too. They fail...miserably. Team Rocket shows up and gases the place, making everyone's voices change. They then imitate Officer Jenny and Ash to get Growlithe and Pikachu to turn on them. In the end, their Pokémon see through the act and get rid of Team Rocket.

#### 50: Pokémon Paparazzi

Who's That Pokémon: Geodude  
The travelers meet up with Todd, a Pokémon photographer hired by Team Rocket—disguised as senior citizens—to "capture" Pikachu. Of course, Team Rocket doesn't understand that he's a photographer. After multiple tries to find Pikachu's natural poses, Team Rocket realizes their mistake, taking matters into their own hands. So the trio becomes a foursome, at least for a little while. If you've played Snap, you'll recognize Todd, who is the star of that game.

#### 51: The Ultimate Test

Who's That Pokémon: Vulpix  
Can Ash pass the test to be accepted into the Pokémon League? He thinks so, but it's harder than it looks. Team Rocket takes the test too, and the final exam is a hands-on battle using random Pokémon. James breaks the rules and gets expelled, but Ash does pretty well (before Team Rocket interferes, that is). Maybe collecting the badges would be easier, though, eh?

#### 52: The Breeding Center Secret

Who's That Pokémon: Psyduck  
In this episode we meet Butch and Cassidy, two more members of Team Rocket, who are stealing Pokémon under the guise of a Pokémon Breeding Center. Misty leaves Psyduck there, but they discover they need Psyduck (for a change!) and go back to retrieve him, discovering what Butch and Cassidy are up to. This is the last episode of the first season, and is also the episode where Todd leaves the group.



You can see some scenes from the Japanese intro in the American show, but not these. Character names are a bit different, too:

Ash = Satoshi  
Misty = Kasumi  
Brock = Takeshi  
Jesse = Musashi  
James = Kojiro



Who's That Pokémon? is also in the Japanese version of the show. Of course, the names of the Pokémon are different.

# Poké-Flix

## Mewtwo Strikes Back

If you've seen Mewtwo in the game, you know that he's one tough customer. In this first Pokémon movie, which hits U.S. theaters on Nov. 12, we get to see the story behind Mewtwo, who was genetically created by scientists as the ultimate rare Pokémon. Things go horribly wrong as Mewtwo goes a little berserk, escaping from his binds and flies to a faraway island. He elevates himself a level above Pokémon, who he thinks are only for fighting, and he invites trainers from across the land to come to the island. Little do they know why they're actually being brought to the island. It's a kind of "Enter the Dragon" meets "Goonies"-type movie. Compared to the series itself, *Mewtwo Strikes Back* is a lot darker, more foreboding flick. It's well-paced and the ending (which we won't spoil) might bring a tear to the eye of the young Poké-fanatic.

This is the first theatrical Pokémon movie, originally released in Japan during the summer of '98. Warner Bros. is distributing in the U.S. and abroad, except in Asia. The music from the original Japanese movie will be completely replaced by all-new music, with a soundtrack album to be released by Atlantic Records. Only female teen pop group M2M has been confirmed as performing on the soundtrack, while rumors abound that Canadian band Len will rerecord the show's main theme for the movie's opening.

## Pikachu's Summer Vacation

Pikachu's Summer Vacation (called *Pikachu no Natsu Yasumi* in Japan) is a 22-minute short film to be shown before *Mewtwo Strikes Back*. It takes place in a Pokémon resort and opens with Pikachu and friends trying to stop Togetic from crying. Of course, things end up going horribly wrong as the good guys have a run-in with a gang of not-so-nice Pokémon: Snubble, Marril, Raichu and Cubone. But they come together in the end to help a Pokémon in need.

*Summer Vacation* isn't like the rest of the TV series—there's very little dialogue. What's there is mostly Poké-speak—weighing in heavily on the cuteness factor (and when we say heavily, we mean bordering on vomit-inducing cuteness for those uninitiated with the show). Pikachu fans will get the most enjoyment out of it, but it's also the first time U.S. audiences will see Snubble and Marril, which are both in Pokémon Gold and Silver.



Mewtwo is one badass Pokémon. He invites trainers around the world to his island to prove he's not just a fighting monster.

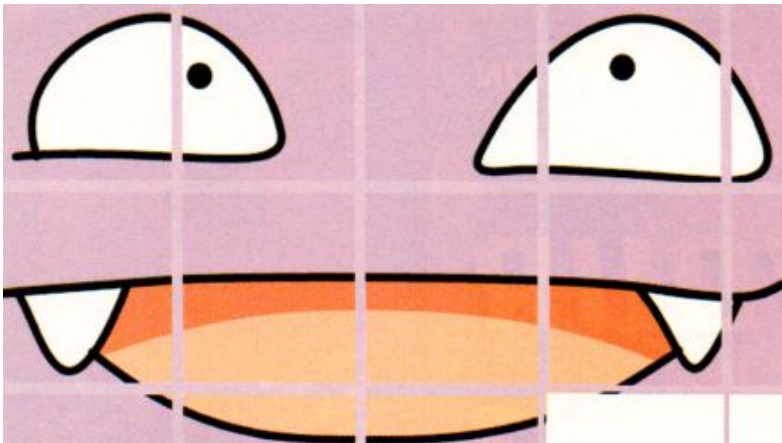


Pikachu hangs on for dear life after falling into the river in *Pikachu's Summer Vacation*.



The teaser poster for the U.S. movie (far left), and the new Japanese movies—*Pikachu Tankentai* (Pikachu Explorers, middle) and *Revelations Lugia* (right).





**Marril**



## What's Next?

### **Pokémon Silver And Gold Set To Deliver Your Next Poké-Fix**

On Nov. 21, kids across Japan will get to play what they've been waiting over two years for—Pokémon Gold and Silver. Unlike the first game's variations of color, these two games are the true sequels in the Pokémon franchise. At Nintendo's Space World '99 expo, 280 game stations were set up, split between Gold and Silver. They quickly filled up with kids anxious to get their hands on the new games, with wait times creeping to more than an hour for 5-10 minutes of playing time. Keep in mind that all the details below cover the Japanese version of the game. Many of the details here (such as names of Pokémon, places and characters) will be changed for the U.S. version scheduled for release in fall 2000.

Pokémon Gold and Silver take full advantage of the Game Boy Color's hardware and its 52-color palette, while remaining backwardly compatible with the earlier iterations of Game Boy hardware. The first thing you'll notice when booting up the game is just how much difference color makes. You can even choose the look of pop-up windows from eight different styles. If you've played the previous versions of Pokémon and are attached to the monsters you collected, you can link up and transfer them to the new game. Feel like printing out your favorite Pokémon's data? Hook up the Game Boy Printer and go to town.

The game begins, like the first one, with Professor Oak (or Orchid, as in the Japanese version) telling you about the Pokémon world, preparing you for your journey ahead. Gone is Ash Ketchum (or Satoshi, in the Japanese game), replaced by a new trainer. This new trainer doesn't have a main name yet. At Space World, the name choices were Gold, Hiroki, Tetsuo and Takashi in the Gold version, and Silver, Kamon, Tooru and Masao in the Silver version. Like the first Pokémon, your goal is to become the world's greatest Pokémon trainer, and you have a new rival to boot. Your rival this time is more evil—he has actually stolen a Pokémon from Dr. Utsugi (the Pokémon expert who gives you your first Pokémon a la Professor Oak in the first game).

At the beginning, you are asked to set the game's clock to the current time. The game runs in real time, so some monsters will only appear in the morning hours, some only during the day

**Pokémon Gold and Silver's brand-new main character is ready to set off on a brand-new Pokémon adventure!**



# ポケットモンスター 金

POCKET MONSTERS

# ポケットモンスター 銀

POCKET MONSTERS



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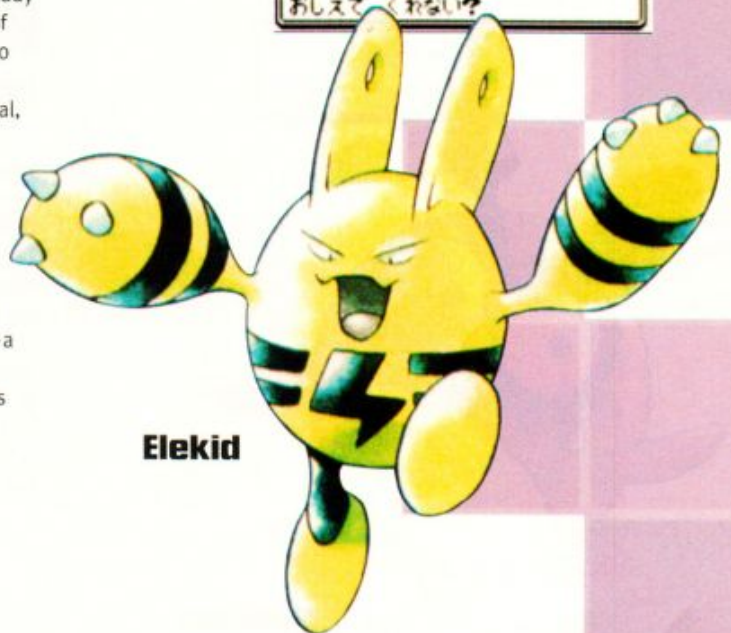


and others show up only at night. So instead of playing whenever you've got time, this requires you to play during the day and night so you can catch all the Pokémon in the game. As time passes, the environments you're in will change as well. As it gets dark in real life, it will get dark in the game. There's reportedly over 200 Pokémon in the game, with about 100 brand-new monsters, but Nintendo is keeping the exact number a secret until the game debuts. It's rumored that not all the monsters from the first game are in the sequel, but at least the more popular ones are (Rattata, Caterpie, Kakuna and Metapod were all in the Space World version). Some of the new monsters are pre-evolved or further-evolved versions of already known Pokémon. For instance, Elekid is an early evolution of Electrabuzz, and a pre-evolved form of Pikachu is rumored to be in the game as well (but hasn't been confirmed).

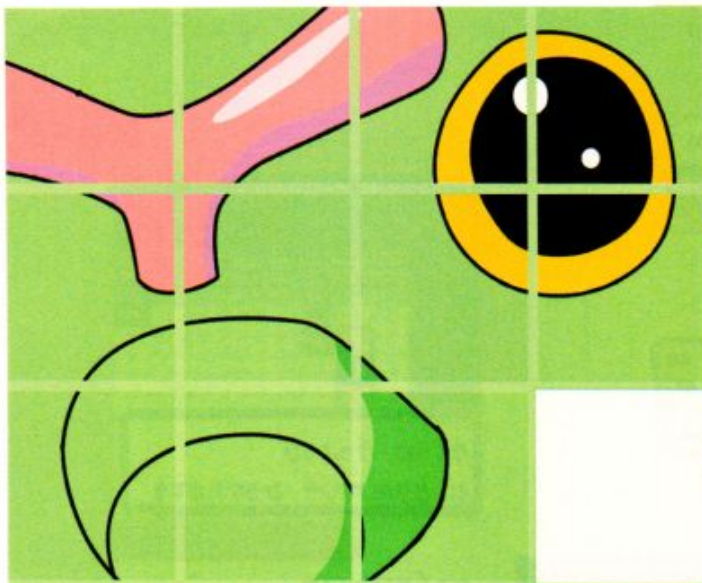
Gold and Silver take place in the same world as the original, but in a different area, called Jouto. You begin the game in Wakaba town, leaving your home as Ash did (after getting some advice from your Mom) then going to the town's Pokémon research facility, headed up by Dr. Utsugi. Here you choose which Pokémon you'll begin the game with from three choices: Waninoko (literally "juvenile alligator" in Japanese)—a blue alligator who is Gold/Silver's Squirtle-type character, and who evolves into Alligates; Hinoarashi—a flaming porcupine-type character, who evolves into Magmarashi; and Chicolita, a plant-type Pokémon that looks like a Victreebel or Bellsprout. All three have male/female forms and will evolve twice.

Male and female-type, you say? That's right. In the new

**You not only have to deal with playing during the day, but at night too! Some monsters will only appear during the evening hours.**



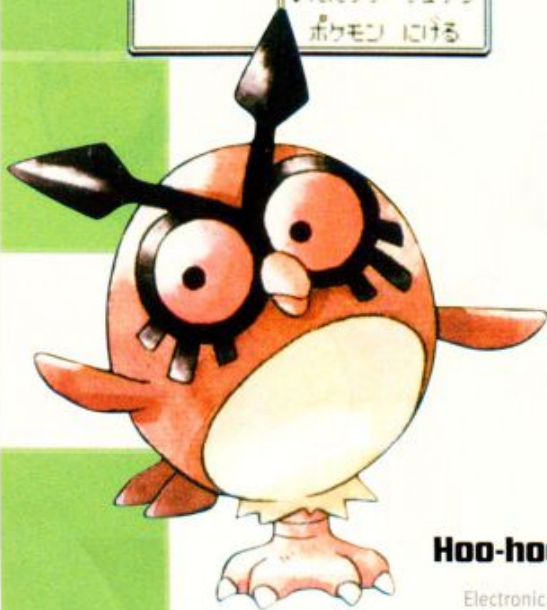
**Elekid**



The new Pokégear keeps track of time, acts as a cellular phone, radio and more.



Items now go in different pockets of your character's backpack, making everything a lot more organized.



Hoo-hoo

Electronic Gaming Monthly 202 - www.videogames.com

games, there are male and female Pokémon, which becomes important if you decide to breed them. There are even genders for those Pokémon brought over from the older game. It's not exactly clear at this point how this will be achieved, but it's thought that you'll be able to breed your Pokémon to produce an egg. What that egg hatches into will be determined by the stats of the monsters you mated.

This time around, if a trainer you're fighting has items, then it can use them on their Pokémon. So let's say you've gotten your opponent's Pikachu down to near-zero health, it can eat some fruit and replenish its life. That's going to make fights with Gym



Eager Poké-fans line up and wait for over an hour to get their hands on Gold and Silver for five minutes.

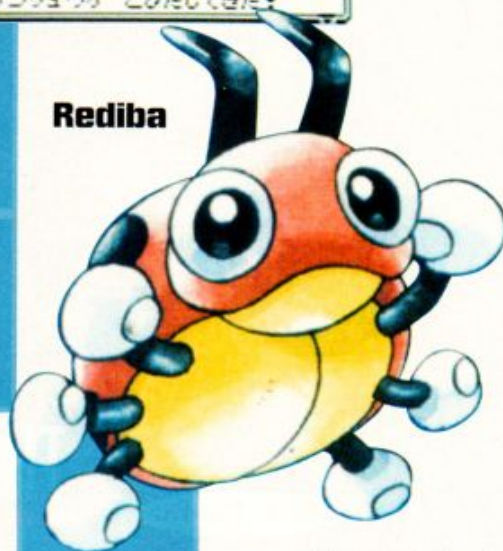
Leaders that much harder. Speaking of items, you can now find nuts or fruits hidden in the overworld inside plants. Giving these fruits and nuts to your Pokémon will replenish their life. To make it easier to store items, your character has a backpack. It has several pockets, each for storing a different type of item: Regular Items, Pokéballs, miscellaneous important stuff and Hidden Machines. So you won't have to go through your entire stock of items just to find where your hidden machines are, just go to the right pocket in your backpack.

Perhaps the newest thing in the game is the Pokégear, a wrist-mounted do-it-all machine that brings many new facets to the way you play Pokémon. In addition to keeping the time, it



**Kireihana**

**Togepi**



**Rediba**

also acts as a cellular phone and radio. You can upgrade your Pokégear by adding or buying upgrade cards, which give it new abilities and options, such as the ability to listen to all the radio stations (there are several, including a station with just music), and view a world map. During the game you'll collect trainer phone numbers that you can call if you need advice, etc. Listening to the radio will give you information on Pokémon seminars so you can learn techniques that will help you become a better trainer. Professor Oak can be heard from via the radio feature of the game. There are even events that will take place only on certain days (yup they're going to make you play this one every day!).

Aside from the Pokégear, Professor Oak has also updated his Pokédex, making it easier to use and as comprehensive as possible. In fact, you'll meet up with him early on in the game, where he'll give you a Pokémon book, for data on new monsters in the game beginning at #152 (right after Mew).

There were eight different Gym Leaders in the version shown at Space World, all named after plants or flowers—Hayato, Tsukushi, Akane, Matsuba, Shijima, Mikan, Yanagi and Ibuki.

Some of the monsters from the new games have already appeared in the Pokémon TV show and the movies in Japan, but they'll start appearing more regularly in the series beginning Oct. 14 in Japan. It's likely that we won't start seeing these new Gold/Silver Pokémon until around the time those games are ready for release here.

**Professor Oak's got a brand-new Pokédex for you, complete with all the information you're going to need when you spot or capture a new species of Pokémon.**





## And The Rest...

You may have to wait until next fall to play Gold and Silver, but that doesn't mean you'll spend the next 11 months in a Poké-drought. You probably already have Pokémon Snap and Pokémon Pinball to play with, and Nintendo has a couple of other Pokémon games on the way to tide you over 'til Gold and Silver's release.

First up is Pokémon Yellow, due in October. Although it packs the same basic story as Red and Blue, Yellow offers lots of little touches that'll tickle any Pokémaniac's fancy. For starters, you get Pikachu right from the get-go. He follows as you wander around the world, and you can talk to him at anytime just by looking his way and tapping the A button (the game stores several digitized Pikachu sounds). Pikachu will also act more and more friendly toward you throughout the game as long as you use him frequently in battle, give him healing potions and teach him new Technical Machine skills.

Pokémon Yellow also takes on more of the flavor of the TV show. The same Team Rocket members you know from the series appear in Yellow, including Jesse, James, Meowth, Koffing and Ekans. The game packs new art for all the monsters, as well as new abilities for several Pokémon.

Unfortunately, you won't find any new pocket monsters in the game. Yellow does include a different allotment of critters, and you'll be able to collect Bulbasaur, Charmander and Squirtle instead of having to trade for them. Yellow's best feature is its Game Boy Printer support. Hook up the printer and you can squirt out pictures and stats of your Pokémon to create your own real-life Pokédex, or just print out lists of Pokémon you have in storage. The only feature Yellow lacks is full-color support for the Game Boy Color, but we figure all the tweaks and hidden mini-games make up for that.

Next up is Pokémon Stadium for the Nintendo 64. This game, which arrives here in March 2000, lets you load your Pokémon into an N64 cart via the Transfer Pak and battle them in a 3D arena. Your friends can also load their pocket monsters and pit them against your own. There's no real story here. Combat uses the same menu-based system of the Game Boy games. But we gotta admit it's still pretty cool to watch your Pokémon wield their attacks on your TV screen in snazzy 3D.



## In The Cards...

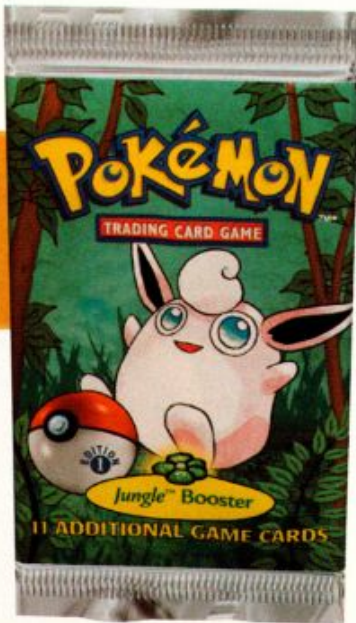
### The Pokémon Card Game is a Hit on Both Sides of the Pacific

If you're looking for a new way to get in some Pokémon play time but don't necessarily want it to involve a video game system, look for Poké-fun in the form of Wizards of the Coast's Pokémon Trading Card Game. The American version of this particular Pokémon-licensed money-maker is actually based on the Pokémon card game in Japan, which was originally designed back in 1996 by Pokémon co-creator Tsunekazu Ishihara. Since its inception, the game has sold around 1 billion cards in Japan.

Stateside, Wizards of the Coast got the rights from Nintendo in the middle of 1998 to unleash this wildly popular two-player trading card game on America's youth. The game shipped toward the end of that year, into the beginning of this year, and has since sold over 1 million card sets. In fact, Electronics Boutique pre-sold some 50,000 Booster Packs before the first card decks even shipped. Even now, many stores sell out soon after receiving their shipments.

It's doing so well Wizards of the Coast has taken the game on the road to spread the word even more, stopping at various locations across the U.S. These events feature all sorts of Pokémon activities ranging from the card game tournaments to Game Boy game battles. These days, Pokémon Trading Card Game tournaments can be found at selected malls throughout the U.S. A tournament locator can be found on the Wizards of the Coast company Web site ([www.wizards.com/Pokémon/](http://www.wizards.com/Pokémon/)).

So how does the card game work? Well, first you need a two-player Starter Set (about \$10) and probably a couple of Booster Packs (around \$3 each, or \$10 for a preconstructed theme deck). The Starter set includes an advanced rule book and 61 cards, each with full-color original artwork of the Pokémon from the video game. The Booster Packs feature a variety of different cards. Some cards have special holographic printing—a sign that you have a rare Pokémon on your hands. There is also a Jungle Expansion Set available which



American versions of the cards are actually worth more in Japan.



You'll find expansion sets in Japan based on the new movies and Team Rocket characters.

includes 48 new cards.

The object of the game, of course, is to collect, trade and battle your various monsters with or against your pals, eventually becoming the world's greatest Pokémon trainer. To do this, you must collect all 150 Pokémon cards—each put into one of three categories: common, uncommon and rare. You start the game by shuffling your deck and drawing a hand of seven cards, laying the rest of your deck as well as one card from your hand face down. After some other starting procedures and a flip of a coin to see who goes first, you're ready for battle. You have a variety of different card types to use—four of them to be exact: Basic Pokémon cards that are used to fight opponents; Evolution cards that can be used in combination with Basic cards to make your Pokémon bigger and more powerful; Energy cards which give your Pokémon its necessary energy for battle; and Trainer cards that can only be used once. Players take turns laying down cards, fighting each other. The first player who obtains all six cards from their opponent wins.

The game is available at most toy, game and retail outlets. For more info on the game, check out Wizards' Web site.

Various manga artists—some of them famous—lend their skills to illustrate the game.



The card game is so popular in Japan that heated matches often draw a crowd.



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## Japanese Releases

- Pokémon Red Game Boy
- Pokémon Green Game Boy
- Pokémon Blue Game Boy
- Pokémon Yellow Game Boy
- Pokémon Stadium Nintendo 64
- Pikachu Genki Dechu Nintendo 64
- Pokémon Card GB Game Boy
- Pokémon Stadium 2 Nintendo 64
- Pokémon Snap Nintendo 64
- Pokémon Pinball Game Boy Color

## U.S. Releases

- Pokémon Red Game Boy
- Pokémon Blue Game Boy
- Pokémon Pinball Game Boy Color
- Pokémon Snap Nintendo 64
- Pokémon Yellow Game Boy

## Color Scheme

Here in the States, Nintendo released Pokémon Red and Blue. Over in Japan, it released Red, Blue and Green—not to mention Yellow. What's with the Technicolor treatment? This chart cracks the rainbow code and explains which colors correspond with which on both sides of the Pacific.

Pokémon Red and Green hit Japan in February 1996 and were immediate hits.



Nintendo released a Blue version to capitalize on Red and Green's success. Blue was basically the same game, except with a different allotment of monsters. Many Japanese gamers actually preferred playing Blue because it packed more of the rare and powerful Pokémon that weren't in Red and Green. Blue also featured new art for all 150 monsters.

The U.S. versions of Red and Blue mix different features from the Red, Green and Blue Japanese versions. Our Red game contains the same allotment of Pokémon found in the Japanese Red version, and our Blue has the same Pokémon from Japanese Green. But both the U.S. Red and Blue were reprogrammed with the art file from Japanese Blue. On top of all that, the final dungeons in our Red and Blue are different from the dungeons in the Japanese originals. Confused yet?

Adding to Nintendo's rainbow of Pokémon games, Pokémon Yellow hit Japan last fall (it's due here in October). This game has the same basic story as Red and Blue—except with a few enhancements, an entirely new art file and a different final dungeon.





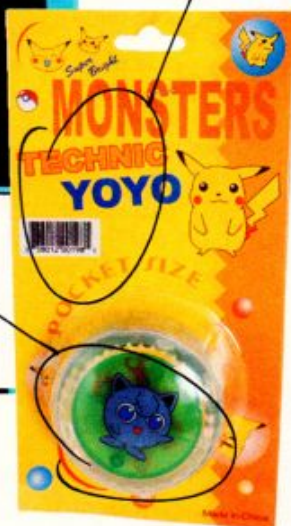
## Find the Fake

Look for These Warning Signs to Avoid Counterfeit Poké-Goods

sloppy, blurry text

No official Nintendo or Pokémon logo

Pokémon is the wrong color



Poor Quality

## Poké-Banned

### The Dark Side of Pikachu

There are people who don't like Pokémon, and then there are people who really don't like Pokémon.

Sometimes they even make headlines. Mark Juvera, a children's pastor at Grace Fellowship Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., nabbed national attention in August when he took a sword and soldering iron to Pokémon merchandise in front of dozens of kids during one of his church services. While he says the whole thing's been blown out of proportion (newspaper reports claim he used a blowtorch to incinerate trading cards, when he really just singed them with the iron), Juvera readily admits to bringing his wrath down on Pokémon. "We do have a sword, which is symbolic of the word of God," he told us, "and we struck a stuffed animal—that Pikachu guy—with it. The sword isn't sharp, and since Pikachu is soft, we didn't cut it. We only struck it one time and then ripped it apart so no one could take it from the trash."

Juvera said he gave little thought to Pokémon (his 9-year-old son had even

amassed more than \$400 worth of games and toys) until he read an e-mail on the evils of Pikachu and his ilk. "I learned it can be a stepping stone toward other role-playing games like Magic the Gathering," he said. "And I saw that one of the videos is titled 'Psychic Friends.' When it starts talking about the ability to use psychic power, magic and things like that, well, all that's totally opposite of what we Christians believe."

Juvera's son has stopped playing with Pokémon, and the pastor thinks he has other kids thinking twice about the pocket monster craze, too. "I had one girl in the service tell me that they're not allowing Pokémon in her public school anymore."

In fact, several schools across the country have banned Pokémon cards and the Game Boy games. They're too distracting, say some teachers, while others fear that bigger kids are bullying younger ones into unfair Pokémon trades.

Cripes—and we thought it was bad when they just took our lunch money. 🐾



# Are You A Pokémaniac?

Take This Test of Your Poké-Aptitude

