What are Pokemon?

“Fictional creatures captured by trainers... and battled for sport.”
- Wikipedia

originally:
151 species (Gen 1)
currently:
722 species (Gen 6)
Many classic designs over the years...
... with a lot of garbage designs too.

Literally garbage
Beginner’s guide to the Pokemon games (US versions)

*As of September 7th, 2013

Generation 1
(GameBoy)
Red (1996)
Blue (1996)
Yellow (1999)

Generation 2
(GameBoy Color)
Gold (2000)
Silver (2000)
Crystal (2001)

Generation 3
(GameBoy Advance)
Ruby (2003)
Sapphire (2003)
Emerald (2005)
LeafGreen (2004)

Generation 4
(DS)
Diamond (2007)
Pearl (2007)
Platinum (2009)
HeartGold (2010)
SoulSilver (2010)

Generation 5
(DS)
Black (2011)
White (2011)
Black 2 (2012)
White 2 (2012)

Generation 6
(3DS)
X (2013)
Y (2013)

Generation 7 (3DS)

1996 (Japan Only)

Winter 2016
Premiered April 1, 1997 (Japan), September, 8 1998 (USA)

916 episodes (and counting...)

VANCOUVER CANADA August 9th–11th
Origins

Created by Satoshi Tajiri in 1995
Origins go back to 1989/1990

Inspired by childhood bug collecting
Pokemania Japan

Launch in Feb 1996

Initially modest sales, but ramped up with Pokemon Blue release

Anime boosted popularity, by mid-1997 game was extremely popular
Red/Blue hit US in Fall 1998
Immediately popular wherever it was released.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dl7YF5Mr8Q
Porygon Seizure Incident - December 16, 1997

In 30 minutes nearly 700 children were hospitalized.

No deaths.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwoQRKCEHgY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwoQRKCEHgY) **(Warning: flashing lights)**

Led to many improved regulations for flashing lights in TV shows, video games.
Why was Pokemon such a smash hit?

“collections may help... ease insecurity and anxiety about losing a part of themselves, and to keep the past present”
“Some collect for the thrill of the hunt. Collecting is much like a quest, a lifelong pursuit...”
“Control over their own universe...”

Simple design becomes iconic

Cute cuddly creatures / Tough badass monsters
**Identifiable**, appeals to a **large demographic**: boy/girl, 5-12; some adults too

**Timing**: launch of Gameboy, interconnectivity with Game Link, globalization, ...

Nostalgia factor (feedback loop with collection habits)

Fun, well-designed (not well-programmed)
...And that’s all I had time for. Further reading:

http://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/History_of_Pokémon