

Is Arbok a Good Pokemon?

For many years, Arbok was a Pokemon with below average stats, but its dual typing and a decent move-pool allowed team builders to work with it. Of course, Arbok was an early fan favorite as it was Team Rocket member Jessie's key Pokemon in the early anime; it seems the fan interest has always helped its standing in the video games. Even in the first games, Red and Blue, Arbok had some key traits that set it apart, especially the move Glare, which paralyzes the opponent's Pokemon with 75 percent accuracy. Would our cobra friend become a good Pokemon in the years to come?

How Good was Arbok in Red, Blue, and Yellow?

What hurt Arbok in the first generation of Pokemon was the same problem most Poison type mons had, the lack of a same-type attack that could dish out enough damage to be relevant as an offensive force. Acid was the best STAB (Same-Type Attack Bonus) attack that Poison types had. With Sludge Bomb, a 90 base power physical Poison move, added in Gold and Silver, Arbok suddenly gained a huge boost to its moveset. Alongside the useful Glare, powerful Earthquake, and a variable fourth move that could range from Giga Drain to Screech to Substitute, Arbok could fill a role on many teams.

How Good was Arbok in Ruby/Sapphire & Fire Red/Leaf Green?

Ruby and Sapphire gave Arbok access to two very useful abilities, both of which it would enjoy in the Fire Red and Leaf Green remakes, as well. One is Intimidate, one of the strongest abilities in the game, reducing the physical attack of your opponent's Pokemon by one stage when Arbok switches in. Intimidate is a huge part of competitive Pokemon, as evidenced by Incineroar being the most popular competitive mons in Sword and Shield. The other is Shed Skin, which gives Arbok a one-in-three chance to literally shed a status condition at the end of each turn. This allowed Arbok to become more of a pivot mon, switching in to take a Thunder Wave or an attack it resists, while also being able to deal some damage on the way out.

Of course, Arbok also got some new Poison-type competition from Seviper, who has slightly better attack (100 vs 95) and much better Special attack (100 vs 65). This allowed Seviper to be a mixed attacker, taking advantage of the powerful Dark type moves it had in its move-pool, such as Night Slash. While Arbok had access to powerful Dark type moves such as Crunch, those moves still were considered Special moves, so Seviper could use them more effectively. What hurt Seviper, though, was its low base Speed, a stat of only 65. **So, who is better: Arbok or Seviper?** While Seviper could technically hit harder, Arbok was still more competitive thanks to being faster.

How Good was Arbok in Diamond/Pearl & Heart Gold/Soul Silver?

Diamond and Pearl gave Arbok access to Poison Jab, which has a 30 percent chance to poison, and the deadly but often inaccurate Gunk Shot. It could also pack Seed Bomb and Crunch based on type coverage needed by the trainer's team. Notably, same-type attack moves had now been split into physical and special types. This meant that Crunch was now a physical attacking move, meaning that Arbok's superior Attack stat made it much more effective. Unfortunately, Sludge Bomb was now a Special attacking move, meaning its reliance on Poison Jab and Gunk Shot (both physical moves) greatly increased.

How Good is Arbok Since Generation 5?

Black and White, despite having a competitive atmosphere filled with Psychic and Ground types that could really mess it up, Arbok gained its best new move yet. Coil is one of the best moves you could give Arbok, a move that increases Attack, Defense, and Accuracy by one stage. This makes Gunk Shot a 91 percent accurate move rather than 70. It also meant that Sucker Punch hit much harder, as well as Earthquake or Seed Bomb.

Arbok also gained the benefits of the held item Black Sludge, which is the same thing as Leftovers for Poison types. This allows another Pokemon on the team to pack Leftovers in competitive play, as most formats limit the same held item to a single mon per team. Arbok also gained the hidden ability Unnerve. While stopping opponents from eating Berries can be useful, it's not better than its other abilities, and should rarely be used over Intimidate.

Power creep slowly pushed Arbok out of the competitive scene in X and Y. It didn't get any help from Omega Ruby & Alpha Sapphire, either, and was present but not relevant in the Sun and Moon era. Arbok was left out of Sword and Shield entirely, with other poison type mons getting better with time.

How Good is Arbok in Brilliant Diamond/Shining Pearl?

Arbok's abilities and moves are great, but its stats are still below average. Thankfully, Arbok would return in Brilliant Diamond, the Diamond half of the Diamond and Pearl 2021 remakes. Unfortunately, you can't find Ekans nor Arbok in Shining Pearl, so you'll have to acquire him through a trade. But, in Brilliant Diamond, Ekans is easy to find in the Grand Underground.

Unlike in the original Diamond and Pearl games, Ekans and Arbok learn Coil in BDSP. There's also another major difference in the remakes, which feature the Pokemon that gained the Fairy type during the X and Y games. That makes Arbok's Coil-fueled Gunk Shot much deadlier, plus he can also learn the typically inaccurate Steel-type move Iron Tail which is significantly boosted by Coil.

For reference, the best moveset for Arbok is likely very similar to the most common one that he had in Sun and Moon low-tier competitive play: Coil, Gunk Shot, Earthquake, and Sucker Punch, with Aqua

Tail occasionally being in place of Earthquake for offensive type coverage. While Aqua Tail is another relatively inaccurate move, like with Gunk Shot and Iron Tail, its accuracy is significantly boosted by Coil. Going forward, this is probably the best way to build your competitive Arbok, albeit for the lowest tier of competitive singles.

While Arbok may never be a competitive Pokemon in a world where there will soon be well over 900 unique mons, it's not bad. The real problem is its below average speed with a base stat of 80, so requires a very deft trainer to pick Arbok's spots well. The Diamond and Pearl era is full of mons who love Ground moves, including the uber-popular Garchomp, as well as other mons packing Psychic moves. Creative trainers could find a way to make the best of its defensive typing and pivot it using Intimidate or Shed Skin as an ability depending on the role Arbok needs to fill for the specific team.

Is Arbok a Good Pokemon in 2026?

Yes, Arbok is a good Pokemon, one that is probably better than its base stat totals would suggest. An Arbok with an Adamant nature (plus attack, minus special attack), can dish out a lot of damage, and a Jolly nature Arbok (plus speed, minus special attack) is probably faster than some people realize. While Brilliant Diamond is perhaps Arbok's last hurrah as a low-tier competitive option, he's never going to be a bad Pokemon while you're adventuring. Plus, Ekans is a pretty good (actually kind of busted) Little Cup Pokemon, especially with investment in his defenses, and the same move pool as its evolution Arbok.

All in all, Arbok deserves better than to be omitted entirely from a Pokemon game series as it did in Sword and Shield. Arbok didn't initially appear in the Scarlet and Violet games, either. But, I was thrilled to see an Ekans early on in the Teal Mask DLC, so Arbok is definitely back. This is great, because there's definitely love for Arbok; the Cobra Pokemon has received Mega Forms in several fan-made Pokemon games. In the Pokemon Trading Card Game's 151 set, Arbok even received an ultra rare EX card!

As for Arbok in Scarlet and Violet, well, it hasn't fared too well competitively. That's not really a surprise given the major power creep in Generation 9. It ended up in ZU, meaning that it's at the absolute bottom of the barrel of Pokemon to use in competitive singles. As good as its movepool and abilities are, its stats simply just don't hold up. In doubles, it's been used more as a meme than anything else.

But, if you were to use it in VGC, Pikalytics says that the average Arbok in VGC 2023 Regulation E runs a Brave Nature (plus Attack, minus Speed), with the moves Gunk Shot, Toxic, Coil, and Ice Fang. It holds a Life Orb for better damage output and the Intimidate ability to lower an opponent's attack stat. So, yes, you can run it if you absolutely wanted to, but it's barely in the top 250 Pokemon in the format.

Notably, Gunk Shot on this Arbok one-shots Flutter Mane without Defense investment! Same deal with Rillaboom, whose High Horsepower isn't a consistent two-hit. It does need a Coil to OHKO Water-type Ogerpon, though. It's always a two hit with Coil on Iron Hands, though. Unfortunately, it also only does 76 to 92 percent to Landorus-Therian with Ice Fang with even a Coil, and that's probably its biggest problem. So, even without the benefit of Terastallizing, Arbok is at least serviceable; it's just too slow to deal with a lot of things.

In more recent developments, [Arbok has become a seventh-round option in Draft League tournaments in late-stage Scarlet and Violet](#) as a defensive utility option.

Will Game Freak bestow some gifts onto the purple snake in the future? Considering that Pokemon seems to love giving first generation mons new tricks, it's certainly not impossible. Arbok probably deserves at least a revisit, especially being such an iconic monster from the anime.

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