

Curious Cultures

TEACHING RESOURCES FOR 10-14 YEAR OLDS



THE PADAUNG WOMEN OF MYANMAR

25 BRASS RINGS?



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The Amazing World Of Ripley!

Inspired Resources

This education pack is inspired by one man and the amazing world he lived in. It was, of course, the same planet as the rest of us inhabit, but what set Robert Ripley apart was his curious viewpoint and insatiable appetite for the unusual and different. Some would even say the bizarre! Likewise, the lessons and activity sheets in this resource will enable your students to test and explore their imaginations, creativity and observational powers to the full.

Global Explorer

Millionaire cartoonist, renowned broadcaster, and in the 1930's voted America's most popular man, Robert Ripley was, above all a world-class explorer and collector. Indiana Jones- style, he was relentless in his search for astonishing artefacts to add to his collection of the truly unbelievable. He coined the phrase "Believe It or Not" and founded the „Odditoriums" that still bear his name.

The Gold Coast's latest new attraction

The latest of these „Odditoriums" is the showpiece ***Ripley's Believe It or Not!*** attraction at SOUL Centre, Cavill Mall, Surfers Paradise. There, in impressive surroundings, you'll find the renowned exhibits that prompt even the most reserved among us to drop our jaw. Quite simply, you won't believe your eyes.

ODDLY EDUCATIONAL!

Our teaching resource brings you some of the flavour of the world of Ripley and is designed to be used in conjunction with an Oddly Educational! school visit. The whole experience will stimulate curiosity but better still the projects are fun to do and fully in line with curriculum requirements. Combine these with a school visit and not only are the lessons brought to life but it will make learning outside the classroom truly Oddly Educational!



Welcome to Oddly Educational!

Welcome to **Ripley's Believe It or Not!** Curious Cultures, which aims to introduce you and your students to a mix of the history, geography and culture behind some of the extraordinary exhibits in Ripley's „Odditorium“ in Surfers Paradise. During the course of his lifetime, Robert Ripley, born in America in 1890 travelled around the world the equivalent of 14 times visiting countries and cultures that fascinated and amazed him, so much so that he returned with collections of artefacts to show people back home. Now they are on show in Ripley's „Odditoriums“ worldwide.

You can visit **Ripley's Believe It or Not!** with your students and learn about some of the discoveries and their impact on our lives today. There are six lesson plans designed to be used in the classroom after a school visit, each lesson refers to different artefacts in Ripley's, Surfers Paradise.

Activity - Your School Visit

In this activity, introduce your students to some of the artefacts and themed areas in **Ripley's Believe It or Not!** Surfers Paradise. They will have to look out for all of the items listed on the activity sheet and make notes for future activities.

Preparation

Book your visit to Ripley's.
Photocopy the required activity sheets for every student.
Brief your students on what you want them to do whilst they are at Ripley's.

Lesson

On the day before or morning (time permitting) of your class visit, hand out copies of the Believe It or Not! lesson plan to all your students. Explain that whilst they are at Ripley's they will see all of these artefacts – and many more. There are over 300 exhibits in Ripley's. Discuss with your students the artefacts listed and their links to future lesson themes; money, torture, traditions and communications. Once your students arrive at **Ripley's Believe It or Not!** they will have to find the artefacts, with their groups, during their visit which will involve learning about other curious cultural artefacts as well.

Plenary

Once back in the classroom review what students have discovered by discussing the notes they made during the school trip. Find out which themes they found most interesting which may determine your decision on the sequence of the activities in Curious Cultures.



**Robert Ripley with a
Genuine Shrunken Head!**

Ripley's
Believe It or Not!
ODDITORIUM

CURIOUS CULTURES

Back in the classroom, after a trip to Ripley's talk to your students and recap what they discovered, and listen to which artefacts interested them most. Their responses may influence the order in which you use the lesson activities in this resource.

They are in the following order:

1 Money Timeline 2 Beauty Around the World: Chinese Lily Slippers 3 An Important Message 4 The first Vampire: Vlad the Impaler 5 Shrunken Heads- Jivaro Indians 6 Torture Chamber

This project delivers over ten hours of teaching time and can be extended through plenary sessions suggested. National curriculum mapping for Queensland follows at the end of this project's teaching notes.

Money Timeline

This lesson will give the students a historical and visual knowledge of the evolution of money.

Ripley's Link:

Congolese Spear Money.

Resources:

Balls of string
Coloured card
Scissors
Clothes pegs

Preparation:

Photocopy the activity sheet for each student.

Lesson

Discuss how money and currency has developed from ancient history to modern day. Ask students to make notes on the discussion as they will be creating a money timeline.

Using the activity sheet ask students to make notes on the different types of currency, working in groups they should cut them out and label them with the dates or time period they were introduced. Each group is to make a timeline with the string (similar to a washing line). Using the pegs they will peg each item of currency in chronological order.

Groups will then move to another team's timelines to see if they have the currency items in the correct order.

In students workbooks they are to design a futuristic type of currency. Thinking about space travel how will we exchange our money for goods? Will we work on a universal scale and will there be banks in the future?

Plenary

Ask for volunteers to tell the class their ideas on the future of world currency. This will make for a lively discussion when compared to your timeline. Will we have digital money where we use cards instead of currency and the internet to transfer our money?



Beauty Around the World: Chinese Lily Slippers

Ripley's Link:

Lily Slippers, Life size figurine of a traditional Chinese female with broken and bound feet, Padaung Women of Myanmar , Pudaung Neckrings (Cover)The Djerma Women from Southern Nigeria.

Resources:

Notebooks
Coloured pencils/pens
Internet
Resources
Text „Those Doll-sized Feet“
Construction/butcher paper

Preparation:

Photocopy the text „Those Doll-sized Feet“ for each student.

Lesson

The practise of foot binding began in the Sung Dynasty, sometimes between 960- 976 BC. It is reported that a prince had a concubine who was required to dance with bound feet. This caused traditional families to dictate that the feet of young girls should be bound to keep them small. The term „Lily Feet“ was used to describe the tiny feet because they were thought to be very beautiful and a symbol of high-class. Thus the name of the shoes „lily slippers,“ which were made of silk and were decorated with beautiful embroidery.

The actual foot binding process began when a girl was between the ages of three and eleven years old. The foot was purposely broken and bound for two to three years, until the child's feet were a mere 3 inches long and resembled the Chinese lotus flower. The results of the foot binding were highly deformed feet that were extremely painful to walk on. Many times, the toes actually fell off because the bandages were wrapped so tight that blood could no longer reach them.

The foot binding process was outlawed in 1911 when the New Republic was formed; meaning this odd tradition lasted far more than one thousand years.

1. Read „Those Doll-sized Feet,“ and show pictures.
2. Discuss why this was done. Children must understand that this practise was discontinued about 80 years ago.
3. Discuss kinds of restrictive clothing used in our society today. For example:
 - a) Girdles and corsets, Neckties, Platform and high-heeled shoes, Skin-tight jeans and skirts
4. Discuss kinds of practises used today to make ourselves attractive:
 - a) Hairstyles (cutting and permanents), Pierces ears/noses, diets, exercise classes, brand-name clothing, shaving).



Broken & Bound Feet



Chinse Lily Slippers



5. Divide students into seven groups and assign each group a continent, and explain that as a class they will be creating a class collage titled "Beauty Around the World." Using all available resources and materials, have students research men's and women's beauty practices or traditions across their assigned continent. Groups should collect both images and texts that address these practices, and use photos, illustrations, downloaded pictures and words as material for their collages. For each different practice, they should jot down the answers to the following questions:
 - a) Where, specifically, does this practise take place?
 - b) Where and when did this practise originate?
 - c) Why do people in this culture find this beautiful?
 - d) How does this practise reflect the history of this continent?
 - e) What does this „ideal“ of beauty say about culture?
 - f) Does this tradition serve a practical as well as an „aesthetic“ purpose? Explain.
 - g) How does this practise differ does from your own culture's standard of beauty?

Some examples of such practices might include the Padaung women of Myanmar (Asia) who have a tradition of "neck stretching" with coiled necklaces (Ripley's Exhibit), or the Dinka men of southern Sudan who are known for wearing tight corsets to emphasize their waists. Other examples may include henna painting (Asia), tattooing (Australia/ Asia/ New Zealand), lip (or „Jabret“) and ear plugging (North America, South America, Asia and Africa), and „body swelling“ South America).

6. After each group has collected all the information/ text, each group creates a collage of the images and words collected for their assigned continent. (If you wish, you may cut the shapes of the continents out of construction paper, butcher paper or poster board and have the groups collages created on these, so that the final collage display will be a map of the world.) Make sure students write brief explanations of each beauty practice displayed in the collage, addressing the questions provided as guiding questions for research.

Plenary

In a later class, students present their collages and written descriptions. You might invite other classes to your "Beauty Around the World" exhibit.



The Padaung Women of Myanmar



Ripley's
Believe It or Not!
ODDITORIUM

An Important Message

Ripley's Link:

Michael Jackson's Fedora, Michael Jackson In bubblegum, Figurine of Vlad the Impaler.

Resources:

Various Resources (Internet / Text)

Preparation:

Photocopy the activity sheet for each student.

Lesson

Throughout history some people make a huge difference or a big impact in society. It may be something they have done for the good or something which they are remembered for which wasn't so good. It is always interesting to find evidence, primary or secondary, which gives us an insight into the type of person they were.

Students will, for this lesson, research a historical person of their choosing and write a profile, which covers both the good and the bad in their biographies, explaining why they are such an important historical figure. Then they can create a comic strip about their selected historical person using the activity sheet.

The comic strip will show the historical figure recounting the things they have done in their lives from their own perspective. If the historical figure has done lots of bad things in his or her time, they may not see it this way. They may be quite proud of what they have done. The speech may include memories showing pictures of what the person remembers doing.

After the initial explanation, the teacher is to take one example of a famous person, Vlad the Impaler for example, and discuss with the class how his last speech would look and how Vlad would see himself, the fact that he brutally killed thousands of innocent people!

Students should begin by researching their chosen historical figure and creating a mind map of the important or interesting things they have done.



Plenary

Swap the biography comic strips around between the students and let them read each others to compare them. Which ones do the students think deliver a funny perspective to the person's view on their own life?



The First Vampire- Vlad the Impaler

Ripley's Link:

Figurine of Vlad the Impaler

Vlad Dracula: The first vampire?

Resources:

Coloured pencils and A3 paper

Examples of British newspaper articles from 1879.

Preparation:

Photocopy the activity sheet for each student.

Lesson

Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler) is believed to be the original Count Dracula (1430-1476). The story of Dracula is based on the 15th century Romanian Prince named Vlad III Dracul. Young Vlad was nicknamed Dracula after his father (Who was Vlad Dracul). In Romania, Dracul translates to „dragon“ or „devil“ and the „al“ stands for „son of.“



He was known to have burnt to death all the beggars of his kingdom at a single dinner party, and to impaled over 10,000 people on the fence posts surrounding his castle. Vlad the impaler was believed to have killed over 100,000 people in his short lifetime. Stories of his villainy were published, read, and reread, and it was these stories that led Bram Stoker to create the infamous Count Dracula we know today.

Today everyone is familiar with vampires, but in Britain very little was known of vampires before the 18th century. During the 18th century there was a major vampire scare in Eastern Europe, which brought them to public attention. Government officials frequently went off to hunt and stake vampires. This controversy was directly responsible for England's current vampire myths.

In fact, the word Vampire only came into English language in 1732 from a German report of vampire slaying. Vampire myths and stories go back thousands of years and occur in almost every culture around the world. The vampires we are familiar with today are largely based on Eastern European myths. The vampire myths of Europe originated in the Far East, and were transported from places like China, Tibet and India on the trade caravans along the silk route to the Mediterranean. Here they were talked about and reported along the Black Sea coast to Greece, the Balkans and of course the Carpathian mountains, including Hungary and Transylvania.

After an initial class discussion about Vlad Dracul (The first Vampire) and Vampires, students should locate Transylvania on the map of Europe provided. (Hint it is in Romania). Asks students;

- How many countries did it encompass?
- Find other interesting facts about the region.
- Get students to study the map of Europe and think about the methods of transport needed to reach London from Transylvania.
- Locate & Read several British newspaper articles from 1879. Get students to study the ways in which they are written. In what ways are the language and styles different from ours today?
- Then get students to imagine that they are a reporter from 1897 London. You have been sent to write a story about vampires, due to recent vampire activity. What has been seen and heard around town? You must write your report keeping with the flavour of the time period.

Plenary

Get selected students to read news reports to the class, and or display articles around the room.



Shrunken Heads – Jivaro Indians

Ripley's Link:

Genuine Shrunken Heads

Jivaro Indian & A Genuine Shrunken Head!

Resources:

An apple, One packet of table salt per student, A peeler, A teaspoon/ butter knife, A plastic container or bowl, Clear varnish (optional)

Preparation:

Photocopy the activity sheet for each student.

Lesson

The Jivaro are amongst the most famous tribes of the Amazon area, due to their tradition of shrinking the heads of their enemies killed in war. Although they no longer practice the shrinking of human heads, this legendary tribe still exists and inhabits an area larger than Switzerland on the eastern slopes of South America.

Before students come for their visit to Ripley's, give them the handout. Get students to complete this worksheet, while they are visiting to find out „why“ and „how“ The Jivaro shrunk human heads. .



Once back in the classroom, get students to make their own shrunken heads, using an ancient method!

Shrunken Head Apple

1. Get students to peel the apples.
2. Using the teaspoon/ butter knife, carve one side of the apple to resemble a face.
3. Get students to half fill the container with salt, then place the apple in the container and cover it with the remaining salt.
4. Leave the apple for several weeks.
5. When you take the apple out of the salt, you should have a wonderfully dry, wrinkled head that you can decorate with paint, string and hair clippings. Varnishing your „shrunken head“ before you decorate it will help with longevity.

What's happening?

Although, the real process of shrinking human heads involves hot water, sand and stones, this process is similar to that the ancient Egyptians used to make mummies. The Egyptians removed all the internal organs and dried out the body using natron, a mixture of salts.

After about 40 days of drying with the natron, the body was wrapped with line and soaked in resin. The resin hardens and acts in the same way as varnish by stopping the moisture from getting inside.

So basically, the salt around the apple is an example of a desiccant. Similar to the Egyptians process to mummify, it absorbs the moisture from the apple. Since bacteria thrives where there is water, drying out the apple prevents the bacteria from causing the apple to rot.

Adding a coat of varnish helps prevent any moisture from getting inside the apple, so you can keep your shrunken head for a long time.

Plenary

The shrunken heads can be made into a display in the classroom.



Torture chamber

Ripley's Links:

Pear Of Agony, Medieval Thumb Screw, Wheel of Misfortune, Medieval Witch Catcher, Medieval Scold's Bridle, Spiked Slave Collar, Chinese Flail, The Twisting Stork.

Thumb Screw



Resources:

Six sets of torture equipment cards; Copies of Diary sheet

Preparation:

Photocopy the activity sheet „Torture cards“ for each group.

Photocopy the activity sheet „Torture Diary“ for each student.



Wheel of Misfortune

Lesson

Explain to the class the torture chambers of medieval times, describing what they looked like and the conditions in which people were kept. Remind them of what they saw at their trip to Ripley's. Talk to your students about what types of punishments were inflicted and the crimes the prisoners were guilty of.



Pear of Agony

Break the class into small groups of approximately five students, give each group a copy of the activity sheet „Torture Cards“ and ask them to identify what they think they were used for. Bring the group back together and discuss the findings.

Once you've collated ideas on the board, you can enlighten class on the real uses (Refer to Teacher's notes)

Now you need to create a scenario where students have been imprisoned for a medieval crime, building up an atmosphere so that the students can picture in their minds being in the torture chamber. You may select horrible pictures to be displayed in the room or play spooky music. (Setting this up the night before makes for an interesting and exciting start to a school day!).

Each student is to use the „Torture diary“ activity sheet to convey their feelings and describe the conditions they are being held under. They can relate this to the crime they are supposed to have committed - or claim they are innocent! A description of the torture and the equipment used will create a gruesome diary, which should be full of fearful emotion and details of their ordeal.

Plenary

Collect in all the diary sheets. Take a sample of five and ask your students to move back into their groups. The chosen samples should then be read out and the class can then vote if they think the prisoner should be freed, continued to be punished or hung!



CURIOUS CULTURES / RELEVANT ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS & LEARNING STATEMENTS

1 Money Timeline

Studies of Society & Environment

(SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Culture and identity

Cultures and identities consist of material and non-material elements and are affected by crosscultural contacts.

- Material and non-material elements influence personal identity and sense of belonging of groups e.g. *material elements of cultures include places, food, clothing and music; non-material elements of cultures include symbols, values, beliefs, traditions and heritages.*

Studies of Society & Environment

(SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Culture and identity

Cultures and identities are shaped by a range of factors, and societies promote cohesion and diversity in different ways.

- Group identities are influenced by different factors, including family, communities, nationality, socioeconomic factors and religious beliefs.

2 Beauty Around the World: Chinese Lily Slippers

Studies of Society & Environment

(SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Culture and identity

Cultures and identities consist of material and non-material elements and are affected by crosscultural contacts.

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3 An Important Message

English

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Writing and designing

Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across wider community contexts.

- The purpose of writing and designing includes evoking emotion, persuading and informing.
- Writers and designers establish roles, make assumptions about their audience and position them through language choices
- Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and position an audience e.g.
- Text users make choices about grammar and punctuation, to establish meaning.
- Knowledge of word origins and sound and visual patterns, including base words, prefixes and suffixes, syntax and semantics, is used by writers and designers when spelling.
- Writers and designers refer to authoritative sources and use a number of active writing strategies, including planning, drafting, revising, editing.

English

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Writing and designing

Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across local, national and global contexts.

- The purpose of writing and designing includes parodying, analysing and arguing

- Writers and designers establish and maintain roles and relationships by recognising the beliefs and cultural background of their audience, and by making specific language choices
- Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and establish and maintain roles and relationships to influence an audience
- Text users make choices about grammar and punctuation, to affect meaning
- Writers and designers draw on their knowledge of word origins, sound and visual patterns, syntax and semantics to spell.
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4 The first Vampire: Vlad the Impaler

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Reading and viewing

Reading and viewing involve using a range of strategies to interpret, evaluate and appreciate written, visual and multimodal texts across wider community contexts.

- Purposes for reading and viewing are identified and are supported by an evaluation of texts based on an overview that includes skimming and scanning titles, visuals, headings and subheadings, font size, tables of contents, indexes and glossaries.
- Readers and viewers draw on their prior knowledge, knowledge of language elements and point of view when engaging with a text
- Words, groups of words, visual resources and images can persuade an audience to agree with a point of view by portraying people, characters, places, events and things in different ways.
- Reading fluency is supported through monitoring meaning and applying self-correction, in combination with a developing vocabulary and prior knowledge of subject matter.
- Comprehension involves drawing on knowledge of the subject matter and contextual cues to interpret, infer from and evaluate texts in community contexts.
- Words and their meanings are decoded using the cueing systems together (grapho-phonetic, semantic and syntactic), and by using knowledge of base words, prefixes and suffixes

Writing and designing

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English

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Reading and viewing

Reading and viewing involve using a range of strategies to interpret, analyse and appreciate written, visual and multimodal texts across local, national and global contexts.

- Purposes for reading and viewing are identified and are supported by an analysis of texts based on an overview that includes skimming and scanning titles, visuals, headings and subheadings, font size, tables of contents, indexes, glossaries, topic sentences and references



- Readers and viewers draw on their prior knowledge, knowledge of language elements, points of view, beliefs and cultural understandings when engaging with a text
- Words, groups of words, visual resources and images can position an audience by presenting ideas and information and portraying people, characters, places, events and things in particular ways.
- Reading fluency is supported through monitoring vocabulary and its meaning across different contexts.
- Comprehension involves drawing on knowledge of the subject matter, contextual cues and intertextuality to interpret, infer from and evaluate texts in local, national or global contexts
- Words and their meanings are decoded by using the cueing systems together (grapho-phonetic, semantic, syntactic), and by using word origins.
- Readers and viewers use a number of active comprehension strategies to interpret texts, including activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, identifying main ideas, inferring, monitoring, summarising and reflecting.

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Studies of Society & Environment (SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Place and space

Environments are defined by physical characteristics and processes, and are connected to human activities and decisions about resource management.

- Distribution maps, climate zone maps and weather maps have specific features to convey information, including latitude, longitude, eight compass points, scale and distance, a legend and shading and/or symbols.

Studies of Society & Environment (SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Place and space

Environments are defined by spatial patterns, human and physical interactions, and sustainable practices can balance human activity and environmental processes.

- Maps, including topographic, political and thematic maps, are developed with particular features, including scale, contour lines and human-created boundaries, and use the specific skills of observing, visualising, estimating, sketching and measuring.

5 Shrunken Head- Jivaro Indians

Science

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

Science as a human endeavour

- Different cultures, including those of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, have contributed to science and scientific practice

e.g. traditional Chinese medicine recognises relationships

- Group identities are influenced by different factors, including family, communities, nationality, socioeconomic factors and religious beliefs.

between the human body and the environment; English scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, described gravity.

Science

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Knowledge and understanding

Science as a human endeavour

Responsible and informed decisions about real-world issues are influenced by the application of scientific knowledge.

- People from different cultures contribute to and shape the development of science

e.g. Australian Indigenous knowledge can be applied to land and water management, food production and waste management.

6 Torture Chamber

English

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7

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Culture and identity

Cultures and identities consist of material and non-material elements and are affected by crosscultural contacts.

- Material and non-material elements influence personal identity and sense of belonging of groups
e.g. material elements of cultures include places, food, clothing and music; non-material elements of cultures include symbols, values, beliefs, traditions and heritages.

Studies of Society & Environment

(SOSE)

Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9

Culture and identity

Cultures and identities are shaped by a range of factors, and societies promote cohesion and diversity in different ways.



Money Timeline



Before money, people used to barter goods from one another using personal possessions, livestock and crops. This took place around 9,000BC. At around 1200BC in China, cowrie shells were used as currency and these lasted until the middle ages. These shells were then made from metal and used as the first metal currency. They also made from base metals the first coins with holes in them so they could be stored on chains. Around 500BC, pieces of silver became the earliest coins. In time they took the appearance that coins have today, being imprinted with numerous gods and emperors to mark their value.

In 118BC, banknotes in the form of leather money were used in China. One-foot square pieces of white deerskin edged in vivid colours were exchanged for goods. This is believed to be the beginning of a kind of paper money. From the ninth century to the fifteenth century AD in China, the first actual paper currency was used as money. Through this period the amount of currency skyrocketed causing severe inflation. Unfortunately in 1455 the use of paper currency vanished from China. European civilization would still not have paper for currency for many years. In 1816, England made gold a benchmark of value. This meant that the value of currency was pegged to a certain number of ounces of gold and this was called the „gold standard“. This would then help to prevent inflation of currency. In 1900 the U.S. followed suit and also adopted the „gold standard“. Today we have currency of notes and coins for most countries in the world.

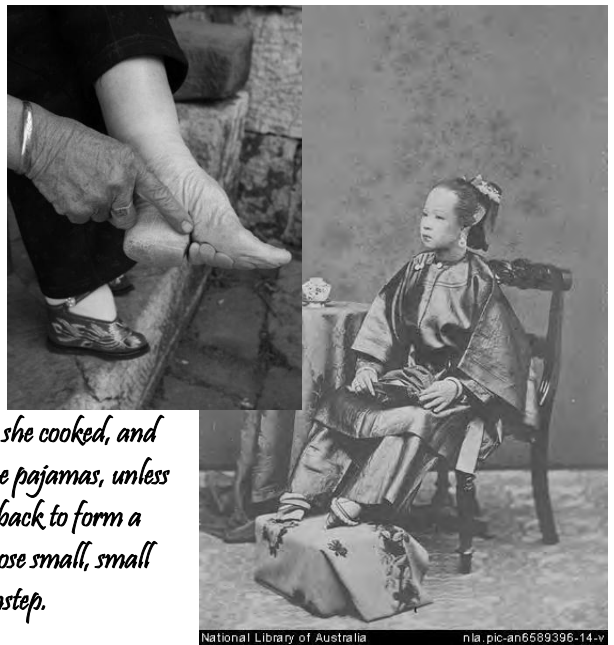
Ripley's
Believe It or Not!
ODDITORIUM

Those Doll-Sized Feet...

Jane Kam Pang

Ah Po's house was next door to mine for the first decade of my life. For as long as I can remember, my mother and I spent a part of each day visiting her.

Ah Po had seven children. My mother was the eldest. She sewed, she cleaned, she cooked, and she had those "doll-sized" feet. She was always clad in dark traditional Chinese pajamas, unless she 'went out'; then it was a long, dark cheongsam. Her long hair was pulled back to form a pug. Her skin, like my mother's, was almost flawless. And she always wore those small, small black leather shoes. Some were laced; others had a narrow strap across the instep.



Wooden stools were strategically placed around her kitchen so Ah Po could kneel from ice-box to sink to table to stove, and not have to walk on those tiny feet of hers. Her knees were usually swollen or blistered. In the late afternoon, Ah Po would hobble out to the back yard, carrying a big, big black pot to cook the evening's rice. She tended the fire, fueled with wood, while sitting on a small bench. I can still see that black, black pot that contained the whitest, hottest rice.

It was years later, when I saw her bare feet, that I started to understand the effort and the pain that must have accompanied her every step. Her feet were smaller than my hands. The big toe was where it should be, but the other four toes were folded under the sole of the foot. The big toe and the heel of the foot were pushed very close together. The arch of the foot was very high.

When very young, about age six, girls like my grandmother had their feet bound. Long, narrow strips of cloth were wrapped in a figure eight over the instep, around the heel, under the foot. These bandages were tightened daily until the foot measured less than four inches.

Historically, some believe this practice started around the Sung Dynasty. This extremely painful custom lasted over a thousand years. Mothers wished their daughters to be in a 'state of refinement and grace'. The swaying walk that necessarily developed was thought to be erotic and sensuous. Foot binding was beyond fashion. Words like feminine, sexy, dignified, fragile, delicate, gentle must be used to depict the qualities women hoped for with bound feet.

Although Ah Po lived over 80 years, I do not remember her as being old or handicapped. She had a regal look and did all her household chores without the aid of computerized appliances. She was truly a lady by all standards -- yes, with those "doll-sized feet."



Ripley's
Believe It or Not!
ODDITORIUM

An Important Message

Create a comic strip showing the highlights of your chosen historical figure.
Write your comic from your chosen figures point of view.

The form consists of five empty rectangular panels for drawing a comic strip. The top row contains three panels of equal size. The middle row contains a single large panel that spans the width of the three panels above. The bottom row contains two panels of equal size, each spanning the width of two panels above.



How to Shrink a Human Head

When visiting Ripley's it is your job to find out how and why the Jivaro Indians shrunk Human heads. Fill out the sheet below by collecting the information when you visit!

1. _____



2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



Torture chamber cards

Decide what each of these torture devices were used for and write a brief description.







Believe it or Not!

During your visit to *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* look for these artefacts/figurines from other cultures.

MAORI CANNIBAL FORK	
PEAR OF AGONY	
JIVARO INDIANS/ SHRUNKEN HEADS	
CONGOLESE SPEAR MONEY	
BRASS NECK RINGS	
GERMAN EXECUTIONER'S AXE	
CHINESE LILY SLIPPERS	
VLAD TEPES	
THE WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE	



How to Shrink a Human Head - Answers

When visiting Ripley's it is your job to find out how and why the Jivaro Indians shrunk Human heads. Fill out the sheet below by collecting the information from the museum.

1. As soon as a Jivaro has killed an enemy, he hacks off the head as close to the body as possible, carries it away to a place of safety where he goes through a ceremony, and slits the scalp from the crown downwards to the nape of the neck. Through this opening he flays out the skull, carefully removing the flesh of the skin of the face of the scalp.



2. Throwing away the skull, he stretches the skin over a handle made of wood and then thrusts it for a time into a vessel of hot water which causes it to contract a little.

3. Next a ring, fashioned from a vine, is sewed in the neck opening to hold it open after which hot stones are dropped inside.

4. Magic rites are intermingled with each new process as the shrinking is begun by filling the head with hot sand and keeping it constantly in motion in order that it may act on all parts of the head uniformly. As the sand cools off, it is reheated and placed back in the head, which is scraped each time with a knife to remove the burnt tissues.

5. Gradually, as the head dries and grows smaller, the Indian works the features with his hands, pinching and moulding the face so that it will retain its natural appearance...and even its natural expression, when reduced several times in size.

Ripley's
Believe It or Not!
ODDITORIUM

Torture chamber cards - Answers

Decide what each of these torture devices were used for and write a brief description.



Pear of Agony: One of the nastiest torture instruments in the Ripley Collection, the "Pear of Agony" had a two-fold purpose. It could be inserted into the mouth of a heretic, screwed open, and left there until they suffocated, or it could be inserted temporarily into the mouth of someone being tortured to prevent them from screaming from pain. C. 1500s.

Medieval Thumb Screw: Used to obtain a confession, thumb screws were slowly tightened to give a criminal time to confess before being maimed. Those who would not confess were crippled by the thumb screws, but those who did confess fared no better, typically being sentenced to death regardless of the crime.



The Wheel of Misfortune: This German execution device, used from 1550-1750, worked by chaining the doomed to the wheel and rolling it down a hill. An earlier German ruler, Emperor Wenzel, was so curious about the feeling of those sentenced to death that he ordered his own execution! When the frightened executioner failed in his task, Wenzel had him beheaded for disobedience!

The Twisting Stork: A rare form of full body shackle, the Twisting stork was first used by the ancient Romans. Not only would the body be restrained, but the positioning would cause severe neck, abdominal and chest pain and potentially could cripple the wearer if kept on too long.



Spiked Slave Collar: Spiked collars were often put on criminals that needed to be transported. As long as the prisoner did not try to escape, he was only a "little uncomfortable," should he struggle, however the slightest twist of the head would mean ripping the flesh from his throat.

Medieval Scold's Bridle: Designed to publicly humiliate the wearer, "Scold's Bridles" were fastened to women whose husbands felt they gossiped too much and needed to be silenced. The metal prong was inserted into the mouth, which made it impossible for them to talk idly.



Believe it or Not!

During your visit to *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* look for these artefacts/figurines from other cultures.

MAORI CANNIBAL FORK	This bizarre carved implement was used as a fork by Fiji's cannibals in the 1800s. They considered it taboo to eat human flesh with their bare hands!
PEAR OF AGONY	One of the nastiest torture instruments in the Ripley Collection, the "Pear of Agony," had a two-fold purpose. It could be inserted into the mouth of a heretic, screwed open, and left there until they suffocated, or it could be inserted temporarily into the mouth of someone being tortured to prevent them from screaming from pain. C. 1500s.
JIVARO INDIANS/ SHRUNKEN HEADS	The Jivaro are amongst the most famous tribes of the Amazon area, due to their tradition of shrinking the heads of their enemies killed in war. Although they no longer practice the shrinking of human heads, this legendary tribe still exists and inhabits an area larger than Switzerland on the eastern slopes of South America.
CONGOLESE SPEAR MONEY	Although this looks like a giant deadly spear, it is in fact a rare form of money! – Made of valuable iron, spear money was more often used as a symbol of rank during ceremonies, then as a form of currency. Amongst the Bapopie people of North-East Zaire, however, 30 spears would buy a male slave, 40 spears a female slave, and 100 spears would buy a canoe!
BRASS NECK RINGS	Young women of the Padaung tribe of Myanmar, put a new brass ring around their neck every year starting at age 5. The rings weigh several pounds and ultimately will seriously mis-shapen the wearer's neck.
GERMAN EXECUTIONER'S AXE	Prior for the invention of the guillotine in the 18 th century, beheadings were carried out by strong burly executioners waving heavy long handled axes like the one shown here. Beheadings were popular public spectacles despite the occasional miss by the executioner and the horror of needing multiple chops to finish the job.
CHINESE LILY SLIPPERS	At the age of 3 the daughters of wealthy families had their feet purposely broken and bound. The ideal foot was a mere 3 inches long and was crushed into a shape resembling the Chinese lotus flower. The slippers themselves were made with fine silk.
VLAD TEPE	Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler) is believed to be the original Count Dracula (1430-1476) The story of Dracula is based on the 15 th century Romanian Prince named Vlad III Dracul. Young Vlad was nicknamed Dracula after his father (Who was Vlad Dracul). In Romania, Dracul translates to „dragon“ or „devil“ and the „a“ stands for „son of.“ Known to have burnt to death all the beggars of his kingdom at a single dinner party, and to impaled over 10,000 people on the fence posts surrounding his castle. Vlad the impaler was believed to have killed over 100,000 people in his short lifetime.
THE WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE	This German execution device, used from 1550 – 1750, worked by chaining the doomed to the wheel and rolling it down a hill. An earlier German ruler, Emperor Wenzel, was so curious about the feeling of those sentences to death that he ordered his own execution! When the frightened executioner failed in his task, Wenzel had him beheaded for disobedience!

