Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Key West features an incredible collection of over 550 UNIQUE, BIZARRE and INCREDIBLE artifacts in 13 galleries. Our goal is to INSPIRE, INTRIGUE and SURPRISE guests with remarkable oddities of nature, science, art, humanity and history.

Education Packet
Grades K-5

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With your parent’s permission and assistance, using a smart phone or tablet computer, scan the QR code to the left (or search “Ripley’s Believe It or Not!” in the App Store) to download a free App! The Ripley’s app opens up an entire new world of Ripley Adventures right on your device!

The app allows you to download the latest Believe It or Not! photos, videos, stores and facts. The OddScan feature allows you to scan real-world targets in Ripley’s museums and books to unlock exclusive hidden content. Plus, download Ripley’s Believe It or Not! magazines, live feeds from Ripley’s social media, Ripley’s cartoons and a ‘Ripleyfied’ sword swallowing game!

For more than 90 years, Ripley Entertainment Inc. has been a global leader in the attractions industry. Ripley’s Believe It or Not!® is the largest, fastest growing, and most successful chain of amusement museum-type attractions in the world! Constantly changing and expanding, our already extensive worldwide presence includes over 90 fantastic attractions in 10 countries.

The astonishing collection of fun, family friendly and educational attractions appeals to people all over the world, both young and old, and we can proudly boast attendance figures of over 13 million guests annually!
Who is Robert Ripley?

The Ripley story begins on Christmas Day in 1893, when Robert Leroy Ripley was born in Santa Rosa, California. A talented self-taught artist, Ripley sold his first drawings to Life magazine when he was only 14! Ripley was also a natural athlete who longed for a career in baseball, but his dreams of pitching in the big Leagues were shattered when he broke his arm while playing his first professional game. After the accident, Ripley returned to his earlier goal of becoming a professional artist. He landed a job as a cartoonist covering sports for the San Francisco Chronicle, but soon after, he left California, and headed for New York City.

Travel was Robert Ripley’s lifelong obsession. During his career, he visited 201 countries, traveling a distance equal to 18 complete trips around the world! In 1920, he made his first trek across Europe. Two years later, he visited Central and South America and wrote about what he saw in a syndicated feature column called “Rambles Around South America”. He was drawn to the Orient in 1925, crossing through Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines. Ripley felt most at home in China. He found Chinese culture to be fascinating, and adopted certain Chinese customs. When he entertained, he often greeted his guests in traditional Oriental costume. He presided over elaborate feasts in which he described the dishes of each course in precise detail, and at one point he even signed his cartoons “Rip Li”!

Ripley was called “The Modern Day Marco Polo.” His travels took him to North Africa and Morocco, to New Zealand, Tibet, New Guinea and Russia. On one trip he crossed two continents and covered over 24,000 miles from New York to Cairo and back again— in search of the unbelievable. The journey included 15,000 miles by air, 8,000 by ship & over 1,000 miles by camel, donkey, and horse!
An act of religious devotion written on something you use in your classroom. What was my name and what did I write?

There is a picture of Mr. Ripley and his one-eyed dog (Cyclops) in front of his home. Where is his home located??

Who was the REAL Count Dracula?

“I want to live…God how I want to live!” were ALMOST my last words. Can you tell me my name and my story?

What was Mr. Ripley’s Full Name (Birth Name)?

I display upon me a multitude of rings that make many people stretch their neck to take a second look. Who am I?

As most people in my time, I found Robert Ripley’s discoveries truly unbelievable. I set out on a mission. Who am I and what was my mission?

I am worshiped by many as a sign from Mother Nature and my ancestors worshiped for their abundance. The answer to this question is as plain as the white of my eye. What is my name?

We were carved as a pair out of solid ebony. We were carved on the Ivory Coast of what continent?

When Ripley visited Japan, it was after a devastating event that changed both Japan and the world. What event was this? Where in Japan did it take place?

Meet my one-eyed dog, Cyclops!

Read the show cards for clues!
FuN FaCtS!

Wayne Harbour wrote more than 22,000 letters trying to prove Ripley’s finds and claims as fake or false. He was never able to do so. After he died, Mr. Harbour’s widow donated his collection of letters to Ripley’s Believe It or Not!

Sword Swallowing is a 4,000 year old art that has actually helped enhance medical science. Sword Swallowers suppress a natural reflex in the throat and insert solid steel blades of 15-25 inches. It was the sword swallows’ ability to suppress this reflex that helped doctors develop the first rigid Endoscope as well as digestion studies in the early 1800’s. Currently there are less than a few dozen active sword swallowers in the world, but you can see one LIVE in Key West! D. W. Blademaster performs nightly at Mallory Square and is an honorary member of the Sword Swallowers International Association. For more information on D.W. or sword swallowing, contact Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Key West.

Ripley’s Ripples

One of Mr. Ripley’s earlier cartoons in 1929 said that “America has no National Anthem”!

He pointed out that Congress had refused to recognize that song as the Nation’s National Anthem. Believed to be because its original tune was taken from a bar song called “To Anacreon in Heaven”. When an angry public turned to Ripley for answers, he said “Don’t write to me, write to your Congressmen” – and they did!

Five million petitions were sent to Congress with most people demanding answers and actions. Even John Phillips Sousa published an opinion in favor of the idea. Congress got the message and passed a bill on March 3, 1931. It was signed by President Herbert Hoover making “The Star Spangled Banner” the National Anthem of The United States of America.

In a 1936 survey, Robert Ripley was voted the most popular man in America, even more popular than the President of the United States!
**Vocabulary**

Read and develop an understanding for the following definitions. List one exhibit in the museum that fits the definitions.

**CULTURE**: The patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn and create.

Exhibit ________________________________

**TRIBE**: A group of people that includes many families and relatives who have the same language, customs, and beliefs.

Exhibit ________________________________

**SUPERSTITION**: A belief or way of behaving that is based on fear of the unknown and faith in magic or luck.

Exhibit ________________________________

**ANCIENT**: Belonging to the very distant past, no longer in existence.

Exhibit ________________________________

**RITUAL**: A religious or formal ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way.

Exhibit ________________________________

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**Homework**

**Assignment #1: Cultural Diversity**

One of the things that makes the planet earth such an interesting place to live is the wide variety of cultures found throughout the world.

**Assignment**: Discuss cultural diversity in your class. What exhibits did you see at Ripley’s Believe It or Not! that reflect the uniqueness of a culture? Using the internet with your parents’ permission and teacher’s assistance, or your school library, research the following cultures. Fill in the chart below for each category about what makes the cultures unique.

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<tr>
<th>Jivaro Indians</th>
<th>Ubangi</th>
<th>Padaung</th>
<th>Myan</th>
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• Homework •
Assignment #2: Draw like Ripley!

Robert Ripley held many jobs over his lifetime, but one of the things he was most known for were his cartoons. As you walk through our museum you will see several examples of his work. Ripley was the first person inducted into the Cartoon Hall of Fame. His cartoons have been in continuous circulation for 75 years.

Believe it or not…Ripley’s early cartoons featured a story and drawing submitted by *Peanuts* creator, Charles Schulz, about his dog Spike who could eat sharp things like pins and razor blades. Spike was later the inspiration for Schulz’s most famous cartoon dog, Snoopy!

Using Ripley’s cartoons as an example, pick any artifact that you see in the museum, read the show card and draw a Ripley’s Believe It or Not! cartoon based on the artifact (or 3).

• Homework •
Assignment #3: Ripley’s Geography

Part 1 – Using a pen, pencil or marker, put a small dot on the map everywhere that there is a Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Odditorium.

Part 2 – List everywhere in the world that there is a Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Odditorium.

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25 Cities! That’s a lot of weird stuff!
• Homework
Assignment #4: Tricks of Nature

Robert Ripley called Genetic Abnormalities “Tricks of Nature”. Can you find three examples in this building of a creature or human who is different?

1. 
2. 
3. 

How are these “Tricks of Nature” different than their genetically normal counter parts? Be sure to identify the differences and similarities between both types of animals.

Differences:

Similarities:

• Class Project

Turn Your Class Into a B.I.O.N. Museum!

In 2013, a school class just like yours decided to turn their classroom into their very own Believe It or Not! Odditorium. They found fun and interesting facts (some from Ripley’s Books and some that we didn’t even know of)!

Project:

1. Using a Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Book or your own research find something UNBELIEVABLE and make a replica of it. You can use anything you like as long as you have your parents’ permission.

2. Don’t forget…every good Ripley exhibit has a show card to go with it. Make a showcard that you can place next to the exhibit letting people know what it is.

3. On a separate paper write some information on what the exhibit is, where you found the information and what items you used to make it. Submit this to your teacher as the final part of your project.

4. In the words of Mr. Robert Ripley…. “Give ’em Shockers!”

*Teachers – If you would like assistance with making this a class project, please contact your local Odditorium and we would be more than happy to assist.
Robert Leroy Ripley was many things to many people. He was an artist, an entrepreneur, and a world traveler. He spent much of his adult life traveling the globe searching for exciting new cultures, rituals, and people! One thing Robert Ripley was not was a bully. Through his travels, Ripley met some of the most interesting people from around the world. People who were tall, short, big, small, some who ate bugs, some who pierced their bodies with bone, and others who had spent their lives being ridiculed for their physical differences. He met women with full beards, men whose faces were entirely covered with hair, people that were over 8 feet tall, and those that grew to mere inches. In the end, Robert Ripley welcomed them all into his home, on board his ship, and into every fiber of his life. In fact, he made them his life.

Ripley was very protective and caring towards those who were “different” than what our society says that they should be. In those days, sideshows featured what they called “Freaks.” Ripley would have none of that. To this day, the word has been banned from the company’s vocabulary. Our entire company is founded on the principle that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated as such. We should learn to appreciate the fact that all people are not the same and celebrate these differences rather than exploiting them or abusing those who differ in appearance. We hope that you will utilize these lessons in an effort to help children come to accept and celebrate all people from all walks of life. After all, we at Ripley’s believe that ‘ODD IS IN!’

For more information on Ripley’s Believe It or Not! fight against bullying, contact your local Odditorium for our “Odd Is In” slide show, class presentation and buttons.

Features:
1. Identifying the 4 Types of Bullying In Our Society
2. Dealing With Bullying
3. Discussion Questions
4. Embracing Our Differences
5. Interesting ODD People in the History of Ripley’s