



*The Dalfram Dispute, 1938 –*

# PIG IRON BOB

*2015. Directed by Sandra Pires.*

## Study Guide

For more information visit:  
<[pigironbob.com.au](http://pigironbob.com.au)>







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This study guide contains questions on *The Dalfram Dispute, 1938 – Pig Iron Bob*. 2015. Directed by Sandra Pires.

Most questions can be addressed at appropriate levels by students in stages 4, 5, and 6.

Highlighted questions are extension questions suitable for stage 6 or advanced stage 5 students.

The documentary, *The Dalfram Dispute, 1938 – Pig Iron Bob*, tells the story of the events surrounding the walk-out by the wharfies on the Port Kembla wharf in 1938. They refused to load pig-iron onto the ship, the Dalfram, which was bound for Japan.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE BACKGROUND TO THE DISPUTE:

In 1938, Communist Party member, Ted Roach, was elected Secretary of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) South Coast Branch in January. He wanted to end the infamous **“bull” system** and to introduce a roster system for work on the Port Kembla wharves.

1. Who was Pig Iron Bob?

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2. Describe the “bull” system.

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3. How were workers selected?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slightly textured appearance.

4. What was the result if they weren't chosen for work?

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5. Why was it called the “bull” system?

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6. List any **disadvantages** of being picked.

[illegible]



# TED ROACH:

7. Who was Ted Roach?

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8. What did he do?

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9. **Describe** his early life.

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10. When and why did he join the Communist Party?

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11. What was his first victory against authorities?

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12. How did Roach beat the bull system?

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13. Why did the men like him?

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14. What happened to Roach in the years after the Dalfram dispute?

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15. If you had met Ted Roach, do you think you would like him? **Explain** your reasons why or why not?

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# ROBERT “BOB” MENZIES:

16. Who was Bob Menzies?

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17. **Describe** his early life.

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18. Why didn't Menzies serve in World War I?

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19. Why did some people, including Menzies, prefer Nazism to Communism?

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20. Why was Menzies impressed with Germany?

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21. Why did he oppose Ted Roach?

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22. Where did the nickname “**Pig Iron Bob**” come from?

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23. Some people like their nicknames, others don't...

a. Did Menzies like or dislike the nickname?

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b. What evidence do you have for this?

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24. What conflicts of interest did Robert Menzies have?

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25. What happened to Menzies in the years following the Dalfram dispute?

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26. Imagine you were to meet Robert Menzies. What questions would you ask him? What would you like to tell him, and why?

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# ROBERT “BOB” MENZIES:

27. Using the interviews with the daughters of Roach and Menzies, Suzanne Roach and Heather Henderson, **list the characteristics** of each of the two men:

ROACH	MENZIES

28. In what ways were they similar, and in what ways were they different?

29. How did Roach and Menzies feel about one another?

30. Who would you have supported if you had lived at that time? Why?





# JAPAN:

31. Why did ordinary Australians fear the Japanese, even before the Second World War?

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32. What was the act of the Japanese that turned people against them?

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33. Do you think the world was right to fear the Japanese at that time?

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# NANJING MASSACRE:

In 1937 over a period of about six weeks the Imperial Japanese army moved into the Chinese city of Nanking (or Nanjing), the capital of Nationalist China. They murdered hundreds of thousands of people, including civilians, and between 20,000 and 80,000 women were sexually assaulted. Nanjing was left in ruins and the events later came to be known as the Nanjing massacre or the rape of Nanjing.

34. From the pictorial and other evidence, describe the Nanjing massacre.

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35. Why do you think it was so important in the story of the Dalfram dispute?

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36. Why do you think that the documentary spends so much time cutting back to the Nanjing massacre?

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## THE DALFRAM DISPUTE:

38. What was the origin of the name “*The Dalfram Dispute*”?

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39. List the events that led up to the Dalfram dispute, then rank them in order of importance. In a paragraph, justify your decision.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

40. Why didn't Wharfies want the Pig Iron to go to Japan?

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41. What happened on 15th November 1938?

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42. Why was that important?

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43. What was Menzies view on trade with Japan?

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44. Were all the waterside workers communists?

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45. What was Roach's simple and powerful argument?

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46. What was the result of the January vote to load or not load the Dalfram?

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52. Why and when did BHP sack 3000 workers?

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**53. Summarise** the main events in the Dalfram dispute.

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47. How did the dispute end?

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48. How long did the Dalfram dispute last?

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49. Why was the support of women important?

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50. How did the wharfies survive?

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51. What support did the wharfies have? Give examples.

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This image shows a full page of a notebook or ledger with horizontal ruling. The paper is white with faint, evenly spaced horizontal lines running across it. There are no vertical margin lines, and the page is completely blank except for the ruling.





This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



# THE DOG-COLLAR ACT:

56. What was the dog-collar act?

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57. How many licences to work were issued?

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58. What symbolic act was performed by Roach with his licence?

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59. Do symbolic acts such as this have any effect? Why do you think that?

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# RESULTS OF THE DALFRAM DISPUTE:

60. What were results of the Dalfram dispute;

a. For workers?

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b. For Menzies?

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61. Do you think that events such as the Dalfram dispute have any lasting effect? Why or why not?

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# GENERAL QUESTIONS

62. Two of the **central ideas** of the documentary were Peace and Forgiveness.

a. What images or sequences were the **most powerful** in presenting the idea of Peace?

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b. What images or sequences were the **most powerful** in presenting the idea of forgiveness?

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c. How did the parallel stories of the Dalfram dispute and the Nanjing massacre help responders to understand the message of Peace?

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d. How did the parallel stories of the Dalfram dispute and the Nanjing massacre help responders to understand the message of Forgiveness?

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63. The documentary often mentioned **trade unionism**, as the Dalfram dispute was one of the first union actions that were not about work conditions or pay.

a. What **message** did the documentary present about trade unionism?

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b. What **techniques** did the filmmaker use to convey that message in the documentary?

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64. Do you think that the documentary was **biased** towards either left or right politics? What makes you think that?

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65. What were your **favourite parts** of the documentary, and why?

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68. What did you **learn** from the documentary?

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69. If you could speak to the filmmaker Sandra Pires, what would you tell her about **your experiences** of watching the documentary?

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66. What parts of the documentary **didn't** you **enjoy**, and why?

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67. What parts of the documentary **made** you **think** the most?

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# TECHNIQUES OF DOCUMENTARY

*\*For students in stage 5 and 6, and advanced students in stage 4\**

70. Sandra Pires, the director, uses eye-witness accounts where possible. What is the effect of those eye-witness accounts in the documentary?

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71. Some parts are in black and white, and some in colour.

a. Why does Pires use this technique?

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b. What is its effect?

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72. What is the effect of using the interviews with Suzanne Roach and Heather Henderson, the daughters of the two men?

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73. What is the effect of including the different points of view at the end? The Japanese, Tom Uren, The Chinese, Roach and Menzies?

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74. Is the title The Dalfram Dispute 1938 - Pig Iron Bob effective or not?

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81. If you had been the editor of the documentary, is there anything you would have done differently? **Explain** your answer.

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82. Some sections used re-enactment:

a. What did these sections add to the documentary?

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b. Were these sections convincing?

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c. Why or why not?

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d. Why do you think Pires used this technique?

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83. Was the documentary a balanced presentation, or did you feel the filmmaker presented the story favouring one side or the other? Why do you think that? What evidence can you present to support your view?

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84. Would you say that this documentary increased your understanding of the Dalfram dispute? Why or why not?

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85. Write a **list of points** for and against using the documentary The Dalfram Dispute 1938 - Pig Iron Bob as a resource for schools.

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# CREDITS

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For more information on *The Dalfram Dispute, 1938 – Pig Iron Bob. 2015.* visit [pigironbob.com.au](http://pigironbob.com.au) or visit the facebook page.

**Company:** [whydocumentaries.com.au](http://whydocumentaries.com.au)

**Producer/Director:** [whydocumentaries.com.au/about.shtml](http://whydocumentaries.com.au/about.shtml)

**Director of Photography:** [javiervallador.com.au](http://javiervallador.com.au)

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