



ROGUE NATION



A **STUDY GUIDE** BY ROBERT LEWIS



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From its colonial beginnings as a jail, at some stage Australia developed into the democratic and egalitarian society we know today.

Rogue Nation takes two episodes from early colonial history and shows in a dramatic and accessible way how this transformation started.

Using *Rogue Nation* can help students engage with the drama of history, while exploring in limited class time some key big ideas in the development of Australian national and civic identity.

Rogue Nation is a 2 x 54-minute dramatised documentary series about the epic story of how the colourful characters of early colonial Australia transformed a penal settlement into a land with rights and opportunity in a mere 40 years.

Historian Michael Cathcart leads viewers through some formative events in Australia's early colonial history, including the Rum Rebellion and the clash between William Wentworth and Governor Ralph Darling – events that established some civil rights for all settlers in the convict colony. We

see how a fledgling colony on the wrong side of the globe was rapidly transformed from a place of punishment to a confident and prosperous community.

The series examines the fight for power and control between two powerful interest groups: the wealthy and entrepreneurial landowners – and the 'emancipists' and 'currency lads and lasses', ex-convicts and their offspring who took on the governors appointed by the Colonial Office in London.

Rogue Nation introduces well-known figures including pastoralist John Macarthur, barrister and newspaper proprietor William Wentworth, and Governors William Bligh, Lachlan Macquarie and Ralph Darling.

It shows how a handful of driven, ambitious, ruthless and fiercely independent colonists saw off several British governors, encouraged upheaval and learned the art of politics; discovering that debates, pressure groups and propaganda could change governments and shape policy.

In doing so, they helped to lay the foundations of the prosperous liberal democracy of Australia.

CURRICULUM APPLICABILITY

Rogue Nation has received a M (recommended for mature audiences) classification from the Office of Film and Literature Classification with the consumer advice: Infrequent violence and themes. The series is relevant for:

Australian History

- Early colonial history
- Rum Rebellion
- The role of the governors
- The fight for power and control between two interest groups
- The development of currency lads and lasses
- The development of representative government and civic rights

Civics and Citizenship

- The development of representative government and civic rights
- Individuals and political leadership and influence
- Development of Australian democracy

English

- Biography
- The role of individuals in change

Media Studies

- Historical docudramas
- Storytelling in media

Episode 1

Honour Among Thieves

EXPLORING IDEAS AND ISSUES

BEFORE WATCHING *ROGUE NATION: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES*

The following activities will help you understand some of the key ideas and concepts in the film you are about to see.

A. Understanding authority and rebellion

Dear Diary

What a day! It started as a normal day in class, but will go down in history now as 'The Day Brianna Snapped'!

The lesson was about to start. Mr Vittori was checking homework. Here's what was said, as I recall it:

Mr V 'OK class, homework handed up, thanks. Brianna, where's yours?

B Sorry sir, I didn't do it.

Mr V Brianna, what do you mean, you didn't do it? That's the second time this week you've not done it. I bet you got your other work done, though, didn't you?

B No, sir. Sorry.

Mr V Sorry's not good enough. There are too many people taking this attitude. This subject is as important as any other, and you will all get your work done on time! Brianna, you'll do extra to make up for this.

B That's not fair – you haven't given Jack any punishment and he never does it! That's just not fair!

Mr V Enough! You do as you're told young lady, or else.

B (In tears now) No! That's not fair. I won't do it! I can't do it!

Mr V You will! I will not have students telling me what they will and will not do. You do it, or else you'll go to the Principal!

B You can't do that, it's not fair!

Mr V Don't you tell me what's fair and what's not. Get out of here and wait outside the Principal's office.

B But ...

Mr V Don't answer back – get out! Get out! Or I'll make sure you are expelled!

B Expel me then, get the Principal, see if I care!

And Brianna stormed out, in tears, slamming the door so hard the glass pane broke!

*Well, we were all just stunned. Nobody spoke – we just stared goggle-eyed. If she gets expelled, what will happen to her? Poor Brianna. All this trouble at home with her mother, and now this. Goodness knows what will happen to her now. This is **really** serious.*



As a class or group, discuss:

1. Why did Brianna 'snap'?
2. Was her behaviour reasonable? Was Mr Vittori's?
3. Why do you think she reached the point of not caring what the consequences for her actions would be?
4. Are there any points at which either person might have changed the way this confrontation was going?
5. Who or what caused this situation?

B. Understanding political propaganda

Look at this cartoon and answer the questions that follow.

1. There are four figures. Briefly describe each.
2. Two of the figures have more authority than the others. What are the symbols of authority that are used to make this clear?
3. Describe what is happening in the cartoon.
4. With whom does the cartoonist want you to have sympathy – the group of three, or the one figure under the bed? Explain how the cartoonist works to achieve this.
5. What do you think is the main message of this cartoon?

You will be able to come back to these answers after watching Episode 1 of *Rogue Nation*.

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY AND EXPLORING THE IDEAS

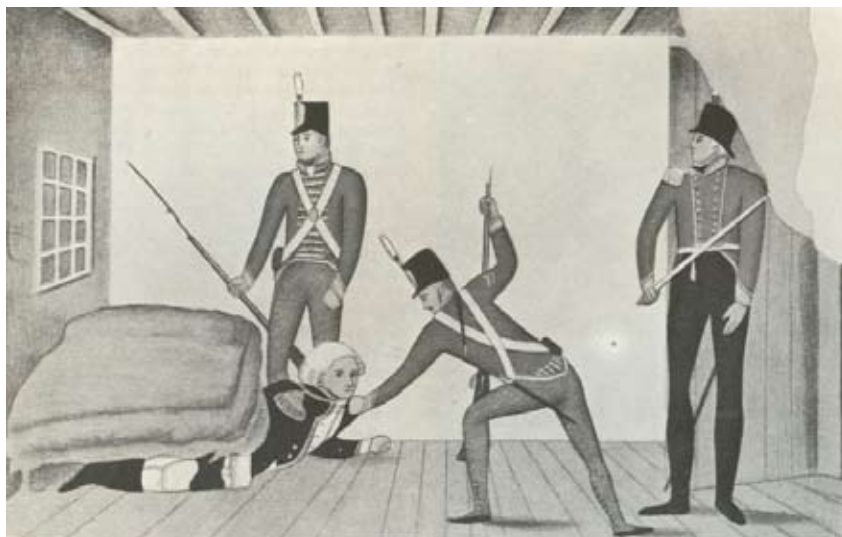
Episode 1 – Honour Among Thieves

Synopsis

Historian Michael Cathcart introduces John Macarthur and the powerful faction of landowners, entrepreneurs and local military who take on Governor William Bligh and trigger Australia's only military coup, the Rum Rebellion of 1808.

Set in colonial Sydney from the 1790s, the first part of the dramatised documentary history series *Rogue Nation* delves into the struggle for power and control between ambitious landowners and the colony's British governors.

While on the surface a dispute over the importation and sale of rum, the real battle is about access to prime Aboriginal land in a vibrant and growing frontier town of more than 7000 soldiers, merchants, convicts, civil servants, Aborigines and free settlers.



'The Arrest of Bligh' - propaganda cartoon from the time of the Rum Rebellion, 1808. This is a copy of the original held by the State Library of New South Wales.

Led by army lieutenant-turned-pastoralist John Macarthur, wealthy landowners and entrepreneurs tackle first Governor Philip King and then his replacement, Governor William Bligh, a naval captain best known for a mutiny aboard his ship, the *Bounty*.

Escalating tension between Macarthur and Bligh leads to the military insurrection and house arrest of Bligh, known as the Rum Rebellion.

Bligh returns to England a broken man and a new era of hope arrives with Governor Lachlan Macquarie, who believes in the redemption of convicts and a fair go for all.

Key Characters

William Bligh – Appointed Governor of New South Wales in 1806. He had formerly sailed with Captain Cook and was a brilliant navigator who brought his men to safety after the mutiny of part of the crew on his ship the *Bounty* in 1789. A supposed reason for the mutiny was Bligh's explosive temper and abusive language.

Mary Putland – Bligh's daughter. She was widowed early in Bligh's term as Governor, and acted as the female head of Government House. Her mother, Bligh's wife, had remained in Britain.

John Macarthur – Arrived on the Second Fleet as a captain in the New

South Wales Corps, in 1790. He had become an extensive landowner and businessman in the colony, and had a vision of providing quality wool as an export to Britain.

Elizabeth Macarthur – Macarthur's wife, who would run his business interests in New South Wales during his long absences in Britain.

Richard Atkins – a civilian and the highest legal officer in New South Wales. Due to the lack of trained lawyers he acted as both prosecutor and judge in many cases.

Colonel William Paterson – the senior officer of the NSW Corps. While lieutenant-governor, he entered into a duel with John Macarthur and was wounded. He fled to Van Diemen's Land to avoid exercising leadership but returned one year after the rebellion to assume command of the colony.

Major George Johnston – He was the military commander of the New South Wales Corps before Paterson's return.

Questions

After watching *Honour Among Thieves*, answer these questions to make sure that you understand the story and the key ideas and themes it presents.

The opening scenes of the film show

us the drama that is about to be explored.

1. What is your first impression about the conflict that becomes known as the Rum Rebellion of 1808?
2. Who are the main people involved?
3. What are the main causes of or issues associated with the incident?

One of the main characters in the episode is John Macarthur. He arrived on the Second Fleet, in 1790.



4. What do we learn about why the Macarthurs came to New South Wales?
5. What would they have sacrificed to make this journey?
6. What qualities would they have needed?
7. How would their expectations and ambitions have affected the way they saw the colony and the way it should develop in the future?

The Macarthurs arrived in NSW – a convict colony.

8. Explain the seven main elements of this society and the main thing that each would want or hope for in the colony:
 - Governor
 - Convicts
 - Free settlers
 - Freed convicts
 - New South Wales Corps
 - Civil officials
 - Aboriginal inhabitants
9. Explain how these groups may have seen and responded to each other.
10. The Britain the colonists came from was a society based on class. How might this have affected the way people saw each other and interacted in New South Wales?

11. A few people in NSW immediately gained large holdings of land and were in a position to gain great wealth through manipulation of imports. How might this have affected the way people saw each other and interacted in NSW?

One of the ways a few could manipulate the economy of the colony was through rum.

12. How could having a monopoly on the import of rum help a few people gain great wealth?
13. What impacts would the use of rum as the main currency have had on the nature of the colony?
14. Why might the British Government have wanted to end this situation?

Governor King tried to stop the rum monopoly and sided with small settlers over the wealthy few in the colony. Lieutenant-Governor Paterson, the Commanding Officer of the New South Wales Corps, and Macarthur fought a duel and Macarthur was sent back to Britain for trial – but the trial was never held. Instead, Macarthur returned with sheep and a huge land grant that the new Governor, Bligh, would be required to honour.

15. How did this grant, and Macarthur's proposal that it be on an area formerly set aside for com-

mon use, cause a dispute between Bligh and Macarthur?

The film quotes Bligh's reaction:

BLIGH: The area is called the cowpastures for good reason, sir. A herd of wild cattle established itself there and Governor King didn't want them driven off.

MACARTHUR: Yes, well I had this out with the Governor before he left. My boundaries have been decided. It would not be good practice to disturb the sheep.

BLIGH: What have I to do with your sheep, sir? What have I to do with your cattle? You are to have such flocks of sheep and herds of cattle that no man has heard of before. No, sir, I know your concerns, sir, you've got 5000 acres of land, sir, in the finest situation in the country but by God Macarthur you shan't keep it.

MACARTHUR: I remind you, sir, that land was granted to me by recommendation of the Privy Council by order of the Duke of Portland.

BLIGH: Damn the secretary of state. He commands at home, I command here.

MACARTHUR: Well it would not be my choice to seek redress through the law however.



BLIGH: Damn the law! My will is the law.

16. How does the film use this incident to illustrate the nature of Bligh's character?
17. How does Bligh's reaction to Macarthur also bring out the issue of the legal status of people's rights in the colony?

Bligh now believed Macarthur had broken the law by having been owner of a ship from which a convict escaped. Macarthur tried to evade this law by giving up ownership of the ship. Bligh had the main legal officer in the colony, Judge-Advocate Richard Atkins, issue a warrant for Macarthur's arrest.

18. How did Macarthur respond to this warrant?
19. How was this response a further criminal act?
20. Why did Bligh now order the clearing of a number of houses and the tearing down of a fence of Macarthur's?
21. How would this have been seen by the people affected?
22. What do we now learn was Bligh's vision of the future of the colony?

23. How did this conflict with the vision of Macarthur and other major landowners?
24. How is the conflict also becoming one about the nature and extent of a governor's power?
25. How was it also becoming a personal one to do with people's perceptions of their honour and status in society?

Macarthur was now in court for the offence of having been owner of a ship from which a convict escaped and of having refused to accept the arrest warrant. The case was to be heard by the Judge-Advocate, together with six magistrates who were also officers of the New South Wales Corps.

26. How did Macarthur holding a debt of Atkins make Atkins inappropriate to sit in judgement of Macarthur?
- Bligh now ordered the arrest of the six officers of the NSW Corps who were the magistrates for the case.
27. How might this situation have been seen by Macarthur and others as proof of the failure of law and order under Bligh?
28. If it were seen this way, could the NSW Corps feel justified in removing Bligh?

The highest ranking officer of the New South Wales Corps, Major Johnston, now sent his troops to arrest Bligh, as

he feared Bligh would try to escape and gather armed settlers to act against the military.

29. Look back at the cartoon exercise at the start of this guide. How do the filmmakers justify Bligh's actions in hiding in the bedroom?
30. Would you say that Bligh was a coward, or was he justified in hiding before trying to escape?
31. How did the rebels try to justify their action in removing Bligh from his position of authority?

Bligh was now kept under arrest for a year, until Colonel Paterson returned from Tasmania, and sent Johnston to Britain for a trial. Macarthur followed. The new Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, arrived with his own military regiment to remove the influence of the NSW Corps. Johnston was found guilty, but given a very mild punishment. Bligh was later promoted, but felt that the crime committed against him had never been properly addressed and that the light punishment given to Johnston was in fact a rebuke against him. When he died in 1817 there was no mention of his role as Governor of New South Wales placed in the list of accomplishments on his headstone.

Drawing it together

32. What do you think the Rum Rebellion tells you about the *power and influence of individuals* in early NSW colonial history?





33. What does it tell you about *conflicting views of the future* of the colony?
34. What does it tell you about the *development of economic power and interests*?
35. What does it tell you about the *social composition of the society*?
36. What does it tell you about the *role of influence and patronage in Britain* on the development of the colony?
37. What does it tell you about the *significance of distance* in events in New South Wales?
38. Historian Michael Cathcart says:

The Rum Rebellion is notable, not for its violence, but for the fact that no one got hurt. In the absence of democracy, the people of Sydney had changed a government which had become unacceptable. It didn't usher in a new world order but it does show that many of the people had started to care about government, ambition and justice. They may have come here as rogues, but they were starting to reinvent themselves as a nation.

Discuss this assessment of the event.

Significant characters in history

Imagine that the two key characters of this episode, Bligh and Macarthur, have applied to be the principal of your school.

Each claims to be the best person for the job.

1. Using the table on the right, prepare a key list of points for and against each person. Include such aspects as strengths, weaknesses, ability to interact with people, leadership qualities, and so on.
2. Which person would you prefer in the job?
3. Would your answer be the same when considering them as leaders of NSW in 1808, or do the different jobs require different qualities? Explain your opinion.
4. Here are four character summaries provided by the filmmakers in their Media Kit to accompany the film. Choose one of these, and either analyse it, or create your own alternative version.

William Bligh

Rebellion seemed to follow William Bligh around. Although known for great violence of temper and extreme outbursts, he was also capable of great personal bravery. Sent by the Colonial Office to drag an unruly colony into line, his vision for New South Wales – a small-scale arcadia peopled by contented peasant farmers – only ever had the most tenuous of connections with early 19th century reality. He made enemies easily, insulted indiscriminately and was sent packing.

Bligh was at his best in a crisis – when his crew on the *Bounty* mutinied in 1789 he navigated a tiny open boat 5800 kilometres to Timor with his loyal remnant crew. Arriving in NSW in 1806 in the aftermath of devastating floods, he organised emergency flood relief and promised settlers that the government stores would buy their crops after the next harvest. During the fateful events of 26 January 1808, now known as the Rum Rebellion, he kept calm and phlegmatic whilst those around him panicked at the approach of the NSW Corps soldiers.

Bligh's greatest problem was not his heart or his nerve, but his head. Arriv-

BLIGH	MACARTHUR
Strengths/good qualities	Strengths/good qualities
Weaknesses/poor qualities	Weaknesses/poor qualities

ing in New South Wales with inadequate and outdated information, he was unable to accept that Sydney had advanced far beyond the simple subsistence existence that the Colonial Office assumed.

Mary Putland

The eldest daughter of Captain William Bligh, Mary Putland was married to Lieutenant John Putland, a naval officer and Captain Bligh's Aide-de-Camp. She accompanied her father out to the colony in 1806 playing the role of hostess in place of Bligh's wife, who refused to leave England.

Described by a less-than-sympathetic observer as 'rather pretty but conceited and extremely affected and proud', Mary Putland helped redesign the Government House garden according to the latest style, employing up to ninety convict men to blow up and carry away the rocky outcrops in the Domain.

John Putland died of tuberculosis at

the beginning of 1808. After Bligh's arrest and subsequent release Mary remained in the colony, and married Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice O'Donnell of the 73rd Regiment, who accompanied Governor Macquarie to replace the NSW Corps and Bligh. She remained with him in Sydney when Bligh returned home.

John Macarthur

John Macarthur was brooding, intense, highly-strung and acutely sensitive to any social slight or breach of 'honour'. A man of great energy and vision, he quarrelled with practically everyone during his thirty years in the colony and claimed to have played a key role in engineering the demise and recall of four British governors – only a slight exaggeration.

A ruthless meddler, particularly where his personal interests were concerned, Macarthur was given to duels, blackmail and poison pen campaigns, but he also can claim credit as one of the most influential and constructive figures in early Australian history.

Macarthur was among the first to envisage the future possibilities of the small remote penal outpost and was largely responsible for kick-starting the tremendous productive leap in the early 1790s which lifted the colony out of bare survival mode. He was pivotal in establishing the wool industry, despite early scepticism and derision, which ensured colonial expansion and prosperity in the decades leading up to the great gold rushes of the 1850s.

Devoted to his wife and children, Macarthur enjoyed an order and harmony in his private life that equalled the chaos and violence of his public life.

In the 1820s, just as the colony began to develop in the way that he had imagined, he lapsed into madness, plagued by jealousy, paranoia and delusions of persecution. He died in 1834.

Elizabeth Macarthur

Educated, intelligent and cultured, Elizabeth Macarthur was an ideal foil to her intense and easily antagonised husband. Devoted to her husband, Elizabeth was as tactful, diplomatic and calming as Macarthur was prickly and ambitious. Her early years in the colony consisted chiefly of struggling to raise and educate her children, and run a household, but she also managed to be the elegant centre of sophisticated and polite society.

In 1809 Macarthur went to England to give evidence at his Court Martial and could not return for eight years. Elizabeth ran all of Macarthur's farming operations in NSW, riding to the peripheries of white settlement to monitor the progress of their stock and overseeing culling, breeding, finding feed, shearing, then grading and shipping the wool for export. During this period, Australian wool established itself in the British market, Macarthur wool at the forefront, making Elizabeth Macarthur one of the founders of the Australian wool industry.

Is *Rogue Nation* good history?

Rogue Nation is a docudrama – part documentary (represented by the role of the narrator, historian Michael Cathcart) and part dramatic historical reconstruction.

Does this style and approach work?
Does it provide good history as well as good entertainment?

Think about what is needed for a show to be good history and for it to be good entertainment. For example, for it to be good history it would need to be written by people who are expert in the area, and it would need to be accurate and true to the times.

For a show to be good entertainment it would need to be attractive, entertaining, with engaging and interesting characters.

1. Discuss this as a class and list the criteria in each of the two columns below.

GOOD HISTORY REQUIRES:	GOOD ENTERTAINMENT REQUIRES:

Now look at the two views about the episode that follow. Answer the questions and draw on your own response to the program to come to your own conclusions.

A. Media Kit comment

The final instalment of Screen Australia's dramatised history series for ABC Television, *Rogue Nation* brings to life an era of Australian history rarely seen on screen – the early colonial years.

Conceived by production company Essential Media and Entertainment, the two-part docudrama was developed as an expansive look at Australia's colonial history; the birth of Australia from its origins as a penal colony into a democratic colonial society.

'We wanted to look at the cause and effect of this transformation and how it shaped the foundations of our nation,' Essential's executive producer Ian Collie says.

We fashioned it into a two-part series focusing on two key periods and two local rogues – Macarthur and Wentworth – who were both larrikins and ambitious men with forceful and dominant personalities.

1. Do you think this focus on key individuals is effective?

'The Bligh and Macarthur story has not been told before – there are two colourful protagonists who come up against each other and that was a great story to me,' [director] Andrikidis says.

With such a theatrical tale, Andrikidis was keen to keep the drama as realistic as possible and focused on securing the best possible cast, headed by Geoff Morrell as Macarthur and John Wood as Bligh.

'A lot of docudrama can end up being a theatrical performance, but I was keen to make it as believable and naturalistic as possible,' he says.

2. Do you believe the film has

achieved this type of characterisation?

Both Macarthur and Bligh had been widely presented as caricatures and [Andrikidis] worked to infuse them with emotion and subtlety, to give them a third dimension.

Another challenge was to weave Cathcart seamlessly into the drama. The filmmakers achieved this by placing their narrator in the midst of the action – a character might drop a newspaper in a dramatic re-creation which Cathcart steps in and retrieves.

While the film was shot entirely on location, many of the original places no longer exist so the crew filmed at the now-disused Old Sydney Town, north of Sydney, and Old Government House at Parramatta. Sydney University's historic facades served as 19th century London.

3. Do you think the way Michael Cathcart interacts with the drama is effective? Does it perhaps add to your understanding of the story? Or does it perhaps interfere with the drama and 'realism' of the film?

There also was a challenge in sourcing accurate costumes. Australians haven't made period drama for years and a treasure trove of costumes was sold offshore in the 1980s.

'None of it exists in Australia anymore so it all had to be made or imported from Britain,' Andrikidis says. 'Bligh's uniform was hired from the UK, where we got quite a bit of the clothing. All the costumes for the governors and aristocracy had to be brought in.'

4. Is the realism and accuracy effective? Or would the film work as well if it were only vaguely authentic?

Australian history recreationists were hired as extras to play soldiers and convicts – many wearing costumes they had bought from the producers of *Mary Bryant*.



B. Interview with presenter Michael Cathcart

An accomplished historian, author and broadcaster, Michael Cathcart joined the *Rogue Nation* production team early in 2007 as the narrator and 'face' of the historical series.

While best known for his acclaimed abridgment of Manning Clark's six-volume classic, *A History of Australia*, Cathcart has wide experience with radio and television production as the presenter of a several programs for ABC Radio National and host of the 15-part ABC TV history series *Rewind* (2004), which presented little-known stories from Australian history. The experience opened his mind to the possibilities of television ...

While there is little doubt about what happened in the history, interpretations can vary.

The tendency today is to read the past in search of people who resemble ourselves, or major figures who seem to be articulating a political position that we would approve of today. I'm more interested in exploring the past for its strangeness than in seeing the past as a mirror of ourselves.

I think what's exciting is to go back in to the 19th century and to see that these people thought and spoke and behaved differently from us. The past is not the present in fancy dress; it has its own reasons, its own fears, its own

prejudices and its own aspirations.

- Do you think the main figures are presented more as familiar and identifiable characters, or as ones that are very different in their concerns and aspirations from us today? Explain your ideas.

Cathcart, who has taught Australian history for twenty years, says he never stops learning about the past and learned a lot while researching *Rogue Nation*.

'It clarified my thinking about the nature of rights in Australia: citizens' rights, civil rights, the rights to vote, trial by jury, free speech and decent conditions of work,' he says.

The ultimate insight of Rogue Nation is that a society that valued individual rights and opportunity was implicit in the foundation of a convict colony. Rights for the settlers were as much part of the founding agenda of convict Australia as was punishment. In any case, the government couldn't afford to run the place as a prison. It was more economical to let the convicts make new and productive lives for themselves.

- Do you believe that representations of these big themes are achieved in the film?

'While great battles for power and opportunity were fought over the rights of the different classes to land, a great loss was suffered by Aborigines, whose rights as the traditional land-owners were betrayed,' he says.

- The Aboriginal perspective is non-existent in this film. Does that matter? Explain your views.

'The ultimate goal of the Making History initiative, and in this case *Rogue Nation*, is to take an era of Australian history which is often seen as boring and revitalise the way we look at it,' says the Director of Commissioned Production for Screen Australia, executive producer Mark Hamlyn.

- Do you think this film has helped

make this period of Australian history realistic, entertaining, engaging and significant? Explain your views.

Episode 2 Rights of Passage

EXPLORING IDEAS AND ISSUES

BEFORE WATCHING ROGUE NATION: RIGHTS OF PASSAGE

The following activities will help you understand some of the key ideas and concepts in the film you are about to see.

A. Understanding representative government

Imagine that a decision-making body is needed to create rules for your school. Below are listed some possible individuals or groups who could fulfil this role.

- Briefly note the advantages and disadvantages of each for this role in the table below.
- Who would you select? (It may be a



combination of several of these.)

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY AND EXPLORING THE IDEAS

Episode 2 - Rights of Passage

Synopsis

Historian Michael Cathcart introduces William Wentworth and the 'Emancipists', a loose-knit group of former convicts and their children who take on British Governor Ralph Darling in the 1820s in a struggle for independence

POSSIBLE RULE-MAKERS	ADVANTAGES/STRENGTHS	DISADVANTAGES/WEAKNESSES
Principal		
Teachers		
Senior students		
All students		
Students chosen by election		
Interested parents		
Community representatives		



and civil rights in colonial Australia.

Set in Sydney in the 1820s, the second part of the dramatised documentary history series *Rogue Nation* delves into the conflict between the visionary Governor Lachlan Macquarie, who believes in the redemption of convicts and a fair go for all, and those who argue that his social experiment has gone too far.

After twenty-five years as a penal colony, Sydney's white population has grown to around 36,000. The convict class is creating a new identity, the giant textile mills of industrial England are hungry for wool and the booming Australian pastoral industry, led by John Macarthur, relies on cheap convict labour to supply it.

But with the industrial revolution comes a revolution of ideas and Macquarie believes in treating ex-convicts and their children as the equals of free immigrants – granting them land, government jobs, rights and respect.

It's a controversial view and strategic lobbying by the pastoralists leads to Macquarie's recall and replacement by Governor Ralph Darling, whose mission is to reassert imperial authority and reinforce the colony's status as a place of punishment.

But this won't happen without a fight and the 'Emancipists', championed by newspaper proprietor-turned-barrister William Wentworth, challenge Darling

head on. At stake is the question of whether a penal colony can ever become a nation.

Two high profile cases, the Sudds and Thompson torture scandal and the Jane New trial, expose the frailty of Darling's rule as the 'Emancipists' fight back with calls for justice and independence. The despised Governor is sent packing to a colourful Sydney farewell.

Questions

After watching *Rights of Passage*, answer these questions to make sure that you understand the story and the key ideas and themes it presents.

The opening scenes of the film show us the drama that is about to be explored.

1. What is your first impression about the conflict between Governor Darling and William Wentworth?

In 1810 William Bligh was replaced as Governor of New South Wales by Lachlan Macquarie. Macquarie's answer to the question 'What sort of society should New South Wales be?' was a place where small-scale settlement was encouraged, and where people, regardless of their 'convict stain', could take a place in a free society. Under Macquarie the colony developed as a free society, with an increasing number of ex-convicts and convict-born people.

2. John Thomas Bigge, in New South Wales to report to the British Government on the way the colony should progress, was influenced by John Macarthur and a colonial aristocracy which opposed the democratic movement.
3. What was their vision of the way the colony should progress economically and socially?
4. How did they justify their views?
5. How was that view being contradicted or frustrated by Governor Macquarie and his policies?

A key character among the 'currency' stock (those people born as free men and women in Australia, but the children of convicts or ex-convicts) is William Charles Wentworth. Wentworth is a supporter of the notion of ex-convicts having the same rights as 'free-born Englishmen'.

6. How did Macquarie's policies help this development?
7. How was Wentworth connected with free settlers, convicts and currency people?
8. Wentworth was rejected as a suitable marriage partner to Macarthur's daughter. How might this have influenced his ideas?
9. Wentworth supported 'free representative government'. What does this mean?
10. Why did this idea, which was the way Britain itself was governed, cause such controversy and division in New South Wales?

Wentworth and Macarthur were seen as the leaders of the two opposing social and economic groups – Wentworth as the leader of the group that supported the equality of ex-convicts in the society, and Macarthur as leader of the group that resisted and opposed involvement by this 'socially inferior' group.

11. How did Wentworth's relationship

with Sarah Cox show his beliefs?

12. Why did the relationship outrage New South Wales' exclusionist society?

13. Whose ideas does the new Governor, Sir Ralph Darling, share?

Darling implemented a change recommended by Bigge – that a small legislative council be formed to help govern the colony.

14. How would this theoretically be something that Wentworth would support?

15. Why did he not support it in the fashion that it was introduced?

16. Why would having a newspaper help Wentworth promote his influence in the colony?

Two cases now formed the battlefield between the Wentworth group, and the old establishment group, for whom Darling now became virtual leader.

17. Why did the soldiers Sudds and Thompson deliberately break the law?

18. How did Darling see this as a threat to the way he had been ordered by the British Government to move the colony of New South Wales?

19. Why did Wentworth react against the harsh punishment imposed – for humanitarian reasons, or for ideological reasons?

20. Why did Chief Justice Forbes oppose the sentence – for humanitarian reasons, or because it seemed to be the Governor going beyond the limits of his powers?

21. Why did the Sydney Turf Club dinner where Darling was insulted upset him – for personal reasons, or because it was a challenge to his authority in the colony?

The case of Jane New also raised issues that brought the powers of the Governor into question by those who wanted to limit those powers.

22. Why was Jane New able to work for her own husband even though she was still a convict?

23. Why did Governor Darling impose such a harsh sentence on her?

24. Why did Chief Justice Forbes oppose the sentence?

25. How was this an example of some citizens of New South Wales protecting the civil rights of the members of the society, even those who were the lowest on the social scale?

26. Why did Wentworth and his supporters oppose Darling's attack on property rights when he removed Jane New from her assignment to her husband?

27. Here is the scene where the issue is explained:

CATHCART: Darling's zest for discipline and order will come back to haunt him ...

By declaring Jane to be a convict-at-large and then confining her to the notorious female factory, he's deprived James New of his servant. So now the question is this: What are James New's rights?

DARLING: The governor retains all rights over the assignment of convicts.

FORBES: According to the act you can show mercy. You can't just blaze in and make the sentence more severe and what of Mr New?

DARLING: The husband? What of him?

FORBES: Well the colony can't run without assigned servants. You've robbed him of his property rights in her.

DARLING: That's ridiculous. Isn't it?

CATHCART: He just doesn't get it. The age of the all-powerful governor is over. Forbes speaks for a new age of rights and the rule of law: he must know what's coming or rather who's coming. Wentworth with the help of the Stephen brothers issues a writ of habeas corpus [an order to make the Government bring the accused person to court to answer questions about her] alleging the false imprisonment of Jane New. Now this turns on vital political question: How far can the government interfere with a person's property rights? You see, Jane New as an assigned convict is the property of her husband James.

WENTWORTH: Can the Governor rightly deprive this man? Deprive him of his servant? The Governor has no power to interfere in the assignment of a convict but the Governor has consigned this woman, a woman who should never have been brought to trial, to the hell-hole of the female factory contrary to the most fundamental principles of British justice.

How does the case of Jane New show the clash in New South Wales between those who want power to



be with the Governor, and those who want a more representative form of government, in which every person's rights are protected just as they are in Britain?

28. In fact Britain upholds the Governor's power in this instance on a legal technicality. How does Darling react to having this power?

29. How is this seen as overstepping his powers?

John Stephens continued to act illegally to protect Jane New, but was dismissed by Darling. Stephens, however, went to Britain and worked to undermine Darling's reputation. Darling was eventually recalled – to the celebration of the Wentworth group. Wentworth summarized the victory in this way: Good riddance and damnation to the autocratic rat of a man who came here to stamp on liberty and grind her into the soil. And we colonists have an equality of rights and standing and listening privileges with the King's subjects in the old country.

30. Discuss this evaluation of the struggle.

Drawing it together

31. What do you think this film about the clash between Wentworth and Darling tells you about the *power and influence of individuals* in early New South Wales colonial history?

32. What does it tell you about *conflicting views of the future* of the colony?

33. What does it tell you about the *development of economic power and interests*?

34. What does it tell you about the *social composition of the society*?

35. What does it tell you about the *role of influence and patronage in Britain* on the development of the colony?

36. What does it tell you about the *significance of distance* in events in New South Wales?

37. What does it tell you about the *development of the colony away from an autocracy towards a representative government* on the British model?

Significant characters in history

Imagine that the two key characters of this episode, Wentworth and Darling, have applied to be the principal of your school.

Each claims to be the best person for the job.

1. Using the table to help, prepare a key list of points for and against each person. Include such aspects as strengths, weaknesses, ability to interact with people, leadership qualities and so on.
2. Which person would you prefer in the job?
3. Would your answer be the same when considering them as leaders of New South Wales in the 1820s, or do the different jobs require different qualities? Explain your opinion.
4. Here are two character summaries provided by the filmmakers in their Media Kit to accompany the film. Choose one of these and either analyse it, or create your own alternative version.

William Charles (WC) Wentworth

William Charles Wentworth, an explorer, author, barrister, landowner and statesman, was born in 1790, two years after his mother was convicted of theft and transported to Sydney. His father was Dr D'Arcy Wentworth, who sailed to Sydney on the *Neptune*

WENTWORTH	DARLING
Strengths/good qualities	Strengths/good qualities
Weaknesses/poor qualities	Weaknesses/poor qualities

and *Surprise*. Wentworth was sent to England to be educated and returned in 1810, where in 1811 Governor Lachlan Macquarie appointed him acting provost-marshal. He was granted 1750 acres (708 hectares) on the Nepean, where his estate, Vermont, is still a Wentworth property. While offended by the aristocratic behaviour of the ambitious landowners, Wentworth was no democrat, believing that men must be free, but free to rise.

In 1816 he returned to London where he studied law. He was in love with John Macarthur's daughter, Elizabeth, but her father refused the match. Insulted, Wentworth resolutely identified himself with the interests of the Australian-born. In 1819 he published *Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales and Its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen's Land, With a Particular Enumeration of the*

Advantages Which These Colonies Offer for Emigration and Their Superiority in Many Respects Over Those Possessed by the United States of America.

Wentworth was called to the Bar in February 1822 and returned to Sydney in 1824, where he continued to write, championing the cause of the emancipists and smaller free settlers, free press, trial by jury and self-government and in 1824, he published the first issue of the *Australian*. In 1827, Wentworth went head-to-head with Governor Darling when Darling prosecuted him for seditious libel over his criticism of the sentencing of Private Sudds.

By taking up the fight against autocracy and by his courage and oratory in the defence of Emancipists at the Bar, Wentworth awakened a political instinct among the smaller people of Sydney and become their hero. He entered the Legislative Council in 1843 and became a leader in the colony, playing a role in the establishment of state education and the foundation of Australia's first colonial university, the University of Sydney.

Governor Ralph Darling

Sir Ralph Darling was appointed in 1824 as Governor of New South Wales. He was a strict disciplinarian and regarded the thieving behaviour of Privates Joseph Sudds and Patrick Thompson as intolerable. Determined to stamp out potential rebellion in the military and make an example of the two men, Darling intervened in their sentencing and ordered the men to serve seven years' hard labour, making a spectacle of the severity. Sudds, who was already ill, died.

Back in England, Viscount Goderich advised Darling that he had acted illegally in commuting the sentence and advised that Thompson should be discharged from further punishment. Meanwhile the relationship between Governor Darling and Chief Justice Forbes had become so strained that, in 1828, Sir George Murray, Secretary of State for the Colonies, warned



them that if their relationship did not improve, Darling would be relieved of his command and the judge recalled.

Patrick Thompson returned to England in October 1829. In September 1835 he appeared before the Select Committee to inquire into the conduct of Governor Darling. The Committee eventually proclaimed Darling 'entirely free from blame'.

Is *Rogue Nation* good history?

Note to teachers: The matrix that appears in the section for Episode 1 with the same heading as above (on page 8) can also be used for Episode 2.

Now look at the following information that relates to Episode 2, and draw on your own response to the program, to come to your own conclusions.

A. Media Kit comment

For director Lisa Matthews, the biggest challenge in making lively historical docudrama is the need to make it interesting and relatable for a contemporary Australian audience while maintaining its historical accu-

racy. Drama and accuracy are equally important.

This determination drove every stage of the filmmaking process for *Rogue Nation*, from casting, to costume and makeup, to filming and editing techniques.

'It was really important to make the film very contemporary so history was accessible to the audience,' Matthews says ...

Writer Katherine Thomson elaborates:

Most of the drama I have previously written is based to some degree on life; it's heavily rooted in factual drama. The question is always how much of a dramatic leap I can take and obviously the reins are fairly tight when you are dramatising documentary.

Thomson was constantly aware of the need to back up every line with fact.

She drew heavily on original sources, including the reports written by the officials of the day as well as original police and court documents.



Part of the frustration of this work is the enormous amount of research you do for just a couple of lines. You can't just write it was a sunny day – you have to go and read 10 books and make sure that it was a sunny day!

Accuracy also was maintained by costume designers Jan Hurley and Jean Turnbull, who sourced many of the costumes from Britain.

'I didn't want the film to look like a boring old period film,' Matthews says.

We felt that if the costumes weren't right there's no point making the film. It had to be believable and real. The uniforms – naval, convict, police and military – all had to be historically correct.

But while historical accuracy was maintained in the script and look of the film, liberties were taken with language and accent.

We didn't want it to be overly theatrical; we didn't want everyone to have pompous English accents so we pared back the accents to make it more real for the Australian audience. We wanted people to speak faster, as they do, to make it more real and more accessible.

The two 54-minute episodes were shot using two cameras over five

weeks and Matthews and co-director Peter Andrikidis used modern shooting techniques to give the film a contemporary feel, including hand-held cameras, 'switch' pans and jump cuts.

'Instead of just having a character walk from A to B, you chop it up so in time they walk faster. It's not always perfectly in continuity but it gives the film vibrancy and a more contemporary feel. It's not a new device, but in a period film it gave it a different feel,' Matthews says.

They avoided using sepia, a common device in period drama, preferring the saturated colours familiar to Australians and cooler, blue-based colours for British scenes.

As Matthews says, a riveting story is what drives a good film whether contemporary or set in the past.

A lot of period films alienate the audience by making it a totally different world and we wanted to make it more accessible. People 200 years ago had the same basic needs, and wants, and desires as we do today. They weren't that different.

We want the viewers to be strapped in and taken on a riveting ride through our history but in a way that feels very real.

1. Discuss the ways in which the filmmakers have tried to achieve historical accuracy.
2. Do you agree that exactness is needed in such films?
3. Discuss the ways that the filmmakers have tried to make it accessible to a modern audience.
4. Do you think they have succeeded?
5. The filmmakers believe that the film style was important in achieving a sense of acceptance by the audience. Select some scenes, identify the film techniques used

(including camera techniques, editing, lighting and colour, music) and discuss them.

B. Interview with presenter Michael Cathcart

Note to teachers: The material in Section B of Episode 1 (on page 9) can also be used for Episode 2. The following is an additional question that relates only to Episode 2.

I think what's exciting is to go back in to the 19th century and to see that these people thought and spoke and behaved differently from us. The past is not the present in fancy dress; it has its own reasons, its own fears, its own prejudices and its own aspirations.

6. Compare this comment with director Lisa Matthews' comment above that people 'weren't that different'. Comment on this apparent contradiction between the two and the way the film results.

AFTER WATCHING ROGUE NATION

In making *Rogue Nation*, one of the filmmakers' aims was to get away from the idea of convict Sydney as a hellhole of punishment as depicted in Robert Hughes' book, *The Fatal Shore* (and other earlier books like it).

The colony was definitely a place of punishment but it was also a place of opportunity for many of the convicts, who were able to get small grants of land soon after they completed their term. Babette Smith in her recent book *Australia's Birthstain* (see reference list) expands on this point.

7. What preconceptions of yours have been challenged by this film?
8. Is it how you imagined life in the early 1800s?
9. Were there any parts of the film that surprised you?
10. Are you keen to read more Australian history as a result of having

watched *Rogue Nation*?

11. Plan and write your own review of *Rogue Nation* in 350–450 words, for a newspaper television liftout magazine section.

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Rogue Nation

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