



## Exploring Senior Cycle Texts

### *Diego Maradona*

directed by Asif Kapadia

**Please note:** *Diego Maradona* directed by Asif Kapadia is a documentary as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2026., 2027 and 2028

This extract and accompanying activities may be used to explore the text as part of the comparative study.

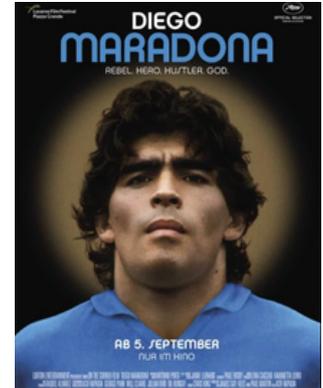


Image courtesy of HBO

### Background to the Movie:

*Diego Maradona* tells the story of the legendary Argentinian footballer, focusing on his time with Napoli from 1984-1992. It was directed by the award-winning Asif Kapadia, known for his documentaries *Senna* and *Amy*. Kapadia aims to humanise iconic figures in his films, and in this documentary, he presents Maradona as a vulnerable individual who achieved great success but struggled with fame.

Kapadia's direction focuses on Maradona's footballing genius but emphasizes that the story is about loss and the destructive nature of fame. The film also explores the duality of Maradona's personality, highlighting both his charisma and his vulnerability.

### Pre-watching Activities - Discussion Starters:

- What do you already know about Diego Maradona?
- What do you know about the city of Naples and its history?
- What are your expectations for a documentary about a famous footballer?





## The Opening Scene:

The documentary starts with a car chase, reminiscent of *The French Connection* or *Bullitt*. Before watching the scene, ask students to consider the conventions of a car chase scene. What type of camerawork, editing, and music do they expect?

- After watching the scene, discuss how it meets or subverts these conventions.
- Ask students to analyse the specific choices made by the director:
- What kind of shots are used? (close-ups, long shots, tracking shots?)
- How does the editing create a sense of speed and tension?
- What is the effect of the music?
- Discuss how the scene establishes the tone for the rest of the documentary and foreshadows the themes of fame, pressure, and escape.

## Analysing the Film's Narrative and Style

1. The film utilises 500 hours of never-before-seen footage from Maradona's personal archives. How does this contribute to the documentary's authenticity and intimacy?
2. How does the film's style, without talking heads or celebrity narration, enhance the viewer's experience?
3. Maradona's voiceover plays a significant role in the film. How does it help us understand his perspective and inner thoughts?
4. The documentary focuses on Maradona's time in Naples from 1984 to 1992. Why do you think this period is considered crucial for understanding his life and career?
5. The film explores the duality of Maradona's personality, describing him as "Rebel. Cheat. Hero. God." How are these contrasting aspects of his character presented in the documentary?





## Exploring Key Themes and Concepts

1. What does the documentary reveal about the relationship between Maradona and the city of Naples? How did he become a symbol of hope for the Neapolitans?
2. How does the film portray the impact of fame and media attention on Maradona's life?
3. The documentary highlights the role of key figures in Maradona's life, like his ex-wife Claudia Villafañe and his personal trainer Fernando Signorini. What insights do they offer into his personality and struggles?
4. Fernando Signorini says, "With Diego I would go to the end of the world. But with Maradona, I wouldn't take a step." What does this statement reveal about the complexities of Maradona's character?
5. The film explores the darker aspects of Maradona's life, including his involvement with drugs and the Camorra. How does the documentary address these issues?

## Compare and contrast:

Select two scenes that offer contrasting perspectives on Maradona – one that highlights his charisma and brilliance, and one that reveals his vulnerability and struggles. Ask students to compare and contrast the visual elements of these two scenes.

How does the camera work differ?

What kind of editing choices are made?

What is the effect of the music or sound design?

How do these choices shape the audience's perception of Maradona?

