

# THE QUEEN

Directed by Stephen Frears (2006)  
Starring Helen Mirren and Michael Sheen.



The film *The Queen* focuses on the week following Princess Diana's death and how, initially, the Royal Family felt that it should be treated as a private affair. This contrasted with the views of the Prime Minister of the time, Tony Blair, and the general public which demanded an opportunity to express its grief with an official, Royal funeral. The Queen, recognising the public's need, finally accepted and a state funeral took place on 6th September 1997, followed by over 2.5 billion people worldwide.

In this extract Helen Mirren, who won over 29 awards for her portrayal of the Queen, speaks about her difficulties as an actress in taking on such a role and how she dealt with it.

*Interesting Note:* After the film's release Helen Mirren was invited by the Queen to Buckingham Palace for dinner but could not attend due to work commitments.



## OVER TO YOU

- 8** Before watching the extract discuss in pairs the kind of problems an actor/actress might have when portraying an actual person who is still alive as opposed to a fictional character.

Now watch the extract twice and then answer the following questions.

- 9** According to the actress what things must be represented as perfectly as possible when portraying a living person? Complete:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

- 10** How did she feel about this role? Choose: (more than one)

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> terrified | <input type="checkbox"/> exhilarated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> relaxed   | <input type="checkbox"/> confident   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nervous   | <input type="checkbox"/> depressed   |

- 11** She then says she found it very helpful to imagine herself as a portrait painter. Why? Choose:

- ☐ because you need to imitate the person exactly and in every way.  
☐ because you're bringing your perception of the person and not a perfect reproduction.

- 12** Do you think Helen Mirren was successful in this role? If not say why.