

A. Political games (B2)



- 1 Look at the picture, read the caption and comment.
- 2 Read the text and pick out all the proper nouns and classify them into the following categories: people – places – other. Deduce the main themes of the text.
- 3 Focus on what the journalist says about himself and about the people he mentions. Find what they have in common.
- 4 Pick out the words belonging to the fields of politics and war. Describe the political situation in *Game of Thrones* (GoT).
- 5 Find what makes this fictional power game very different and also very similar to our world's politics.
- 6 **NOTION** Write a short review of a fantasy series / film / novel you know, explaining why you find it particularly addictive. (80-100 words)

Along with millions of others, I can't wait to start the latest series, and know I won't miss an episode.

I am not alone. At Westminster, *Game of Thrones* – HBO's epic fantasy series based on a set of novels by George

5 R.R. Martin – seems to be one thing politicians and political journalists can agree on, even at election time. (...)

In Washington, President Obama considers a sneak preview¹ of the show to be a perk² of office, cornering the HBO chief executive at a White House banquet to

10 demand: "Where's my *Game of Thrones*?"

Julia Gillard, Australia's deposed prime minister, professes herself a GoT addict, and has even taken to sending out messages on Twitter in Dothraki, one of the fantasy world's languages.

15 So what's the attraction of the quasi-medieval dynastic saga with dragons, especially since I've never gone a bundle on³ fantasy? (...)

At first glance, there isn't much politics as we know it in



Queen Elizabeth II on the set of *Game of Thrones* in Belfast, June 2014

Game of Thrones. There are no elections. The closest the story gets to democracy is a quick show of spears⁴ as some downtrodden⁵ fighters decide whether to follow their latest despot into battle. You can be sure that their choice is only between evils: will the enemy hurt them more if they fight than their commanders will if they don't?

25 That's the point. *Game of Thrones* displays power-politics in the raw⁶, where no motive is ever entirely pure, and even good deeds have a downside. The characters are trying to do what they consider to be their best – which might just be looking after themselves – while fighting

30 a pervading sense of doom⁷ as "winter is coming"⁸. How very like our own dear world, as our politicians squabble⁹ about who can offer us the most secure future.

Adam Boulton, *The Telegraph*, Apr. 18, 2015

1. sneak preview (exp.) = avant-première

2. perk (n.) = avantage (en nature)

3. go a bundle on (exp.) = be extremely fond of

4. spear (n.) = lance

5. downtrodden (adj.) = oppressed

6. in the raw (exp.) = in a natural state

7. doom (n.) = bad destiny

8. motto of one of the great families of Westeros, meaning that everyone should be prepared for dark periods in their lives

9. squabble (v.) = quarrel about a small detail