Mr. Smith Goes to Washington Discussion Questions

1. What is the film trying to say about American democracy?

2. How would today’s world react to a Jefferson Smith?

3. Would Jefferson Smith make a good political leader?

4. In one scene Senator Paine tells Smith about how he had to compromise so he could go and “serve the people in a thousand honest ways.” Should one compromise their ideals in order to get things done?

5. Why are no party names, such as Democrats and Republicans, mentioned in the film?

6. What aspects of the film still hold true today? Why is this film still so highly regarded and relevant?

7. From the film’s release in 1939 to now has there been a level of corruption in the government as seen in the film?

8. What role do children play in the film?

9. Why would Frank Capra want to make a film like this as the world was heading into war?