

# mr smith goes to washington questions answer key

**Mr. Smith Goes to Washington questions answer key** is a valuable resource for educators, students, and film enthusiasts who want to delve deeper into the themes, characters, and narrative techniques of this classic 1939 film directed by Frank Capra. This article explores the significance of the film, presents insightful questions designed to engage viewers, and provides comprehensive answers to enhance understanding and appreciation of this iconic political drama.

## Overview of Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Released during a time of considerable political unrest, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" tells the story of an idealistic youth leader, Jefferson Smith, played by James Stewart, who is appointed to the U.S. Senate. Upon arriving in Washington, Smith faces the harsh realities of political corruption and challenges the status quo in a powerful filibuster. The film serves as a commentary on democracy, integrity, and the power of one individual to effect change.

## Key Themes in the Film

Understanding the themes of "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" will enrich the viewing experience. Some of the key themes include:

- **Integrity vs. Corruption:** The film contrasts Smith's idealism with the corrupt practices of seasoned politicians.
- **The Power of One:** Smith's character embodies the belief that one person can make a difference in society.
- **Political Disillusionment:** The film reflects the disillusionment many felt towards the political system during the late 1930s.
- **Friendship and Loyalty:** Smith's relationships, particularly with his secretary Clarissa, highlight the importance of support and camaraderie.

## Discussion Questions for Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Engaging with the film through discussion questions can stimulate critical thinking and deeper analysis. Here are some thought-provoking questions:

## Character Analysis

1. How does Jefferson Smith's character evolve from the beginning to the end of the film?
2. What role does Clarissa Saunders play in shaping Smith's journey?
3. In what ways do the supporting characters, such as Senator Paine, embody the theme of corruption?

## Thematic Exploration

4. What does the film suggest about the nature of democracy and the role of citizens in a democratic society?
5. How do the events in the film reflect real-world political issues that are still relevant today?
6. Discuss the significance of the filibuster scene. What does it reveal about Smith's character and his beliefs?

## Filmmaking Techniques

7. How does Frank Capra use cinematography to enhance the emotional impact of the film?
8. In what ways does the score contribute to the overall mood and tone of the film?
9. Analyze the use of dialogue in shaping character development and advancing the plot.

## Impact and Legacy

10. What has been the cultural impact of "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" on American cinema and politics?
11. How do modern adaptations or references to the film illustrate its continuing relevance?

## Answer Key for Mr. Smith Goes to Washington Questions

Here are the answers to the discussion questions posed above. These answers can serve as a guide for educators and students alike.

### Character Analysis Answers

1. Jefferson Smith's Evolution: Smith starts as an idealistic and naive character, but through his struggles in the Senate, he becomes more aware of the complexities of politics, ultimately standing firm in his values.
2. Role of Clarissa Saunders: Clarissa acts as both a mentor and a source of support for Smith. Her experiences and insights help him navigate the political landscape, and her loyalty is vital to his journey.
3. Embodiment of Corruption: Senator Paine represents the entrenched political corruption, showing how power can corrupt even those who once had noble intentions. His betrayal of Smith highlights the film's message about integrity.

## Thematic Exploration Answers

4. Nature of Democracy: The film emphasizes the importance of active citizenship, suggesting that democracy relies on the engagement and integrity of its citizens.
5. Real-World Political Issues: Themes of corruption, the influence of money in politics, and the struggle for justice resonate with contemporary audiences, reflecting ongoing challenges in the political system.
6. Significance of the Filibuster: The filibuster is a pivotal moment that showcases Smith's tenacity and moral conviction, symbolizing the fight against corruption and the power of one voice to challenge the system.

## Filmmaking Techniques Answers

7. Cinematography: Capra uses close-ups during emotional moments to heighten the audience's connection to the characters, particularly Smith, making his struggles more impactful.
8. Role of the Score: The musical score, composed by Dimitri Tiomkin, underscores the emotional highs and lows of the film, enhancing the viewer's engagement with Smith's journey.
9. Use of Dialogue: The dialogue reveals character motivations and conflicts, particularly in debates and speeches, which drive the plot and highlight the film's themes.

## Impact and Legacy Answers

10. Cultural Impact: "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" has influenced countless political dramas and has been referenced in various media, showcasing its lasting legacy in American culture.
11. Modern References: Contemporary films and television often echo Smith's fight against corruption, demonstrating that the film's themes remain relevant in today's political discourse.

## Conclusion

The "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington questions answer key" serves as a valuable tool for educators and students aiming to explore the intricacies of this timeless film. By understanding its themes, analyzing characters, and engaging in thoughtful discussion, viewers can appreciate the film's profound commentary on democracy and the enduring power of individual conviction. Whether used in a classroom setting or for personal reflection, this resource enhances the viewing experience and encourages a deeper appreciation for one of cinema's great political narratives.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the main theme of 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'?

The main theme is the struggle between idealism and corruption in politics, showcasing the importance of integrity and civic duty.

## **Who is the protagonist in 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'?**

The protagonist is Jefferson Smith, an idealistic and naive junior senator from a small state.

## **What challenge does Mr. Smith face during his time in Washington?**

Mr. Smith faces the challenge of navigating a corrupt political system and overcoming the opposition from seasoned politicians who seek to thwart his efforts.

## **What is the significance of the filibuster in the film?**

The filibuster is significant as it represents Mr. Smith's determination to stand up against corruption and fight for his beliefs, highlighting the power of individual action in the Senate.

## **How does the character of Mr. Smith evolve throughout the film?**

Mr. Smith evolves from a naive idealist to a more seasoned and resilient figure who understands the complexities of politics but remains committed to his values.

## **What role does the media play in 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'?**

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, influencing political agendas, and ultimately supporting Mr. Smith's cause as the truth of the corruption is revealed.

## **What message does the film convey about democracy?**

The film conveys a message about the fragility of democracy and the importance of active citizen engagement and moral integrity within the political system.

## **What impact did 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' have on American culture?**

The film has had a lasting impact on American culture, inspiring discussions about civic duty, political reform, and the role of the individual in government.

## **What is the historical context of 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'?**

The film was released in 1939 during a period of political disillusionment in the U.S., reflecting the public's concerns about corruption and the effectiveness of government amid the Great Depression.

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