FILM ANALYSIS GUIDE SHEET—Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

1. How does Jefferson Smith become a senator?

2. Compare Jefferson Smith's characteristics with the other possible appointees.

3. Use two or three words to describe Taylor and Paine.

4. What concepts does the director try to convey in the montage of monuments and music during Smith's tour of Washington?

5. Why does Smith become so angry with the press after he arrives in Washington?

6. How accurate are the descriptions by Saunders of how a bill becomes law, and the newscaster's definition of a filibuster?

7. Is Paine's final confession realistic? What does it reveal about politicians or the nature of politics in the United States?
Preparing and Presenting a bill: Mr. Smith’s case

Introduction: You are going to watch an excerpt of the classic film Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. In this 1939 Oscar-nominated movie, the actor Jimmy Stewart plays the role of a new Senator in Washington, who is taking the place of a Senator who died suddenly. Mr. Smith (Jimmy Stewart) has no political experience and has been chosen by some corrupt Senators who think they can control him.

Directions: Please read the following questions BEFORE the movie begins so you know what to look for. These questions ARE in order of the scenes in the movie.

1. Mr. Smith is interviewed at a press conference. What is the bill or "pet project" that he says he wants to pursue?

2. Ms. Saunders, Mr. Smith’s secretary, explains the process of writing a bill. What does she say needs to be included when writing up a bill? (What does the bill need to explain?)

3. According to Ms. Saunders, what does Mr. Smith need to do once he has finished writing up the bill? (What is the next step?)

4. Why does Mr. Smith’s bill create such a stir when he presents it?
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Answer the questions while you watch the film. During discussion, answer those you’ve missed.

ANSWER A, B & C AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MOVIE

A. Could the world use a "Mr. Smith" in Washington today? Why or why not? Use specific examples.

B. Explain how this movie applies to class. Give 2 specific examples utilizing both formal & informal instances.

C. Over all, did you like or dislike the movie? Give multiple specific examples to back up your opinion.
1. The movie begins with the death of a _______________ named Sam Foley. (1)
2. Joseph __________ and Jim __________ decide Horace ______________ will be the new senator. (3)
3. "...with Willet Creek Dam coming up...can't take any chances...have to be __________ sure of him." (1)
4. The people choose another candidate named Henry _______________________________. (1)
5. Governor Hopper's children want him to nominate _______________________________ instead. (2)
6. He decides when his coin toss lands on its side next to ______________________________ headline of Jeff Smith. (1)
7. Joseph Smith learns he knew Jeffrey Smith's _______________________________. (1)
8. How did Jeff's father die? _______________________________. "Look! There it is! The __________ dome!" (2)
9. When Jeff gives them the "slip", he's really just gone sight- _______________________________. (1)
10. What kind animal does Smith bring to Washington D.C.? _______________________________. (1)
11. "And that Lincoln Memorial, gee ___!" "You better relax, Senator, you'll get yourself __________ wore out." (2)
12. When talking with Diz, what does Saunders keep threatening to do in regard to her job? _______________________________. (1)