Questions for “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington”

Directions: Answer the following questions while watching the film. Please remember that if you are absent, then you’re responsible for getting the answers from another student for the part you missed. It will take a few days to watch. (12.5 pts.)

1. When Senator Foley dies, who gets to choose his replacement?

2. Why are the Governor and his group of supporters worried about who will take Senator Foley’s place?

3. Who becomes the new Senator?

4. Why are the people of the state so happy at Jefferson Smith’s appointment?

5. What does Mr. Smith do when he first arrives in Washington D.C.?

6. What nickname does Saunders give Mr. Smith?

7. Why does Mr. Smith want to visit Mt. Vernon before his first day as a Senator?

8. How does the press manipulate Mr. Smith’s words and actions after his first press conference?

9. Why can’t Mr. Smith respond to the allegations made against him on the Senate floor about his sincerity as a Senator?

10. How does Mr. Smith react to the untrue articles and misleading pictures?

11. What is at the heart of the bill that Mr. Smith wants to introduce and pass?

12. Why doesn’t Saunders think that Mr. Smith’s bill is passable?

13. How does Mr. Smith act around Susan Payne?

14. What is the controversy (unknown to Mr. Smith) about the location of his proposed camp, Willet Creek?

15. Why does Susan Payne take Mr. Smith out for the afternoon?

16. What does Saunders do to “enlighten” Mr. Smith about situation involving Senator Paine and Willet Creek?

17. How has Senator Payne managed to stay in office for 20 years?

18. How does Senator Payne prevent Mr. Smith from speaking against the deficiency bill?

19. What does the Payne “group” do to make Mr. Smith look bad?

20. What does Mr. Smith do on the floor of the Senate in order to be heard?

21. How does the President of the Senate react to Mr. Smith’s action?

22. How does Jim Taylor try to keep the news away from the state?

23. What does Saunders do to try and get the correct information to the state?

24. Do you think Mr. Smith’s filibuster is tough on him? Why do you think that?

25. What does Senator Paine admit at the end of the film?
“Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” Reflection Questions

Directions: Choose three of the following questions to answer and reflect on about the film we just watched. Each question is worth 2.5 points, and for full credit, your answer should show some real thought and understanding (minimum of 3 sentences per answer).

1. What is the film trying to say about American democracy? Explain your answer.
2. How would today’s world react to a Jefferson Smith? Explain your answer.
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? Why or why not?
5. Why are no party names, such as Democrats and Republicans, mentioned in the film? Does it matter? Explain.
6. What aspects of the film still hold true today? Why is this film still so highly regarded and relevant?