

mr smith goes to washington movie guide answer key

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington movie guide answer key is a valuable resource for educators and students alike, as it provides an in-depth look at one of the most iconic films in American cinema. Directed by Frank Capra and released in 1939, the film tells the story of an idealistic young senator, Jefferson Smith, who is thrust into the murky waters of political corruption. This article serves as a comprehensive guide to the movie, outlining its themes, characters, and key moments, while also offering insights into how to engage with the film in an educational setting.

Overview of Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington is not just a film; it is a cultural touchstone that reflects the political climate of its time. The story follows Jefferson Smith, played by James Stewart, who is appointed to the Senate to fill a vacancy. Unbeknownst to him, the political machine is rife with corruption, and his naive idealism is put to the test when he discovers a scandal involving a dam project that his mentor is involved in.

Key Themes

The film explores several significant themes that resonate today:

- **Idealism vs. Cynicism:** Jefferson Smith embodies the belief that one person can make a difference, contrasting with the cynical views of seasoned politicians.
- **The Power of Democracy:** The film underscores the importance of democratic ideals, showcasing how a single voice can challenge corruption.
- **Corruption in Politics:** The narrative reveals the darker side of politics, including bribery, manipulation, and the impact of special interests.
- **Integrity and Morality:** Smith's moral compass serves as a reminder of the importance of ethics in governance.

Main Characters

The film's characters are crucial to its lasting impact. Here's a breakdown of the main figures:

1. **Jefferson Smith:** The protagonist, portrayed by James Stewart, represents the idealistic American citizen who believes in justice and the power of the people.
2. **Senator Joseph Taylor:** A corrupt politician who serves as a mentor to Smith, embodying the corrupting influence of power.
3. **Clarissa Saunders:** Played by Jean Arthur, she is a skilled and cynical political aide who becomes Smith's ally, helping him navigate the treacherous political landscape.
4. **Senator Jim Taylor:** A powerful lobbyist whose interests conflict with Smith's ideals, showcasing the influence of money in politics.

Plot Summary

The plot of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* unfolds as follows:

1. Appointment to the Senate: Jefferson Smith is appointed to the Senate by the governor, who hopes to use him as a puppet.
2. Discovery of Corruption: As Smith begins his term, he uncovers a scheme involving a proposed dam that will benefit Taylor, leading to his realization of the corruption surrounding him.
3. Smith's Filibuster: In a desperate attempt to expose the truth, Smith engages in a lengthy filibuster, drawing attention to his cause and rallying public support.
4. Climax and Resolution: The film culminates in a dramatic showdown where Smith's integrity and resolve shine through, ultimately leading to a moral victory despite the odds against him.

Educational Use of the Movie

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington serves as an excellent educational tool for discussing various topics, including political science, ethics, and American history. Here are some ways to utilize the film in an academic setting:

Discussion Questions

To facilitate engaging discussions, consider using the following questions:

1. How does Jefferson Smith's character challenge or reinforce your views on politics?
2. What parallels can you draw between the film's portrayal of politics and contemporary political issues?
3. In what ways does the film suggest that one person can impact the political system?
4. How does the film address the concept of accountability in government?

Activities and Assignments

Incorporating interactive activities can enhance the learning experience:

- **Debate:** Organize a debate on the effectiveness of idealism in politics, using Smith's character as a reference point.
- **Creative Writing:** Have students write a letter from Smith to a contemporary politician, addressing current issues and advocating for change.
- **Research Project:** Assign students to investigate real-life instances of political corruption and compare them with the events depicted in the film.

Viewing Guide

To aid in comprehension, a viewing guide can be beneficial. Key points to focus on during the movie include:

- **Character Development:** Track how Jefferson Smith evolves throughout the film.
- **Symbolism:** Identify symbols used in the film, such as the filibuster itself, representing the struggle for truth.
- **Cinematic Techniques:** Analyze Capra's use of camera angles, lighting, and music to enhance emotional impact.

Conclusion

The **Mr. Smith Goes to Washington movie guide answer key** serves as a comprehensive resource for educators and students, enhancing the understanding of this classic film. By exploring its themes, characters, and plot, viewers can gain valuable insights into the complexities of politics and the enduring ideals of democracy. Whether utilized in a classroom setting or for personal reflection, this film remains a powerful commentary on the importance of integrity and the belief that one individual can effectuate change in the world. Through engaging discussions and activities, audiences will not only enjoy this cinematic masterpiece but also learn vital lessons about civic responsibility and moral courage.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary theme of 'Mr. Smith Goes to

Washington'?

The primary theme is the struggle between idealism and political corruption, showcasing the importance of integrity in governance.

Who directed 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'?

Frank Capra directed 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'.

What role does Jimmy Stewart play in the film?

Jimmy Stewart plays the character Jefferson Smith, an idealistic young senator.

What event prompts Jefferson Smith's journey to Washington?

Jefferson Smith is appointed to the Senate to fill a vacancy, which leads him to Washington.

How does Jefferson Smith's character evolve throughout the film?

Jefferson Smith evolves from a naive idealist to a determined advocate for honesty and transparency in politics.

What is the significance of the filibuster in the movie?

The filibuster represents Jefferson's fight against corruption and his attempt to uphold his values against overwhelming opposition.

What role does the character of Senator Payne play in the story?

Senator Payne serves as the antagonist, representing the corrupt political forces that Jefferson Smith must confront.

How does 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' reflect American political values?

The film highlights themes of democracy, civic duty, and the power of the individual to effect change in the political system.

What impact did 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' have on American cinema?

The film is considered a classic and has influenced the portrayal of politics in cinema, emphasizing the importance of integrity and the common man in democracy.

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