Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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?

**Themes and Ideas Presented in the Movie**

The following are a list of questions or ideas that come up in the movie. You will respond to each item to the best of your abilities. Don’t worry about getting a “right” answer. For many of the issues presented there is no “right” answer. I want your personal opinion, your gut reaction. Tell me what you think. This part is also open ended. That means that there could be other issues that are in the movie that I may not have thought of. You might see something I miss. Therefore, I will give **extra credit** (2pts each) for any issues or questions that you bring up on your own.

1. What do you think is the role of government in society?
2. Do you think our government cares about you?
3. How are minorities represented in the movie?
4. How are women represented in the movie?
5. Do you have a problem with the way Smith seems to talk about issues of the nation being only for boys or men?
6. How do you feel about Smith?
7. How do you feel about a. Taylor b. Paine c. Saunders d. Diz or the other reporters?
8. Are there honest people in politics?
9. What is the difference between compromise and sacrificing your morals and integrity?
10. Do you see *cynicism* in this movie? If so where and by whom?
11. What is idealism? Is there a difference between idealism and simply being naive?
12. What about the notion of “Public Opinion” can the media control public opinion?
13. How powerful do you think the media is in influencing politics?
14. Are Paine, Taylor and their friends evil?
15. Compare the race, age and sex of the Senators in this film with the ones of today. How different are they?
16. Do you admire Jeff Smith or is he just going too far? Is he a corny dope or a hero?
17. How much of a difference can one person make in the world?
18. Do you think something like this can happen today?
19. Did you like the movie? Why or why not?
20. Analyze the following quote from Smith as he begins to write his bill about the boys camp:

“You see, boys forget what their country means by just reading The Land of the Free in history books. Then they get to be men they forget even more. Liberty's too precious a thing to be buried in books, Miss Saunders. Men should hold it up in front of them every single day of their lives and say: I'm free to think and to speak. My ancestors couldn't, I can, and my children will. Boys ought to grow up remembering that.”