

***Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes**
Study Guide Grade 7

Use this study guide to help you better understand the book. As you read each chapter, answer the following questions. Please do this by hand on looseleaf. Keep your work neatly stored in a folder. Papers that are badly crumpled will not be accepted in September.

Progress Reports 1-8

Vocabulary

permanent
apprentice

complicated
conscious

marooned

Questions

1. In what form has the novel been written?
2. Who is the main character?
3. What kind of test did Burt give Charlie? What was the result?
4. Why was Charlie taking the tests?
5. What did Miss Kinnian tell the doctors about Charlie?
6. What happened when Charlie was given the Thematic Apperception Test?
7. Who was Algernon? How does Charlie meet Algernon?
8. With regard to the operation, what was Professor Nemur worried about?
9. Why did Charlie want to be smart?
10. What relationship does Mr. Donner have with Charlie?
11. How did Charlie feel after the operation? How did the doctors help Charlie?
12. When did Charlie begin to see results after the surgery? What were the results?

Progress Reports 9-10

Vocabulary

peculiar
plateau
procedure

administered
hunches
cowers

ward
massive
impulse

Questions

1. What happened on April Fool's Day at the bakery?
2. What did Charlie discover when he went to the party with Joe and Frank?

3. How could Charlie tell that he was getting smarter?
4. Who did Charlie talk to about his memories and dreams? Why?
5. What happened when Burt administered the Rorschach test with Charlie?
6. How did Mr. Donner and the other bakery employees react to Charlie?
7. What did Charlie's IQ climb to?
8. When Charlie overheard Nemur and Strauss discussing the presentation of their findings, what happens?
9. What concerned Charlie about making friends with some of the boys at the Campus Bowl?
10. What did Charlie dream about P.S. 13?

Progress Report 11

Vocabulary

depraved	ironic	despising
implication	pompous	ornately
consistent	intuition	vague
obligations	queasy	

Questions

1. How was Charlie beginning to feel about Alice Kinnian?
2. What did Charlie find confusing about his dreams and memories?
3. What did Charlie realize from his nightmare and the free association he did after the dream?
4. What problem does Charlie discover at the bakery? What did Charlie do about it?
5. When Charlie talked to Alice about the problem at the bakery, what did he realize?
6. What did Charlie discover in his conversations with various professors and specialists?
7. What happened during Charlie's evening out with Alice?
8. What was the status of Charlie's job at the bakery? What were Charlie's conclusions?
9. When Charlie next visited Alice, what comment does she make?
10. While Charlie was talking to Alice, what memory did he experience?

Progress Reports 12-13

Vocabulary

platonic	pathology	admonish
docile	prognosis	erratic
superimposed	euphemisms	juxtaposition
degenerate	paradoxical	

Questions

1. What was happening to the relationship between Charlie and Drs. Nemur and Strauss?
2. What was happening to Charlie's powers of recall? How did Charlie feel about it?
3. What event involving his sister did Charlie remember? How did Charlie feel about it?
4. Why did Charlie and Alice have a quarrel?
5. What had Charlie's IQ changed to?
6. What happened in Central Park?
7. By fastening the airplane seat belt, what memory was triggered?
8. What was Charlie's observation about Dr. Guarino?
9. What was Charlie's main resentment concerning Professor Nemur?
10. What were the main events at the conference?

Progress Report 14

Vocabulary

berserk

precaution

composure

phenomenal

futile

naïveté

amnesia

usurped

deterioration

Questions

1. What did Charlie discover from the newspaper account about his actions at the conference?
2. What memories did the newspaper article trigger?
3. When Charlie was back in New York, what did he do? Why?
4. What happens during Charlie's meeting with Fay Lillman? How does Charlie feel about it?
5. What happens when Charlie visits Matt Gordon's barbershop?
6. What gift did Fay bring for Algernon? Why?
7. How did the first night Charlie spent with Fay go?
8. When Charlie finally contacts Alice, what does he share with her?
9. How did the intelligent Charlie try to distract the child Charlie? Was it successful? Why, or why not?
10. When Charlie went back to his apartment, what did he do?
11. What did Charlie do during the next few weeks?
12. What was Algernon's condition?

Progress Reports 15-16

Vocabulary

cordial	lethargy	vestibule
skeptical	stupor	inevitable
exigencies	cynical	
imperceptibly	obstruction	

Questions

1. How is Charlie received when he takes Algernon back to the lab?
2. What question did Charlie ask Burt? What did Burt reply?
3. Where did Charlie want to go? Why?
4. What is happening to Algernon?
5. What happens when Alice and Fay meet?
6. After Charlie's talk with Alice how does Charlie behave?
7. What happened at Mrs. Nemur's cocktail party?
8. What did Dr. Strauss say had come up in recent therapy sessions?
9. What was the Algernon-Gordon effect? What did it mean?
10. What happened to Algernon?
11. What happens when Charlie visits his mother?
12. What happens when Charlie meets with Norma?

Progress Report 17

Vocabulary

accumulated	recede	valid
isolated	luminescent	labyrinth
encompassing	flail	fugues

Questions

1. What happens during Charlie's therapy session with Strauss?
2. What was the first thing Charlie is now refusing to do for the doctors?
3. What happened when Charlie took the Rorschach test?
4. What is the status of Alice and Charlie's relationship?
5. What was happening to Charlie? How was Charlie feeling?
6. When Charlie went back to the bakery, what happened?
7. What "Charlie Gordon" did Charlie pull? What was the result?
8. What was Charlie's plan?
9. What was Charlie's last request in his progress report?

10. What length of time has elapsed from the first to the last progress report?

Flowers for Algernon Activities:

Directions: Pick one of the following activities to complete after reading the novel.

Vocabulary Prompt Essay

Directions: Include the vocabulary words in a well-constructed essay responding to the writing prompt.

Writing Prompt: Would you rather be the most popular person in your school or the smartest person in your school? What are the advantages/disadvantages of popularity? What are the advantages/disadvantages of intelligence? What sacrifices do people make to fit in? What is good or bad about being unusual?

Vocabulary Words:

misled
tangible
refute
invariably

regression
verified
obscure
deterioration

hypothesis
introspective

Take a Rorschach Test

In the story *Flowers for Algernon* the main character, Charlie Gordon, had to take a Rorschach test. This test is more commonly known as the inkblot test. The Rorschach Test was developed by a Swiss psychiatrist named Hermann Rorschach. This test was designed to determine personality traits by interpreting a subject's responses to inkblot images.

Look at the following inkblots and decide what it looks like to you. Write down your responses and then compare them with those of your classmates. Were there any similarities or patterns?



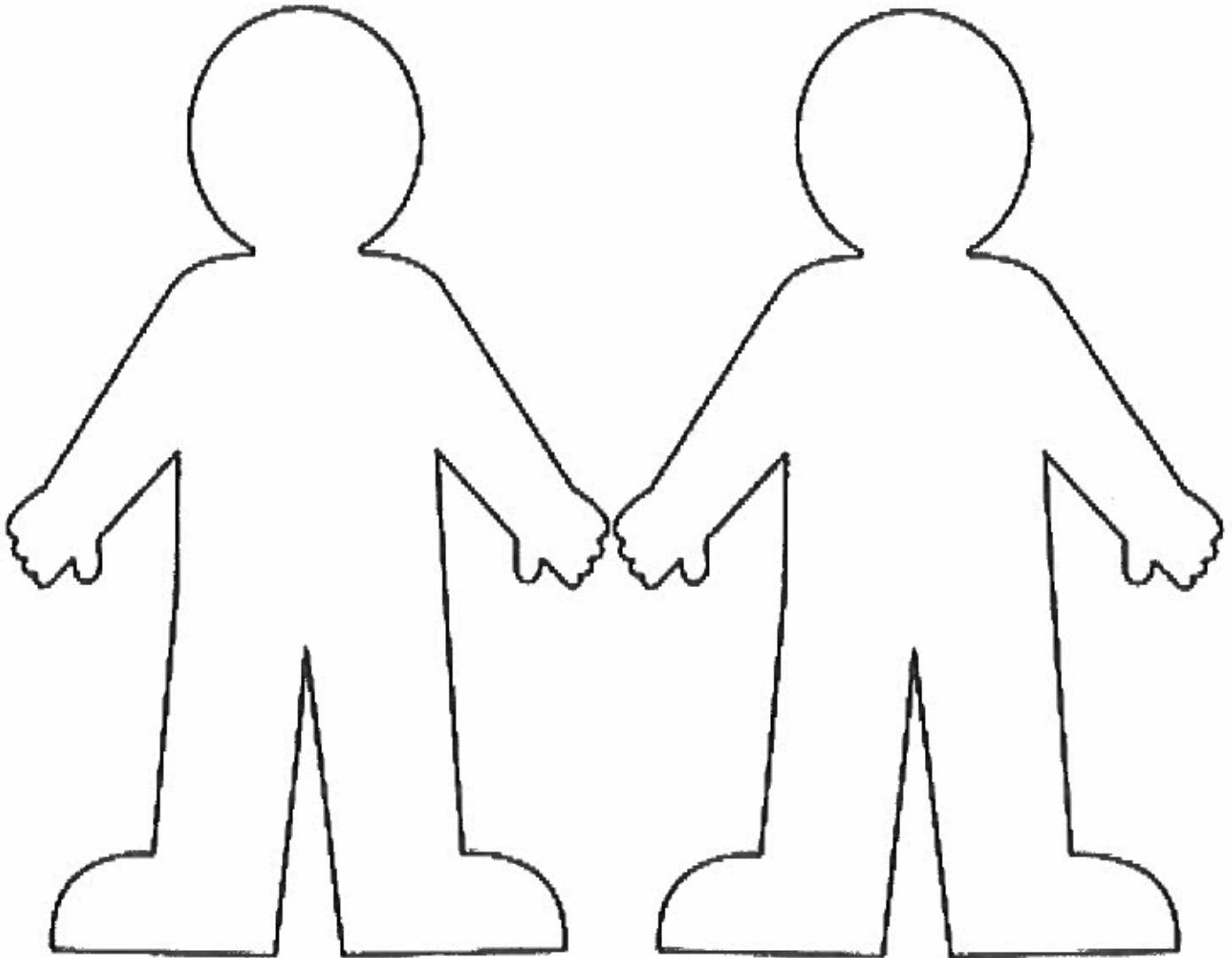




This activity will help synthesize your knowledge of the novel by carefully examining the text and creating a visual representation of Charlie. Working from the body outlines below, print quotations from the novel, draw pictures, and/or glue small clippings from magazines onto the “bodies” of Charlie. You are to show the two Charlies, before the operation and after.

Before

After



Character Traits

13. "I'll tell you what you did, Mister Gordon. You come pushing in here with your ideas and suggestions and make the rest of us all look like a bunch of dopes. But I'll tell you something. To me you're still a moron. Maybe I don't understand some of them big words or the names of the books, but I'm as good as you are-better even."
14. "That's not true. But I realize there's nothing we can do. When you've got a child like him it's a cross, and you bear it, and love it. Well, I can bear him, but I can't stand your foolish ways."
15. "But he's put his whole life into this. He's no Freud or Jung or Pavlov or Watson, but he's doing something important and I respect his dedication-maybe even more because he's just an ordinary man trying to do a great man's work, while the great men are all busy making bombs."
16. "Do you think this is easy? Why are you making it harder for me? All these years everyone telling me he should be put away. Well, they were right. Put him away. Maybe at the Home with his own kind he'll have something. I don't know what's right or wrong any more. All I know is I'm not going to sacrifice my daughter for him now."
17. "Not what I expected. No sex, or anything like that. But you were phenomenal. What an act! The weirdest. You'd be great on the stage. You'd wow them at the Palace. You went all confused and silly."
18. "This work is important now, Charlie. Not only to the world and millions of unknown people, but to you. Charlie, you've got to solve this thing for yourself as well. Don't let anyone tie your hands."
19. "You're feeling sorry for yourself. What did you expect? This experiment was calculated to raise your intelligence, not to make you popular. We had no control over what happened to your personality, and you've developed from a likable, retarded young man into an arrogant, self-centered, antisocial bastard."
20. "Oh, Charlie I'm glad you're back now. We've needed someone. I'm so tired. . . ."
21. "I'm not here because I feel sorry for you. It's because I feel sorry for me."
22. ". . . Charlie if anyone bothers you or trys to take advantage of you call me or Joe or Frank and we will set them strait. We all want you to remember that you got friends here and dont you ever forget it."
23. Anyway I bet im the frist dumb persen in the world who found out some thing inportent for sience. I did somthing but I dont remembir what. So I gess its like I did it for all the dumb pepul like me in Warren and all over the world.

Essay Questions

Choose one and answer it to prepare for the essay portion of the test.

1. The short story that this novel has been expanded from was originally written in 1959. It was published in a science-fiction magazine and classified as such. What was happening in the world of science in the late 50s and early 60s? What products were introduced during that time that are now commonplace?
2. The main setting for this story is New York City. Many land-marks, such as Times Square, enable the reader to visualize the location. Which settings are fictional and which are present still today? What does the novel gain from this mix of real and fictional settings?
3. The combination of the progress reports and the memory regressions allow the author to use both a first and third person narration technique. How would this novel be affected by having the story told by another character? Miss Kinnian? Professor Nemur? How important is the point of view to the story line?
4. What would probably happen to Charlie Gordon today? Would he have been mainstreamed into a regular classroom? What changes have been made in our society and legal system to make this novel at times politically incorrect? How do these changes benefit society as a whole, or do they?
5. Compare and contrast Charlie's personality before and after his surgery. Does more knowledge make him a better person? Compare the evolved Charlie's personality with Professor Nemur's during their argument at the psychological meeting.
6. Discuss whether you believe Charlie should have undergone the surgery at all. Was he better off for having done it, despite his eventual regression?
7. Charlie was fired from the bakery because he was making the other employees and bakery patrons uncomfortable with his newfound intelligence. Was this fair? Why or why not?

