

Guided Reading Questions/Chunking the Text
Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes

Connecting to the text (Objective 1E4c):

**What if you woke up tomorrow and realized you had become a genius overnight?
What would your initial reaction be?**

What drawbacks, if any, might there be to being a genius?

How might your friends and members of your family respond to your intelligence?

During Reading Questions (Objective 1E3a)

PROGRESS REPORT 1 - March 5 1965

1. What do you learn about Charlie Gordon?
2. What has Dr. Strauss told Charlie? Why?
3. Why is the spelling strange?
4. Correct at least five spelling mistakes (there are more).

PROGRESS REPORT 2 - March 6

1. Describe the test Charlie is given.
2. Why does Charlie fetch his glasses and why does he think he needs new glasses?

3. At the end Charlie pretends "a fountain pen with ink leaking all over a table cloth". What does that tell you about him?
4. Why does he have a rabbit's foot in his pocket?
5. How does Charlie feel about the test and how does he behave when he is tested? What does that tell you about him?
6. Do you think he passed the test?
7. Correct some more spelling mistakes.

PROGRESS REPORT 3 - March 7

1. Who is Miss Kinnian?
2. Why did Charlie go to night school? What does that tell you about him?
3. Describe the Thematic Apperception Test.
4. How does Charlie do here?

5. What is the point of the Thematic Apperception Test and the "*raw shock*" test?

6. "Algernon and me had the same *amazed* to do." Explain what Charlie means here and what the test with Algernon is about.
7. How does Charlie explain the fact that he loses and how does he feel about losing?

PROGRESS REPORT 4 - March 8

1. What is the experiment about?
2. Explain the words Charlie doesn't get ("intelek**" and so on).
3. Why does Dr. Strauss think Charlie is a good choice for the experiment?
4. Why do you think Dr. Nemur is against using Charlie at first?
5. Do you think he is a good choice?

PROGRESS REPORT 5 - March 10

1. How does Charlie feel before the operation? Give some examples.
 2. Sum up your impression of Charlie so far. Find as many **adjectives** as you can to describe the sort of person he is.
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PROGRESS REPORT 6 - March 15

1. Are there any changes after the operation?

PROGRESS REPORT 7 - March 19

2. How does Charlie feel about the tests, Algernon, Dr. Strauss, Miss Kinnian? Why?
3. What were his feelings about them before the operation?
4. (Objective 3A7b) **Evaluate the tone** of narrator (Charlie) concerning his operation. What do Charlie's negative remarks reveal about his feelings toward the operation?

PROGRESS REPORT 8

March 23

1. How does Charlie feel about going back to work? Why?
2. What does Charlie learn about Algernon here?

March 25

1. Charlie says that his colleagues are really his friends and they like him. Do you agree?
2. What does the expression "to pull a Charlie Gordon" mean?

3. What does "the 4 man" mean?

March 28

1. Why doesn't Charlie like to race with Algernon any more?
2. Has Charlie made any progress so far? What does he think himself? What does Dr. Strauss think? What do you think?

March 29

1. What is the purpose of the "TV" Dr. Strauss has given Charlie?

PROGRESS REPORT 9

April 3

2. What does Charlie mean when he talks about having two minds?
3. What does the expression "Charlie is a card when potted" mean?
4. Describe what happens at the saloon.
5. How does Charlie get home? Why is he black and blue?
6. (Objective 3Ad **Analyze characterization**) How does Charlie feel about Joe and Frank? How do you feel about them?

7. (Objective 3Ad **Analyze characterization**) Three weeks have now passed since the operation. Identify signs that changes are taking place in Charlie's intellectual capacity.

April 6

1. How did Charlie feel about Algernon right after the operation (PR 7, March 19)? How does he feel about him now? Why?
2. In what way is Algernon special?
3. What do Charlie's feelings about Algernon tell you about him?

April 9

1. How does Charlie feel about *Robinson Crusoe*? Why?

April 10

1. Pronounce the following words: "*through, enough, tough*".
2. Why does Charlie have trouble here?

April 15

1. Why does Miss Kinnian look at Charlie "kind of funny" when she reads the Progress Reports and why does she have to run to the ladies'?
2. How would you describe Charlie's attitude to other people?

April 16

1. What is punctuation?

2. How does Charlie use punctuation?

April 17 & April 18

1. Give examples of Charlie's progress.

April 20

1. Why does Charlie feel sick inside?
2. Sum up what Charlie has learnt so far.
3. In your opinion has the operation been a good thing or a bad thing for Charlie so far?
4. Evaluate whether "Flowers for Algernon" could change readers' attitudes and actions toward people who are mentally challenged.

PROGRESS REPORT 11

April 21

1. How does Charlie look upon finding out that he is a laughing-stock? Do you agree?
2. What is an I.Q. according to Dr. Nemur? b) Dr. Strauss? c) Burt? d) What do you think it is?

3. What was Charlie's I.Q. before the operation? What is it going to be soon? What is a normal I.Q.?

April 22

1. (Objective 3A3b Analyze the conflict and events of plot)

Why is Charlie angry? Describe the conflict.

2. What happened the first time Charlie took the inkblot test (PR 2, March 6)?
3. What does he see in the cards now? What do the things he sees tell you?
4. In what way has Charlie's attitude toward other people changed? Why has it changed?

April 25

1. Give examples of how Charlie is treated at his job now.

April 27

1. What do the doctors argue about?
2. Why does Dr. Nemur want to publish the results at once?

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3. What is your impression of the two doctors?

April 28

1. To what does Miss Kinnian compare the process of learning? Do you agree?
2. What are Charlie's feelings for Miss Kinnian at this point?
3. What is Miss Kinnian worried about?

PROGRESS REPORT 12

April 30

1. Why does Charlie lose his job?
 2. What is Fanny referring to when she talks about Eve who listened to the snake and ate from the tree of knowledge?
 3. What larger aspects are given to the story by Fanny's words?
 4. How does she feel about the change in Charlie?
 5. Charlie cannot see that it is wrong that he wants to become intelligent and understand the world around him. What do you think? Do you agree with Charlie or with Fanny?
 6. When was the first time Charlie had the feeling of shame burning inside him?
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7. What has the operation meant to Charlie so far?

May 15

1. What is the difference between the two doctors in Charlie's opinion?
2. Why are the doctors uncomfortable around Charlie now?
3. How does Charlie react when he finds out that he knows more than the doctors?

May 18

1. Describe Charlie's relationship to other people at this point.

May 20

1. Give a summary of the incident.
2. (3A7b Analyze tone) Describe Charlie's **tone** in this passage. Support your answer.
2. What is Charlie's reaction? Why?
3. What decision does Charlie make?
4. Do you agree with Charlie that it would be a good idea to increase the intelligence level of mentally retarded people with this new technique?

PROGRESS REPORT 13

May 23

1. What are the implications of Algernon biting Charlie?

May 24

1. In what way is Algernon changing?

May 25

1. Why have the doctors asked Charlie not to come to the lab any more?
2. What does Charlie decide to do?

May 29 & May 31

1. What is Charlie working on?

June 4

1. What does Charlie's letter say?
2. How does he feel about the whole thing?
3. Do you understand his feelings?

June 5

1. What is the *Algernon-Gordon Effect*?

June 10

1. What happens to Algernon?
2. How does Charlie react to this? What does this tell you about him?

June 15

1. What is Charlie's mood?

June 19

1. When was the last time he was brought home by a policeman?

June 21 - June 30

1. Describe Charlie's deterioration.
2. What are Charlie's feelings at this point?

3. How do the doctors feel?

July 7

1. What do we learn about Charlie's family?

July 10 - July 25

1. How do other people react to Charlie at this point: Mrs Flynn, the doctor, Miss Kinnian?

2. Why does Charlie isolate himself?

July 27

1. In what way have things changed at work?

July 28

1. Why is Charlie leaving New York ?
 2. How does he feel about what has happened to him, and about the doctors and Miss Kinnian? How would you feel?
 3. Whom does Charlie blame for the failure? Do you agree?
 4. Is Charlie's situation now the same as it was before the operation?
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5. Why do you think the writer chose to end the story this way? Why did he not let Charlie keep his intelligence?

6. (Objective 3A3c Analyze the mood) How does the ending affect you? How do you feel as a reader?

 7. What does the writer achieve by having everything seen from Charlie's point of view?

 8. (Objective 3A6a Analyze theme) Sum up the theme or message of the story.
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