**Flowers for Algernon**

**Study Guide**

Directions: Answer the following questions about the story in your notebook. Remember to label the top of the page with the category name.

**Progris riport 1 martch 3**

1. In this first report, several characters in the story are identified. Briefly describe Charlie, Gordon, Miss Kinnian, and Mr. Donner.
2. Why is Charlie writing the progress reports?

**Progris riport 2-martch 4**

1. What information about Professor Nemur, Burt, and Dr. Strauss can be inferred by this report?
2. Why can Charlie not relax during the inkblot test?
3. How does Charlie react when he does not see anything in the inkblots, and it is clear he is going to fail the test?
4. What evidence is there that Charlie frustrates Burt?

**3rd progris riport**

1. Briefly identify Uncle Herman, Gimpy, and Norma.
2. Why does Charlie want to be smart?
3. Who recommends Charlie for the experiment? Why is he recommended?
4. Why do they want to know where Charlie’s family lives?

**Progris riport 4**

1. Why will Charlie not make up stories about the people in the pictures?
2. How does he try to continue the test?
3. Why do you suppose it is important that Charlie learns to do the mazes?
4. How does Charlie feel about Algernon? Why is he not upset about losing to the mouse?
5. What form of narrative is used in this novel?

**Progris riport 5 mar 6**

1. List the reasons Charlie is considered a good candidate for the surgery.
2. List eh objections to selecting Charlie.
3. What are the dangers to Charlie from the surgery?
4. How do the doctors justify experimenting on Charlie?

**Progris riport 6th Mar 8**

1. What is Charlie’s definition of science?
2. Why is Miss Kinnian nervous?
3. Do you think it is fair to Charlie that he must keep this operation a secret from his co-workers? Why?
4. What new reason does Charlie reveal about his desire to be smart?

**Progress Report 7 March 11**

1. What surprises Charlie about the operation?
2. What is the scientific method?
3. Does Charlie demonstrate any evidence of increased intelligence soon after the operation?
4. What kind of information do the doctors want in Charlie’s reports?
5. Why does Hilda want Charlie to “pray to God to ask him to forgive what they done to me”?
6. List two new reasons Charlie want to be smart.

**Progress Report 8**

1. Describe the change in Charlie’s attitude.
2. Why is Professor Nemur worried about publicity?
3. What secret is revealed about Algernon?
4. Why does Mr. Donner employ Charlie?
5. Define a “Charlie Gordon.”
6. What evidence is there that Charlie is getting smarter?
7. A flashback is a scene that interrupts the ongoing action in a story to show an event that happens earlier. Find an example of a flashback.
8. Why does he fall asleep in therapy?
9. Why does Charlie want to visit Norma?
10. Find an example of an allusion. Explain how it is an allusion.

**Progress Report 9**

1. Why are Frank and Joe mad at Charlie?
2. Why does Charlie’s memory about his sister make him feel bad?
3. How does Charlie reach a “plateau”?
4. Why does Charlie feel sick?
5. Draw a generalization from the story based on Dr. Strauss’ advice to Charlie.
6. How does Charlie feel when Dr. Strauss explains his dream?
7. What are Dr. Strauss’ and Professor Nemur’s definitions of I.Q.?
8. Define free-association.
9. Why does Charlie dream about Miss Kinnian and then, through free-association, remember the incident with Harriet?
10. Why do you suppose Charlie fine that “…anger and suspicion were my first reactions to the world around me”?

**Progress Report 10**

1. What type of narrative is used on page 43? Why?
2. Why do you think Gimpy wants Charlie to learn to make rolls and gives him the shiny disc even though he fails?
3. Why is Charlie frightened by the argument between Nemur and Strauss, regarding attending the convention?
4. State a theme for this novel based on Charlie’s conversations with the college students.
5. What does his mother take away from his in the following passage?

*“It is soft and warm and he feels the confusion of relief and fear. It is his, but she will take it away from him as she always does.”*

1. How does the author reflect the personality of the following characters by their names:

Charlie’s Family: (3)

Charlie’s Co-workers: (3)

Charlie’s Doctors: (2)

**Progress Report 11**

1. Why does Alice believe their relationship might “have a negative effect”?
2. Define Charlie’s problem at the bakery. What solutions are offered by Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss?
3. Why is Gimpy angry at Charlie after he solves the problem at the bakery without getting Gimpy fired?
4. Why will the professors at the college not discuss their areas of study with Charlie?
5. Who do you think Charlie sees in his hallucination at he park?
6. Find an example of an allusion when Charlie tries to convince his co-workers to let him keep his job.
7. Why does Charlie want so desperately to stay at the bakery?
8. Find and example of a metaphor and a simile on the May 25 progress report.
9. Which flashback of sexual experiences do you think is the root of Charlie’s problem? Why?

**Progress Report 12**

1. How has “language [become] a barrier instead of a pathway”?
2. Describe how Charlie’s power of recall is growing beyond the limits of most people.
3. Why does Norma not want to share the dog with Charlie?
4. How do you think Charlie feels about his sister?
5. Why is Alice uncomfortable around Charlie?
6. Why does she not want to go to the conference in Chicago?
7. Find an example of a simile and a metaphor in the same sentence of the June 8 report.
8. Why does Charlie decide to take the woman from the park back to his room?
9. What is the “double image” Charlie sees when the woman opens her coat?
10. Why do you think Charlie almost wants the mob to catch him?

**Progree Report 13**

1. How do Charlie and his parent feel about God?
2. Why does Rose insist on talking to Charlie’s doctors? Why does Matt resist?
3. Despite the terror of being strapped to a table, why does Charlie like Dr. Guarino?
4. Why does Charlie resent Professor Nemur?
5. How does Charlie’s kind gesture toward the professor backfire?
6. Why does Burt defend Professor Nemur?
7. What euphemism is used to describe Charlie’s mental state, both before and after the operation?
8. What two pieces of information are withheld from Charlie?
9. Why does Charlie want to stop Nemur and “get up and show everyone what a fool is was, to shout at him”?
10. Explain the mistake Charlie finds in the statistical analysis of the waiting period.
11. Why must Charlie see his parents as soon as possible?
12. Support or refute the following statement:

*Charlie lets Algernon out of his cage only as a distraction, so he can avoid speaking at the conference.*

**Progress Report 14**

1. Why did Rose change toward Charlie and begin to reject him?
2. Why is Charlie isolating himself from Alice and the doctors?
3. Describe Fay Lillman.
4. Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues in the story to suggest what action is to come. Find an example that may be foreshadowing in this section.
5. Why is Charlie excited to see Matt?
6. Do you think Rose really intends to harm Charlie with the knife?
7. Why does Charlie not reveal his identity to his father?
8. Algernon does mazes for Charlie without the motivation of a tangible reward, such as food or water. Using this idea, state the theme for this novel.
9. What does Charlie learn bout his unconscious mind by getting drunk with Fay?
10. Why does Charlie go to the movies and “…brush against someone and sense the connection between the branch and trunk and the deep root”?
11. How does the following quotation from this section apply to Charlie before the operation?

*“A child may not know how to feed itself, or what to eat, yet it knows hunger.”*

1. Why can Charlie not make love to Alice? How does he solve the problem? Is he successful?
2. Why is Charlie returning to the Foundation?
3. Where is the old Charlie when Charlie first makes love with Fay?
4. Why does Charlie take Algernon back to the lab?
5. Support or refute the following statement:

*The old Charlie stops watching Charlie and Fay because their relationship is of no importance.*

**Progress Report 15**

1. If the experiment fails, list the negative effects which may make returning Charlie to the bakery unlikely.
2. State the theme for this novel suggested in the following quotation:

*“I see now that the path I choose though that maze makes me what I am. I am not only a thing, but also a way of being—one of many ways—and knowing the paths I have followed and the ones left to take will help me understand what I am becoming.”*

1. Describe Algernon’s mental deterioration in the time he is away from the laboratory.
2. How does Charlie feel about the plan to send him to Warren Home if the experiment fails? How does Professor Nemur feel? Support you answer with lines from the story.

**Progress Report 16**

1. Why do the patients at Warren, who have escaped to the outside, usually return to the hospital on their own?
2. Briefly identify the personnel at the Warren State Home and Training School.
3. Why does Charlie think all of these people come to work at Warren?
4. What does Alice have against Fay?
5. How does Alice known that Charlie is not emotionally involved with Fay?
6. What is in the comparison in the following metaphor?

*“A monkey sitting in the center of his cage, staring at me out of sleepy eyes, rubbing his cheeks with little old-man shriveled hands…and bouncing off the cage wire, up to the swing overhead where the other monkey sits…he swings and tries to graph the other monkey’s tail, but the one on the bar keeps swishing it away.”*

1. Do you think Charlie expects to discover how to retain his increased intelligence?
2. State a theme for his novel using the following quotation:

*“How many great problems have gone unsolved because men didn’t know enough, or have enough faith in the creative process and in themselves, to let go for the whole mind to work at it?”*

1. In what way does the new Charlie believe he is better off before the operation than he is now?
2. State a theme for the novel using the following quotation:

*“the mind absorbed in and involved in itself as a self-centered end, to the exclusion of human relationships, can only lead to violence and pain.”*

1. What does the old Charlie want from the new Charlie? Why is this new Charlie unable to give it to him?
2. What is the Algernon-Gordon Effect?
3. Do you think Charlie will decline below his original intelligence level? Support your answer with ideas from the novel.
4. What does Charlie want from his mother when he finally goes to see her?
5. How much of Charlie’s story does Rose understand?
6. Why does Charlie not tell Norma the truth about his condition?
7. In the following quotation, what does the knife symbolize to Charlie?

*“She had a knife, and Alice had a knife, and my father had a knife, and Dr. Strauss had a knife.”*

**Progress Report 17**

1. How many months pass from the date of the operation to the beginning of this report?
2. Why does Charlie not commit suicide?
3. Find a metaphor in the hallucination Charlie experiences in Dr. Strauss’ office.
4. What does the light in the cave symbolize?
5. Why is Charlie afraid to go to the light?
6. How does the following quotation link Charlie to Algernon?

*“I know how important it is, and I’ve got to do it. I’ve told myself I won’t have dinner until I sit down and write something—anything.”*

1. Find a metaphor on page 201.
2. Knowing he cannot stop the deterioration, what does Charlie pray for?
3. How is Alice’s presence both good and bad for Charlie?
4. Why does Charlie watch hours of television?
5. In what way does Alice begin acting like Charlie’s mother?
6. How does Charlie feel about Mrs. Mooney’s help?
7. Find an example of an allusion in the entry for November 1.
8. How is Charlie trying to low the deterioration?
9. Why does Charlie tell himself not to be sore if the men at the bakery make fun of him?
10. How does Charlie react to Klaus’ threat to break his arm? How do Charlie’s coworkers react?
11. Why does Charlie ultimately decide to go to the Warren Home?
12. What does Charlie retain about his life after the operation?
13. State a theme for this novel based on the P.S. at the end of the last progress report.
14. Why do you think Charlie wants flowers on Algernon’s grave?