

Advanced Placement in  
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

# Flowers for Algernon

by Daniel Keyes

written by Kay Hampson

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ISBN 978-1-935464-85-3  
Reorder No. 305341

# Flowers for Algernon

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. support the following major themes in the novel with evidence from the text
  - a. a tension exists between the emotions and intellect
  - b. the past has the power to affect the present
  - c. society mistreats and misunderstands the mentally challenged
2. identify significant incidents and comments that signal the author's themes.
3. analyze Keyes's techniques of character's development
4. examine the use of the following narrative techniques and devices:
  - a. the journal format
  - b. the changes in Charlie's use of language
  - c. flashbacks
5. explain changes in tone in the novel
6. discuss Keyes's use of sexuality to reflect emotional growth
7. analyze the use of foreshadowing, irony, simile, metaphor, and allusion in the book
8. trace the development and evolution of symbols in the text, particularly the window and the knife
9. trace the development of the connection between Charlie and Algernon and explain how it contributes to the text as a whole
10. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam
11. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam
12. offer a close reading of *Flowers for Algernon* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel

## LECTURE NOTES

### THE HISTORY OF *FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON*

*Flowers for Algernon* was originally a short story. Daniel Keyes, who left his position as associate editor at Marvel Comics to teach high-school English, used his experience working with special-needs students to write “Flowers for Algernon.” The story was initially submitted to the magazine *Galaxy Science Fiction* in 1958, but when the editor asked Keyes to alter the ending—having Charlie retain his intelligence and marry Alice Kinnian—Keyes refused. “Flowers for Algernon,” with Keyes’s intended ending, was soon after published in the April 1959 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. It was an instant success, and it received the Hugo Award for Best Short Story in 1960.

Between 1961 and 1965, Keyes expanded the story into a novel and received an offer of publication from Doubleday Publishers. However, like *Galaxy Science Fiction*, Doubleday wanted Keyes to give the story a happy ending, and Keyes—who still maintained that such an ending was not appropriate for the novel—once again refused. After returning the publisher’s advance, Keyes sent the book to five other publishers; each one rejected the book. However, Harcourt, Inc. finally agreed to publish the novel without changes, and since its initial publication, *Flowers for Algernon* has not gone out of print. The novel won the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1966, and in 2000, Daniel Keyes was presented with the Science Fiction Writers of America Author Emeritus Award.

### SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction is a genre that is difficult to define, primarily because it encompasses several subgenres and often overlaps with other categories of literature, television, and film. Generally speaking, however, the plots of science fiction works involve advanced, often fantastic, scientific research and innovations. These may include time travel, space shuttles and flying machines, advanced information technology, machines with artificial intelligence, and bioengineering. The settings in the science fiction genre also vary, and the story may be set on present-day earth, an alternate reality, outer space, a dystopian community, or a post-apocalyptic world. The genre is so broad that it can encompass novels and films widely recognized as science fiction—such as H.G. Wells’s *War of the Worlds* and George Lucas’s *Star Wars*—as well as those that may be classified primarily under another genre, such as George Orwell’s *1984* and Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*.

*Flowers for Algernon* was written as a work of science fiction, and Keyes intended for it to be published in the *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine. The novel examines the implications of using scientific principles to study human beings: How can a great disparity between the level of emotional and intellectual intelligence be detrimental? Is an individual with a mental disability considered less human than a person with normal awareness and mental aptitude? What role does sexual development play in an individual’s life? How important is social interactivity in an individual’s life?

## PHENYLKETONURIA (PKU)

In *Flowers for Algernon*, the main character, Charlie Gordon, suffers from phenylketonuria. Phenylketonuria, also known as PKU or Föllings Disease, is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder, resulting from a mutation on chromosome 12. The mutation leads to a deficiency of the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase, which impedes the conversion of phenylalanine into tyrosine. Since phenylalanine is one of several large neutral amino acids (LNAA) that compete for transport into the blood-brain barrier, its overabundance in the blood prevents other essential LNAAs from entering the brain. The absence of the other amino acids inhibits the synthesis of proteins and neurotransmitters, and as a result, causes brain damage and mental retardation.

While the disorder is incurable, it can be treated, and its effects can be prevented. One in approximately 15,000 children in the United States is born with the disease, but most infants are tested for the disorder hours after their birth. If a low level of phenylalanine can be maintained through the use of a special diet and protein supplements, brain damage can be reduced. With a continuation of the diet—which limits the digestion of meats, milk products, grains, and certain vegetables—people who have PKU can live fairly ordinary lives.

## ETHICS IN EXPERIMENTATION ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

In the story, Charlie eagerly agrees to participate in Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss's research; however, readers may question whether the experiment is ethical, seeing as how the dramatic increase in Charlie's intelligence over a short period of time damages his personal relationships, causes him to lose his job, and puts him into a state of depression. There is also some question about whether Charlie initially understands the risks involved and whether a person with a mental disability can even give informed consent.

In order to gain a better sense of the legality and ethicality of the experiment, review the following brief summary of laws regulating research on human test subjects, beginning with the Nuremberg Code and ending with the current law.

## THE NUREMBERG CODE

After World War II, doctors and scientists of the Nazi regime were tried for torturing and murdering prisoners used as test subjects in medical research. The first of the subsequent Nuremberg Trials, also called the “Doctor’s Trial,” took place from 9 December 1946 through 20 August 1947. A United States military tribunal tried these individuals, who, in their experiments, performed atrocities that included bone transplants, castration using X-rays, and the subjection of prisoners to mustard gas, sulfanilamide, typhus, malaria, smallpox, cholera, and jaundice.

In order to try the doctors, authorities needed guidelines to help distinguish between ethical and non-ethical research. For this reason, Dr. Leo Alexander and a few others composed a list of ten points regulating human experimentation. They are as follows:

1. The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision. This latter element requires that before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject there should be made known to him the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonable to be expected; and the effects upon his health or person which may possibly come from his participation in the experiment.

The duty and responsibility for ascertaining the quality of the consent rests upon each individual who initiates, directs or engages in the experiment. It is a personal duty and responsibility which may not be delegated to another with impunity.

2. The experiment should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocureable by other methods or means of study, and not random and unnecessary in nature.
3. The experiment should be so designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and a knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study that the anticipated results will justify the performance of the experiment.
4. The experiment should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.

5. No experiment should be conducted where there is an a priori reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur; except, perhaps, in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects.
6. The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.
7. Proper preparations should be made and adequate facilities provided to protect the experimental subject against even remote possibilities of injury, disability, or death.
8. The experiment should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons. The highest degree of skill and care should be required through all stages of the experiment of those who conduct or engage in the experiment.
9. During the course of the experiment the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if he has reached the physical or mental state where continuation of the experiment seems to him to be impossible.
10. During the course of the experiment the scientist in charge must be prepared to terminate the experiment at any stage if he has probable cause to believe, in the exercise of the good faith, superior skill, and careful judgment required of him that a continuation of the experiment is likely to result in injury, disability, or death to the experimental subject.

[The Nuremberg Code (1947) In: Mitscherlich A, Mielke F Doctors of infamy: the story of the Nazi medical crimes. New York: Schuman, 1949: xxiii-xxv.]

These guidelines became collectively known as the Nuremberg Code, and while they were used to acquit or convict the doctors on trial, they were never put into law.

*THE DECLARATION OF HELSINKI*

In June 1964, the World Medical Association developed The Declaration of Helsinki, another code of ethics controlling research done on human test subjects. Adapted from the Nuremberg Code, the guidelines were relatively similar, but relaxed some of the guidelines governing the patient's consent:

In any research on human beings, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, anticipated benefits and potential hazards of the study and the discomfort it may entail. He or she should be informed that he or she is at liberty to abstain from participation in the study and that he or she is free to withdraw his or her consent to participation at any time. The physician should then obtain the subject's freely given informed consent, preferably inheriting.

When obtaining informed consent for the research project the physician should be particularly cautious if the subject is in dependent relationship to him or her or may consent under duress. In that case the informed consent should be obtained by a physician who isn't engaged in the investigation and who is completely independent of this official relationship.

In case of legal incompetence, informed consent should be obtained from the legal guardian in accordance with national legislation. Where physical or mental incapacity makes it impossible to obtain informed consent, or when the subject is a minor, permission from the responsible relative replaces that of the subject in accordance with national legislation. Whenever the minor child is in fact able to give consent, the minor's consent must be obtained in addition to the consent of the minor's legal guardian.

[World Medical Organization. Declaration of Helsinki. British Medical Journal (7 December) 1996; 313(7070):1448-1449.]

*CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 45: PUBLIC WELFARE, VOLUME 46*

The United States government took the ideas presented in the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki, and passed legislation regulating experimentation on human test subjects. According to the code, all experiments conducted by members of a federal agency, or a group regulated in some way by a federal agency, must be approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The only forms of human research exempt from IRB approval are those that involve traditional education methods and tests; however, the subjects must remain completely anonymous.

Each Institutional Review Board comprises at least five members with different areas of expertise, but who are familiar with the laws and regulations governing research. Each board must contain both men and women, and the group must be culturally and racially diverse. At least one member must have a background in science, and one member must be from a non-scientific field of study. No member may have a conflict of interest with the study, nor may he or she have a friend or relative associated with the research institution. Furthermore, while individuals may be invited to give advice on topics unfamiliar to the board, the invitees may not vote with the board on whether to approve the project.

In order for a project involving human test subjects to be deemed ethical, it must meet several qualifications. First, the researchers must minimize the risk to the test subject, and, if possible, utilize procedures, tests, and treatments the subject is already undergoing. Next, the potential benefits to the participant and the community must either equal or outweigh the potential risks involved. Additionally, the researchers must be aware of special precautions that apply to people of certain populations (e.g., pregnant women, children, the mentally handicapped). Furthermore, the researchers must get documented informed consent, and they must prove that they will continually ensure the safety of the subjects.

In order to obtain consent, researchers must provide the participant with the following information:

- the complete procedure of the experiment
- the potential risks involved
- the expected duration of the procedure
- how the individual will be compensated or treated if an injury occurs
- who to contact with questions or concerns
- the understanding that the participant is allowed to discontinue his or her participation in the experiment without any consequence.

If children are to participate, the researchers must not only obtain consent from one of the child's legal guardians, but also from the child him- or herself. If the participant is mentally or physically incapable of assenting to the experiment, a family member or guardian may provide consent.



*FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON*

While these are the guidelines restricting and regulating research on human subjects (as of January 2010), readers may still wonder whether the experiment in the book is ethical. In fact, at several points in the novel, Keyes hints that society would not respond well to Charlie's alteration.

However, there are also other sections of the text that indicate Professor Nemur followed proper, ethical procedure when involving Charlie in the project. Several times, Professor Nemur details the process he had to follow to obtain informed consent.

## PLATO'S "ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE"

The novel opens with the following quotation from the philosopher Plato's treatise *The Republic*:

*Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.*

The passage is the conclusion of an allegory told to Glaucon, Plato's older brother, by the philosopher Socrates. We know it today as the "Allegory of the Cave."

In the allegory, men sit on the floor of a cave for their entire lives, restrained so that they cannot move or look around. Behind where they are sitting, there is a fire, in front of which pass puppets and objects. The people in the cave only see the images cast on the wall, and these shadows constitute their only knowledge of the real world. They do not know that what they see is only an illusion, and reality lies outside the cave.

One man, however is freed from his bonds. Initially, he is blinded by the light of the fire. Eventually, he finds his way out of the cave. After his eyes become acclimated to the sun, he realizes that what lies outside is the real world, and that he and his fellow prisoners have been deceived.

The allegory continues to tell that the former prisoner, who is now aware of Reality, wants to stay in the Real World, but he feels obligated to return to the cave to share what he has learned with the rest of his fellows. When he returns to the cave, his eyes have difficulty adjusting to the darkness. When the other prisoners see his impaired state and hear his strange stories about the world outside the cave, they think that he is insane. For this reason, they vow never to leave, and they threaten to kill anyone who does.

The passage that opens *Flowers for Algernon* also references Charlie's transformation in two ways:

When Charlie is mentally challenged, his perception of reality is distorted, much like the perceptions of the men in the cave. However, once he undergoes the operation and develops superior intelligence, he metaphorically leaves the cave and enters the real world. There, he is able to comprehend ideas and concepts that even the smartest individuals cannot understand. When he begins to regress and return to his initial level of intelligence, it is as though he is walking back into the cave. Because he returns to his previous state with his memories of what he experienced when he was intelligent, he is unable to return to his previous state of mind and be content.

The passage from Plato's *Republic* advises people not to judge those individuals who seem confused or weak. If the person has come out of darkness and gone into the light—dazzled, but blinded by the sun—people should feel happy for him or her. If the person has come out of the light and gone into the darkness—still unable to see through the shadows—he or she should be helped.

Similarly, people who are mentally challenged, and who appear weak and confused, should not be ridiculed. If they are happy and amazed by the world around them, people should find their astonishment endearing. If they cannot understand and appear to be depressed, people should sympathize with them.

## **Free Response (Essay Items)**

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1

Read Charlie's entry for May 25. Then, in a well-organized essay, explain what the two portraits symbolize and how each relates to Charlie's latent trauma and anxiety.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2

Read Charlie's July 14 entry. Then write a well-organized and –supported essay in which you analyze the various techniques Keyes uses to create the mood of this passage.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3

Read Charlie's July 27 entry. Then, write a well-organized essay in which you explain the techniques Keyes uses to increase the narrative pace of this section, using the text to support your answer. Then, explain the overall effect the pace change has on the text.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4

Throughout the course of a literary work, an author may establish symbols in order to better illustrate various ideas. In a well-organized essay, discuss the symbolic significance of the knife in *Flowers for Algernon*, tracing its development and evolution throughout the novel.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5

One common characteristic of science fiction literature is the exploration of themes involving the potential hazards of advancing technology and the ethical considerations involved in pursuing and implementing these advances. Write a well-reasoned and -supported essay in which you examine Daniel Keyes's *Flowers for Algernon* as a science fiction story of this type.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6

Many critics maintain that the character-driven novel or play is of higher literary quality than the plot-driven one. Write a well-reasoned and -supported essay in which you examine Daniel Keyes's *Flowers for Algernon* as a character-driven novel.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7

Novels written as a series of letters, documents, or diary or journal entries are called *epistolary novels*. As with every narrative form, there are advantages and disadvantages to limiting the point of view in this way. Write a well-organized and -supported essay in which you weigh the strengths and weaknesses of Daniel Keyes's use of the epistolary form in *Flowers for Algernon*.

## Practice Multiple Choice Items

### PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1-5

Read the journal entries for March 15 through March 30. Then, answer the following questions.

1. Over these entries, the author begins to develop
  - A. a parallel between Burt and Algernon.
  - B. Charlie's desire for human connection.
  - C. the character of Miss Kinnian.
  - D. Charlie's religious sensibility.
  - E. Charlie's understanding of his relationship with his mother.
2. In these entries, Charlie's grammar and punctuation
  - A. show more organization than his thoughts.
  - B. are tools he uses to express himself.
  - C. lag behind his growing awareness.
  - D. betray his attempts to deceive himself.
  - E. change as he goes back and forth in time.
3. The author primarily uses Charlie's first-person perspective in these entries to
  - A. examine ethical questions posed by Charlie's use in the experiment.
  - B. create a humorous portrait of an innocent man in a corrupt world.
  - C. examine the emotional state of Charlie at his moment of enlightenment.
  - D. convey the cruelty and hypocrisy of a supposedly civilized society.
  - E. reveal the falsehoods put forth by an unreliable narrator.
4. Which of the following is not used by Keyes to convey that Charlie is of below-average intelligence?
  - A. malapropisms
  - B. misspellings
  - C. sentence fragments
  - D. punctuation mistakes
  - E. polysyndeton
5. The allusion to *Robinson Crusoe* is intended to
  - A. reveal Charlie's desire to have friends.
  - B. foreshadow Charlie's emotional growth.
  - C. demonstrate the importance of literacy.
  - D. suggest the futility of the experiment.
  - E. emphasize Charlie's isolation and loneliness.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 6-10

Read the journal entry for April 21. Then, answer the following questions.

6. Charlie's tone in the opening paragraph is
  - A. resentful.
  - B. boastful.
  - C. ecstatic.
  - D. matter-of-fact.
  - E. optimistic.
7. Charlie notes that his two coworkers were unable to go out to lunch with him because of last-minute plans. In recording this detail, Charlie shows that he is beginning to see the
  - A. cruelty shown toward the mentally handicapped.
  - B. ethical problems posed by science.
  - C. pain that love can cause.
  - D. complexity of social interaction.
  - E. problems caused by society's deadlines.
8. Gimpy's attitude toward Charlie is primarily
  - A. friendly.
  - B. condescending.
  - C. abusive.
  - D. protective.
  - E. indifferent.
9. What is the primary reason why Charlie cannot make the rolls?
  - A. He does not understand what Gimpy is saying.
  - B. He lacks the motor skills to manipulate the dough.
  - C. He is afraid he will be hit if he fails.
  - D. He is focusing on insignificant details.
  - E. He is distracted by the pendant.
10. Keyes includes Charlie's attempt to read a comic book in order to
  - A. introduce a recurring symbol.
  - B. support an idea already established in the section.
  - C. develop a supporting character.
  - D. draw a connection between two forms of literature.
  - E. put the narrative in a historical context.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 11-15

Read the journal entry for May 20. Then, answer the following questions.

11. In this passage, the bakery represents
  - A. Hell.
  - B. Eden.
  - C. Earth.
  - D. Heaven.
  - E. childhood.
12. In this passage, knowledge is primarily presented as
  - A. dangerous.
  - B. elusive.
  - C. beneficial.
  - D. desirable.
  - E. useless.
13. The primary reason the other workers desire Charlie's departure is that
  - A. they are afraid of him.
  - B. there is not enough work.
  - C. he is still a moron.
  - D. they dislike his new ideas.
  - E. he makes them look stupid.
14. Fanny Birden's opposition to Charlie's transformation is founded on a/an
  - A. uninformed opinion.
  - B. religious belief.
  - C. concern for Charlie's reputation.
  - D. understanding of neuroscience.
  - E. fear of change.
15. At the end of this section, Charlie expresses feelings of
  - A. resignation.
  - B. sadness.
  - C. resentment.
  - D. annoyance.
  - E. jealousy.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 16-20

Read the journal entry for June 13. Then, answer the following questions.

16. The italicized lines beginning “*Laideezzz and gentulmennnnnn...*” illustrate the
  - A. former Charlie’s lack of personhood.
  - B. general stupidity of the scientists at the convention.
  - C. social anxiety Charlie has managed to repress.
  - D. spectacle Charlie fears will be made of him and Algernon.
  - E. impractical application of science and technology.
17. Charlie resents Nemur because Nemur
  - A. professes to be a great scientist.
  - B. treats Charlie as less than human.
  - C. speaks condescendingly about Algernon.
  - D. convinces Burt to hide some facts.
  - E. shows the film of him open-mouthed and confused.
18. The juxtaposition between Algernon and Charlie indicates
  - A. affinity
  - B. similitude
  - C. antagonism
  - D. variance
  - E. cooperation
19. What is the main theme of this passage?
  - A. Educated men have a greater value to society than the mentally challenged.
  - B. Intelligence is equally important to humans and animals.
  - C. Science can answer life’s most complicated questions.
  - D. The mentally challenged are just as human as intelligent men.
  - E. Experimentation using human test subjects is morally acceptable.
20. The revelation that Algernon’s performance had become variable at the peak of his intelligence exemplifies
  - A. dramatic irony.
  - B. foreshadowing.
  - C. anagnorisis.
  - D. climax.
  - E. catharsis.



## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 21-25

Read the journal entries from November 1 through November 21. Then, answer the following questions.

21. In the November 1 entry, the lack of apostrophes in Charlie's writing indicates that he has lost some of his intelligence. Another stylistic indicator of his regression is that he
  - A. cannot understand figurative speech.
  - B. misspells the word "remembered."
  - C. ceases to use end punctuation.
  - D. has difficulty understanding books.
  - E. starts to use third-person narration.
22. The window becomes a symbol representing Charlie's
  - A. isolation from other people.
  - B. rejection of society.
  - C. repressed guilt.
  - D. fear of women.
  - E. connection to his past.
23. The author references *Don Quixote* in order to indicate that Charlie is
  - A. losing his intelligence.
  - B. fighting an impossible battle.
  - C. unable to distinguish fiction from reality.
  - D. feeling sorry for himself.
  - E. unable to interpret figurative language.
24. The fact that Charlie says that he has no family or friends indicates that he
  - A. does not want anyone to visit him.
  - B. has forgotten his friends and family.
  - C. is embarrassed by his intellectual decline.
  - D. is angry with his friends and family.
  - E. wants to keep secrets from the doctor.
25. The last paragraph of the November 11 entry is most likely intended to
  - A. evoke sympathy for Charlie.
  - B. develop the relationship between Charlie and Mrs. Mooney.
  - C. satirize discrimination against the mentally challenged.
  - D. readdress a theme of the novel.
  - E. reveal a positive attribute Charlie possesses.

### Answers with Explanations

1. The author sets up a parallel between Algernon and Charlie, not Burt (A). Charlie begins to sympathize with Algernon; he decides to be friends with the mouse. Charlie talks about Miss Kinnian, but we do not learn about who she is (C) in these entries. Charlie talks about God (D) in the March 16 entry, but not in most of the other entries. He begins to mention his mother and father (E), but they are not the primary focus of the entries. **Charlie starts feeling a desire to see his family. He reads about Robinson Crusoe and feels sorry for the main character. Both these things show that Charlie is beginning to understand how alone he is and to crave a connection with someone, so (B) is the correct answer.**
2. Answer (B) is incorrect because Charlie is not yet able to use language deliberately enough to express himself. Similarly, (D) is not correct because Charlie is still very honest; he is not trying to deceive himself or anyone (we can tell because he says things that are not necessarily socially acceptable). Charlie's language is definitely not more organized than his thoughts (A), and it remains the same during his memories and flashbacks, so (E) is not correct. **The correct answer is (C); although Charlie begins to recognize that he is thinking and becoming aware, his language is the language of the old Charlie.**
3. The novel does address ethical issues involved in experimentation (A), but these issues are not addressed in this passage. Charlie is an innocent man in a corrupt world (B), but most of the stories he tells are not humorous. The first-person narrative does deliver Charlie's emotions (C), but there is no one moment of enlightenment in these passages. Nothing that Charlie says is proven false (E); he just does not understand all of what has happened to him. **The correct answer is (D). Charlie relates stories like the one about his "friends" at the bakery, not understanding the true meaning of what happened. His stories reveal that most people around him are cruel (like the men at the bakery) or lazy (like his uncle). Charlie does not pass judgments; he takes people as they are, and reports on their literal doings.**
4. Malapropisms (A) are used in Charlie's writing to show that he has some confusion concerning language. For example, he uses the word "amazes" to mean "mazes." Keyes also uses misspellings (B) and punctuation mistakes (D) in much the same way. Polysyndeton (E) is used to show that Charlie does not have a sophisticated grasp of written language; his writing is childlike in its simplicity. Because the reader knows that Charlie is thirty-two years old, this should convey the fact that Charlie is less intelligent than other people of similar age. **Sentence fragments (C) are not used; Charlie does begin some sentences with coordinating conjunctions, but these sentences are complete. For all his difficulty with language, Charlie seems to have a decent grasp of grammar.**

5. The allusion is likely being used to draw a parallel between Crusoe and Charlie and their common experiences. Because Crusoe does not desire to have friends, (A) is not correct, and because the passage does not address emotional growth, (B) cannot be correct either. This question asks the reader to explain the significance of the *Robinson Crusoe* allusion, not the significance of literature in general; therefore, (C) is an incorrect answer because the statement is too general. Furthermore, since Crusoe does eventually escape from the island, the allusion does not show (D) the futility of the experiment. **The correct answer is (E). Just as Crusoe was physically isolated on an island, Charlie's mental disability isolates him from people of normal intelligence.**
6. In this passage, Charlie does not express indignation about a person or event, so resentful (A) is not a correct answer. Because he only reports facts, without complimenting himself or praising what he has done, boastful (B) is incorrect. He does not seem excited about his good news, eliminating ecstatic (C). Because he does not express hope about the future, optimistic (E) is also incorrect. **Charlie recounts what he has done at the bakery, conveying no emotional response to the action, therefore, matter-of-fact (D) is the correct answer.**
7. Over the entire entry, Charlie realizes people were cruel toward him because he was mentally handicapped (A), but the detail about Joe and Frank does not reveal such a realization. Charlie's new personality, along with the problems it causes him socially, is the result of a scientific experiment (B), but science is not his direct subject here. Love (C) is not mentioned. Since Charlie knows that last-minute plans are excuses, (E), the literal interpretation of the men's words, is not right. **Charlie understands that Joe and Frank made up excuses to avoid having lunch with him. He sees that people can say one thing, but mean another: he is beginning to grasp the complexity of social interaction (D).**
8. Gimpy is not necessarily friendly (A) toward Charlie, for he always keeps Charlie distant and never attempts to form a connection with him. Though Gimpy is more intelligent than Charlie, he is not condescending (B); he treats Charlie with respect. Gimpy does not try to harm Charlie, either verbally or physically, so abusive (C) is an incorrect answer. He is not entirely indifferent (E), because he does defend Charlie against the other coworkers. **Gimpy is protective (D) toward Charlie, for Gimpy attempts to protect Charlie from Frank.**

9. Charlie understands what Gimpy is saying, so (A) is not right. Charlie has the motor skills to manipulate the dough as long as he is imitating someone else, so (B) is not true. He also fears that he will be hit, but he gets over this anxiety quickly, so (C) is incorrect. Even though he knows the pendant is on the table, Charlie is not (E) distracted by it. **Charlie cannot figure out how to make the rolls because he is focusing on insignificant details (D).** For instance, rather than focusing on what shape the dough is taking, he tries to hold his elbows off to the side the way Gimpy does and hold his hands like Gimpy.
10. Even though Charlie has read the comic book numerous times and has learned the names of the characters, the words on the page are still unfamiliar to him. The comic book is not a recurring symbol (A), and the passage does nothing to develop a supporting character (C). The passage also does not draw a connection between two forms of literature (D); the comic book is mentioned to reinforce the fact that Charlie has trouble learning. Even though the mention of comic books puts the narrative in a historical context (E), it has a greater purpose. **The main idea in this passage is that Charlie has difficulty learning, and other members of society ridicule him for it. This idea is emphasized when Gimpy tries to teach Charlie how to make rolls, and the passage about the comic book supports this idea (B).**
11. The bakery is not a place of punishment (A). Charlie could be said to be moving upward intellectually, the same way people move from earth (C) to heaven (D), but the pain he experiences eliminates this metaphor (and either of its constituent parts) as the correct choice. Charlie's hard realization about his old life is like a child's awakening to knowledge (E), **but the imagery in the entry makes (B) a better choice. Charlie is forced to leave the bakery, a place that feels like home to him, because of his newfound knowledge. The bakery has white walls—white is traditionally a color of purity and innocence. Also, one of the other employees cautions him that it was knowledge that forced Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. All of these details make Eden (B) the best answer.**
12. The passage does not dwell on how difficult knowledge is to find (B), but rather on what harm it might bring. From Charlie's new isolation and others' warnings, knowledge neither seems beneficial (C) nor desirable (D). Fanny's objection is not that knowledge has no use (E), but that too much knowledge is unnatural. **Charlie finds that his new intelligence and desire for knowledge alienate him from people at the bakery. Fanny Birden tells Charlie that trying to acquire more intelligence than God gives is dangerous. (A) is therefore the best answer.**

13. Even though Mr. Donner tells Charlie that his coworkers are afraid of him (A), this is not the real reason behind their dislike of Charlie. This passage does not indicate that there was not enough work in the bakery (B), eliminating competition for work between employees as a reason for Charlie's being fired from the bakery. Similarly, the passage indicates that Charlie has become smarter over the past few weeks, so (C) is not correct. The passage does not indicate that the other workers dislike Charlie's ideas (D); instead, they dislike the change in Charlie which these ideas represent. **The primary reason why the other workers desire Charlie's departure is that he makes them look stupid (E). Frank, Gimp, and Joe enjoyed making fun of Charlie for his low intelligence, and now that Charlie is unintentionally making them feel inferior, they want him to leave.**
14. Although Fanny does not know about Charlie's operation, she has a justifiable reason for opposing Charlie's transformation, eliminating (A). Fanny does have a concern for Charlie, but it is for his well-being and not specifically his reputation (C). That Fanny has an understanding of neuroscience (D) is very unlikely. The text never reveals that Fanny has a general fear of change (E). **Fanny Birken opposes Charlie's transformation because of a religious belief (B), specifically, an underlying moral in the Book of Genesis. Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge and gained an understanding they were never intended to have. As a result, they were cast out of the Garden of Eden, and Fanny fears that Charlie, too, will be punished for gaining unnatural intelligence.**
15. Because Charlie has had such a strong emotional response to the events, it is clear that he is opposing what has happened, instead of accepting that he has been fired. Resignation (A) is an incorrect answer. Charlie does not express sadness (B) in this section; instead, he rails against his former co-workers' attitudes. Annoyance (D) is an incorrect answer, for it implies that Charlie is not as upset about being fired as he really is. Because he seems angry at, not jealous of, his co-workers, (E) can be eliminated. **Charlie expresses feelings of resentment (C) toward his former co-workers. He openly wonders why they have turned against him, and he believes that there is nothing he can do to win their respect.**
16. Even though comparing Charlie to a person in a freak show implies that he will be objectified and considered less than human, (A) is not the best answer. Because people of various intelligence levels attend freak shows, the metaphor does not comment on the general stupidity of the scientists at the convention (B). Furthermore, the passage does not indicate that Charlie has social anxiety that he has managed to repress (C), nor does it make a statement about the impractical application of science and technology (E). **In this passage, Charlie creates a metaphor comparing Nemur's presentation of Charlie and Algernon to a freak show. Charlie imagines the chairman as an announcer who is trying to attract interest in a show that displays a mouse and a human who had been turned into geniuses. The comparison illustrates that Charlie thinks the presentation will (D) make a spectacle of him and Algernon, something the other scientists can gawk at and ridicule.**

17. Previously, Charlie did resent Nemur for professing to be a great scientist (A) but only having expertise in one area; however, that is not the source of Charlie's resentment in this section. Nemur does not speak condescendingly about Algernon (C), eliminating this option as the correct answer, and even though Burt did conceal information from Charlie about Algernon's occasional erratic behavior, the text does not explicitly state that Nemur convinced Burt to keep the information a secret (D). Additionally, even though Charlie is embarrassed by the film footage of him before the experiment, (E) is an incorrect answer, for Charlie's resentment toward Nemur goes even deeper. **The correct answer is (B). Charlie despises Nemur for acting as though Charlie became a person as a result of the experiment. The implication is that Nemur believes that Charlie was something less than human before his surgery.**
18. Although there is an affinity (A) between Algernon and Charlie, it is not alluded to in this passage. There is no antagonism (C) between Charlie and Algernon. Professor Nemur would not imply variance (D) between Charlie and Algernon in the juxtaposition because the difference is not great enough to note, and furthermore, emphasizing variance would undermine Nemur's hypothesis. Although Charlie and Algernon are participants in the same experiment, they do not cooperate (E) with each other. **Algernon and Charlie both underwent the same operation and, with some slight variation, they demonstrate the same results; therefore, the juxtaposition of Algernon and Charlie indicates similitude (B) between the two characters. The similarities between their transformations support Nemur and Strauss's argument that an experiment of this type increases intelligence.**
19. Nemur implies (A) when he speaks to the convention, but Charlie vehemently opposes this idea. Much of this passage is devoted to the idea that Charlie was a human being before the experiment, so (A) is not correct. Even though intelligence is important to human beings, the text does not indicate that it is important to animals as well, eliminating (B) as a correct answer. (C) is too broad a generalization to be the correct answer, and Keyes does not make a value judgment about human experimentation, eliminating (E). **Charlie opposes Professor Nemur's statement that Charlie gained personhood after the experiment. This opposition is voiced several times throughout the passage, making (D) the clear answer.**



20. Dramatic irony (A) refers to knowledge that the audience possesses but that at least one of the characters of the work in question does not. Neither Charlie nor the reader possesses this knowledge before Burt reveals it, so this is not an example of dramatic irony. Anagnorisis (C) is tempting, but the revelation is not exactly enlightening for Charlie; he notes that he “suspect[s] the reason” that the information was withheld. This information will lead to Charlie’s discovery of the truth of his situation, but that discovery does not occur here. The revelation is not the climax (D) of this section. The climax occurs when Charlie releases Algernon from his cage. There is no catharsis (E) resulting from this revelation; in fact, the revelation adds to the emotional tension of the scene. **Because Charlie and Algernon are so closely linked throughout this section, the reader should infer that Charlie will soon begin to display erratic behavior. This makes foreshadowing (B) the best answer.**
21. Answer (A) is made evident by the fact that he cannot understand the symbolism of *Don Quixote*, but this a contextual indicator of Charlie’s decline instead of a stylistic one. Charlie does not stop using end punctuation (C). Answer (D) is incorrect for the same reason as answer (A). Charlie does not use third-person narration (E). **The correct answer is (B). By having Charlie misspell the word, Keyes is attempting to show that Charlie’s writing is reverting back to what it was before the operation.**
22. Although Charlie has rejected society (B), observing the world through the window acts as a substitute for real, personal interaction. Charlie no longer has repressed guilt (C) or a fear of women (D), and even though the window had once allowed Charlie to connect with his past (E), the symbol has taken on a different meaning since Charlie’s regression. **The window represents Charlie’s (A) isolation from other people. Since his change, Charlie has remained alone in his apartment, allowing no one but Mrs. Mooney to visit him. The only way he connects with other people is by viewing them through the window.**
23. The fact that Charlie is losing his intelligence (A) is made clear largely through stylistic changes in Charlie’s writing. The reference to *Don Quixote* reinforces the idea that he is losing his intelligence, but this is not the primary reason that it is included. Charlie, unlike the titular Quixote, seems perfectly able to distinguish fiction from reality (C). Like Quixote, it seems that whatever Charlie does results in his “getting beaten and hurt.” People made fun of him when he was unintelligent, and they resented him when he was a genius. However, Charlie is unwilling to feel sorry for himself (D), as evidenced by the fact that he will continue to work toward keeping his intelligence even though this is a futile course of action. He is too proud to wallow in self-pity. Though the passage does indicate that Charlie is now unable to interpret complex texts (E), this is directly related to his loss of intelligence. **The author most likely includes the reference to *Don Quixote* in order to draw some parallel between Quixote and Charlie. Because the episode Charlie references is the famous “tilting at windmills” quest, the reader should understand that the parallel being drawn is directly related to this episode. Just like Quixote is fighting a battle he cannot win (because his enemies are imaginary), Charlie’s quest to maintain his intelligence through study will be futile. The best answer is (B).**

24. While Charlie does not want Alice or the researchers to visit him, because (A) is such a general statement, it cannot be correct. After all, he allows Mrs. Mooney and the new doctor to visit him. It does not appear that Charlie has forgotten his friends and family (B), especially since he remembers Fay and tries to visit her. Charlie does not appear to be angry with his friends and family (D); although he tells Alice that he does not “like her any more,” we learn that this is untrue and that he only says this because he does not want her to laugh at him. There is no evidence in the text that Charlie (E) wants to keep secrets from the doctor. **Charlie denies having family and friends because he is embarrassed by his intellectual decline (C).** He does not want to go back to the bakery because he is afraid that the workers will laugh at him. He does not want to see Alice because he is afraid that she will laugh at him. Charlie claims not to have friends or relatives in order to avoid potentially embarrassing situations such as these.
25. Although the last paragraph could evoke sympathy for Charlie (A) either by suggesting that his co-workers at the bakery will laugh at him or by showing how Charlie will never lead a normal life again, by the end of the last paragraph, the greater intent has been revealed. Even though Mrs. Mooney’s comments have inspired Charlie to find work, the last paragraph does not develop the relationship between Charlie and Mrs. Mooney (B). Furthermore, it does not satirize discrimination against the mentally challenged by exposing society’s faults and mocking them (C), nor does it readdress a theme of the novel (D). **The last paragraph is intended to reveal a positive attribute Charlie possesses (E), in particular, his determination.** Even though he fears ridicule and harassment, Charlie is determined to work and make money instead of relying on the charity of other people.



# Flowers for Algernon

## progris riport 1 martch 3

1. What is immediately noticeable about the form and structure of this novel?

*The novel is written as a series of journal or diary entries (first person point of view). The spelling and grammar indicate the writer is very young, uneducated, or unintelligent.*

2. Who is Charlie Gordon?

*Charlie Gordon is a thirty-two-year-old man who is mentally challenged. He attends the Beekman College Center for Retarded Adults and works for \$11.00 a week at Donner's Bakery. He is also the writer of the journal and, thus, the narrator of this novel.*

3. Judging by this first entry, what is Charlie's personality like? What seems to be the main focus of his life?

*Charlie is a simple, goodhearted man. He knows his age, his weekly salary, and the name of his school, and he sticks to these basic facts. One of his benefits at the bakery is free bread and cake.*

4. For what purpose does the doctor need Charlie?

*The doctor needs a mentally challenged adult for an experiment.*

5. Why does Charlie hope that Dr. Strauss will use him?

*Charlie hopes the doctor will use him because he thinks Dr. Strauss will make him smart.*

6. Why does a "journal" work as the form for this story?

*The journal serves as the vehicle to convey Charlie's education and maturity levels, and it also allows the reader to view the story's events from Charlie's point of view.*

## progris riport 2-martch 4

1. What does Charlie's nervousness about Burt's white coat suggest about his character?

*Charlie's nervousness about Burt's white coat and his association of the coat with doctors, dentists, and pain reveals the immaturity and simplicity of his thinking.*

2. How does Charlie's initial reactions to the inkblot cards contribute to his character development?

*Like Burt's white coat, the inkblots bring up negative associations from Charlie's childhood, ink he spilled in school and the tests he failed in school. Again, these associations emphasize the simplicity and immaturity of Charlie's thought processes.*

3. What is significant about Charlie's refusal to make up anything about the inkblots?

*Charlie does not want to pretend he sees something in the inkblots because that would be dishonest. Keyes is establishing the truthful aspect of Charlie's childlike character. Keyes might also be suggesting that Charlie is too unintelligent to be any more than a literal thinker. He does not recognize abstract concepts, only the literal inkblots.*

4. What is the Rorschach test?

*The Rorschach test is a personality test. The test-taker studies inkblots. His responses are supposed to reveal significant information about him.*

5. How does Keyes convey Burt's frustration?

*Keyes conveys Burt's frustration by having him break his pencil point and walk out of the room.*

### **3d progris riport**

1. Why does Miss Kinnian consider Charlie her best student? What does this tell us about him?

*Charlie wants to learn even more than classmates who are smarter than he is. He has a strong desire to know about things, including himself; he wants to be a fully realized human being.*

2. What do we learn about Charlie's family in this entry? What do the facts suggest?

*Charlie's mother had a strong desire for Charlie to be intelligent. Charlie has not seen any of his family for a long time. From these pieces of information, we can infer that his family rejected Charlie.*

3. What seems to be the key aspect of Charlie's disability that prevents him from learning?

*Charlie has difficulty remembering. He tends to forget whatever he learns in Miss Kinnian's class, and he does not even remember how he found the Beekman School.*

4. What complication to the plot does Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur's need for consent introduce?

*It has already been established that Charlie is estranged from his family, so it might be difficult—even impossible—for the scientists to obtain the consent they need.*

5. What does the author reveal to the reader when Charlie writes "Gimpy hollers at me all the time when I do something rong, but he reely likes me because hes my frend."

*This statement reveals that Charlie is not only naïve, but emotionally immature.*

### progris riport 4

1. What is the Thematic Apperception Test?

*The Thematic Apperception Test is a test that requires the test-taker to look at pictures and make up stories about the people in them. Like the Rorschach test, this assessment is used to reveal repressed aspects of Charlie's personality, demonstrate his problem-solving abilities, and expose his motive or need for achievement.*

2. How does the Thematic Apperception Test mirror the earlier Rorschach Test?

*Just as Charlie was not able to "make up" images he did not literally "see" in the ink blots, Charlie says that he cannot tell stories about people he does not know because that would require him to lie. He remembers that he used to be hit when he lied, and now, wants to avoid potential punishment by always telling the truth. Keyes is also, once again, showing the reader that Charlie is a literal thinker and unimaginative. He cannot tell stories about people he does not know.*

3. What does the misuse of words such as "spearamints" and "amazed" contribute to the text?

*The misuse of words adds humor, but also some pathos. The language reveals that Charlie has a low level of understanding and awareness, and because of this, he is over-optimistic about the experiment and ignorant of the potential consequences. The reader, who has a better conception of Charlie's situation, pities him for his inability to understand.*

4. What tests does Charlie face in the Psychology Laboratory?

*Charlie works with some games and puzzles. One of the puzzles is a maze, but Charlie does not understand what Burt wants him to do with it.*

5. What does Charlie's first meeting with Algernon emphasize? What does it contribute to the story?

*Charlie's meeting Algernon emphasizes the extent of Charlie's limitations. It also contributes additional pathos, as Charlie himself realizes these limitations.*

### **progris riport 5 mar 6**

1. How does Keyes make Nemur a sympathetic figure in this entry?

*Unlike Strauss and Burt, Nemur is hesitant to do the experiment on Charlie because the ultimate outcome is unclear. He tries hard to tell Charlie everything he knows, both advantageous and potentially dangerous, about the procedure.*

2. What possibility is foreshadowed in this entry?

*Nemur tells Charlie that the operation could fail: Charlie may be worse off than he is now.*

3. Why is Charlie unafraid of what will happen to him?

*Charlie associates past negative occurrences with his own "bad" behavior. He thinks that if he is "good" and avoids bad luck, nothing bad can happen to him. He cannot conceive of the complicated problems that lie ahead of him.*

### **progris riport 6th Mar 8**

1. Where is the pathos in Charlie's explanation of his motivation?

*The reader already knows that Charlie is estranged from his family and that one of the probable reasons for this estrangement is the family's disappointment in Charlie's mental limitations. That Charlie wants his family's approval in addition to his own self-satisfaction adds a level of human sympathy to his character.*

2. What does Charlie tell the people at Donner's Bakery? Why?

*Charlie tells them that he is sick. He has been instructed to keep the operation a secret until it is apparent whether it will work.*

3. What do the lucky penny, rabbit's foot, and horseshoe represent?

*The lucky rabbit's foot, coin, and horseshoe are good luck symbols, and they represent superstition and Charlie's diminished mental capacity. Such tokens of superstition are a stark contrast to the intellect and reason represented by the scientists.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 7 MARCH 11**

1. Why are “Progress Report” and “March” spelled correctly at the beginning of this entry?

*The nurse notices Charlie’s misspellings and shows him how to spell the words correctly.*

2. What is Charlie’s reaction to being scared?

*Charlie is afraid he will “make” all over, but instead, he just wets a little. He then thinks he is going to cry, but before he can, he is given the anesthesia. He remarks that it smells funny, and after he listens to Dr. Strauss talk for a few moments, he breathes deeply and falls asleep.*

3. How is Charlie’s progress conveyed in this section?

*Charlie corrects his own writing by crossing out the word “progris” and rewriting “progress reports.” A second time in the same paragraph, Charlie crosses out the misspelled word “riports” and spells it correctly.*

4. What is further suggested about Charlie’s desire to be smarter? What does this contribute to the emotional impact of the novel?

*Charlie is lonely. He believes that if he were smarter he could make a friend and have someone to talk to—and something to talk about. The reader’s empathy for Charlie is further enhanced.*

5. What is significant about Professor Nemur’s suggestion that Charlie write his journal?

*The suggestion that Charlie use his journal to document his progress suggests the reason for the novel’s being written.*

**March 12 – 13**

1. What does Charlie’s response to Hilda’s remark about tea in China reveal about him?

*Although Charlie has undergone the operation, he is only gradually becoming smarter. The fact that he takes the cliché literally reveals that he is not yet at the mental capacity to understand figurative speech, and as such, is still below normal intelligence.*

2. How does Hilda’s opposition to the experiment introduce the ethical considerations that are often explored in science fiction?

*Hilda believes that God intended Charlie to have a lower intelligence, and Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss had no right to interfere and make Charlie smarter. Thus, she introduces the essential consideration of whether or not humans have the “right” to “meddle with Nature.”*

3. What does the allusion to Adam and Eve contribute?

*The allusion to Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge raises the issue of sin and challenges the reader to consider whether tampering with human lives is ethical. Additionally, since Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge and were cast out of the Garden of Eden, the allusion may foreshadow that Charlie's newly acquired intelligence will be detrimental to him, either exposing him to vice and corruption or destroying his happy ignorance and driving him into depression.*

4. Why is Hilda moved from Charlie's section of the hospital?

*Hilda is moved because she disagrees with the experiments going on and is not afraid to voice her opinion. Since Charlie wrote about their conversation in his journal, they knew what she said and took action so she would not upset Charlie again.*

5. Contrast Miss Kinnian's relationship with Charlie with his mother's. Why are the differences significant?

*Miss Kinnian encourages Charlie, reminding him that she has faith in him. His mother, on the other hand, sent him away years ago because he was not smart enough and embarrassed her. Miss Kinnian's attitude will foster Charlie's developing sense of self-respect; his mother's, of course, will not.*

## Progress report 8

### March 15 - 16

1. What is ironic about the fact that Charlie records a lack of progress? What is Keyes's point in establishing this irony?

*The quality of Charlie's journal entries allows the reader to realize Charlie's obvious progress. The disparity emphasizes that Charlie cannot really be an objective and reliable reporter of his progress.*

2. What does Charlie's stated animosity toward Algernon contribute to both character and emotional impact?

*Charlie's humiliation at continually being beaten by the mouse intensifies the reader's sympathy for him. It also emphasizes that Charlie is still frustrated by what he perceives to be a lack of progress.*

3. What can be inferred from Charlie's observations of the college students, and Burt's remark, about the students' claims to intelligence?

*The students' intelligence is only superficial. They know enough about art, politics, and religion to discuss the subjects with their colleagues and suggest that they are very smart; however, Burt knows that their knowledge in those subjects is not very deep or extensive.*

4. Why does Burt take Charlie to the school cafeteria?

*While it is possible that Burt takes Charlie to the cafeteria simply for lunch, it could also be part of the study. By interacting with the college students, Burt may see any social progress made by Charlie.*

5. Who is financing the Algernon/Charlie project?

*The Welberg Foundation is financing the project.*

### **March 17 - 21**

1. Charlie notes, "I never new before that I was dumber than a mouse." What does Keyes reveal here?

*This is one of the first times that Charlie has compared a current observation with a previous one, indicating that his ability to remember has increased. It is also Charlie's first real observation and evaluation of his own thought process.*

2. How has Charlie's relationship with Algernon changed? How does Keyes indicate the developing relationship?

*Now that Charlie realizes that Algernon is not a regular mouse, he feels vindicated. Somehow, Algernon does not seem so threatening. Keyes gives the idea that there is a connection developing between Algernon and Charlie by the comparison "we both had the same kind of operashun."*

3. How might the change in Charlie's tone be indicative of his increased intelligence?

*Charlie's tone begins to evolve from optimistic to frustrated and annoyed. While he never used to question what Professor Nemur, Dr. Strauss, Burt, and Miss Kinnian told him about the operation, he is starting to form his own opinions and oppose what they want him to do. He thinks the operation was a failure, and he does not want to keep writing the "dumb reports."*

*Additionally, he does not understand why the research team is paying him to write and complete tests, but since they are paying him, he will do it. It appears as though Charlie is finally starting to value money.*

4. What are some indications of Charlie's progress in this section?

*To begin, every word in the first sentence of Charlie's journal entry is spelled correctly. Second, when the bakery workers tease Ernie for losing a birthday cake and say, "For God sake, you trying to be a Charlie Gordon," Charlie understands the comparison and thinks, "I never lost any packages."*

*Furthermore, Charlie is speaking more than usual, and he is more observant of the things other people say and do. Finally, Charlie shows an interest in becoming an apprentice baker, which reveals a desire to improve his standing both at the bakery and, by extension, in society.*

5. What is Keyes's point in having Charlie note that the other employees "do not like Ernie"?

*Charlie's observation is ironic because he does not yet realize that the other workers are actually being cruel to him by making him the butt of their jokes. His mistaken assumption that they do not like Ernie increases the pathos.*

### **March 24 – 27**

1. Professor Nemur is frustrated by Charlie's questions about the TV, but Dr. Strauss seems encouraged. Why?

*Dr. Strauss recognizes the questioning as a challenge to Professor Nemur's authority. This challenge to authority indicates that Charlie is becoming smarter and is attempting to form and assert his own opinions. Furthermore, Charlie is becoming more inquisitive, and he wants to understand how the TV works and what it is supposed to do.*

2. What does Professor Nemur say the TV is intended to do?

*The TV is intended to teach things to Charlie in his sleep, make him dream, and allow him to remember events from his childhood.*

3. What does Charlie think about his first night with the TV?

*Charlie dislikes the TV because it prevents him from sleeping. It shows "nutty pictures" and yells "crazy things" that he does not understand even when he is awake.*

4. What new insight does Charlie gain that he did not have before?

*Charlie has figured out that the laboratory is not a hospital for animals, but is used for science.*



5. What is the significance of Charlie's first memory—to the plot? To the reader's understanding of Charlie's character?

*Charlie's first memory, finding out about the adult center that teaches mentally challenged people to read, provides important exposition since it was at this center that he was chosen for the experiment. It also reflects Charlie's aspiration. The first thing he remembers is how he found a way to learn and improve himself.*

6. In what way does the phrase, "They are all good friends to me" evoke sympathy for Charlie?

*In the two paragraphs prior to this statement, Charlie retells a story about how Joe Carp and Frank laughed at him for wanting to read. They thought that, since he was born mentally challenged, he would not be able to learn. While Charlie thinks that their jokes about his lack of intelligence are friendly, the reader knows that Charlie's co-workers are insulting him. The disparity between Charlie's incorrect interpretation of events and the correct interpretation should make the reader feel sorry for Charlie.*

7. How is the flashback an effective literary technique?

*The flashbacks not only inform the reader of Charlie's background, developing him into a more complex character, but they reveal that Charlie is becoming more intelligent and, as a result, can remember more about his past.*

8. For what reasons would Professor Nemur suggest that Charlie attend therapy once he starts remembering his past through his dreams? What aspect of Charlie's development does therapy represent?

*There are two primary reasons for Professor Nemur's wanting Charlie to attend therapy. First, when Charlie dreams about his past, some of the memories could remain in his subconscious. Therapy would bring these latent recollections to Charlie's consciousness.*

*Second, Professor Nemur may have guessed that Charlie's childhood was unpleasant. Now that Charlie is able to understand human reason and motivation better, the memories could be traumatizing, and therapy will help Charlie process these newfound emotions.*

*Up until this point, Charlie's development has all been intellectual. Now, there is attention being paid to his psychological and emotional sides. These aspects of his personality are important for his development as a fully realized human being.*

**March 28 - 31**

1. Why does the author have Charlie look up the word “subconscious”? What is the significance of this particular word?

*Using the dictionary to look up a word demonstrates Charlie’s growing intellectual capacity. Not only is Charlie developing curiosity, he is also developing problem-solving skills and beginning to function independently.*

*This particular word is significant because, up until now, Charlie has had virtually no subconscious—no memory, no figurative thoughts. Now, as he is developing intellectually, he is also beginning to develop, or realize, his subconscious mind.*

2. What victory does Charlie achieve? Why is this significant to the plot? To Charlie’s character development?

*Charlie is finally able to beat Algernon at the maze. This action is significant to the plot because it shows the extent of Charlie’s progress so far and suggests how successful the operation might actually be. It is significant to Charlie’s character development because it bothered him when he realized that he was not as smart as a mouse, and now he has the beginnings of self-esteem.*

3. What does Charlie’s response to his victory suggest about his character?

*While Charlie is very excited to have beaten Algernon, when he learns that Algernon will not get a treat because he did not win, he is a little sad. Charlie is still compassionate.*

4. How have Charlie’s feelings toward Algernon changed?

*Charlie decides that Algernon is a nice mouse. He holds him and desires to make friends with him.*

5. How does Charlie’s relationship with Algernon mirror what he begins to remember about his family’s dynamic?

*Just as Charlie first resents the mouse for always beating him at the maze, but then he feels compassion when he finally beats the mouse and the mouse does not get a treat, Charlie remembers having been abused by his sister but feeling saddened when she was punished for the abuse.*

6. What does Charlie’s evaluation of Robinson Crusoe reveal about his values? Why would he empathize with Crusoe?

*Charlie feels sorry for Robinson Crusoe because he is companionless on an island. Charlie’s sympathy for Crusoe reveals that Charlie values friends and social interaction very highly. He is able to empathize with Crusoe so strongly because he understands loneliness.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 9****April 1 - 4**

1. Explain the irony of the episode concerning the mixing machine.

*The irony is that on April Fools Day Charlie's friends, who intended to play a joke on him, are the ones who are fooled. Not only does Charlie operate the complex machine, but he is better at it than the man who works the machine as his job.*

2. What does Charlie's response to Joe's telling him to "go jump in a lake" reveal about Charlie's intelligence?

*While, previously, Charlie would not have understood the figure of speech and would have interpreted the comment as a literal command for him to jump in a lake, Charlie now understands that the comment is equivalent to "Shut up!" or "Go away!" and Joe is merely expressing his anger. Even though Charlie sees no improvement in his intellect, the text reveals that he is, indeed, growing in intelligence.*

3. How has the structure of Charlie's writing changed by this time?

*Charlie's sentences are more grammatically correct, there are fewer spelling errors, and his paragraphs are well developed and constructed.*

4. Why does Charlie continue to defend his "friends"? What does Miss Kinnian's response suggest?

*Charlie is naïve; he has not matured emotionally, even though he has significantly improved in other areas. Miss Kinnian tries to explain to Charlie that not all his "friends" are as nice as he thinks they are. Her response suggests that she might be developing an emotional attachment to Charlie and is hurt by his naivete.*

5. What is the author establishing by comparing Miss Kinnian to Charlie's mother?

*The author is establishing the fact that Charlie's earliest memories of his mother—those events that occurred before his sister's birth—are pleasant. Miss Kinnian and Charlie's mother were both nice ladies, and they both had a part in Charlie's moral instruction. The comparison also reveals that, at one point in time, Charlie's mother was accepting of his disability and wanted to help him.*

6. What assessment can be made about Charlie's mother?

*Charlie's mother cared for Charlie, but only before she gave birth to Charlie's sister. From that point on, it seems Norma was favored, and Mrs. Gordon felt as though she had to defend Norma from Charlie, even if it meant hurting him.*

### April 6 – 14

1. What do the events at the party reveal about Charlie's awareness?

*Charlie is beginning to understand that his supposed friends are ridiculing him for their own entertainment. Even though Charlie asks for a non-alcoholic drink, Joe puts liquor in Charlie's cola. Additionally, when Joe tells Ellen to dance with Charlie, Charlie does not understand that people are trying to trip him (although he realizes it as he is retelling the story in his diary). He is also upset that they try to get him to eat wax fruit. Charlie once believed that their laughter meant that they were having a good time, and that he was partaking in the fun with them. He starts to understand that his co-workers are being cruel.*

2. What memory does the comment about Halloran's trigger?

*As Charlie lies on the floor looking up at the blurry faces, the comment about Halloran's triggers a childhood memory. The other kids invited him to play hide-and-go-seek with them. As he counted, they all went away and left him playing by himself.*

3. How does Keyes allow the reader to see Charlie's emotional growth, as well as his intellectual development?

*Charlie finally realizes that his friends have been making fun of him. He blushes at this realization and is very embarrassed. He understands for the first time that he is being laughed at, just as he was being laughed at on the playground. He is ashamed at how naive he has been, believing that these people were "friends."*

4. Why does Charlie feel empty inside? How does he deal with the feeling?

*Earlier, Charlie began to become aware of the loneliness in his life. Now, he feels even lonelier, knowing that the people he once believed were his friends were not. He is so saddened and ashamed that he does not report to work for probably the first time in his life. This action compounds his negative feelings by adding a guilty conscience.*

5. Interpret the simile that Charlie uses to describe his memories returning.

*The simile compares Charlie's memory with a big hole opening up. It is as if a window to the past has been opened, and Charlie can now access the information in his subconscious that has always been stored there, but was irretrievable.*

6. How does the author use this entry to arouse pathos in the reader?

*The Christmas memory affects the reader on an emotional level. Looking at the toys and desiring to have them is something to which many can relate. The reader's heart warms toward Charlie, and indignation may rise towards those who are cruel and not understanding toward one with disabilities. The reader feels sorry for him.*

**April 14 - 17**

1. How has the statement “Your intellectual growth is going to outstrip your emotional growth” already been demonstrated?

*Charlie’s intellectual growth is evident through the changes in his writing, his realization that Dr. Strauss is more than “just a plain doctor,” and his revelation about his friends’ laughter and cruel jokes. However, his lack of emotional growth is also evident. His wet dream and the “funny feelings” he experiences when talking about her are typical of an adolescent, not a man in his thirties, as is the guilt he feels for having them. He realizes that the men at the bakery are cruel to him, but he does not know how to cope with the emotional pain this causes him.*

2. The author mentions three novels: *The Great Gatsby*, *An American Tragedy*, and *Look Homeward, Angel*. What will reading these novels do for Charlie?

*All of these novels deal with adult sexuality. Reading the novels will expose Charlie to other “people” experiencing the same feelings he is struggling with. The novels will help to “educate” Charlie socially.*

3. What new emotion does Charlie experience? Why is this significant point in his intellectual development? What theme does it advance?

*Charlie experiences anger. He has developed intellectually to the point that he realizes that he has been the butt of his “friends’” jokes. He is also beginning to value himself emotionally to the extent that he does not see himself as the cause of his own torment.*

4. How does Charlie’s altered view of friendship further reflect his intellectual and emotional growth?

*Up until now, Charlie has considered most of his relationships to be “friendships.” He is now learning that relationships are complex, and it is possible for people to dislike each other.*

5. Why does Charlie write portions of his journal entry in third person?

*Writing in third person allows Charlie to clearly analyze the Charlie of the past.*

6. What does Charlie’s opinion of Harriet reveal about his sexual development at eleven years old?

*Even when Charlie was a boy, he was not as emotionally and sexually developed as others his age. While the other boys liked Harriet because she was pretty, Charlie felt no physical attraction to her. The only reason he was “in love” with her and gave her his locket was that he thought he would fit in if he emulated the other boys’ behavior.*

### April 18

1. Contrast Charlie's second attempt at the Rorschach test with his first.

*The first time that Charlie took the Rorschach test, he was very quiet and submissive. His one desire was to please the test taker, and he was very apologetic that he could not determine what the inkblot pictures were of. Although Charlie tried hard, he was certain that he failed the test, just as he always failed tests when he was in school. The second time Charlie takes the Rorschach test, he remembers the pain and anxiety he experienced when he took the test, and he becomes upset and angry. He verbally expresses his anger, tosses the cards across the table, and walks out of the room.*

2. What is ironic about the doctors' determining that Charlie has reached a new level of maturity?

*Charlie has begun responding to the world around him with anger and suspicion, indicating that he has reached a new level of growth. Ironically, as he grows more intelligent and emotionally mature, he gains the potential to be unhappy.*

3. What does Charlie's new self-consciousness indicate about his mental and emotional development? How has he changed?

*Charlie once felt no shame; he recorded everything that he thought and did. Now he has developed to the point where he wants to keep his public and private thoughts separate. In effect, he is starting to create a separate, public self for presentation to the scientists. At the same time, he is coming to see that other people have selves that they show and selves that they hide.*

4. Cite two statements that indicate Charlie is experiencing a feeling of embarrassment.

*"I felt the blood rush to my face again" is a statement revealing that Charlie is so embarrassed by the situation that he is blushing. "It's getting harder for me to write down all my thoughts and feelings because I know that people are reading them" is the second statement indicating a feeling of embarrassment. He is self-conscious about what he writes, and he does not want others to judge him.*

5. Answer Charlie's question at the end of the passage.

*Things are starting to bother Charlie because he is now as emotionally developed as an adolescent. The feeling of embarrassment is a very normal adolescent feeling. Oftentimes, teens, with a newly developed sense of independence and need for privacy, do not want people reading their e-mails or journals, even if they are not particularly private or revealing.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 10****April 21**

1. In Charlie's memory, how do Frank and Gimpsey treat him? How is this different from what he used to think?

*Frank hurts Charlie and then acts as though it does not matter because Charlie is not intelligent enough to be considered a real person. Gimpsey, although not cruel to Charlie, treats him as though he does not exist. They act as though Charlie is an object and not a person. Charlie used to consider them friends, but looking back on the past with a better understanding of people, he views their relationships differently.*

2. In this passage, Charlie again views his past through the window. What might the window symbolize?

*The window may symbolize physical separation or emotional distance. Many of Charlie's childhood memories involve a window that he looks through; it usually separates him from the "normal" people. Not only was Charlie distanced from his peers physically, but also mentally. The window now serves to distance him from his past, allowing him to view the past more objectively. At times, the window to his past is open, and at others, the window is closed.*

3. What can be inferred about Charlie's childhood based upon his reaction to the words learn and teach?

*Charlie associates the words teach and learn with failure, and as a result of his failure, punishment. In particular, the words cause him to visualize "a thin white hand upraised," which most likely belonged to his mother. The reader can assume, therefore, that Charlie was hit when he had trouble learning something.*

4. Explain what is revealed about Gimpsey's relationship with Charlie in this flashback.

*Gimpsey, who is also a person with a disability, seems to have a greater understanding and acceptance of Charlie's problem than the other men at the bakery. Even though Gimpsey does not befriend Charlie, he does occasionally defend him.*

*In this particular flashback, Gimpsey believes Charlie might be capable of making the rolls, and patiently attempts to teach him. This action shows that Gimpsey has a relatively high regard for Charlie's abilities; he is willing to give Charlie a chance rather than simply dismissing him as dumb and incapable. Finally, even though Charlie fails at the task, Gimpsey still rewards him with the pendant, revealing that Gimpsey likes and sympathizes with Charlie.*



### April 22

1. Describe the “changes” Charlie is beginning to see in the people at the bakery. What is ironic about his realization?

*Charlie has become a productive member of the bakery staff, devising better ways of utilizing machines and making money. Charlie's co-workers, who still do not know about the operation to improve his intelligence, are frightened of him. Charlie feels very lonely and left out, as his co-workers ignore him or treat him with hostility. It is interesting to note that Charlie feels the other people are changing. In actuality, he is the one who is changing; the others are only responding to his transformation.*

### April 24

1. What does Charlie's overhearing the conversation between Drs. Strauss and Nemur suggest about his development?

*Charlie overhears Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur arguing about whether they should present an interim paper at the convention in Chicago. Charlie leaves because he realizes that even though they are talking about him he has no right to eavesdrop on the conversation. Not only has he become a person who “counts” because he understands what is being said, but he recognizes his new status. In addition, he is developing a sense of ethics to go along with his new personality.*

2. Who supports sharing the findings at the convention? Who does not? What do their opinions suggest about their characters?

*Professor Nemur supports sharing the findings at the convention because he believes that the experiment is a success. In his opinion, nothing can go wrong. Dr. Strauss, however, feels that it is too soon to know whether there will be any negative effects of the experiment. The stances of the two men suggest that Professor Nemur is hasty and impulsive, while Dr. Strauss is more cautious. Additionally, Professor Nemur seems to be very authoritative and is unwilling to agree with Dr. Strauss, who is subordinate to him.*

3. How has Charlie's view of Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur changed?

*At one time Charlie viewed Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur as heroes or extraordinary beings, but now he realizes that they are just two men doing a job and trying to earn recognition.*



**April 26 - 27**

1. Analyze Charlie's writing. Why does Keyes mention particular authors in this passage?

*Charlie's writing is advanced. He uses more sophisticated vocabulary and has mastered all types of punctuation. Keyes mentions the authors to demonstrate the reading level that Charlie has attained. Part of his progress with writing can be attributed to reading the advanced works by the authors listed.*

**April 28**

1. Charlie writes that he can remember through the blur, back to when he was six years old and "it" all happened. What happened?

*What "it" refers to is ambiguous. Since the next sentence is "Just before Norma was born," one may think "it" refers to the birth of his sister, which changes his life forever. "It" may also refer to another argument, in which his mother insists that Charlie is normal and his father argues that Charlie has a disability. "It" could refer to his soiling his pants, or "it" could refer to his father's leaving the apartment, physically and figuratively leaving Charlie behind.*

2. Why are Charlie's parents' faces blurry in his memory?

*Since there are few pleasant memories involving his mother and father—and his parents have, in fact, caused him great distress—Charlie has erased their faces from his memories.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 11****May 1**

1. How does Keyes show that Charlie's emotional development is now equal to that of an adolescent?

*Charlie goes on a date with Miss Kinnian. He is excited at the touch of her arm and spends a whole movie figuring out how he can get his arm around her or, at least, get his elbow to the back of her seat.*

2. Interpret the use of the psychological film as a mirror of Charlie's situation. What causes Charlie's anger toward the film?

*At the end of the film, the main character plans to kill his wife, but just as he is about to commit the murder, something she cries out in her sleep triggers a memory of his childhood. He realizes that the source of his hatred toward his wife is actually someone who used to frighten him, someone who left him with a flawed personality.*

*There are two reasons that the movie causes Charlie emotional distress. First, like the character in the film, Charlie is remembering painful memories from his childhood. Instead of bringing him healing, like the person in the film, however, these memories depress him.*

*Furthermore, Charlie does not know why he is terrified of touching Miss Kinnian, but the reader may suspect that his problem is associated with a situation in his past that left him unable to have sexual feelings for women. It is possible that his fear of women is a result of his flawed relationship with his mother. Charlie needs to realize the pain does not come from Miss Kinnian, any more than the actor's hatred comes from his wife. In the movie, the character understands the memory in a moment and cries out with joy, instantly falling back in love with his wife. In real life, Charlie knows that rectifying old troubles and memories is not nearly that easy. He is upset with the triteness of the film.*

### May 3

1. Describe the changes that have taken place in Charlie in only two months.

*Charlie's intelligence has increased dramatically. He writes flawlessly and reads constantly. He understands more about human relationships and interactions, but he fluctuates between reacting to situations like a teenager and responding like a mature adult. His old understanding of friendship is discarded as he develops a new understanding of what friendship is and who his friends really are.*

2. Construct an interpretation of the meaning of the knife.

*The knife is a symbol of Charlie's fear of sexuality and women. The knife first appears on May 1, when Alice and Charlie are at dinner. As he starts to form a more intimate connection with her, his attention becomes transfixed by the knife she is holding. However, the knife does not take on much significance until the dream. The red-haired woman draws the knife on Charlie when he becomes aroused by her. A psychoanalytic interpretation of this dream would reveal that Charlie is afraid of being castrated as a punishment for his arousal. The knife reveals that Charlie is having difficulty forming a close relationship with Miss Kinnian because he is repressing his desire.*

3. Why does Charlie's dream frighten him?

*All of the information stored in Charlie's subconscious brain tells him that he must never touch a girl. However, the new information he has assimilated about relationships tells him otherwise. The conflict of these feelings about women frightens him.*

4. What theme is represented in this passage?

*The theme represented is the tension between the intellect and the emotions or the power of the past to affect the present. The student could build a case for either theme from this passage.*

### **May 8 – May 11**

1. What is the main issue dealt with in these passages?

*Gimpy is cheating Donner's Bakery by undercharging regular customers and stealing part of the profits.*

2. How does Charlie feel about Gimpy's actions? How does he decide to handle the situation?

*Charlie has a hard time believing what Gimpy is doing. He cannot understand how anyone could cheat a man as nice as Mr. Donner. The more he considers the injustice, the more he hates Gimpy, but he knows telling Mr. Donner may cause Gimpy to lose his job. He discusses it with the doctor, the professor, and Alice before coming to the decision to trust his own judgment. Charlie decides to talk to Gimpy, revealing his knowledge of the wrongdoing by asking his advice on a hypothetical situation. He hopes to threaten Gimpy enough to make him stop stealing, but he also wants Gimpy to keep his job.*

3. On May 10, Charlie writes about his conversation with Professor Nemur about Gimpy. The professor compares Charlie with a knife in a stabbing or a car in an accident. Why does the comparison annoy Charlie? What is most likely the intended effect on the reader?

*Charlie is annoyed that the professor equates him with inanimate objects. When Charlie asserts that he is a person, the professor corrects himself and indicates that he was referring to Charlie before the surgery. Charlie becomes upset by the doctor's comments and reminds him that he was a person before the surgery as well. The intended effect is most likely to increase reader sympathy for Charlie and to cause the reader to reevaluate former biases against mentally or intellectually challenged people.*

4. What does Charlie's decision show about his level of development at this point?

*Charlie now understands that the real world cannot be dealt with through one set of simple rules. He decides upon an action that takes both Mr. Donner's kindness and Gimpy's past good deeds into account.*

### May 15

1. How have Charlie's thoughts about the discussions in the college cafeteria changed?

*Charlie now realized that the conversations that once impressed him—those about history, politics, or religion—are childish and superficial. He is more interested in conversing with experts in the fields of economics, literature, and psychology about their studies.*

2. How have his thoughts regarding the professor and doctor changed?

*He no longer reveres Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss as geniuses, but people with limited knowledge and very defined areas of expertise.*

### May 17

1. What in this passage further explores the theme of emotions versus intellect?

*The thoughts Charlie has when he and Alice lie listening to the concert continue to develop this theme. Even though Charlie has become very intelligent—even smarter than the professor and the doctor—he is still naive when it comes to social interaction. Even though Charlie is attracted to Alice, he does not know how to act when he is with her. As they sit listening to the music, his palms become sweaty, and he has a great desire to put his arms around her. However, he does not know how Alice will respond to his gestures.*

2. Who is standing behind the tree watching Alice and Charlie? Why might he be there?

*The person standing behind the tree is a hallucination of Charlie when he was about fifteen or sixteen years old. His pants are unzipped, and he is completely exposed. It is likely that this image is a manifestation of Charlie's repressed sexual desire, which is responding to and trying to stop Charlie's being aroused by Miss Kinnian.*

3. Why does Charlie hear buzzing and experience the sensation of prickly legs and numb fingers?

*Charlie is having a panic attack, and the symptoms he has are caused by hyperventilation. The sensation, in addition to Charlie's hallucination, shows that he is experiencing anxiety as a result of his sexual desire, which he has striven to repress.*

## May 20

1. Why do the employees at the bakery ask Mr. Donner to fire Charlie? How does Charlie respond to Mr. Donner firing him?

*Charlie makes them uncomfortable. Since they are ignorant of Charlie's operation, they do not understand what is happening to him, and his change makes them nervous. Additionally, Mr. Donner has noticed that Charlie is smarter than he was before, and he knows that a person of Charlie's high intelligence should not be working at a bakery.*

*Charlie is upset by the news, and he asks Mr. Donner to let him stay. Even though Mr. Donner is correct when he says that Charlie does not need to work at the bakery anymore, Charlie is afraid of change. He finally persuades Mr. Donner into letting him talk to his coworkers and change their minds.*

2. Explain the irony of the reasons Charlie's coworkers give for wanting Charlie to leave.

*Just two months ago, Frank considered himself superior to Charlie, and he enjoyed making Charlie look like a fool. Now, however, Frank feels self-conscious because Charlie is more intelligent than he is, and for the first time, Charlie makes him feel stupid. In fact, all the workers hate Charlie because his growth emphasizes their inadequacies.*

3. How does the allusion to the Garden of Eden function in this section? Explain the similarities between Adam and Eve and Charlie Gordon.

*Adam and Eve violated God's will by attaining knowledge beyond the level that God intended them to attain, so they had to leave the Garden of Eden. As a result, they were no longer innocent and trusting, and because of their disobedience, all people suffer. Charlie gains his knowledge through artificial means, and like Adam and Eve, he is no longer innocent. Because of his new knowledge, he has to leave the bakery, which was a pleasant, happy place for him when he had little intelligence.*

4. What does Fanny Birden say that may foreshadow Charlie's regression?

*Fanny says, "Maybe you could go back to being the good simple man you was before."*

5. What is ironic about Charlie's thought about Algernon?

*Previously, Charlie was offended when he was compared to the mouse or anything non-human. Now, however, he is making the same comparison. He considers what would happen to Algernon if the mouse were placed in the same position that Charlie is now in.*

## May 25

1. How does Alice's apartment represent her?

*Alice's apartment is very neat. Everything is arranged systematically, including the throw pillows on the couch and the magazines on the tables. Even the cookies she serves on the plate are placed in a distinct circular pattern, and the napkins are folded into triangles.*

*Despite the neatness of Alice's apartment, Charlie notices that there is no unity in her decorations. She has both a print of Picasso's "Mother and Child" and a painting of a Renaissance courtier. The eclectic taste makes it appear as though Alice does not know who she is.*

2. Interpret the author's use of water imagery in this passage.

*The first mention of water occurs when Charlie is describing the emptiness of not having his job at the bakery, and he says that, for the previous two nights, he has had nightmares of drowning. Later, Alice compares Charlie's losing his job to his being forced off a diving raft as a new swimmer. Finally, Charlie has the thought that maybe "the fear and nausea are no longer a sea to drown in but only a pool of water reflecting the past alongside the now." The nightmares are a very violent representation of water. The second reference to water is somewhat less frightening, as he is at least able to swim by the time he gets pushed off the raft. Finally, the water is simply a pool reflecting the past, but no longer threatening. The water comes to represent Charlie's response to change.*

3. In Charlie's memory, what "happen[s] in his pants" that his mother beats him for? Why does this normal occurrence enrage his mother?

*In the memory, Charlie has an erection; however, Rose's anger actually stems from her disappointment that Charlie is below normal intelligence. She is bothered by the fact that there is a disparity between Charlie's intellectual development and his physiological development. Rose is annoyed at the fact that, physically, he is mature enough to be sexually aroused, but not smart enough to do well in school and function in society.*

4. What does Charlie's mother threaten him with if he should ever touch a girl? What significance does her threat have?

*Rose says she will put him away in a cage like an animal for the rest of his life. Her threat should cause the reader to think of Algernon, who is a caged animal and, like Charlie, undergoes the operation. Her threat also reminds the reader that Charlie's mother, and others like her, think of Charlie more as an animal than a human being because he is mentally challenged.*

5. Does Keyes try to influence the reader to consider those intellectually challenged as either human or animal? Does he try to dictate the moral correctness of the surgery?

*It does not seem that Keyes is trying to convince the reader to support either argument. In fact, Charlie himself has mixed feelings about what to think of himself in his pre-surgery years. Keyes does allude to Adam and Eve, but even in doing that, he leaves the reader to decide whether it is ethical or unethical to make someone of lesser intelligence smarter.*

## PROGRESS REPORT 12

### June 5

1. What is the significance of the approaching convention?

*When Professor Nemur makes his presentation on his experimental procedure and the progress of Algernon and Charlie, this will be the first public announcement of the experiment. Charlie, his humanity, and the ethics of what Nemur has done will be open to public review and criticism.*

2. Describe Charlie and Norma's childhood relationship in the memory.

*Charlie wants nothing more than to play games with Norma; he has no desire to hurt her or to compete with her. Norma, however, is aware that something is wrong with Charlie, and she is embarrassed by him. She does not like being around him, and she tells her friends that they are not related. Additionally, she does not like to share anything with Charlie, whether it is good news or a dog.*

3. What purpose does the series of flashbacks have in the development of Charlie's character?

*The flashbacks allow the reader to witness events in Charlie's past, which have contributed to his present worldview and state of mind.*

4. How do the window and the mirror function in this passage, particularly concerning Charlie's ability to connect or dissociate with his past?

*The window in this passage serves as a tool Charlie can use to look back on his past. The Charlie of the present watches his childhood from the perspective of an outside observer, perceiving the events from a more intelligent and understanding point of view. However, while the window creates a dissociation between the present-day Charlie and Charlie before his operation, the mirror reflects Charlie's image, reminding him that the boy, while very different from the man he has become, is still a part of him.*



## June 6

1. How does the author use the symbol of the window in this passage?

*When Charlie visits the Center for Retarded Adults, he views his old class through a window. The window allows him to observe the other students, but it establishes a boundary between him and them, emphasizing how much Charlie has changed since he left the school and underwent the surgery.*

2. How has Alice and Charlie's relationship changed over the past three months?

*Alice and Charlie have switched roles. Alice used to teach Charlie, who was her intellectual inferior to her. Now, however, his intelligence is superior to hers. While Charlie used to be confused all of the time, Alice now cannot comprehend what Charlie says. Their relationship has changed from warm and kind to cold and bitter, now that both people are annoyed with each other. In his words, the situation has turned "upside-down." Charlie realizes that, in terms of intelligence, he is just as distant from Alice now as he was before the operation.*

3. How has the way Charlie views himself changed?

*Charlie is no longer happy being a "docile pup...licking the foot that kicks [him]." While he used to believe he had friends, he now knows that others used him to make themselves feel important; they took pride in the fact that they were more intelligent than a mentally challenged person. Charlie, however, is also becoming more aware of his attitude toward others. He realizes that he has been too self-absorbed, and he never thought about what is happening to those around him as he changes, particularly Alice.*

4. Why is Alice annoyed with Charlie?

*Charlie's new intelligence has made him difficult to talk to. Charlie becomes impatient with Alice when she talks about things that interest her but that he deems stupid and dull. She is also unable to understand him when he talks about things beyond her comprehension, and he unintentionally makes her feel self-conscious. Charlie makes Alice feel inadequate.*



## June 8

1. What is the significance of Charlie's remark that he constantly travels "Up one street, and down another, through the endless labyrinth, hurling [him]self against the neon cage of the city"?

*In this passage, the words "labyrinth" and "cage" allude to Algernon and his maze, and the reader should realize that Charlie is drawing a parallel between himself and the mouse. More importantly, however, this passage also employs foreshadowing. Since Charlie and Algernon underwent the same operation, changes in Algernon's behavior will eventually become manifest in Charlie as well. In the near future, Algernon begins throwing himself against the walls of his cage, demonstrating that he is emotionally breaking down. Charlie is already experiencing anxiety as a result of his change, but like Algernon, he will eventually become frustrated and hysterical.*

2. Charlie is hopeful that he will be able to respond sexually to the woman in the park. What two memories prevent a successful interaction? Why?

*Once, without a reasonable motive other than to frighten or arouse Charlie (when he was mentally challenged), a woman, who had just gotten out of the bathtub, opened her bathrobe and showed Charlie her naked body. Charlie felt guilty and ashamed, even though he did nothing wrong. When the woman in the park shows him that she is pregnant, she opens her jacket in much the same way the middle-aged woman from his memory did.*

*The pregnant belly also reminds Charlie of his mother when she was pregnant with Norma. From that point on, Rose became so preoccupied with Norma that she stopped loving and protecting Charlie. These two memories, both of which were traumatic, cause Charlie to shut down completely.*

3. Why does Charlie wish that his pursuers had caught and beaten him?

*It appears as though Charlie is still suffering from feelings of guilt whenever he is sexually aroused. At the end of the passage, he notes the "distant humming in [his] ears," which is a symptom of his panic attacks. Charlie is subconsciously punishing himself for having been initially aroused by the woman in the park, and he feels so ashamed that he wishes the men chasing him had caught and hurt him.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 13****June 10**

1. How has Charlie's method of journaling changed? What does his choice of method reflect?

*The method Charlie uses to write reflects the speed at which he thinks. At first, Charlie developed his thoughts slowly, and writing longhand was an adequate way for him to record his observations and feelings. Three months later, however, Charlie began to feel that writing was becoming slow and tedious, so he learned to type. Now, Charlie is so intelligent and his thoughts are developing so rapidly that he must record them by speaking into a tape recorder.*

2. Based on Charlie's memory, how did Rose view God?

*Rose thought of God as someone who could grant favors, like Santa Claus, but also someone frightening, who could take good things away. After all, it was God who gave her a child with a disability.*

3. Why does the airplane ride trigger one of Charlie's traumatic memories?

*The strap of the seatbelt reminds Charlie of a time he visited Dr. Guarino's office as a child. He was strapped to a table, and the doctor turned on a machine that vibrated, flashed bright lights, and made loud noises. The experience frightened Charlie as a child, and it continues to traumatize him as an adult.*

4. Describe Dr. Guarino. Does he seem qualified? Why?

*Dr. Guarino is fat and balding. He has thick white eyebrows and a white moustache that twitches. His office is virtually empty, save for two desks and an examination table. His feigned busyness and acceptance of this special case, his stuffing Charlie's mouth with wads of cloth and strapping him down, and his conversation with Charlie's parents about the long months before any sign of improvement may make him seem less than reputable. Additionally, the way Dr. Guarino speaks to Charlie, addressing him as "kid" and commanding him to tell his parents that he feels smarter, suggests to the reader that Dr. Guarino is not a qualified doctor and his treatments are probably ineffective.*

5. Contrast Rose's and Matt's opinions of Charlie's learning problem.

*Rose believes that Charlie can be conditioned to learn, and she is unable to accept that Charlie is mentally challenged. She also feels that if Charlie cannot be made more intelligent, he will be undeserving of her love. She pushes Charlie to learn, but instead of motivating him, she makes Charlie anxious and so nervous that he wets himself. Matt wishes his son were smarter, but he also accepts Charlie for who he is. He loves his son, regardless of Charlie's low intelligence. Matt also serves as Charlie's protector, criticizing Rose for being so demanding and cruel.*

6. How does Charlie feel about Dr. Guarino in hindsight? How does Charlie feel about Professor Nemur?

*Charlie realizes that Dr. Guarino took advantage of his parents, but he does not resent the doctor's actions. Dr. Guarino was kind to him and spoke some of the few encouraging words Charlie heard when he was young. In retrospect, Charlie feels that the doctor treated him as though he were a human being.*

*On the other hand, Charlie resents Professor Nemur because he claims to have made Charlie "a real human being" by giving him intelligence. In effect, Nemur denies that people who are mentally challenged, like Charlie before the operation, are really human. This idea, in Charlie's opinion, is more reprehensible than Dr. Guarino's act of deception.*

7. Cite and interpret the simile in the last paragraph.

*Charlie uses the following simile: "the memories that began as ripples now wash over me in high breaking waves..." Within the context of the paragraph, Charlie uses the simile to describe the way his memories are affecting his present life. Before, they had only a remote impact on him, usually appearing to him in dreams. Now, as Charlie becomes better able to remember his past, the memories gradually show him the extent to which he was traumatized by his childhood.*

*Additionally, with the reintroduction of the water motif, Keyes could be utilizing foreshadowing. The reader should recall that earlier in the book, Charlie had nightmares about drowning, Alice compares his leaving the bakery job with learning to swim, and Charlie imagines a quiet pool reflecting his past. The reference to water, particularly its violent aspect, foreshadows that the past will create some new form of turmoil in Charlie's life.*

### June 11

1. What is the source of Professor Nemur's frustration? In what three occurrences does it appear? How does Charlie respond?

*Professor Nemur is frustrated because his authority and position are either not recognized or are challenged. He, the main speaker at the conference, is first frustrated that his hotel reservations have been mixed up and he will need to stay at a different hotel from the one in which the conference is held. Charlie waits patiently as Nemur interrogates people from different levels of the hotel's hierarchy until he finally accepts the fact they will have to go elsewhere. Secondly, Professor Nemur is annoyed that Charlie is receiving all of the attention. Charlie knows that Nemur is upset, and he tries to remedy the situation by directing questions to the professor. Third, Professor Nemur is frustrated because Charlie knows more about the experiments within his field than he does.*

2. What is ironic about the explanation Professor Nemur gives to the young female clinician from Falmouth College?

*Just a few days before the conference, Nemur reminded Charlie not to speak so loftily that no one can understand him. However, when Nemur gives his explanation of PKU, he speaks far above the level of the clinician.*

3. What does Charlie realize during the weekend?

*Charlie realizes that neither Professor Nemur nor Dr. Strauss are geniuses, not even in their fields of study. They do not know as much about their research as Charlie does, and they cannot read as many foreign languages as Charlie can.*

4. In Burt's estimation, what is Charlie's downfall?

*Burt says that although Charlie may be a genius, he has difficulty relating to other people.*

5. What effect is created by the alliteration of the letter "d" in the sentence, "...the master's dread of having the disciple discredit his work"?

*Even before the meaning is considered, the sound of this phrase—with its repetition of the hard, percussive consonant "d"—hits the ear violently. The effect emphasizes the meanings of the alliterated words, especially "dread" and "discredit."*

6. How is the use of euphemism and jargon in this scene both ironic and mildly humorous?

*At the time in which this novel takes place, attitudes and language were slowly beginning to change. The issue of Charlie's humanity has already been established, and we have seen Professor Nemur claim to have made Charlie a "real" human being. The irony is in the speakers' struggling to find the appropriate language to communicate. The humor lies in the apparent hypocrisy in some of the characters, whose own attitudes are not really as sensitive as the language they use might suggest.*

### June 13

1. How does this section establish a link between Charlie and Algernon?

*Algernon represents Charlie, and his actions mirror those of Charlie. Algernon is irritated and tense being at the conference, and it is not coincidental that Charlie is, too. Algernon, at the height of his intelligence, becomes difficult to work with, and he sometimes refuses to work at all; so does Charlie. The two are united when Charlie releases Algernon from his cage, and together, they flee the conference.*

2. What offense causes Charlie to release Algernon and flee the conference?

*Charlie becomes annoyed that no one in the room considers him an individual and a human being. The constant juxtaposition of “Algernon and Charlie,” as well as Nemur’s statement, “Charlie Gordon did not really exist before this experiment...,” bothers Charlie so much that he releases Algernon, and they run away from the conference.*

3. What theme do Nemur’s comments support?

*Nemur’s comments about Charlie support the theme of society’s mistreatment and misunderstanding of the mentally challenged. At the time, many perceived them as a burden on society and, because of their low intelligence, less than human.*

4. Interpret Charlie’s statement about crossing an invisible barrier.

*The statement, within the context of the passage, means that Charlie chose to violate society’s rules keeping men out of the women’s restroom. However, the metaphor could also be loosely applied to Charlie’s experience; he was the first person to cross the invisible barrier that separates the mentally challenged from people of normal intelligence.*

5. How does the scene in the restroom represent a turning point in the book?

*Charlie finally understands that he, like Algernon, has been the subject of an experiment with an unknown outcome. He cuts ties with the scientists and goes on the run. Their experiment has allowed him to fully realize his own autonomy, and he uses his new independence to get away from them.*

6. What future developments are possibly being foreshadowed?

*The student may note that Charlie could not stop thinking that something was wrong. The section also ends with Charlie’s stating that he may not have all the time he thought he would have.*

*There are several potential events these remarks may foreshadow. Some students may argue that, just as Algernon has had some decline in his ability in the maze, so Charlie may have a decrease in mental abilities. Others may argue that, because of the operation, Charlie may meet an early death.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 14****June 15**

1. Summarize the news article mentioning Charlie's sister.

*Norma Gordon lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her mother Rose. Until she was contacted by the Beekman University for permission to use Charlie in the experiment, Norma believed Charlie to have died after living a few years at the Warren State Home nearly seventeen years earlier. His father lives in the Bronx and operates a barbershop.*

2. How does Keyes's choice of words to describe Charlie's mother suggest the type of relationship she and Charlie had?

*Keyes uses words with negative connotations, such as "drawn," "sharp," and "thin" to describe her face; "bird-scream" to describe the sound of her voice; "Hair done up in a bun, severely" to describe her hair style; and "piercing" to describe her eyes. All of these words suggest that Rose was a cruel, demanding, and pestering person.*

3. What was the difference between Norma and Charlie when it came to avoiding their mother's wrath?

*Norma was able to read her mother's body language, such as a gesture of the hand or a raised eyebrow; Charlie was not. He had difficulty reading his mother's moods.*

4. Interpret Charlie's use of the word "cathedral" in describing his relationship with his mother.

*The word cathedral in this passage could have one of two meanings. First, a cathedral is a principal church in a diocese, and as such, an important place of worship. Charlie could be suggesting that the moments when his mother comforted him are sacred, almost holy.*

*However, a cathedral could also be a large, cold, stone edifice, and it also has the feeling of being impersonal. The solid, rigid, and cold connotation of the church is a good description of Charlie's childhood; his mother rarely showed him warmth or comfort.*

5. Interpret Charlie's comparison of Norma to a flower.

*Norma, who was of normal intelligence, was allowed to grow and flourish publicly, and was even praised and put on display by her parents. Charlie, however, was hidden away and forgotten. Both Charlie's mother and his sister were embarrassed by the fact that Charlie was mentally challenged, and they preferred to distance themselves from him.*

*The reader should also take notice of the connotation of the two plants: flowers are nurtured and cherished, while weeds are uprooted. Society treats people in much the same way. Those who excel are praised and cared for, while those that do not are left helpless and alone. The Gordons' home is a microcosm of the misunderstanding and mistreatment that the mentally challenged suffered in society.*

6. What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions in this section?

*Keyes challenges the reader to consider whether knowing the past can change the future.*

7. In the flashback, what is the quarrel between Charlie's mother and father about? Why does it hurt Charlie now, over twenty years later?

*Rose wanted to send Charlie away to the Warren State Home, fearing that he would either physically hurt Norma or have a negative impact on her development. As Matt argued, Rose's fears were completely unfounded, and Charlie's doctor told them that he would not hurt Norma in any way. Matt thought that Rose favored Norma, and because Rose had a normal daughter, she did not want Charlie anymore.*

*The reason this memory hurts the present-day Charlie so much is because he is finally able to understand what the argument was about. All young Charlie knew was that his parents were fighting; however, now Charlie understands what was being said, and he is hurt by the fact that his mother wanted to send him away because of his disability.*

8. How does the simile "...as a bird or squirrel backs off from the brusque movements of the feeder..." work in this piece?

*In this simile, Charlie compares himself to a squirrel, which acts on instinct instead of reason, and his mother to a violently-moving feeder, an unfeeling source of sustenance. Though the squirrel desperately needs the food—just as Charlie desperately needs his mother's love—it is afraid that the feeder will suddenly harm it. The squirrel reacts to the movement of the feeder by backing away; however, it does not understand why the feeder is moving in such a strange way. Charlie reacts in a similar way to his mother's screaming; he does not understand why his mother is screaming, but he is frightened by the volume and tone of her voice. Additionally, Charlie is comparing himself before the operation to an animal, which is a comparison he and others have made throughout the novel. Once again, Keyes is forcing the reader to consider the humanity and personhood of mentally challenged people.*

9. Where do Charlie and Algernon 'hide'? What is Charlie's intention?

*When Charlie returns to New York, he withdraws cash from his bank account and checks into the Camden Hotel, which is a few blocks from Times Square. Charlie decides to leave Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss "in the dark" for a while and not let them know his whereabouts.*



## June 16

1. Cite the instances of the number four in the text, and explain what it may symbolize.

*Charlie has four rooms on the fourth floor on Forty-Third Street.*

*There are many reasons that Keyes may be repeating the number four in this section. First, there are four seasons in the year, and the allusion may be intended to suggest to the reader that seasons change and nothing remains the same forever, including people. The number four could also represent the four directions—north, south, east, and west. In this regard, Keyes could be implying that for the first time since Charlie's operation, he has freedom and can choose his own direction.*

2. What effect does the image of Charlie and Algernon sipping beer and eating pretzels while watching the Yankees game have on the reader?

*This image has multiple purposes. First, it shows that Charlie does not consider Algernon to be merely a mouse, but a friend as well. He bonds with Algernon as if he were a person. Additionally, by showing Charlie doing typical things, Keyes helps the reader relate to him.*

## June 19

1. For what purpose might Keyes have chosen to introduce Fay Lillman dressed in nothing more than her bra and panties?

*Keyes might be using this scene to demonstrate Charlie's growth. In the past, Charlie would have been disturbed to see a half-naked woman. This time, however, Charlie is able to control his response and emotions.*

2. How does Keyes use setting to help characterize Fay?

*Charlie observes that Fay has "[paint] tubes, brushes, cans, rags, and parts of frames and canvas...strewn everywhere," and he notes, "the place was thick with the odor compounded of paint, linseed oil, and turpentine—and after a few moments the subtle aroma of stale beer." Even if Charlie did not see Fay with two brushes in her hands, the setting alone would inform him that she was a painter and a heavy drinker. The "mangy green couch...piled high with discarded clothing," as well as the shoes, stockings, and undergarments on the floor indicate that Fay is very comfortable with her body and herself, and she undresses without a concern for who is watching or who might be disgusted by her mess. Charlie also notices that one of Fay's walls displays several of her paintings, two of which depict her in the nude, reinforcing the idea that Fay is comfortable being naked. The messy room also validates Fay's later remark that straight lines bother her, for the mess in Fay's apartment obstructs a view of the right angles of the walls, ceiling, and floor. Lastly, the fact that Fay's front door does not have a lock indicates she feels very secure, and she is not afraid someone will enter her apartment and either steal her things or hurt her.*



3. What about neatness and modern art does Fay not like? What does she prefer?

*Fay does not like the way the lines in neat rooms and in modern art intersect and meet each other at angles. In Fay's opinion, the lines form boxes, which resemble coffins. When she views Algernon's maze, it reminds her that "life is just a box of mazes," possibly suggesting that people are not free, but confined to designated paths. Instead, Fay prefers curved lines, which, to her, represent spontaneity and freedom.*

4. What is a unique feature of Fay's speech, and what may be its purpose?

*Fay frequently uses slang and colloquialisms. This fact is evident in phrases such as, "I'll bust," "dolloed up," "go mad for it," and "Thanks a mill." Fay's casual speech may indicate that Fay is trendy and cool or that she is so comfortable around strangers that she does not feel obligated to use polite, formal speech.*

5. In what ways is Fay a foil to Alice?

*Where Alice is almost compulsively neat, Fay is almost compulsively messy. The eclectic decor of Alice's apartment indicates an uncertainty in her self-awareness, but the mess in Fay's apartment is an indication of, not only her self-awareness, but of the fact that she is comfortable with who she is. Further, Alice is a teacher and represents the worlds of science and reason that Fay eschews. Finally, Alice knew Charlie before the operation and is something of a reminder to him of what he was before. Fay knows only the Charlie he is now and accepts him as he is, not as he was or as he had become.*

## June 20

1. How does Charlie find his father, and where does he find him?

*Charlie finds Matt by searching the accounts of Metro Barber Shop Supply. He finds Matt at Gordon's Barber Shop in the Bronx.*

2. Why does Keyes have Charlie refer to his father as Matt?

*Charlie knows that Matt is not expecting to meet his son, and certainly not a son who is now a genius. He does not want to frighten his father, nor does he want to alienate him the way he alienated his "friends" at the bakery and Alice.*

3. What brings about Rose's confrontation with Matt about the barbershop?

*Rose greatly values her reputation, and she does not want her friends and neighbors to look down upon her. For this reason, she is embarrassed that Charlie was born with a mental disability, and she does not want Matt to become a barber, which she considers a low occupation.*

4. Why does Charlie flinch when he is in the barber's chair?

*When Charlie closes his eyes and feels the blade touch his skin, he is reminded of the operation.*

5. How is the knife presented in the flashback?

*When Rose confronts Matt and demands that he take Charlie away, Rose holds a knife and threatens to use it to kill Charlie. When Charlie is about to be taken to his uncle Herman's and he sees the knife on the table, he thinks that "[Rose] wanted to take something away from him and give it to Norma."*

6. Where has the symbol of the knife been seen previously in the text?

*In the May 3 entry, Charlie recorded a dream about a red-haired girl who kissed and caressed him. When he became aroused by her and remembered what his mother said about never touching girls, she threatened him with a knife. For some subconscious reason, the dream makes him think of Alice.*

*In a second dream, in the May 25 entry, the female lover in Alice's painting holds a knife to her lover, presumably when he becomes aroused by her.*

7. What might a psychoanalyst say the knife represents?

*According to a psychoanalyst, this recurring image of the knife represents Charlie's castration anxiety. Because Charlie's mother traumatized him so much as a child, making him feel guilty for his sexual desires, he subconsciously fears that he will be castrated if he has these feelings.*

*Some psychoanalysts believe that castration anxiety arises from the Oedipus complex and the accompanying fear a boy has that his father, a competitor, will cut off his penis to punish him for his sexual feelings toward his mother; however, others believe that castration anxiety comes from a young boy's realization that young girls lack male genitalia. The boy believes that the girl has been castrated for some punishment, and he fears that the same thing will be done to him.*

*Charlie discreetly mentions the latter cause of castration anxiety on two occasions. First, in the May 3 entry, right after he has the dream about the knife, Charlie recalls a time when he saw Norma coming out of the bathtub. He noticed that Norma's body is different from his, and that "[s]omething [was] missing." He thought something terrible had happened to Norma, and moments later, he envisioned himself running down the hallway, with someone chasing after him with a kitchen knife. On the second occasion in this entry, he remembers seeing the kitchen knife on the table; he imagined that "[Rose] wanted to take something away from him, and give it to Norma." Charlie not only links the knife to his castration anxiety, but he connects it to his mother's favoritism of Norma. If Norma suffered from penis envy—which is another psychoanalytic anxiety—Rose subconsciously wanted to remedy the problem by giving her daughter Charlie's manhood.*

8. At the beginning of the entry, why does Charlie say, “Perhaps I should have waited before going to see Matt; or not gone to see him at all”?

*Matt does not recognize his son, and Charlie is disappointed that his father has forgotten him. Rather than being united with his father, the experience only brings back traumatic memories for Charlie.*

### June 21

1. What might Charlie be implying when he says that the reason that Algernon is throwing himself against the walls of his cage might be “something deeper” than frustration? What might this mean for Charlie?

*Charlie may be implying that Algernon is experiencing some mental breakdown or degeneration. Since Algernon and Charlie underwent the same procedure, and Algernon’s actions appear to foreshadow Charlie’s, Algernon’s behavior may indicate that Charlie will soon have the same reaction.*

2. Explain how the new relationship between Minnie and Algernon serves as a metaphor?

*The language Fay uses when talking about Minnie indicates that she intends the mouse to be a romantic partner for Algernon. For instance, Fay says that Minnie will keep Algernon warm on those “lonely summer nights,” and Fay pulls Charlie out of the room, asking “Where’s your sense of romance?” as if to imply that Algernon and Minnie want to be alone together.*

*Since a parallel has been drawn and developed between Charlie and Algernon, the mice’s relationship may be a metaphor for the one developing between Charlie and Fay. Like Algernon, Charlie needs to have a companion, and Fay provides one.*

### June 23

1. What happens when Fay comes home from the Stardust Ballroom?

*Fay brings home a man named Leroy, and they enter her apartment together. A few minutes later, Charlie overhears the sounds of screaming and things being thrown in Fay’s apartment. When Leroy leaves, Fay comes to Charlie for comfort.*

2. Why does Charlie not have a panic attack when Fay offers to sleep with him?

*As Charlie says, “There was no panic, it was true, but there was also no excitement—no desire.” Charlie is not attracted to Fay. Because of this, Charlie’s interaction with Fay does not make him feel guilty, and he does not have panic attacks.*

3. What is the most likely reason that Charlie starts acting like his former self when he becomes drunk?

*Alcohol, which helps lessen an individual's self-restraint and awareness, breaks down the barrier between Charlie's present state of mind and the persona of young, pre-surgery Charlie, who is stored in his subconscious.*

4. When Fay tells Charlie how he was acting like a child the previous night, she says, "you kept saying that you couldn't play with me because your mother would take away your peanuts and put you in a cage." What is the significance of this phrase?

*This phrase addresses Charlie's castration anxiety once again. He is afraid that if he plays with Fay, potentially becoming aroused by her, his mother will take away his "peanuts" or penis. The remark about the cage refers to something his mother told him when he was young, recorded in the May 25 entry: "If you ever touch a girl, I'll put you away in a cage, like an animal, for the rest of your life." Rose threatens to dehumanize Charlie by putting him in a cage.*

### June 24

1. What is it that drives Charlie to the theaters?

*There are a few reasons that Charlie is driven to the movie theaters. To begin with, he decides to go on an "anti-intellectual binge" and do something purely recreational. He also thinks he could live vicariously through the people in the films and share their experiences and emotions. However, Charlie comes to realize that he is really looking for a connection; he wants to be part of an audience. In the dark movie theater, he feels part of a group, and he enjoys the occasional, accidental physical contact.*

2. What happens in the diner? Why is Charlie ashamed?

*A mentally challenged dishwasher drops a stack of dishes, and the customers shout at him, calling him stupid. At first, Charlie is ashamed because he was as amused by the accident as the rest of the customers. He then becomes even more ashamed when he realizes that he was once in the same position, and he used to make similar mistakes. Finally, Charlie chastises the other customers before he leaves the diner.*

3. For what purpose does Keyes compare humans of lesser intelligence with humans born blind or with missing limbs?

*Keyes makes the comparison in order to emphasize how incapacitating it is to have below-average intelligence. The comparison also shows how inappropriate it is for people to be insensitive toward the mentally challenged. It seems odd that society should feel sympathy for the one group of handicapped people and not another.*

4. What growth does Charlie display in this section?

*Charlie displays emotional growth by showing empathy and concern for strangers. He also decides to work for a cause that will benefit people other than himself. He plans to ask the Welberg Foundation for permission to do some independent work on the project, in order to help people with mental disabilities.*

### **June 25**

1. How has Alice's interaction with Charlie changed since he has grown smarter? How has her character evolved? What might she represent?

*Alice's kindness toward Charlie has not changed, but she seems indecisive about what kind of relationship they should have. She accepted him from the beginning with kindness and warmth, encouraging him to reach his potential, and she accepts him now with kindness and warmth, a cup of coffee, and a willingness to make love.*

*What changes is the female role that Alice fills. At first, she represents the loving mother that Charlie did not have, giving him wise counsel and support as he matures. When he does mature and no longer needs a mother figure, she evolves into a girlfriend or lover, providing Charlie emotional support on a different level. Alice is the one person in the book who accepts Charlie for who he is, whether he is intelligent or not. She may represent an ideal society that embraces all of its members equally, regardless of their limitations or accomplishments.*

2. What has Charlie realized that he is lacking?

*Charlie discovers that he is emotionally isolated from everyone and everything. He realizes not only that he is wandering like a lost soul, but that he is a lost soul. He needs to be in the company of other people in order to be happy.*

3. Why is Charlie not able to make love to Alice, but able to make love to Fay?

*Charlie is unable to make love to Alice because he is subconsciously ashamed of his genuine physical attraction to her. Charlie is not, however, attracted to Fay, so nothing hinders them.*

4. Interpret the symbol of the window in this section.

*In this section, the window represents the border between the old Charlie and the new one. Even though the younger Charlie is able to watch Fay and the present-day Charlie through the window, the window is also a barrier he cannot cross in order to intervene.*

### June 29

1. Why has Charlie become preoccupied with work?

*Charlie suspects that either his intelligence will revert to what it was before or he will be even less intelligent than he was before the operation. For this reason, he wants to write and research as much as possible while he is in his current state.*

### June 30

1. How does Fay's attitude about the parking tickets reflect Charlie's new attitude about life?

*Fay keeps the parking tickets behind the chair and out of her sight so she does not "get an attack of guilt feelings." Similarly, Charlie is actively repressing his past so that he can enjoy Fay's company and life in general. Like Fay, he does not want to be overcome by his guilty feelings.*

2. How does Fay have a positive effect on Charlie's development?

*Fay is helping Charlie develop emotionally. Her carefree and humorous attitude brings out a more fun and lighthearted side of Charlie's character, allowing him to enjoy life and the company of others. Additionally, Fay's persistent, aggressive nature encourages Charlie to go out dancing and to socialize with other people.*

### July 5

1. How does Fay's anecdote about the stolen money characterize her?

*The story Fay tells about the stolen money reveals that Fay has a kind-hearted, forgiving nature, and furthermore, she believes that crimes are committed out of necessity. Fay suspects that the woman stole the money for a good reason, and the woman probably needed it more than Fay did.*

### July 8

1. What is Charlie's tone when writing about linguists?

*When Charlie writes about linguists, his tone is condescending and sarcastic. He ridicules them for expending too much time and energy analyzing small, insignificant details of language. He further demeans their work when he sarcastically claims that they are "filling volumes and libraries with the subtle linguistic analysis of the grunt."*

2. What does Charlie's attitude toward the linguists' research reinforce about his character?

*Charlie has become so intelligent that he thoroughly understands—and is able to draw connections between—several disciplines. Because of this, he acts condescendingly toward individuals who pretend they are geniuses but have a very limited and specialized knowledge. Even though scientists and researchers generally have one area of expertise and do not have the mental capacity to know as much as Charlie, Charlie holds them to the high standard he has set and criticizes them for their inadequacies. This passage reinforces the idea that Charlie's intellect has given him a superiority complex.*

3. How does the crowd respond to Charlie's "moron act"? How is their response to the act different from how society treated Charlie when he really was mentally challenged? Why?

*The crowd cheers when the persona of the pre-operation Charlie emerges and does a tap dance on stage. However, when Charlie really was mentally challenged, people laughed at and ridiculed him. The reason behind the difference is that the crowd thought Charlie was making fun of people of low intelligence. Since others in the bar thought that the mentally challenged are funny, they shared in what they thought was Charlie's amusement. When Charlie really was suffering from the disability, however, he was the subject of their cruelty.*

### July 9

1. How does Keyes utilize foreshadowing in this entry?

*Throughout the novel, a link has been made between Charlie and Algernon. Since they both underwent the operation—Algernon before Charlie—and they change and react to the operation's effects in the same way, anything that happens to Algernon will likely happen to Charlie as well.*

*Algernon has become violent and erratic. He isolates himself in the corner of his cage, trying to avoid all contact. He has hurt Minnie, he bites Fay, and he tries to bite Charlie. Algernon's strange behavior may foreshadow that Charlie will also withdraw from society, hurt Fay, and attack his caregivers (Professor Strauss and Dr. Nemur).*



**PROGRESS REPORT 15****July 12**

1. What is ironic about Nemur's contingency plan should Charlie completely return to his former state?

*Professor Nemur tells Charlie that, if he completely loses his new intelligence, he will be placed in the Warren State Home. Ironically, the scientists are ultimately no better than Charlie's family. Once he is of no use to him, they will place him in the very home Charlie's mother was going to commit him to.*

2. How does Nemur's language reveal that he has doubts about whether Charlie's change is permanent?

*There are two indications in the speech that Professor Nemur is skeptical about the permanence of Charlie's transformation. First, he tries to light a cigarette that is already lit, indicating that he is not paying attention. Additionally, the pause and reiteration in the clause, "we had the highest hopes of permanence, and we still do...we definitely do—" actually suggests doubt.*

3. In the passage beginning, "For one thing, you might not be the same" and ending with "...you couldn't possibly be the same kind of person," what theme is addressed and how?

*This passage reintroduces the theme of intellect versus emotions, and it reiterates the idea that individuals have both intellectual and emotional intelligence. As the story illustrates, a person's emotional and intellectual intelligence should be about the same level. When Charlie was mentally challenged and had a low intellectual intelligence, he was relatively happy; he was completely oblivious to the fact that his coworkers were ridiculing him, and he thought that everyone was his friend. When Charlie grew more intellectually intelligent, but retained his same level of emotional intelligence, he had trouble connecting with other people and had a panic attack every time he became sexually aroused. In this passage, Dr. Nemur continues developing this theme when he says that Charlie could be worse off than before the surgery if he returns to a low IQ, but retains the same emotional intelligence.*

4. Explain the metaphor comparing the Warren State Home to the freezer.

*The metaphor reveals that Charlie feels he will be essentially dead if he goes back to his original intelligence level and loses his sense of awareness. Like the freezer, the Warren State Home will serve as a place to keep Charlie until his body dies and is buried.*



5. How is Fay's idea about life being a box of mazes reintroduced and developed in this section?

*The reader should also recall that in the June 8 entry, Charlie compares wandering the streets at night to an “endless labyrinth” in the “neon cage of the city.” Furthermore, in Charlie's June 19 entry, Fay mistakes Algernon's cage for a work of modern art and names it “Life is just a box of mazes.” In this section, the metaphor is developed and explained: death lies at the end of the maze of life, and people inevitably move toward it. However, the paths individuals take within the maze define them and determine who they are. Charlie also notes the necessity of planning a path through the maze—this is why he wants to see the Warren State Home, where he may stay if he loses his intelligence.*

6. Contrast Professor Nemur, Alice, and Fay. What theme do their differences represent?

*Professor Nemur is a man who has difficulty relating to those around him. He is concerned with only the quantifiable results of the experiment, and he has little regard for Charlie's emotional well-being. He is highly educated and logical, but cold.*

*Alice is deeply concerned with human emotions, and she respects other people, regardless of their intellectual abilities. She has a strong maternal instinct that compels her to nurture others, and she forms deep, caring relationships with people.*

*Fay is energetic, carefree, and capricious. The relationships she forms with others are superficial and convenient. Fay always acts on impulse, regardless whether her impulses violate societal conventions and what is expected of her.*

*These three characters illustrate the balance between emotion and intellect. Professor Nemur is so intellectual that he cannot form meaningful relationships. Fay is so emotional that she does not have the self-discipline to study and learn. Alice, however, balances intellect and emotion, and as a result, she is stable and content.*

**PROGRESS REPORT 16**

July 14

1. What mood is created by the author's description of the state school? What devices does the author use?

*When Charlie describes the Warren State School, he establishes a dismal mood. Almost all of the images presented in the passage have the connotation of being dark and dreary. Charlie begins the entry by commenting on the weather, saying that the day is "gray and drizzly." The weather alone could evoke a feeling of depression in the reader, but to enhance the mood, Keyes includes Charlie's own emotional response—depression "grips" him—and describes the estate in terms that are dark and foreboding. The building is described as a "sprawling gray estate." The building also has "two concrete pillars," and the image of the hard, solid rock suggests that the place is cold and rigid. Finally, the "narrow side-road" that leads past the building evokes a feeling of claustrophobia.*

2. What is ironic about the hedges enclosing the Warren State Home?

*One would assume that the hedges around the Warren State Home are used to keep the patients in; however, the patients seldom leave the grounds, and when they do, they usually return. Instead, the hedges are used to keep curious people from walking onto the grounds.*

3. Why does the sight of the young man on the tractor disturb Charlie?

*Keyes's description of the man on the tractor suggests that the person is mentally challenged. The man has an "empty smile," "a sailor's hat with the brim pulled down childishly to shield his eyes, although there was no sun out," and "eyes wide, inquiring." The man reminds Charlie of himself before the operation. The thought disturbs him for several possible reasons. For instance, Charlie may feel embarrassed by the way he probably looked to other people when he was mentally challenged. It is also possible that the man foreshadows the person Charlie will become once he reverts to his original IQ.*

4. How does the doctor's comment about the boys in the Warren Home increase reader sympathy for Charlie?

*The doctor tells Charlie not to worry about the boys and that they will not hurt him. After Norma was born, one of the reasons Charlie was sent away was Rose's fear that Charlie would hurt his sister. The doctor, while trying to reassure Charlie, actually emphasizes Charlie's painful memories of being misunderstood and mistrusted.*

5. How does the text reveal that Thelma is self-conscious about the birthmark on her face?

*When Thelma talks to Charlie, she always stands to the left of him so that he can see only the normal side of her face. She never looks directly at him, and the only time Charlie sees the birthmark is when she turns. Her odd but deliberate posture and movements suggest that Thelma is embarrassed by the mark.*

6. Why does Thelma enjoy taking care of the mentally challenged?

*Thelma enjoys taking care of the mentally challenged because she likes feeling needed. Thelma has a natural maternal instinct, and the boys in the home are children she can nurture who will never grow up.*

7. Why does Charlie become emotional when the boy shows him his lamp base?

*Charlie sees the boy as a reflection of the person he was before the operation and the person he will become after he loses his intelligence. Charlie finds it endearing that the people in the hospital have so much less than normal people, but are still pleased with what they have and what they can do. For instance, even though the lamp base the boy makes is of poor quality, he is still happy to show it to Charlie, and he is excited when Charlie praises it. When Charlie leaves, the boy reaches out and touches him as a way of saying goodbye. Charlie becomes emotional when he thinks about how innocent and kind the gesture is.*

8. How does the principal misinterpret Charlie's comment about no one being past help?

*Charlie is referring to himself. However, the principal does not know that the operation was performed on Charlie. She misinterprets his statement as figurative; she thinks it expresses the hope that mentally challenged people can be made more intelligent.*

9. Explain the use of the rhetorical questions in this entry. What does the author seek to convey through them?

*The rhetorical questions encourage the reader to consider the implied answers. In this case, the author is conveying the idea that though there are innumerable people in great need of emotional and physical care, there are very few individuals who are willing to reach out to them. The mentally challenged should be treated like people and be able to experience friendship and love. Society, however, either ignores or ridicules them.*

### July 15

1. What is happening to Algernon?

*Algernon is refusing to eat, and Burt has to clamp him down on the table and force-feed him.*

2. What is the significance of Charlie's statement, "I felt [the bands] around my own arms and legs"?

*Because he identifies so closely with Algernon, Charlie physically feels the sensations Algernon experiences. When Algernon has his legs strapped so Burt can feed him, Charlie imagines that the straps are on his own arms and legs.*

*Additionally, since Algernon's actions foreshadow what will happen to Charlie, this statement leads the reader to predict that Charlie will eventually have to be restrained and force-fed.*

3. How does Keyes show the relationship between Fay and Charlie disintegrating?

*Fay and Charlie only have one thing in common: their physical attraction to each other. Even though Charlie does enjoy Fay's companionship, they do not share common interests, and their lifestyles conflict. While Fay enjoys dancing, drinking, and painting, Charlie prefers studying and learning. Charlie likes to keep his apartment neat and organized, but Fay feels more comfortable when the apartment is in a state of disorder. Since neither person is willing to compromise and partake in the other's activities, and because the ways they chose to live are opposite, they begin to grow apart.*

### July 16

1. How do Fay and Alice meet?

*Fay comes back early from the Stardust Ballroom. She goes up to the fire escape to Charlie's window, then walks into the apartment while Charlie is talking to Alice.*

2. How does Keyes show that Alice and Fay like each other?

*When Charlie returns from the kitchen, he finds Fay sitting on the floor with her shoes off, drinking gin straight from the bottle. Her actions reveal that she is comfortable with Alice in the apartment. This idea is enhanced by the subject of their conversation: Fay is discussing the importance of sunbathing and suggesting that everyone should join a nudist colony. The topic is only half-serious, but it exposes some of Fay's values, particularly her love of freedom and admiration of the human body. The fact that she is revealing these values to Alice shows that she has formed a connection with her. Alice responds to Fay's comment by laughing hysterically, but unlike the people who laughed at Charlie when he was mentally challenged, Alice is not being cruel or rude; she is connecting with Fay by sharing in the humor and amusement. Fay also offers Alice a drink, which is a symbolic gesture of friendship and connection.*

3. Why is Alice opposed to Charlie seeing Fay?

*Alice thinks that Fay could be a negative influence on Charlie and distract him from his work. Since he has superior intelligence for only a finite amount of time and he will eventually revert to his previous state of mind, Alice wants Charlie to do as much as he can to help the world through scientific research while he is still able. Fay will only distract Charlie by influencing him to drink and go out dancing every night.*

4. Why is Alice relieved when Charlie tells her that Fay does not know about his operation?

*In Alice's opinion, Charlie's letting people know about his operation is an intimate revelation. Charlie has to trust the other person in order to confide this secret to him or her. Fay's ignorance about Charlie's background indicates that he has not committed himself to her.*

### July 27

1. How does Charlie's relationship with Fay change in this section?

*When their relationship began, Fay asserted that she did not want any demands placed on her, but now she is making demands on Charlie. Fay is bothered by the fact that Charlie is devoting all of his time to work and ignoring her. Furthermore, Fay is resentful toward Charlie's new work ethic because she does not understand or appreciate the research he is doing. In fact, Fay hates all intellectual activities; she prefers to engage in activities that are artistic, liberating, or sensual. Charlie submitted to Fay and did the things she wanted to do, but Fay is unwilling to accept the things that are important to Charlie.*

2. What does Charlie mean when he says, "time assumes another dimension"?

*Now that Charlie accepts that he will only have his superior intelligence for a limited time, he feels as though he must accomplish as much as he possibly can while he is still able to think complex thoughts. For this reason, time is more important than ever before, and in order to stay focused on his research, Charlie dissociates from his past. To Charlie, "time and space [are] taffy being stretched and looped and twisted out of shape. The only real things are the cages and the mice and the lab equipment here on the fourth floor of the main building."*

3. How does Charlie's manner of perception seem to be changing in this section?

*Charlie is having a difficult time distinguishing between dream and reality, as well as between the past, present, and future. All forms of thought and memory have become amalgamated within Charlie's consciousness; his new perception unifies all ideas and sensations.*

4. How does the passage about the monkeys reflect Charlie's new form of perception?

*When Charlie describes the monkeys' behavior, his observations stimulate a memory, which he cannot differentiate from reality. He imagines that he is a child again and that he is at the zoo. He wants to feed and pet the chimpanzee, but he imagines that there is a sign telling him not to feed the animals. Additionally, he imagines that he sees other people standing outside in spring clothes. This passage about the monkeys and the zoo validates Charlie's remark about his new form of perception. He is unable to distinguish dream from reality and past from present.*

### July 28

1. What is Charlie's tone when he relates the fact that Fay has a new boyfriend? How is this tone conveyed, and what does it reveal? Explain the significance of the tone he uses.

*When Charlie discusses Fay's new boyfriend, he uses an emotionally detached, matter-of-fact tone. His sentences are short and to the point, and with the exception of the word "fortunately," the words he uses have a neutral connotation. The tone in the opening paragraph reinforces its last lines: Charlie really does not care that Fay has left him. In fact, he is somewhat relieved.*

*As Charlie becomes more intelligent, he pays less attention to human contact; his emotions diminish, and his tone becomes flat.*

2. For what purpose does Keyes detail Algernon's actions?

*Algernon has already been established as a device foreshadowing Charlie's intellectual growth and decline; however, since Algernon is a mouse and cannot express his thoughts and feelings, the reader must draw conclusions about what is happening to the mouse based upon Algernon's observable behavior. When Algernon slows down on the unfamiliar path, the reader can conclude that the mouse is slowing down because he is confused. When he starts becoming disorderly and erratic, he is frustrated that he does not know the correct path. Algernon demonstrates confusion when he pauses and turns around, and frustration from making a mistake when he throws himself against the wall. When he starts to screech wildly, he is attempting to escape from the maze. Finally, he demonstrates that he has given up. It is likely that Charlie will react the same way toward his own academic endeavors when he loses his intelligence.*

### July 31

1. Explain the metaphor Charlie uses to describe work in this section.

*Charlie compares the knowledge he gleans from work to something that soaks through his pores. This metaphor shows how the acquisition of knowledge is now something effortless and natural for Charlie.*

2. What is Charlie's tone in this section?

*Charlie is rapturous and ecstatic. He talks about his new ability to find unity, truth, beauty, and love in all things with a sense of awe and wonder. He describes it as fireworks bursting in his mind, a "bubbling energy," a "zest that fills everything [he does]," and something that has "lifted [him] to a peak of light and understanding."*

### August 11

1. What is Charlie's goal in his research involving Algernon?

*Charlie wants to find out why Algernon, who represents all people who will undergo the operation, is starting to regress.*

2. Why does Charlie have trouble communicating with other people? Are his reasons plausible?

*Charlie attributes his difficulty interacting with people to two things. First, he suspects that people fear him. Alice and his coworkers at the bakery become uncomfortable around Charlie after the change, either because they are unable to account for his new intelligence or they were unsure of what to expect from him. Second, Charlie suspects that there is a mutual feeling of indifference between him and others. Charlie becomes impatient with other people when they cannot participate in an intellectual conversation with him, and as such, he prefers not to bother. Likewise, other people either view him as an object—something to be studied, but not befriended—or they become frustrated when they realize that he is much smarter than they are and they cannot understand what he is saying.*

3. Describe Mrs. Nemur's behavior toward Charlie.

*Mrs. Nemur feigns politeness, but attacks Charlie with disguised insults. She wants Mr. Harvey, one of the men funding her husband's research, to know that Professor Nemur is the person who began the research. Furthermore, she wants Charlie to feel that he is indebted to Nemur for giving him his intelligence. Mrs. Nemur undermines Charlie's research by stating that he is "taking up someone else's work," an idea that not only insults Charlie, but reminds Mr. Harvey how important her husband's research is.*



4. Why does Raynor's wife stare at Charlie in such a strange way?

*Mrs. Raynor thinks of Charlie as a test subject instead of a thinking, sentient being. The fact that she rudely stares at him indicates that she views him as an object instead of a person. Furthermore, Mrs. Raynor never addresses Charlie, and she talks about him to the others as if he were not standing nearby. Mrs. Raynor does not think Charlie is capable of understanding the conversation.*

5. How does Charlie justify his ingratitude to Professor Nemur?

*Charlie draws a comparison between himself and a guinea pig, an idea which is intended to mock Professor Nemur for repeatedly talking about him as if he were a test subject and not a real person. Charlie, once again, argues that he was a person both before and after the experiment, and both the research team and the scientific community were wrong to deny him personhood. Additionally, he resents the fact that Professor Nemur has made him feel as though he were indebted to the team and should treat them as his masters.*

6. How does Keyes use language to reveal that the original Charlie is manifesting himself while Charlie is in a drunken stupor?

*Charlie's tone changes, and he begins to show signs of hesitation and self-consciousness. He becomes very apologetic, and he acts submissively toward Professor Nemur. In addition, the style and structure of his language changes. Charlie begins to use run-on sentences and misspell/mispronounce words. Both changes are characteristic of Charlie's pre-operation writing style, indicating that young Charlie is speaking through the drunk, present-day Charlie.*

7. Interpret the scene with the bathroom mirror.

*While Keyes has used windows as a symbol throughout the book, he now replaces the window with a mirror. At this junction, before the mirror, the two Charlies finally meet. There is interaction. The Charlie in the mirror seems to ask for his body back, but the Charlie in the bathroom indicates that he will never give it up.*



8. How is this section a turning point in the novel?

*The two conflicts reach their climax. First, Charlie and Professor Nemur engage in a confrontation, and Charlie finally berates the professor for treating him as though he were an animal or an object instead of a human being. Then, Charlie and his former self confront each other through the bathroom mirror. Charlie is forced to acknowledge that the other Charlie is not a separate entity, completely dissociated from himself, but another facet of his personality that he must battle for control over his body.*

*Additionally, this section of the novel contains anagnorisis, a moment of recognition before the turn of events. Aside from accepting that young Charlie is a part of himself, present-day Charlie acknowledges the negative changes that have occurred in him. His new intelligence has made him arrogant and self-centered, completely incapable of forming a connection with other people. He is ashamed of the person he has become.*

4:30AM

1. How does Charlie find the answer to his question?

*As Charlie anticipates, the answer to his question comes to him in his sleep, when the gap between his conscious and unconscious mind is closed.*

### August 26

1. What is the “Algernon-Gordon Effect”?

*The “Algernon-Gordon Effect” is Charlie’s hypothesis describing the correlation between how much an animal or individual’s intelligence has increased and the rate at which intelligence will decrease. According to the hypothesis, “Artificially-induced intelligence deteriorates at a rate of time directly proportional to the quantity of the increase.” In other words, the more intelligent an animal or person becomes as a result of the operation, the more quickly that animal or person will regress.*

2. What predictions can be made about Charlie based upon the hypothesis?

*Since Charlie has become one of the smartest men alive as a result of the experiment, the decline in his intellect will occur over a very short period of time.*

### September 1

1. Based upon what can be discerned from this passage, how does Charlie feel about his own regression?

*Charlie feels resigned. He knows now that his mental decline is inevitable, especially since he is the one who has figured out the formula predicting the rate at which he will lose his intelligence.*

2. How do Professor Nemur and the other researchers receive Charlie's hypothesis?

*Professor Nemur and the others are reasonably skeptical about Charlie's hypothesis. Under Nemur's orders, Burt takes Charlie's report to Hallston University to check his formulas and application of them, and Burt himself reviews Charlie's charts and experiments.*

### September 2

1. What are Charlie's feelings toward the researchers?

*Charlie has no resentment toward Professor Nemur, Dr. Strauss, or Burt. Their experiment was well-thought out, and they had Charlie's and society's best interests in mind. When they began the experiment, they did not believe it would have any major negative consequences.*

### September 15

1. What request does Charlie make of the researchers?

*Charlie asks that no additional intelligence-enhancing experiments be done on humans until they are performed on animals first.*

2. How does Charlie predict a solution to the Algernon-Gordon problem will be discovered?

*Charlie thinks that scientists studying enzyme imbalances will most likely discover the solution. They will need a lot more time to do research. Meanwhile, he will lose his intelligence.*

### September 17

1. What are the first indications that Charlie's intelligence is waning?

*Charlie is becoming absent-minded; he frequently loses things, and becomes angry when he cannot find them.*

2. What are the physiological changes in Algernon's brain that cause intelligence loss?

*The cerebral convolutions become smoother, and the brain fissures become deeper and broader.*

3. What effect does Algernon's death have on Charlie?

*Algernon's death makes Charlie's impending decline in intelligence seem more real. Even though Charlie could trust that his theories and the conclusions he drew from observing Algernon's behavior were true, there was always a small amount of doubt that the hypothesis could be wrong and Charlie could retain his intelligence. However, Algernon's decline and death make Charlie realize that he will suffer in the same way.*

### September 21

1. Why does Charlie decide to visit his mother?

*Charlie's decline is quickly approaching. If he does not meet and forgive his mother in the near future, he will never be able to.*

### September 27

1. Cite three instances of personification that Keyes uses to describe Charlie's old neighborhood. What is the overall effect of the device?

*Keyes personifies the refrigerator on the sidewalk, saying that it had its "face ripped off," and he says the mattress on the curb has "wire intestines hanging out of its belly." Furthermore, Keyes writes that there are "old people standing in the shade of tired porches." All three objects are given personal characteristics, and they are shown to be in torment.*

*The personification in this scene evokes sympathy for the inhabitants of the area, who, like the unfeeling objects in the street, are suffering in despair. The street was once a happy, prosperous one, but it is now desolate and affected by poverty. Even before the reader is introduced to Rose, he or she should suspect that her life has been tough, and even though she deserves censure for her cruelty to Charlie, she has fallen into misfortune and should be pitied as well.*

2. How does Rose appear in the section, and how does Keyes's description make her a sympathetic character?

*Rose is now an old woman: Her hair is almost entirely white, and her face is wrinkled. Additionally, the old brown sweater that she wears is evidence of her poverty. Despite her age, when Charlie comes to visit, she is standing outside in the cold and wind, washing the ground floor windows of her house, which, as was already previously revealed to the reader, is on a dirty, squalid street. The work is evidently a difficult, burdensome task, for when Rose stops working and straightens up, she is out of breath and her face is covered in perspiration.*

*Rather than pity herself for her evidently terrible life, she works hard to make the best of things. Even though her street has fallen into ruin and the effort is wasted, she wants to keep her windows clean and nice. Because Rose is fruitlessly attempting to better her situation and surroundings, the reader feels sorry for her.*

3. What is symbolic about the chore Rose is doing when Charlie arrives?

*Of all the jobs Rose could be doing as Charlie approaches, she is washing the windows. In this novel, windows symbolize Charlie's ability to view his past through flashback, while still dissociating himself from the traumatic experiences. In much the same way, windows allow a person to see in or see out, but there is still a barrier impeding entrance and exit. When he sees Rose, he remembers her from his childhood memories, but is still able to distance himself from the past.*

4. What is significant about the first words Charlie says to his mother?

*Charlie is literally speechless when his mother addresses him, and his behavior is similar to the way he acted the last time he met her, back when he was mentally challenged. He says that he stood "dumbly, unable to make [himself] understood," and that "[his] tongue kept getting in the way, like a huge obstruction, and [his] mouth was dry." Additionally, the first word he says is "Maaa," which is almost incomprehensible and would be something the former Charlie would say.*

5. How does Charlie respond to Rose's retreat into the house, and why might his actions be significant?

*Charlie responds violently to Rose's retreat, although he does not seem to be conscious of it. He breaks the glass window of the door with his hand—which may be a symbolic gesture of Charlie breaking and crossing the barrier between his past and present life—and he pushes through, landing on the floor of the vestibule. Then, he climbs up the stairs to his family's apartment and demands that his mother open the door. In essence, Charlie breaks into the house.*

*Charlie's actions may also be indicative of his regression. When Algernon's intelligence began to regress, he started acting erratic and violently, throwing himself against the walls of his cage and even attacking Minnie. Charlie is acting in a similar way.*

*Additionally, the change in Charlie is somewhat ironic: Rose feared Charlie when he was mentally challenged, although he was harmless then. Now he is cognitively advanced, but capable of rage and violence.*

6. Why does Charlie's manner of speaking hypnotize his mother?

*The way Charlie speaks, using complex sentences to express intelligent thoughts, shows Rose that he has changed and is no longer mentally challenged.*

7. What is relevant about the way Rose treats Charlie after he realizes that he has been hurt?

*Rose treats Charlie as if he were an animal, which is similar to the way Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss treated Charlie before his operation. For a few moments, Rose thinks that Charlie is a child again, and because of the way she treats him, Keyes once again shows that society views the mentally challenged as creatures less than human.*

8. What are some indications that Rose has a mental problem?

*Rose's awareness and memory are impaired. While she initially recognizes Charlie and seems to understand that he has changed, she starts acting as though he were still a child. However, after a while, she forgets who he is entirely, and she thinks that he has come to the apartment because she has not paid her electric bill. When she recognizes Charlie once more, she does not seem to know that more than twenty years have passed since he left home; she wants to brag about his report to the neighbors and his schoolteachers, completely oblivious to the fact that most of them have moved away or died. Additionally, she forgets that Matt left her, and she expects Matt and Norma to come home.*

9. What does Charlie give his mother, and why?

*Charlie gives his mother a copy of his report on the Algernon-Gordon effect so that she can show her friends that he became successful.*

10. What is ironic about Norma's reason for taking care of her mother?

*Norma cares for her mother because she does not want to put her in an institution. However, Norma gave consent for Professor Nemur to use Charlie in an experiment, and, if it did not turn out well, to put him in the Warren State home.*

11. What is Norma's reaction to meeting Charlie?

*Norma is shocked, but happy to be reunited with her brother. She expected him to come at some point, but she thought he would call first. She is also thrilled that he remembers her and their mother.*

12. Why did Norma never make an effort to contact Charlie?

*Rose had told Norma that Charlie passed away while living in the Warren State Home. It was not until Professor Nemur asked for permission to use Charlie in the experiment that she realized he was still alive.*

13. How is Norma different from how Charlie remembered her?

*Norma is no longer spoiled and cruel, but kind, warm, and affectionate.*

14. Charlie's mother is in the same room as he and Norma are, but she seems not to be there at all. Why is this ironic?

*Charlie and his mother have switched roles. In the past, Norma and Rose talked about Charlie in front of him, knowing that he could not understand. Now that Rose has developed a mental disorder, Charlie and Rose are free to talk about her while she is there, knowing that she cannot understand what they are saying.*

15. What is the memory Charlie recounts to Norma?

*Charlie asks Norma if she remembers the time when they were playing in the basement, jumping on the mattress with lampshades over their heads. Norma bounced off the mattress and hit her head on the wall, and when their parents came down to see what happened, Norma lied and said that Charlie was trying to hurt her. Rose blamed Matt for not watching Charlie, and to punish her son, she beat him with a strap.*

16. What explanation does Norma give Charlie for why she despised him?

*Norma was jealous of the special treatment that her parents gave Charlie. While she had to go to school and earn good grades, Charlie was allowed to miss school and was never punished for not doing his homework correctly. Also, Norma's peers used to pick on her for having a mentally challenged brother.*

*When Norma told their parents that he tried to kill her, she was upset that she was not invited to a birthday party because Charlie was of below-average intelligence.*

17. Explain the allusions to the houses of Atreus and Cadmus.

*These are families famous in ancient Greek literature for the suffering they underwent.*

*Tantalus was the founder of the house of Atreus. Originally, he was favored by the gods and allowed to eat from Zeus's table; however, when he stole nectar and ambrosia and gave it to mankind, he was prohibited from returning to Olympus.*

*In order to avenge himself, he invited the gods to dinner and served them his son, Pelops, who he had cut into tiny pieces and cooked. With the exception of Demeter, the gods realized beforehand what they were being served, and they did not eat the meal. Instead, they resurrected Pelops, giving him an ivory shoulder where Demeter had accidentally eaten the flesh. Tantalus was punished, and his descendents were cursed.*

*Tantalus's grandson, Atreus, committed a similar crime. After his brother, Thyestes, committed adultery with Atreus's wife and attempted to usurp the kingdom, Atreus asked Thyestes to have supper with him. In order to punish his brother, Atreus cooked and served Thyestes's children. Thyestes was avenged when his later son, Aegisthus, killed Atreus.*

*Descendents of Cadmus also had unfortunate fates. Semele, Cadmus's daughter, was impregnated by Zeus, and when she asked the god to appear to her, he appeared as lightning and unintentionally burnt her alive. When Acteon, Cadmus's grandson, accidentally saw Artemis bathing, she turned him into a stag, and he was killed by his own hunting dogs. Oedipus, another of Cadmus's descendents, unintentionally murdered his father and married his mother. Oedipus's sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, killed each other in battle while fighting for their father's kingdom, and their sister, Antigone, was put to death by her uncle, Creon, for burying Polyneices.*

*By alluding to these two families, Keyes emphasizes the injustice done to Charlie. No oracle or curse contributed to the terrible way he was treated, only society's insensitivity toward the mentally challenged and his mother's undeserved cruelty. The only reason Charlie was sent away was that his mother was afraid that her friends and neighbors would think less of her for giving birth to a child with a disability. There are no good answers to Norma's questions about why Charlie was sent away and why he could not have stayed.*

18. What reason does Charlie provide for not being able to return home? What does he offer to do to help the family instead?

*Charlie suspects that Norma wants him to return home and help care for his family only because she thinks that his change is permanent; she does not know that he is going to lose his intelligence and return to being who he was before the surgery. Charlie tells Norma that he will regularly send the family money from the stipend he is given by the Foundation.*

19. What prompts Rose to threaten Charlie with a knife? Furthermore, what purpose does this scene have within the novel?

*When Charlie hugs Norma, Rose mistakenly thinks the action is sexual, and she threatens him with the knife. By having Rose respond in this way to a simple gesture of affection, the scene validates what Charlie has believed all along: He did nothing to warrant Rose's cruelty. He never harmed Norma. Charlie did not have to leave because of something he did, but because of his mother's attitude toward him and the way she put his life in danger.*

20. Explain Norma's déjà vu.

*After the knife incident, Norma has the feeling that she has witnessed this scene before. Charlie realizes that Norma has the same memory he has of the night his mother threatened to kill him. However, Charlie decides not to burden Norma with the truth.*

## PROGRESS REPORT 17

### October 3

1. What is the importance of the image of young Charlie in the window?

*The image is what keeps Charlie from committing suicide. He realizes that the life he has been living for the last seven months belongs to the boy in the window; no one, not even he, has the right to throw the life away.*

2. Why is Charlie's story about playing the hi-fi late at night significant?

*Charlie's story supports his remark that he has "become edgy and irritable," and the change in his character indicates that he is losing his intellect. The reader should recall that Algernon, when he started to regress, began to act violently. Charlie's story—particularly about wanting to hit Mr. Vernor and smashing all of his records—indicates that Charlie, too, is acting violently because of his regression.*



### October 4

1. What triggers the connection that Charlie makes between Dr. Strauss and Matt?

*Dr. Strauss, looking tired and flabby, reminds Charlie of Matt. Charlie then connects sitting on the couch with sitting in the barber chair.*

2. What is the cause of Charlie's animosity toward Dr. Strauss?

*Charlie degrades psychoanalysis by comparing it to a haircut. He also makes jokes about the stupid conclusions (e.g., symbolic rebirth and baptism) psychologists draw from the associations.*

*Charlie feels that Dr. Strauss's psychoanalysis of him is fruitless. Charlie knows that his regression is inevitable, and there is nothing Dr. Strauss can do to prevent the change from occurring or to make Charlie feel better about the situation.*

*Furthermore, Charlie dislikes how Dr. Strauss displays no emotion. Even when he actively tries to upset Dr. Strauss, the psychologist shows no response. Charlie calls him "Stolid Strauss."*

3. Draw a connection between what happens to Charlie at this session and what happened to Algernon.

*After periods of heightened sensitivity and exertion, Algernon went into unresponsive, coma-like states. However, when a short amount of time had passed, he would return to his normal behavior. Charlie goes into a similar trance during his session with Dr. Strauss.*

4. What is happening to Charlie as he experiences the sensation of expanding?

*Charlie is having a near-death experience. He begins to lose the connection with his body, and grows "lighter, less dense, and larger," increasingly gaining consciousness until he is able to perceive the entire world. He is losing his sense of self and is dissolving into the universe. Furthermore, when Charlie describes his experience of moving upward, he may be entering heaven or some form of afterlife. Another indication that he is dying is Keyes's diction. He writes that Charlie is about to "pierce the crust of existence," leaving "the mortal world below." It can therefore be assumed that Charlie is moving into a state of non-existence in the immortal world above.*

5. What is happening to Charlie as he experiences the sensation of shrinking? How can he be both shrinking and expanding at the same time?

*By "shrinking," Charlie means that he is losing the sense of himself as an entity that exists and takes up space; he is being absorbed into the fabric of being. At the same time, his spirit is expanding out of his body and uniting with the rest of the universe.*

6. What event or situation does the imagery in Charlie's vision suggest?

*Charlie is re-experiencing birth. First, he makes a slip of the tongue when trying to say the word ego; instead, he says "egg." This leads him to wonder if he is being reborn.*

*The multipetaled flower, the cave, and the emerging of darkness into light are all images of birth. Charlie is being born into the ultimate knowledge of reality, but he is pulled back into being by the other Charlie, who is afraid of this knowledge.*

7. What does Charlie mean by "Plato's words"?

*This is an allusion to Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (contained in his long philosophical treatise, The Republic). In this allegory, people are chained within a cave, watching the shadows of real things play upon the cave walls. One of the people escapes the cave and ventures into the light. At first, his eyes hurt, but eventually, he comes to know reality. When he goes back into the cave to tell the people still chained about the situation, they do not believe him.*

*Charlie, by undergoing his intelligence-enhancing operation, has metaphorically left the cave. He has seen and experienced things that other men and women, let alone pre-surgery Charlie, could not comprehend. Now that he is regressing and going back into the cave, he is aware that he will never be the same again. Furthermore, in line with what Professor Nemur said about Charlie being emotionally scarred by what he experienced when he was intelligent, Charlie will be impaired when he returns to his normal state of mind. While he may not remember what he accomplished when he had high intelligence, he will be upset knowing that he has lost something.*

## **October 5**

1. How is Charlie's frustration about his mental deterioration evident in this section?

*Charlie mentions that he is having difficulty writing his progress reports, and as a result, he does not want to do them. Additionally, when Charlie realizes how much the speed at which he can do the maze decreased, he tears the paper and throws it away. He then refuses to do the maze again, and he tries to relieve his anger by yelling at Burt.*

2. What does the Rorschach test that Burt gives Charlie unintentionally reveal?

*The Rorschach test, which is intended to test personality, shows Charlie just how much he has forgotten. Once, he knew exactly how the test worked and what the desirable responses were. However, when he starts boasting that he knows what he has to do, he realizes that he has completely forgotten.*

3. How does Charlie project his frustration about memory loss onto the cards?

*Charlie means to search his memory for the answer to how the Rorschach test works, but instead, he looks through the cards as if they could give him an answer to his problems.*

4. What does Charlie see in the inkblots, and what do these images reveal about his mental and emotional state?

*On the first card, Charlie imagines that he sees a woman washing the floor or a man holding a knife. The woman washing the floor is most likely Rose, for the last time Charlie saw her, she was cleaning. The knife represents Charlie's castration anxiety, and the fact that Charlie says a man holds the knife instead of a woman suggests that he is trying to hide his fear from Burt by changing the gender of the attacker. Both images Charlie sees in the inkblot reveal that he is still traumatized by the way his mother neglected him and prevented him from being able to have a sexual relationship with a woman.*

*On the second card, Charlie imagines that he sees either two figures fighting over a doll or two faces staring through a window. Both images depict the conflict between Charlie's two personas over the control of his body. Charlie is still having trouble accepting that he will have to relinquish control over his body and give it back to his mentally challenged counterpart.*

5. What is the meaning of Charlie's elevator metaphor?

*Charlie compares his intelligence level to an elevator. He started on the lower level of the building. After the operation, his intelligence increased, even surpassing Burt's IQ. In other words, he took the elevator past Burt's floor. However, Charlie knows that he is regressing, and his IQ is going to return to his initial level, much lower than Burt's. In terms of the metaphor, he will be passing Burt on the elevator down. Since Charlie does not believe that he will be able to regain his intelligence, he tells Burt that he does not think he will take the elevator again.*

### **October 7**

1. What is the purpose of the flashback in this scene?

*The flashback emphasizes Charlie's decline in reading level. Just as he struggles reading Paradise Lost, he once had a difficult time reading a simple children's book.*

2. How does Keyes convey Charlie's anxiety in this section?

*While Charlie remembers his difficulty learning to read, he unknowingly starts breaking the binding of the book. When Charlie regains awareness and realizes what he is doing, he breaks the book's back, tears out some pages, and throws the book across the room.*

### October 10

1. In this entry, Charlie makes a remark about being brought home by a police officer. What effect does this have on the narrative?

*Earlier in the novel, after he got drunk with his coworkers and was abandoned by them, he got lost in the city streets and had to be brought home by the police. This remark brings the text full circle and shows that Charlie is returning to the level of intelligence he had at the beginning of the novel.*

2. What does Charlie mean when he says that there is a “gray film over everything”?

*Charlie is losing his sense of awareness.*

### October 11

1. Why does Charlie ask Alice, “[w]hat’s wrong with the zoo?”

*Charlie accuses Alice of coming to his apartment not because she is concerned about his well-being, but because she wants to observe him as if he were a spectacle. Charlie also dehumanizes himself in this statement, comparing himself to an animal. In effect, Charlie is resigning himself to the idea that mentally challenged individuals are not people.*

2. How does Charlie finally manage to make love to Alice?

*Charlie becomes fully conscious of the fact that Alice is neither his mother nor his sister, and since sexual intercourse with her would not be incestuous, he should not feel guilty about sex with her.*

3. What realization does Charlie have in this section?

*Charlie realizes that intelligence without friendship or human affection is worthless.*

**October 14 - 19**

1. Chart the course of Charlie's decline in these entries.

*On the 14<sup>th</sup>, Charlie goes to a concert to enjoy music by Stravinsky, but finds he no longer has the patience to listen to it. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, he learns that he has days of amnesia and realizes the symptoms signal senility. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, Charlie tries reading his paper on the Algernon-Gordon Effect, but cannot understand most of it. He is particularly irritable and angry toward Alice, but later regrets his behavior. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Charlie realizes that his motor activity is impaired; he trips frequently and tends to drop things. He also tries to read an article written in German and realizes he has forgotten all of the foreign languages he has learned.*

2. Why does Charlie feel that he is always looking at life through a window?

*As a child, he was kept inside so no one would know there was anything wrong with him. Most of his memories involve him looking through a window or a mirror. In fact, as he traveled the elevator of intellect to the top and then back down, he did not have an opportunity to step out of it and participate in life and relationships; he spent the time looking out the glass sides of the elevator, separated from the affairs of those around him.*

**October 21**

1. Contrast Charlie's personality as recorded in this entry with his earlier character.

*When Charlie was gaining intelligence, he was warm-hearted and kind toward everyone. He also had a sense of humor and wanted to make friends. Now that Charlie's intelligence is declining, he isolates himself from everyone else. He attempts to escape from his life by watching television, and he takes out his anger on the people he loves.*

2. Why does Charlie become angry with Alice?

*She chastises him for his bad behavior. She says that rather than using his time wisely, Charlie is pitying himself. He is also angry because he is having difficulty understanding some of the things Alice says, and he resents the fact that he is losing his intelligence.*

**October 25**

1. How has Charlie's life changed since Alice left?

*Charlie's coordination has deteriorated to the point where he can no longer use the typewriter and has to write his progress reports longhand. He also has started taking books out of the library, hoping that reading will help him retain his knowledge.*

2. Who visits Charlie? Why?

*First, Dr. Strauss visits Charlie, claiming that he has come to collect the progress reports. However, since Charlie offered to send them to the college when he was finished with them, Charlie assumes that Dr. Strauss wants to see how he is feeling.*

*Mrs. Mooney also comes to the apartment frequently and brings Charlie food. While it is possible that she comes due to her own concern for Charlie's health, it is also possible that Dr. Strauss or Alice have put her up to it.*

### **November 1**

1. How does Keyes use language in this section to show Charlie's decline?

*Charlie's language reveals that he has forgotten the rules of grammar and punctuation that he learned. He begins to use run-on sentences again, just as he used to when he was mentally challenged, and the only punctuation marks he uses are question marks and periods. He also starts to misspell words, writing "rememberd" instead of remembered.*

*Furthermore, he has lost his ability to think creatively and metaphorically. This is evident in the fact that he does not understand the symbolic meaning and deeper significance of the novel Don Quixote.*

2. Explain the symbolism of the window in this section.

*The window has always served as a boundary between the intelligent Charlie and the mentally challenged Charlie. Charlie described watching his flashbacks as looking through a window, and he frequently commented that he imagined younger Charlie watching him through the window as well. In this section, Charlie has regressed intellectually, and he is now in the position of his younger self, looking out the window at the normal world.*

### **November 2**

1. How have Charlie's feelings about sexuality evolved by this entry?

*When Charlie was more intelligent, he experienced guilt when he became sexually aroused by women. He gradually became aware that the guilt was instilled in him by his mother, who threatened to kill him or put him in a cage if he had sexual feelings about women. However, he eventually overcame his anxiety and was able to make love to Alice. Now, even though his intellect is declining, he still retains the level of emotional intelligence he had before his regression, and he is excited by the sight of the woman bathing. Despite his ability to become aroused when he sees the woman's naked body, he feels disappointed and lonely.*

**Nov 5**

1. How is Charlie's decline shown in his journal?

*Just as before, Charlie neglects to use commas, apostrophes, and all punctuation marks other than periods. Now, however, he no longer writes the full name of the month on the top of his entries, but uses abbreviations. He also uses short words instead of long, complex ones because he is too tired to use the dictionary. Moreover, Charlie occasionally begins his sentences with conjunctions, creating sentence fragments.*

**Nov 9 - 10**

1. Trace the evolution of Charlie's "faith."

*At the beginning of the novel, Charlie is very superstitious, and his faith rests in his rabbit's foot and his horseshoe, which he believes give him good luck. After his operation, however, his rabbit's foot and horseshoe are no longer important to him, and they are no longer mentioned in the narrative. A few weeks later, Charlie puts his faith in science and the possibilities it holds for him and other mentally challenged people. On a few occasions, he considers whether God exists, and he remembers the way his mother talked about and prayed to God. Finally, as his intelligence diminishes and returns to its original level, Charlie once again puts his faith in his rabbit's foot and horseshoe.*

**Nov 11 - 16**

1. What is one significant difference between Charlie at the beginning of the novel and Charlie at the end?

*Now that he has overcome his anxiety about women, he is sexually aroused by them. While previously, he would have been terrified and embarrassed to see an image of a naked woman, now he takes pleasure in looking at pornographic magazines.*

*Another difference is that Charlie is now aware of how people in society treat the mentally challenged; he knows when people are making fun of him.*

2. How has Charlie's relationship with Alice devolved by the end of the book?

*Charlie continues to love Alice, but he drives her away. Charlie is embarrassed by his regression, and he feels that Alice, who knew him when he was intelligent, will laugh at him. Despite this, Alice continues to show concern for Charlie by checking on him and contributing money to pay his rent and buy his food.*



**Nov 18**

1. Compare and contrast the bakery when Charlie returns with the bakery when Charlie left.

*When Charlie returns to the bakery, he finds many of the same people still working there and things operating pretty much as they were. Mr. Donner keeps his promise to Charlie's uncle and accepts Charlie back as a bakery worker. Charlie resumes his old job of cleaning the bathroom and sweeping the floors. Also, a new employee, Meyer Klaus, makes fun of Charlie, just as the others used to.*

*Some things have changed, however. Before he left, Charlie had little memory of his past, but now, he remembers that he used to be smart. He explains the operation to his coworkers, and they develop a new respect for him. They defend him when Meyer Klaus ridicules him. At his return, it seems as though the workers truly have become Charlie's friends.*

**Nov 21**

1. How does the author convey the idea that Charlie, like Algernon, will be worse off at the end of the experiment than he was at the beginning?

*Before the experiment, Charlie was able to lead a relatively normal life, working at the bakery part time and living outside of the Warren State Home. Now, however, Charlie is going to Warren, where he will stay with other mentally challenged people who are unable to work or live on their own.*

2. What does Charlie take with him to the Warren Home?

*Charlie takes a few books with him to practice reading, a new rabbit's foot and lucky penny, and some magic powder that he believes will make him smart.*

3. Why does Charlie believe that he is better off now than he was before the operation?

*He has had the opportunity to learn many new things, but also knows he has a family.*



# Flowers for Algernon

## progris riort 1 martch 3

1. What is immediately noticeable about the form and structure of this novel?  
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2. Who is Charlie Gordon?  
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3. Judging by this first entry, what is Charlie's personality like? What seems to be the main focus of his life?  
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4. For what purpose does the doctor need Charlie?  
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5. Why does Charlie hope that Dr. Strauss will use him?  
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6. Why does a "journal" work as the form for this story?  
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**progris riport 2-martch 4**

1. What does Charlie's nervousness about Burt's white coat suggest about his character?

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2. How does Charlie's initial reactions to the inkblot cards contribute to his character development?

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3. What is significant about Charlie's refusal to make up anything about the inkblots?

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4. What is the Rorschach test?

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5. How does Keyes convey Burt's frustration?

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**3d progris riport**

1. Why does Miss Kinnian consider Charlie her best student? What does this tell us about him?

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2. What do we learn about Charlie's family in this entry? What do the facts suggest?

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3. What seems to be the key aspect of Charlie's disability that prevents him from learning?

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4. What complication to the plot does Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur's need for consent introduce?

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5. What does the author reveal to the reader when Charlie writes "Gimpy hollers at me all the time when I do something rong, but he reely likes me because hes my frend."

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### progris riport 4

1. What is the Thematic Apperception Test?

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2. How does the Thematic Apperception Test mirror the earlier Rorschach Test?

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3. What does the misuse of words such as “spearamints” and “amazed” contribute to the text?

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4. What tests does Charlie face in the Psychology Laboratory?

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5. What does Charlie’s first meeting with Algernon emphasize? What does it contribute to the story?

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**progris riport 5 mar 6**

1. How does Keyes make Nemur a sympathetic figure in this entry?

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2. What possibility is foreshadowed in this entry?

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3. Why is Charlie unafraid of what will happen to him?

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**progris riport 6th Mar 8**

1. Where is the pathos in Charlie's explanation of his motivation?

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2. What does Charlie tell the people at Donner's Bakery? Why?

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3. What do the lucky penny, rabbit's foot, and horseshoe represent?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 7 MARCH 11**

1. Why are “Progress Report” and “March” spelled correctly at the beginning of this entry?

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2. What is Charlie’s reaction to being scared?

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3. How is Charlie’s progress conveyed in this section?

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4. What is further suggested about Charlie’s desire to be smarter? What does this contribute to the emotional impact of the novel?

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5. What is significant about Professor Nemur’s suggestion that Charlie write his journal?

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**March 12 – 13**

1. What does Charlie's response to Hilda's remark about tea in China reveal about him?  
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2. How does Hilda's opposition to the experiment introduce the ethical considerations that are often explored in science fiction?  
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3. What does the allusion to Adam and Eve contribute?  
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4. Why is Hilda moved from Charlie's section of the hospital?  
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5. Contrast Miss Kinnian's relationship with Charlie with his mother's. Why are the differences significant?  
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**Progress report 8****March 15 - 16**

1. What is ironic about the fact that Charlie records a lack of progress? What is Keyes's point in establishing this irony?  

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2. What does Charlie's stated animosity toward Algernon contribute to both character and emotional impact?  

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3. What can be inferred from Charlie's observations of the college students, and Burt's remark, about the students' claims to intelligence?  

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4. Why does Burt take Charlie to the school cafeteria?  

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5. Who is financing the Algernon/Charlie project?  

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**March 17 - 21**

1. Charlie notes, "I never new before that I was dumber than a mouse." What does Keyes reveal here?

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2. How has Charlie's relationship with Algernon changed? How does Keyes indicate the developing relationship?

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3. How might the change in Charlie's tone be indicative of his increased intelligence?

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4. What are some indications of Charlie's progress in this section?

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5. What is Keyes's point in having Charlie note that the other employees "do not like Ernie"?

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**March 24 – 27**

1. Professor Nemur is frustrated by Charlie's questions about the TV, but Dr. Strauss seems encouraged. Why?

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2. What does Professor Nemur say the TV is intended to do?

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3. What does Charlie think about his first night with the TV?

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4. What new insight does Charlie gain that he did not have before?

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5. What is the significance of Charlie's first memory—to the plot? To the reader's understanding of Charlie's character?

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6. In what way does the phrase, "They are all good friends to me" evoke sympathy for Charlie?

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7. How is the flashback an effective literary technique?

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8. For what reasons would Professor Nemur suggest that Charlie attend therapy once he starts remembering his past through his dreams? What aspect of Charlie's development does therapy represent?

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**March 28 - 31**

1. Why does the author have Charlie look up the word “subconscious”? What is the significance of this particular word?  
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2. What victory does Charlie achieve? Why is this significant to the plot? To Charlie’s character development?  
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3. What does Charlie’s response to his victory suggest about his character?  
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4. How have Charlie’s feelings toward Algernon changed?  
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5. How does Charlie’s relationship with Algernon mirror what he begins to remember about his family’s dynamic?  
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6. What does Charlie’s evaluation of *Robinson Crusoe* reveal about his values? Why would he empathize with Crusoe?  
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**PROGRESS REPORT 9****April 1 - 4**

1. Explain the irony of the episode concerning the mixing machine.  

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2. What does Charlie's response to Joe's telling him to "go jump in a lake" reveal about Charlie's intelligence?  

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3. How has the structure of Charlie's writing changed by this time?  

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4. Why does Charlie continue to defend his "friends"? What does Miss Kinnian's response suggest?  

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5. What is the author establishing by comparing Miss Kinnian to Charlie's mother?  

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6. What assessment can be made about Charlie's mother?  

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**April 6 – 14**

1. What do the events at the party reveal about Charlie's awareness?

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2. What memory does the comment about Halloran's trigger?

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3. How does Keyes allow the reader to see Charlie's emotional growth, as well as his intellectual development?

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4. Why does Charlie feel empty inside? How does he deal with the feeling?

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5. Interpret the simile that Charlie uses to describe his memories returning.

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6. How does the author use this entry to arouse pathos in the reader?

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**April 14 - 17**

1. How has the statement “Your intellectual growth is going to outstrip your emotional growth” already been demonstrated?

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2. The author mentions three novels: *The Great Gatsby*, *An American Tragedy*, and *Look Homeward, Angel*. What will reading these novels do for Charlie?

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3. What new emotion does Charlie experience? Why is this significant point in his intellectual development? What theme does it advance?

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4. How does Charlie’s altered view of friendship further reflect his intellectual and emotional growth?

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5. Why does Charlie write portions of his journal entry in third person?

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6. What does Charlie’s opinion of Harriet reveal about his sexual development at eleven years old?

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**April 18**

1. Contrast Charlie's second attempt at the Rorschach test with his first.

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2. What is ironic about the doctors' determining that Charlie has reached a new level of maturity?

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3. What does Charlie's new self-consciousness indicate about his mental and emotional development? How has he changed?

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4. Cite two statements that indicate Charlie is experiencing a feeling of embarrassment.

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5. Answer Charlie's question at the end of the passage.

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**PROGRESS REPORT 10****April 21**

1. In Charlie's memory, how do Frank and Gimpsey treat him? How is this different from what he used to think?

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2. In this passage, Charlie again views his past through the window. What might the window symbolize?

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3. What can be inferred about Charlie's childhood based upon his reaction to the words *learn* and *teach*?

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4. Explain what is revealed about Gimpsey's relationship with Charlie in this flashback.

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**April 22**

1. Describe the “changes” Charlie is beginning to see in the people at the bakery. What is ironic about his realization?

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**April 24**

1. What does Charlie's overhearing the conversation between Drs. Strauss and Nemur suggest about his development?

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2. Who supports sharing the findings at the convention? Who does not? What do their opinions suggest about their characters?

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3. How has Charlie's view of Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur changed?

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**April 26 - 27**

1. Analyze Charlie's writing. Why does Keyes mention particular authors in this passage?

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**April 28**

1. Charlie writes that he can remember through the blur, back to when he was six years old and “it” all happened. What happened?

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2. Why are Charlie’s parents’ faces blurry in his memory?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 11****May 1**

1. How does Keyes show that Charlie's emotional development is now equal to that of an adolescent?

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2. Interpret the use of the psychological film as a mirror of Charlie's situation. What causes Charlie's anger toward the film?

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**May 3**

1. Describe the changes that have taken place in Charlie in only two months.

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2. Construct an interpretation of the meaning of the knife.

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3. Why does Charlie's dream frighten him?

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4. What theme is represented in this passage?

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**May 8 – May 11**

1. What is the main issue dealt with in these passages?

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2. How does Charlie feel about Gimpy's actions? How does he decide to handle the situation?

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3. On May 10, Charlie writes about his conversation with Professor Nemur about Gimpy. The professor compares Charlie with a knife in a stabbing or a car in an accident. Why does the comparison annoy Charlie? What is most likely the intended effect on the reader?

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4. What does Charlie's decision show about his level of development at this point?

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**May 15**

1. How have Charlie's thoughts about the discussions in the college cafeteria changed?

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2. How have his thoughts regarding the professor and doctor changed?

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**May 17**

1. What in this passage further explores the theme of emotions versus intellect?

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2. Who is standing behind the tree watching Alice and Charlie? Why might he be there?

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3. Why does Charlie hear buzzing and experience the sensation of prickly legs and numb fingers?

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**May 20**

1. Why do the employees at the bakery ask Mr. Donner to fire Charlie? How does Charlie respond to Mr. Donner firing him?

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2. Explain the irony of the reasons Charlie's coworkers give for wanting Charlie to leave.

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3. How does the allusion to the Garden of Eden function in this section? Explain the similarities between Adam and Eve and Charlie Gordon.

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4. What does Fanny Birden say that may foreshadow Charlie's regression?

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5. What is ironic about Charlie's thought about Algernon?

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**May 25**

1. How does Alice's apartment represent her?

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2. Interpret the author's use of water imagery in this passage.

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3. In Charlie's memory, what "happen[s] in his pants" that his mother beats him for? Why does this normal occurrence enrage his mother?

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4. What does Charlie's mother threaten him with if he should ever touch a girl? What significance does her threat have?

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5. Does Keyes try to influence the reader to consider those intellectually challenged as either human or animal? Does he try to dictate the moral correctness of the surgery?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 12****June 5**

1. What is the significance of the approaching convention?

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2. Describe Charlie and Norma's childhood relationship in the memory.

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3. What purpose does the series of flashbacks have in the development of Charlie's character?

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4. How do the window and the mirror function in this passage, particularly concerning Charlie's ability to connect or dissociate with his past?

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**June 6**

1. How does the author use the symbol of the window in this passage?

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2. How has Alice and Charlie's relationship changed over the past three months?

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3. How has the way Charlie views himself changed?

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4. Why is Alice annoyed with Charlie?

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**June 8**

1. What is the significance of Charlie's remark that he constantly travels "Up one street, and down another, through the endless labyrinth, hurling [him]self against the neon cage of the city"?

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2. Charlie is hopeful that he will be able to respond sexually to the woman in the park. What two memories prevent a successful interaction? Why?

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3. Why does Charlie wish that his pursuers had caught and beaten him?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 13****June 10**

1. How has Charlie's method of journaling changed? What does his choice of method reflect?

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2. Based on Charlie's memory, how did Rose view God?

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3. Why does the airplane ride trigger one of Charlie's traumatic memories?

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4. Describe Dr. Guarino. Does he seem qualified? Why?

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5. Contrast Rose's and Matt's opinions of Charlie's learning problem.

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6. How does Charlie feel about Dr. Guarino in hindsight? How does Charlie feel about Professor Nemur?

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7. Cite and interpret the simile in the last paragraph.

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June 11

1. What is the source of Professor Nemur's frustration? In what three occurrences does it appear? How does Charlie respond?  
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2. What is ironic about the explanation Professor Nemur gives to the young female clinician from Falmouth College?  
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3. What does Charlie realize during the weekend?  
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4. In Burt's estimation, what is Charlie's downfall?  
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5. What effect is created by the alliteration of the letter "d" in the sentence, "...the master's dread of having the disciple discredit his work"?  
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6. How is the use of euphemism and jargon in this scene both ironic and mildly humorous?  
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**June 13**

1. How does this section establish a link between Charlie and Algernon?

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2. What offense causes Charlie to release Algernon and flee the conference?

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3. What theme do Nemur's comments support?

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4. Interpret Charlie's statement about crossing an invisible barrier.

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5. How does the scene in the restroom represent a turning point in the book?

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6. What future developments are possibly being foreshadowed?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 14****June 15**

1. Summarize the news article mentioning Charlie's sister.

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2. How does Keyes's choice of words to describe Charlie's mother suggest the type of relationship she and Charlie had?

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3. What was the difference between Norma and Charlie when it came to avoiding their mother's wrath?

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4. Interpret Charlie's use of the word "cathedral" in describing his relationship with his mother.

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5. Interpret Charlie's comparison of Norma to a flower.

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6. What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions in this section?

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7. In the flashback, what is the quarrel between Charlie's mother and father about? Why does it hurt Charlie now, over twenty years later?

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8. How does the simile "...as a bird or squirrel backs off from the brusque movements of the feeder..." work in this piece?

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9. Where do Charlie and Algernon 'hide'? What is Charlie's intention?

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**June 16**

1. Cite the instances of the number four in the text, and explain what it may symbolize.

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2. What effect does the image of Charlie and Algernon sipping beer and eating pretzels while watching the Yankees game have on the reader?

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**June 19**

1. For what purpose might Keyes have chosen to introduce Fay Lillman dressed in nothing more than her bra and panties?

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2. How does Keyes use setting to help characterize Fay?

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3. What about neatness and modern art does Fay not like? What does she prefer?

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4. What is a unique feature of Fay's speech, and what may be its purpose?

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5. In what ways is Fay a foil to Alice?

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**June 20**

1. How does Charlie find his father, and where does he find him?

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2. Why does Keyes have Charlie refer to his father as Matt?

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3. What brings about Rose's confrontation with Matt about the barbershop?

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4. Why does Charlie flinch when he is in the barber's chair?

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5. How is the knife presented in the flashback?

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6. Where has the symbol of the knife been seen previously in the text?

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7. What might a psychoanalyst say the knife represents?

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8. At the beginning of the entry, why does Charlie say, "Perhaps I should have waited before going to see Matt; or not gone to see him at all"?

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**June 21**

1. What might Charlie be implying when he says that the reason that Algernon is throwing himself against the walls of his cage might be “something deeper” than frustration? What might this mean for Charlie?

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2. Explain how the new relationship between Minnie and Algernon serves as a metaphor?

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**June 23**

1. What happens when Fay comes home from the Stardust Ballroom?

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2. Why does Charlie not have a panic attack when Fay offers to sleep with him?

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3. What is the most likely reason that Charlie starts acting like his former self when he becomes drunk?

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4. When Fay tells Charlie how he was acting like a child the previous night, she says, “you kept saying that you couldn’t play with me because your mother would take away your peanuts and put you in a cage.” What is the significance of this phrase?

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**June 24**

1. What is it that drives Charlie to the theaters?

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2. What happens in the diner? Why is Charlie ashamed?

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3. For what purpose does Keyes compare humans of lesser intelligence with humans born blind or with missing limbs?

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4. What growth does Charlie display in this section?

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**June 25**

1. How has Alice's interaction with Charlie changed since he has grown smarter? How has her character evolved? What might she represent?

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2. What has Charlie realized that he is lacking?

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3. Why is Charlie not able to make love to Alice, but able to make love to Fay?

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4. Interpret the symbol of the window in this section.

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**June 29**

1. Why has Charlie become preoccupied with work?

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**June 30**

1. How does Fay's attitude about the parking tickets reflect Charlie's new attitude about life?

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2. How does Fay have a positive effect on Charlie's development?

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**July 5**

1. How does Fay's anecdote about the stolen money characterize her?

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**July 8**

1. What is Charlie's tone when writing about linguists?

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2. What does Charlie's attitude toward the linguists' research reinforce about his character?

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3. How does the crowd respond to Charlie's "moron act"? How is their response to the act different from how society treated Charlie when he really was mentally challenged? Why?

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**July 9**

1. How does Keyes utilize foreshadowing in this entry?

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**PROGRESS REPORT 15****July 12**

1. What is ironic about Nemur's contingency plan should Charlie completely return to his former state?  
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2. How does Nemur's language reveal that he has doubts about whether Charlie's change is permanent?  
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3. In the passage beginning, "For one thing, you might not be the same" and ending with "...you couldn't possibly be the same kind of person," what theme is addressed and how?  
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4. Explain the metaphor comparing the Warren State Home to the freezer.  
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5. How is Fay's idea about life being a box of mazes reintroduced and developed in this section?  
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6. Contrast Professor Nemur, Alice, and Fay. What theme do their differences represent?  
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**PROGRESS REPORT 16****July 14**

1. What mood is created by the author's description of the state school? What devices does the author use?

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2. What is ironic about the hedges enclosing the Warren State Home?

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3. Why does the sight of the young man on the tractor disturb Charlie?

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4. How does the doctor's comment about the boys in the Warren Home increase reader sympathy for Charlie?

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5. How does the text reveal that Thelma is self-conscious about the birthmark on her face?

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6. Why does Thelma enjoy taking care of the mentally challenged?

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7. Why does Charlie become emotional when the boy shows him his lamp base?

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8. How does the principal misinterpret Charlie's comment about no one being past help?

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9. Explain the use of the rhetorical questions in this entry. What does the author seek to convey through them?

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**July 15**

1. What is happening to Algernon?

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2. What is the significance of Charlie's statement, "I felt [the bands] around my own arms and legs"?

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3. How does Keyes show the relationship between Fay and Charlie disintegrating?

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**July 16**

1. How do Fay and Alice meet?

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2. How does Keyes show that Alice and Fay like each other?

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3. Why is Alice opposed to Charlie seeing Fay?

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4. Why is Alice relieved when Charlie tells her that Fay does not know about his operation?

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**July 27**

1. How does Charlie's relationship with Fay change in this section?

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2. What does Charlie mean when he says, "time assumes another dimension"?

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3. How does Charlie's manner of perception seem to be changing in this section?

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4. How does the passage about the monkeys reflect Charlie's new form of perception?

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**July 28**

1. What is Charlie's tone when he relates the fact that Fay has a new boyfriend? How is this tone conveyed, and what does it reveal? Explain the significance of the tone he uses.

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2. For what purpose does Keyes detail Algernon's actions?

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**July 31**

1. Explain the metaphor Charlie uses to describe work in this section.

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2. What is Charlie's tone in this section?

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**August 11**

1. What is Charlie's goal in his research involving Algernon?

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2. Why does Charlie have trouble communicating with other people? Are his reasons plausible?

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3. Describe Mrs. Nemur's behavior toward Charlie.

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4. Why does Raynor's wife stare at Charlie in such a strange way?

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5. How does Charlie justify his ingratitude to Professor Nemur?

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6. How does Keyes use language to reveal that the original Charlie is manifesting himself while Charlie is in a drunken stupor?

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7. Interpret the scene with the bathroom mirror.

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8. How is this section a turning point in the novel?

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**4:30AM**

1. How does Charlie find the answer to his question?

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**August 26**

1. What is the “Algernon-Gordon Effect”?

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2. What predictions can be made about Charlie based upon the hypothesis?

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**September 1**

1. Based upon what can be discerned from this passage, how does Charlie feel about his own regression?

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2. How do Professor Nemur and the other researchers receive Charlie's hypothesis?

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**September 2**

1. What are Charlie's feelings toward the researchers?

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**September 15**

1. What request does Charlie make of the researchers?

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2. How does Charlie predict a solution to the Algernon-Gordon problem will be discovered?

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**September 17**

1. What are the first indications that Charlie's intelligence is waning?

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2. What are the physiological changes in Algernon's brain that cause intelligence loss?

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3. What effect does Algernon's death have on Charlie?

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**September 21**

1. Why does Charlie decide to visit his mother?

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**September 27**

1. Cite three instances of personification that Keyes uses to describe Charlie's old neighborhood. What is the overall effect of the device?  

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2. How does Rose appear in the section, and how does Keyes's description make her a sympathetic character?  

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3. What is symbolic about the chore Rose is doing when Charlie arrives?  

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4. What is significant about the first words Charlie says to his mother?  

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5. How does Charlie respond to Rose's retreat into the house, and why might his actions be significant?  

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6. Why does Charlie's manner of speaking hypnotize his mother?

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7. What is relevant about the way Rose treats Charlie after he realizes that he has been hurt?

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8. What are some indications that Rose has a mental problem?

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9. What does Charlie give his mother, and why?

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10. What is ironic about Norma's reason for taking care of her mother?

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11. What is Norma's reaction to meeting Charlie?

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12. Why did Norma never make an effort to contact Charlie?

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13. How is Norma different from how Charlie remembered her?

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14. Charlie's mother is in the same room as he and Norma are, but she seems not to be there at all. Why is this ironic?

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15. What is the memory Charlie recounts to Norma?

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16. What explanation does Norma give Charlie for why she despised him?

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17. Explain the allusions to the houses of Atreus and Cadmus.

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18. What reason does Charlie provide for not being able to return home? What does he offer to do to help the family instead?

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19. What prompts Rose to threaten Charlie with a knife? Furthermore, what purpose does this scene have within the novel?

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20. Explain Norma's déjà vu.

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**PROGRESS REPORT 17****October 3**

1. What is the importance of the image of young Charlie in the window?

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2. Why is Charlie's story about playing the hi-fi late at night significant?

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**October 4**

1. What triggers the connection that Charlie makes between Dr. Strauss and Matt?

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2. What is the cause of Charlie's animosity toward Dr. Strauss?

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3. Draw a connection between what happens to Charlie at this session and what happened to Algernon.

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4. What is happening to Charlie as he experiences the sensation of expanding?

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5. What is happening to Charlie as he experiences the sensation of shrinking? How can he be both shrinking and expanding at the same time?

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6. What event or situation does the imagery in Charlie's vision suggest?

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7. What does Charlie mean by "Plato's words"?

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**October 5**

1. How is Charlie's frustration about his mental deterioration evident in this section?

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2. What does the Rorschach test that Burt gives Charlie unintentionally reveal?

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3. How does Charlie project his frustration about memory loss onto the cards?

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4. What does Charlie see in the inkblots, and what do these images reveal about his mental and emotional state?

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5. What is the meaning of Charlie's elevator metaphor?

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**October 7**

1. What is the purpose of the flashback in this scene?

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2. How does Keyes convey Charlie's anxiety in this section?

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**October 10**

1. In this entry, Charlie makes a remark about being brought home by a police officer. What effect does this have on the narrative?

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2. What does Charlie mean when he says that there is a “gray film over everything”?

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**October 11**

1. Why does Charlie ask Alice, “[w]hat’s wrong with the zoo?”

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2. How does Charlie finally manage to make love to Alice?

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3. What realization does Charlie have in this section?

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**October 14 - 19**

1. Chart the course of Charlie's decline in these entries.

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2. Why does Charlie feel that he is always looking at life through a window?

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**October 21**

1. Contrast Charlie's personality as recorded in this entry with his earlier character.

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2. Why does Charlie become angry with Alice?

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**October 25**

1. How has Charlie's life changed since Alice left?

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2. Who visits Charlie? Why?

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**November 1**

1. How does Keyes use language in this section to show Charlie's decline?

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2. Explain the symbolism of the window in this section.

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**November 2**

1. How have Charlie's feelings about sexuality evolved by this entry?

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**Nov 5**

1. How is Charlie's decline shown in his journal?

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**Nov 9 - 10**

1. Trace the evolution of Charlie's "faith."

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**Nov 11 - 16**

1. What is one significant difference between Charlie at the beginning of the novel and Charlie at the end?

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2. How has Charlie's relationship with Alice devolved by the end of the book?

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**Nov 18**

1. Compare and contrast the bakery when Charlie returns with the bakery when Charlie left.

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**Nov 21**

1. How does the author convey the idea that Charlie, like Algernon, will be worse off at the end of the experiment than he was at the beginning?

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2. What does Charlie take with him to the Warren Home?

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3. Why does Charlie believe that he is better off now than he was before the operation?

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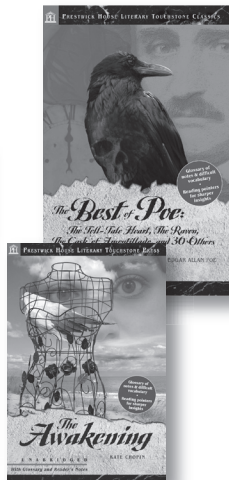
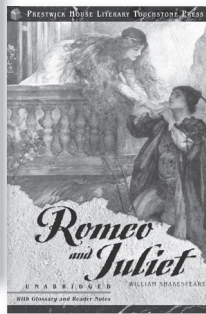
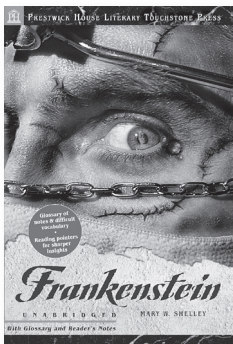
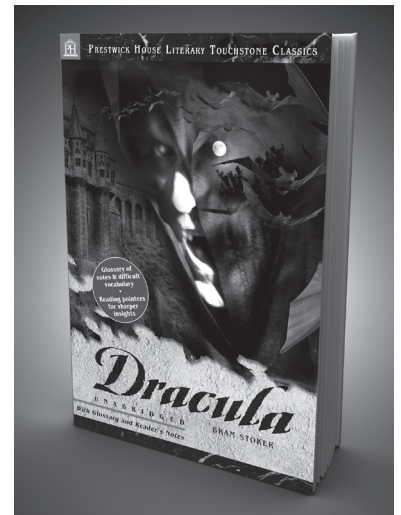
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