Flowers for Algernon Study Questions

English Language Arts B 10

Student Learning Outcomes:

- We can comprehend and respond to a piece of literature through visual, oral, print, and multimedia texts
- We can read, listen to, comprehend, interpret, and summarize information and ideas within a piece of literature that deals with identity and social responsibility

Progris report 1 March 3

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

Progris report 2 – March 4

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

3rd progris report

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

Progris report 5 March 6

1. List the reasons Charlie is considered a good candidate for the surgery.
2. List the objections to selecting Charlie
3. What are the dangers to Charlie from the surgery?
4. How do the doctors justify experimenting on Charlie?
Progress Report 6

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

Progress Report 7

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

Progress Report 8

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

Progress Report 9

1. Why are Frank and Joe mad at Charlie?
2. Why does Charlie’s memory about his sister make him feel bad?
3. How does Charlie reach a “plateau”?
4. Why does Charlie feel sick?
5. Draw a generalization from this story based on Dr. Strauss’ advice to Charlie.
6. Why do you suppose Charlie finds that “….anger and suspicion were my first reactions to the world around me”?

Progress Report 10
1. Why type of narrative is used on page 43? Why?
2. Why do you think Gimpy wants Charlie to learn to make rolls and gives him the shiny disc even though he fails?
3. Why is Charlie frightened by the argument between Nemur and Strauss, regarding attending the convention?
4. State a theme for this novel based on Charlie’s conversations with the college students.

Progress Report 11
1. Why does Alice believe their relationship might “have a negative effect”?
2. Define Charlie’s problem at the bakery. What solutions are offered by Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss?
3. Why is Gimpy angry at Charlie after he solves the problem at the bakery without getting Gimpy fired?
4. Why will professors at the college not discuss their areas of study with Charlie?
5. Who do you think Charlie sees in his hallucination at the park?
6. Why does Charlie want so desperately to stay at the bakery?

Progress Report 12
1. How has “language become a barrier instead of a pathway”?
2. Describe how Charlie’s power of recall is growing beyond the limits of most people.
3. Why does Norma not want to share the dog with Charlie?
4. How do you think Charlie feels about his sister?
5. Why is Alice uncomfortable around Charlie?
6. Why does she not want to go to the conference in Chicago?
7. Why does Charlie decide to take the woman from the park back to his room?
Progress Report 13

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

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

Progress Report 14

1. Why did Rose change toward Charlie and begin to reject him?
2. Why is Charlie isolating himself from Alice and the doctors?
3. Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come. Find an example that may be foreshadowing in this section.
4. Why is Charlie excited to see Matt?
5. Do you think Rose really intends to harm Charlie with the knife?
6. Why does Charlie not reveal his identity to his father?
7. What does Charlie learn about his unconscious mind by getting drunk with Fay?
8. How does the following quotation from this section apply to Charlie before the operation?

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

9. Why is Charlie returning to the Foundation?
10. Why does Charlie take Algernon back to the lab?
Progress Report 15

1. If the experiment fails, list the negative effects which may make returning Charlie to the bakery unlikely.
2. Describe Algernon’s mental deterioration in the time he is away from the laboratory.
3. How does Charlie feel about the plans to send him to Warren Home if the experiment fails? How does Professor Nemur feel? Justify your answer with reference to the book.

Progress Report 16

1. Why do the patients in Warren, who have escaped to the outside, usually return to the hospital on their own?
2. Briefly identify the personnel at the Warren State Home and Training School. (there should be 4)
3. Why does Charlie think all of these people come to work at Warren?
4. What does Alice have against Fay?
5. How does Alice know that Charlie is not emotionally involved with Fay?
6. Do you think Charlie expects to discover how to retain his increased intelligence?
7. In what way does the new Charlie believe he is better off before the operation than he is now?
8. What does the old Charlie want from the new Charlie? Why is the new Charlie unable to give it to him?
9. What is the Algernon-Gordon Effect?
10. Do you think Charlie will decline below his original intelligence level? Support your answer with ideas from the novel.
11. What does Charlie want from his mother when he finally goes to see her?
12. Why does Charlie not tell Norma the truth about his condition?
13. In the following quotation, what does the knife symbolize to Charlie?

“She had a knife, and Alice had a knife, and my father had a knife, and Dr. Strauss had a knife.”
Progress Report 17

1. How many months pass from the date of the operation to the beginning of this report?
2. Why does Charlie not commit suicide?
3. What does the light in the cave symbolize?
4. Why is Charlie afraid to go to the light?
5. Knowing he cannot stop the deterioration, what does Charlie pray for?
6. How is Alice’s presence both good and bad for Charlie?
7. Why does Charlie watch hours of Television?
8. In what way does Alice begin acting like Charlie’s mother?
9. How does Charlie feel about Mrs. Mooney’s help?
10. How is Charlie trying to slow the deterioration?
11. Why does Charlie tell himself not to be sore if the men at the bakery make fun of him?
12. How does Charlie react to Klaus’ threat to break his arm? How do Charlie’s coworkers react?
13. Why does Charlie ultimately decide to go to the Warren Home?
14. What does Charlie retain about his life after the operation?
15. Why do you think Charlie wants flowers on Algernon’s grave?