

"Flowers for Algernon"

Study Guide - Part II

1. How many words per minute can Charlie type? Why is this such an amazing feat?
2. Why does Charlie need to speak and write "simply" to other people?
3. What does Charlie come to realize about Dr. Nemur's intelligence?
4. Analyze the following quote: "No one I've ever known is what he appears to be on the surface." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
5. Charlie has officially surpassed Dr. Nemur and Dr. Strauss in terms of intelligence. Give examples from the story to confirm this statement.
6. What happens when Charlie tries to talk to Miss Kinnian? How does she react?
7. Why does Charlie find himself spending more and more time alone with books?
8. What epiphany does Charlie come to regarding the bus boy in the restaurant?
Which literary term would be associated with this?
9. On May 23 & 24, what does Charlie notice about Algernon's personality?
10. Why do you think Dr. Nemur and Dr. Strauss ask Charlie not to return to the lab anymore?
11. After leaving Nemur and Strauss, what does Charlie's work ethic look like?
12. Why do you think Charlie is now going by "Charles Gordon"?
13. On June 5, what starts happening to Algernon? What epiphany does Charlie come to regarding his own condition?
14. Put this statement into simpler terms: "Artificially increased intelligence deteriorates at a rate of time directly proportional to the quantity of the increase"?
15. Why is Charlie careful not to get too emotional?
16. What happened to Algernon on June 10? Do you think the same will happen to Charlie?
17. Why do you think Charlie had such a strong relationship with Algernon?
18. Now that Charlie sees what might happen to him, what type of thoughts is he having?
19. What are some of the things that Charlie starts to forget?
20. On July 7, what do you notice about Charlie's journal entry?
21. What type of childhood did Charlie have? What type of parents? Do you think this contributed to the way his is? Why did he start thinking about his parents at this point in the story?

22. Why doesn't Charlie want to ask for his job back at Donnegan's?
23. Why was Charlie so mean to Miss Kinnian?
24. What happened when Joe and Frank saw someone making fun of Charlie?
25. Explain why Charlie wants to go to New York.
26. What did you think about the ending of the story?
27. List the parallel episodes. List the subplots.

Things to consider: "educated in the tradition of narrow specialization" (doctoral degree), ancient languages (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) (Hindustani and Chinese), inferiority vs. superiority complex, irony of Dr. Strauss's comment, mob mentality (Charlie laughed at the bus boy), "people think nothing of abusing a man born with low intelligence", "there are so many doors to open", Charlie's publication, special connection with Algernon, Paradise Lost allusion (fall from grace, original sin, temptation), pleading with God not to take it all away, compares his deterioration to senility/second childhood, "the blank expression, the silly smile, the people laughing at him", "it's slipping away like sand through my fingers" (simile), [the doctor] "smiled when I told him I used to be a genius. He talked to me like I was a baby and he winked at Mrs. Flynn. I got mad and chased him out because he was making fun of me the way they all used to"

Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree whose moral taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden

- o What allusion does this echo from earlier in the story?