

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Flowers for Algernon

by Daniel Keyes

Copyright © 2002 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-60389-549-1

Item No. 201390

progris riport 1

1. In this first report, Charlie is following Dr. Strauss' instructions to write down, in the same way he talks, everything that happens to him. In one long paragraph, Charlie reveals many details about his life. He also reveals that he is a hard-working, optimistic, and agreeable person. Using the same format and style as Charlie does, write one paragraph revealing details about your life and about yourself.

progris riport 2

2. Charlie patiently tries over and over again to see pictures in the inkblots. He wants to please Burt, and he wants to pass the test, but he cannot see any pictures in the ink. Write about a time you failed at something. How did you feel? How did you respond to your failure?

progris riport 3

3. Charlie tells Professor Nemur that he tries to learn because "all my life I wantid to be smart and not dumb and my mom always tolld me to try and lern." For what reasons do you try to do your best in school? List the reasons, beginning with the most important ones.
4. Charlie muses about how Gimpy might react if Charlie became smarter. Imagine you could take a pill before going to sleep, which makes you a smarter person when you awake. Who would you like to surprise with your new intelligence? How do you envision this person's reaction to the new you?

progris riport 4

5. Charlie loses ten races to Algernon. Consider how you might feel if a mouse seemed to be more intelligent than you. What do you think about the way Burt and the others are treating Charlie? Write a letter to Burt about ignoring Charlie's feelings. In the letter, make specific suggestions about how he might have conducted the experiment without humiliating Charlie.

progris riport 5

6. In this progress report Charlie writes about a conversation between Professor Nemur, Burt, and Dr. Strauss. Re-write the conversation as a dialogue. It might begin as follows:

Prof. Nemur: I am worried about using Charlie for the experiment.

Dr. Strauss: He is the best candidate we have tested so far.

7. Animal rights groups protest some scientific experiments because they believe using animals for research is cruel and immoral. Assume there is a human rights group protesting the use of mentally handicapped humans in scientific experiments. What arguments might such a group make against utilizing Charlie?

progris riport 6

8. Even though Charlie does not intend to be funny, his progress reports are sometimes humorous. Find an example of humor in this progress report. Write a brief paragraph to a classmate who doesn't get the humor explaining why the incident is funny.

PROGRESS REPORT 7

9. Charlie writes in his progress report that “If your smart you can have lots of frends to talk to and you never get lonley by yourself all the time.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write Charlie a letter explaining your point of view.
10. The scientific method is defined as a method of keeping careful records of all aspects of the experiment so that the results are reproducible. What scientific evidence is there in this chapter that the operation is successful? Write a brief, factual entry Burt might make on Charlie’s medical chart detailing his progress.

PROGRESS REPORT 8

11. Charlie is impatient. Nothing is happening quickly enough for him. Have you ever felt this way? What would you say to Charlie to help him to deal with his frustration?
12. The other college students question why Charlie, who is obviously slow, is at the college. The experiment is a secret, so Charlie cannot explain why he is on campus, and Burt tells them that Charlie is cleaning the psychology department. Assume that the experiment is not a secret, that Charlie is a minor celebrity on the campus, and that all the other students know why he is there. Write a conversation Charlie might have with two other college students who meet him in the cafeteria. What questions might they ask Charlie? How would he answer those questions?
13. Dr. Strauss reveals to Charlie that Algernon is smarter than other mice because he also had the operation. Algernon appears to be remaining smart, so Dr. Strauss is hopeful that Algernon’s increased intelligence is permanent. Before undergoing a dangerous procedure, it is customary for a patient to be fully informed of the danger and to sign a waiver form releasing the doctors from any responsibility if the procedure fails. Write the waiver form Dr. Strauss should have had Charlie sign to be fully informed about the possible long-range effects of this operation.

Response Journal

14. In a flashback, Charlie relates how he came to attend the Beekman College for retarded adults. Briefly describe how you felt on your first day of school. Write your story as a flashback in the same way Charlie tells his story.
15. Friends seem to be very important to Charlie. Even though his friends from the bakery play mean tricks on Charlie and laugh at him, he still considers them to be his friends. In one or two paragraphs describe an incident from your life, the movies, or a book you have read, when a group of friends amuse themselves by picking on or making fun of someone else.

PROGRESS REPORT 9

16. Charlie learns what it means “to pull a Charlie Gordon,” and he feels ashamed. If you could talk to Charlie at this point in the story, what would you tell him about human nature?
17. Dr. Strauss says to Charlie, “The more intelligent you become the more problems you’ll have, Charlie.” State whether or not you agree or disagree with Dr. Strauss. Relate an incident from your life to support your answer.
18. Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur have different definitions of intelligence. Professor Nemur says that I.Q. “was something that measured how intelligent you were,” but Dr. Strauss says that I.Q. “showed how much intelligence you could get.” Write your own definition of intelligence based on your life experiences. This can be a short sentence or you may expand on it.
19. Charlie is learning not to trust anyone, even Burt and Dr. Strauss. At the end of this progress report, Charlie wants to keep some of his reports private. Write one or two paragraphs on the importance of privacy in your life.

PROGRESS REPORT 10

20. Gimpy is the only one at the bakery who shows Charlie some compassion. Compose a thank you letter from Charlie to Gimpy expressing Charlie's gratitude.
21. Charlie enjoys talking and listening to the college students. He writes, "Now I understand one of the important reasons for going to college and getting an education is to learn that the things you've believed in all your life aren't true, and that nothing is what it appears to be."

State whether or not you agree with Charlie's conclusion. Support your answer with experiences from your life, especially about obtaining new knowledge.

22. Rose wants Charlie to be like the other children. Her inability to accept Charlie the way he is causes pain for herself, Charlie, and her husband Matt. Have you even felt like someone important in your life refuses to accept you for who you are? Write a letter to Rose explaining to her how Charlie feels when she tries to mold him into someone he cannot become.

PROGRESS REPORT 11

23. In this report Charlie, records how he feels on his first date with Alice Kinnian. At one point in his writing he says, "I was a blundering adolescent in her eyes, and she was trying to let me down easy." At the conclusion of the date, Charlie does not kiss her good night, but he regrets that decision. He writes, "But next time, I'm going to kiss her good night." Imagine you are an advice columnist in a newspaper. Charlie has written you a letter asking you for advice on how to behave on his next date with Alice Kinnian. How would you answer his letter?