

FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON
Comprehension Questions

1. Pick five questions from each column to answer. Questions go in order of the reading. Therefore, do not select all questions from the same section of the chart. Spread your answers out over the whole story for a total of fifteen responses.
2. In a new Word document, type your answers in complete sentences with correct spelling and punctuation. Restate the question in your topic sentence. Completely answer each question, demonstrating your comprehension of the material.
3. Save your answers in the Zagaeski folder of the student drive under the assignment name. Save the file using your last name, first name, and date.

Column A	Column B	Column C
How can you tell that Charlie Gordon is an extremely slow learner?	What are they using Charlie for?	What was your first reaction when you discovered the story starts with invented spelling by Charlie? Why does the author, Daniel Keyes, use this literary technique?
Who is Algernon? Explain what his role is in the story.	How do you know that Charlie is strongly motivated to increase his understanding and intelligence?	What does Charlie's response to the Rorschach test suggest about him? What do Charlie's responses to the "nice testing lady" tell about the way Charlie thinks?
What good quality does Dr. Strauss say that Charlie has?	Why does Charlie feel so excited?	Write a grammatically correct version of one of Charlie's journal entries, correcting Charlie's spelling and punctuation.
What does Charlie use to give him luck during the operation?	What superstition is Charlie referring to when he says "a black cat crossed me?" What does Dr. Strauss suggest to him about science? <i>Connect</i>	Analyze the art on the page. How do you relate this art work to "Flowers for Algernon"?
In what way is Charlie like Algernon?	What is Charlie talking about when he says "amazed"?	Why is this story considered science fiction?
How do the other workers at Charlie's factory treat him?	Why doesn't Charlie want to race with Algernon anymore?	What do the workers mean when they say someone "pulled a Charlie Gordon"? What do the remarks imply about Charlie's co-workers?

Find ten words that are misspelled and spell them correctly. Show both Charlie's spelling and the correct spelling.	What signs in Charlie's progress report suggest that changes are taking place in his intelligence?	Why is it ironic that Charlie wants to be smart like his "best friends" Joe Carp and Frank Reilly?
Why is being able to beat Algernon at the maze important to Charlie?	Charlie does not realize that Frank and Joe have played a trick on him by leaving him at the bar. He associates their laughter with friendship. What does this suggest about Charlie's character?	Do you agree with Charlie when he says it isn't right to make animals pass tests in order to eat? What does Charlie's opinion suggest about him?
Why did Miss Kinnian really run out of the room? Explain her emotional reaction.	Charlie says that Miss Kinnian told him to "mix up" his punctuation. In his entry dated April 16, he says that Miss Kinnian told him that commas make writing better. How has Charlie misunderstood her?	Explain the idiom "reached a plateau" as it relates to Charlie's progress.
What do the changes in Charlie's spelling and punctuation reveal about him?	What is Charlie beginning to realize about Joe Carp and Frank Reilly?	Do you think that "Flowers for Algernon" could change its readers' attitudes and actions toward people with mental disabilities?
Will Charlie be like everyone else when his IQ is three times 68? Will people like Charlie and be friendly to him when he is a genius?	Up until now, Charlie's basic traits have been his innocence, trust, and good naturedness. Does this episode suggest that these traits are changing?	What is author Daniel Keyes suggesting about psychology and IQ measurements by showing the differences of opinion among Dr. Strauss, Dr. Nemur, and Burt?
How is Charlie's new-found intelligence affecting him at work?	Contrast Charlie's reaction to the Rorschach test with his pre-operation response. How has he changed?	Years ago, learning-impaired people were routinely put into institutions; now relatively few are. Why do you think this trend has changed?
Why did Charlie once think Miss Kinnian was "very, very old," even though he is really older than she is?	Finish Miss Kinnian's statement: "I hope. . . I just hope to God —." Why did you choose to finish her statement this way?	What is the meaning of the idiom "to ride on his coattails"? How is this used in the story?
What possibility do Charlie and Miss Kinnian worry about?	Explain the strange conflict that suddenly exists between Charlie and his co-workers. Why do they suddenly want to drive him out of the factory?	How was Charlie's decision similar to that of Eve's? How did Charlie, like Adam and Eve, have to pay a price for his decision?
How are Charlie's feelings toward his doctors changing?	What is an inferiority complex and why does Dr. Strauss say that Charlie is giving Dr. Nemur an inferiority complex?	One theme of this story deals with the role that intelligence plays in happiness. Do you think Charlie has become a happier person since his operation?

Why can't Charlie communicate well with other people anymore?	What is keeping Charlie and Miss Kinnian from becoming closer?	What does <i>semantic</i> mean? Why does Charlie mention a book on semantics while thinking about the problems he has communicating?
Who does the boy in the diner remind Charlie of?	Do you think Charlie's personality traits and personal experience suit him for working in the field of increasing human intelligence levels? Why or why not?	In the "keyhole speech", explain how and why the author uses figurative language to express Charlie's feelings.
Why are the changes in Algernon disturbing for Charlie?	How does Charlie's sense of urgency create suspense?	How does the incident on May 23 suddenly change the mood of the story?
What is Charlie working on?	How do you know what conclusion Charlie has reached from his research? Cite text examples.	How does the medical and scientific jargon affect your willingness to believe the unrealistic elements of the story?
What is happening to Charlie?	Put yourself in Charlie's place. What do you think Charlie was thinking and feeling as he buried Algernon?	Look up <i>Paradise Lost</i> on the Internet. Why does the author include this allusion in the June 15 entry?
What are the first writing errors Charlie makes when his IQ starts to decline?	Why do you think Dr. Strauss feels guilty?	How do the details about Charlie's parents affect the mood of the story?
What happens when Charlie goes to get his old job back?	How have the changes in Charlie's intelligence affected his co-worker's views of him?	Who, if anyone, might place flowers on Algernon's grave? Why?