

Reading Check

1. Who suggests that Charlie should volunteer for the experiment?
2. What is Charlie's job at the factory?
3. How does Charlie learn while he is asleep?
4. What is the first sign of change in Algernon?
5. What are the first symptoms of the deterioration of Charlie's intelligence?

For Study and Discussion

Analyzing and Interpreting the Story

1. "Flowers for Algernon" is a story about a young man who undergoes a remarkable transformation, or change, through surgery. According to the Progress Report dated March 8, what are the doctors planning to do with their daring techniques?
2. What evidence in the entries of March 10 through April 18 shows Charlie's increase in intelligence?
3. In the entry of April 20, Charlie's feelings change. What happens to make him feel ashamed?
 - 4a. As Charlie becomes *more* intelligent, how do his relations with other people change?
 - 4b. How do the doctors, Miss Kinnian, and the people at the factory treat him when he *loses* his intelligence?
5. Charlie feels shame again in the entry of May 20.
 - 5a. What does Charlie learn about himself in the scene with the dishwasher?
 - 5b. What resolution does he make at the end of this entry?
6. The entry of May 23 opens with the dramatic words: "It happened today." What hap-

pened, and why does Charlie see such significance in it?

7. In his P.S., Charlie says, "Its easy to make frends if you let pepul laff at you. Im going to have lots of frends where I go." Why is this statement sad?

8. In the entry of April 30, one of Charlie's co-workers, Fanny, says that it was evil when Eve listened to the snake and ate from the tree of knowledge.

- 8a. Why do you think she reminds Charlie of the temptation of Adam and Eve?
- 8b. How does Charlie, like Adam and Eve, have to pay a terrible price for his decision?

9a. What is going to happen to Charlie?
9b. How do you know?

10. Why is Algernon so important to Charlie?

11a. If Charlie had understood what would happen to him, do you think he would still have chosen to be intelligent, or to be limited mentally, as he is in the beginning and the end of this story?
11b. What evidence from his own reports can you find to support your answer?

Literary Elements

Understanding Point of View

"Flowers for Algernon" is written from the point of view of Charlie Gordon, the narrator. You learn about the characters and events in the story only through what Charlie writes in his reports. A story told by one of its characters is written in the first-person point of view. (The first-person pronoun is *I*, and it is an *I* who tells the story.)

The first-person point of view enables you to learn the narrator's thoughts and feelings, but it limits your understanding of other characters. First-person narrators can report only conversations and events they are aware of. Charlie's limited understanding of the people