

Approved for use in High School Reading Intervention Setting

Summary of the Work:

Algernon is a laboratory mouse who has undergone surgery to increase his intelligence. The story is told by a series of progress reports written by Charlie Gordon, the first human subject for the surgery, and it touches on ethical and moral themes such as the treatment of the mentally disabled.

Rationale:

Students will utilize this novel as a supplement to the Read 180 curriculum, *Your Brain Exposed*. The story is told through the lens of a low IQ protagonist who eventually receives a brain surgery to become a genius.

Students will learn empathy and gain understanding through the protagonist. The first-person narration is honest and heartbreaking at times.

Students in the reading intervention setting will also find the high-interest and low readability of the novel appealing.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- Reviewed by M.R. Hillegas; *Saturday Review*, 49:33 (March 26, 1966)
- Reviewed by Stephen McKenna; *Best Seller*, 26:10 (April 1, 1966)
- *Times Literary Supplement* (July 21, 1966), p. 629

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- 1960: [Hugo Award](#) for the story "[Flowers for Algernon](#)"
- 1966: [Nebula Award](#) for the novel [Flowers for Algernon](#)

Readability

- Lexile Score: 910
- Readability Level: 5.9

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: CCSS 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.3, 9-10.5, 9-10.6, 9-10.9

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

Charlie's limited intelligence has allowed him to perceive that he is different from most people, and he believes that if he can learn to read, he can become like everyone else. Charlie, unlike many an adolescent, believes in education. He breathes new life into students' spirit of discovery. He is also relatable because he has an intense need to fit in with those around him.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The novel demonstrates literary techniques such as foreshadow, metaphor, symbolism, and unique narrator voice.

Additional Connections:

*Students will make connections from the novel to previously read fiction and informational texts and the film, *Awakenings*, regarding brain function and perception.*