

Flowers for Algernon — Novel

June

by Daniel Keyes

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: compulsion, docile, erratic, euphemisms, insufferable, irreversible, juxtaposition, superimposed, usurped, veneer

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · March and April · Charlie begins his progress reports

Section 2 · May · Charlie keeps growing smarter

Section 3 · June · Charlie navigates his new intelligence

Section 4 · July and August · Charlie pursues his own research

Section 5 · September, October, and November · The final progress reports

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. A sudden **compulsion** to check the locked door seized him again.

- A. an irresistible urge
- B. a brief temptation
- C. a strong wish

2. The **docile** horse let the toddler lead it around the yard.

- A. friendly and playful
- B. lazy and slow to move
- C. easily managed; obedient

3. The car's **erratic** swerving across lanes alarmed the other drivers.

- A. irregular and unpredictable
- B. fast and reckless
- C. sharp and sudden

4. The manager wrapped the layoffs in soft **euphemisms**.

- A. vague, evasive excuses
- B. mild words for harsh ones
- C. empty, cheerful promises

5. Her **insufferable** bragging made everyone avoid her at lunch.

- A. too unpleasant to tolerate
- B. endless and repetitive
- C. loud and showy

6. Cutting down the ancient forest caused **irreversible** damage.

- A. widespread and severe
- B. impossible to undo
- C. sudden and shocking

7. The **juxtaposition** of the new tower and the old church surprised visitors.

- A. merging of two things into one
- B. placing two things side by side
- C. careful balancing of two things

8. The designer **superimposed** a faint logo over the photograph.

- A. placed over something else
- B. scattered loosely around
- C. blended evenly together

9. The ambitious general **usurped** the throne while the king was away.

- A. fought hard to protect
- B. took charge of briefly
- C. seized power wrongfully

10. Beneath his polished **veneer** hid a cold and selfish heart.

- A. a quick, clever mind
- B. a calm, patient temper
- C. a thin surface covering

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

honeycomb — here figurative — the city's many lit windows seen as the cells of a honeycomb

cathedral of my childhood — figurative — the loving words of his early childhood remembered as something sacred and grand

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY
1	A
2	C
3	A
4	B
5	A
6	B
7	B
8	A
9	C
10	C

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 “Did you think I’d remain a docile pup, wagging my tail and licking the foot that kicks me?”

As it is used in the passage, the word “docile” most nearly suggests that the old Charlie was...

- A. openly rebellious
- B. meekly obedient
- C. playful and energetic

2 “Oh, how insufferable you’ve become. How do you know what I feel?”

Which choice best describes Alice’s attitude toward Charlie in the excerpt?

- A. calm and reassuring
- B. amused and teasing
- C. fed up and exasperated

3 “Standing there with her coat open, she was superimposed as a double exposure on the picture of the middle-aged woman ...”

It can reasonably be inferred that, as Charlie looks at the woman, he...

- A. sees two images at once
- B. mistakes her for a photograph
- C. no longer recognizes her

4 “I said the destruction to the tissue was irreversible, not the process itself.”

Which statement is best supported by the excerpt?

- A. The whole experiment cannot be undone.
- B. The change cannot be reversed at all.
- C. The tissue damage cannot be undone.

5 “... mocking the euphemisms of educational jargon, I’m exceptional—a democratic term used to avoid the damning labels of gifted and deprived ...”

The word “exceptional” is offered as a euphemism in order to...

- A. soften blunt, harsh labels
- B. praise gifted students
- C. define a medical term

6 “When someone from the audience asked Burt if he was suggesting that this erratic behavior was directly caused by increased intelligence ...”

The passage most strongly suggests that Algernon’s erratic behavior is...

- A. normal for a trained mouse
- B. a troubling warning sign
- C. proof the experiment worked

7 “The constant juxtaposition of ‘Algernon and Charlie,’ and ‘Charlie and Algernon,’ made it clear that they thought of both of us as a couple of experimental animals ...”

The constant juxtaposition of the two names primarily functions to...

- A. praise the experiment’s success
- B. introduce the two main characters
- C. equate Charlie with the mouse

8 “At that point, the compulsion overwhelmed me.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Charlie opens Algernon’s cage because...

- A. an urge he can’t resist takes over
- B. Burt dares him to do it
- C. he has carefully planned it

9 “The operation had covered him over with a veneer of education and culture, but emotionally he was there ...”

The author describes a “veneer of education and culture” in order to...

- A. show the old self was only hidden
- B. show the old self was erased
- C. praise Charlie’s new learning

10 “I can’t help feeling that I’m not me. I’ve usurped his place and locked him out ...”

Which choice best describes Charlie’s attitude toward his own existence here?

- A. indifference toward the past
- B. guilt at displacing the old self
- C. pride in his new abilities

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	C	
3	A	
4	C	The key turns on Nemur's distinction: the tissue damage is permanent, but the process itself can be reversed.
5	A	
6	B	Event comprehension. Algernon's erratic decline foreshadows the same fate awaiting Charlie.
7	C	
8	A	Event comprehension.
9	A	Theme comprehension.
10	B	Character comprehension.

Teacher Context: June

At the height of his new intelligence Charlie is taken to a scientific convention where he and Algernon are displayed, and he begins to grasp the limits and the ethics of what was done to him. June is by far the longest division in the book and forms its own section as the novel's intellectual and dramatic peak.