

Flowers for Algernon — Novel

July and August

by Daniel Keyes

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: catatonic, coalesced, dissociation, eludes, exigencies, indebted, ivory tower, neurosis, reap, tangible

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. After the shock, she sat **catatonic** on the couch, staring at nothing.

- A. dizzy and lightheaded
- B. frozen and unresponsive
- C. drowsy and half-asleep

2. The various clubs **coalesced** under a single new leader.

- A. reorganized internally
- B. merged into one
- C. expanded rapidly

3. The trauma triggered a deep **dissociation** that worried her therapist.

- A. a sudden loss of memory
- B. a buildup of nervous tension
- C. a splitting off of the mind

4. The solution to the puzzle still **eludes** me.

- A. escapes one's grasp
- B. completely satisfies
- C. strongly tempts

5. A good leader plans ahead for the **exigencies** of any crisis.

- A. final outcomes
- B. hidden causes
- C. urgent demands

6. She felt deeply **indebted** to the stranger who returned her wallet.

- A. deeply impressed
- B. strongly attracted
- C. owing gratitude

7. Critics said the senator wrote from an **ivory tower**.

- A. a sheltered, detached position
- B. a place of deep wisdom
- C. a position of wealth and luxury

8. Years of pressure left her with a quiet **neurosis**.

- A. a mild anxiety disorder
- B. a deep exhaustion
- C. a bitter resentment

9. Those who study hard often **reap** the rewards later.

- A. to gain as a result
- B. to wait for
- C. to deserve

10. After months of work, the team finally had **tangible** results to show.

- A. widely praised
- B. real and concrete
- C. highly promising

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

incinerator — a furnace for burning waste; here, for disposing of dead lab animals

withered — shriveled or wasted away; here figurative for souls drained of life

guinea pig — a person used as the subject of an experiment

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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

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 *"I'm sure that from the beginning you planned for all exigencies. So what happens to me?"*

As it is used in the passage, the word 'exigencies' most nearly means...

- A. lucky chances or openings
- B. small, minor details
- C. pressing needs or demands

6 *"... if we could show the world that there is some tangible good coming out of it."*

According to the excerpt, Raynor hopes the project will produce...

- A. concrete results he can show off
- B. abstract theories for scientists
- C. quick profits for the foundation

2 *"You can't understand it, can you, from way up there in your research ivory tower?"*

Which choice best describes Winslow's attitude toward Charlie here?

- A. scornful of his sheltered detachment
- B. impressed by his expert knowledge
- C. envious of his scientific training

7 *"I've served your purposes, and now I'm trying to work out your mistakes, so how the hell does that make me indebted to anyone?"*

The passage most strongly suggests that Charlie refuses to feel 'indebted' because...

- A. he was never given any real help
- B. he has paid back all his debts
- C. he owes no thanks for being used

3 *"When I picked him up, he made no attempt to uncurl, but remained in that state much like a catatonic stupor."*

It can reasonably be inferred that Algernon, in a 'catatonic stupor,'...

- A. is curled up to keep warm
- B. is motionless and unresponsive
- C. is resting before another run

8 *"The problem, dear professor, is that you wanted someone who could be made intelligent but still be kept in a cage and displayed when necessary to reap the honors you seek."*

Charlie says Nemur cages him to 'reap the honors,' suggesting Nemur wants to...

- A. gather credit from Charlie's success
- B. plant new ideas in Charlie's mind
- C. shield Charlie from public view

4 *"What eludes me is the reason for his regression — is it a special case? An isolated reaction?"*

Which statement about the cause of Algernon's regression is best supported here?

- A. It excites Charlie's interest
- B. It escapes Charlie's understanding
- C. It alarms Charlie greatly

9 *"A peculiar dissociation has taken place in the past month or so."*

It can reasonably be inferred that the 'dissociation' Strauss describes is Charlie's...

- A. loss of all his earlier memories
- B. sense of his old self as separate
- C. open break with the scientists

5 *"It's as if all the knowledge I've soaked in during the past months has coalesced and lifted me to a peak of light and understanding."*

The author has Charlie say his knowledge 'coalesced' in order to...

- A. show his learning fused together
- B. show his knowledge broke into fragments
- C. show his growing excitement and energy

10 *"Intelligence without the ability to give and receive affection leads to mental and moral breakdown, to neurosis, and possibly even psychosis."*

In Charlie's hypothesis, mentioning 'neurosis' chiefly functions to...

- A. praise the power of pure intellect
- B. list a fatal brain disease
- C. warn where loveless intellect leads

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY	NOTE
1	C	
2	A	
3	B	
4	B	
5	A	
6	A	
7	C	Event comprehension. Charlie does not deny he was helped — he denies that being used for the experiment obliges him to gratitude.
8	A	
9	B	Character comprehension. Here the 'dissociation' is Charlie perceiving his earlier self as a separate person — not memory loss.
10	C	Theme comprehension. Neurosis is milder than the psychosis Charlie names next — anxiety or obsession without losing touch with reality.

Teacher Context: July and August

Charlie turns his mind to investigating the experiment himself while his personal life grows turbulent, and the first warning signs about the procedure begin to surface. These two months are joined as the turning point between Charlie's peak and what follows.