California Standards

Reading Standard 3.2
– Evaluate the structural elements of the plot (for example, subplots, parallel episodes).

Before You Read

Literary Focus

Subplots and Parallel Episodes
– A subplot is a minor plot that relates in some way to the major story.
– A long story might also have parallel episodes, in which the writer repeats certain elements of the plot.
Before You Read
Reading Skills
Using Context Clues

– At the start of “Flowers for Algernon,” you’ll notice that Charlie has trouble with spelling.
– To figure out Charlie’s misspelled words, try to sound them out. He spells words how they sound.

Before You Read
Reading Skills
Using Context Clues

– The context will often give you enough context clues, or hints, to help you figure out the word’s meaning.

Before You Read
Make the Connection
Quickwrite

– Would you rather be the most popular or the smartest person in school?
  • On a small piece of paper write either S for “smartest” or P for “most popular” and pass your response to the vote counter.
  • Tally the votes.
  • How did you vote? Was it close?
  • Discuss the reasons for the results.
Before You Read
Make the Connection

Quickwrite
– Write a brief response to one of the following questions:
  • What are the advantages and disadvantages of popularity? Of intelligence?
  • What sacrifices do people make to fit in?
  • What is good or bad about being unusual?

Before You Read
Vocabulary Development
• misled
• tangible
• refute
• invariably
• regression
• verified
• obscure
• deterioration
• hypothesis
• introspective

misled
• Joe and Frank misled Charlie into thinking they were his friends.
• If you have been misled, you have been fooled, or led to believe something wrong.
tangible

• An early tangible benefit of Charlie’s operation was his improved skill at spelling.
• Tangible means to be capable of being seen or felt.

refute

• Charlie used his research to refute the work of Drs. Nemur and Strauss.
• If you refute something, you’ve proven it wrong using evidence.
• The Spanish cognate of refute is refutar.

invariably

• Charlie’s co-workers invariably laughed at his mistakes.
• Invariably means always.
• The Spanish cognate of invariable is invariable.
regression

• After his regression the mouse no longer could find his way through the maze.
• Regression is to return to an earlier or less advanced condition.
• The Spanish cognate of regression is regresión.

verified

• Charlie wanted the results of his research verified by other scientists.
• Verified means confirmed.
• The Spanish cognate of verify is verificar.

obscure

• Charlie wanted to obscure the fact that he was losing his intelligence.
• Obscure means to hide.
• The Spanish cognate of obscure is oscurecer.
deterioration

• Because of his mental deterioration, Charlie could no longer read German.

• Deterioration means to worsen or decline, or can mean used.

• The Spanish cognate of deteriorate is deteriorarse.

hypothesis

• The doctors’ hypothesis was that they could improve intelligence through surgery.

• A hypothesis is a theory to be proved.

• The Spanish cognate of hypothesis is hipótesis.

introspective

• Charlie kept an introspective journal of his thoughts and feelings.

• Introspective means looking inward.
Standards Starter

Build Prerequisite Skills

– What recent movie has everyone seen?
– Can you summarize the plot and identify the central conflict?
– What are some other minor stories that relate to that major plot?

Correcting Misconceptions

It may be hard to read this passage because the speaker’s words are not set off by quotation marks.

– Charlie’s sentence:  He sed Charlie what do you see on this card.
– Correct sentence: He said, “Charlie, what do you see on this card?”
– Compare the two sentences.

Reading Skills

Drawing Conclusions

– From Charlie’s report, what do you think he is supposed to do on the Rorschach Test?
– What does Charlie’s reaction to the test reveal about him?
Direct Teaching
Reading Skills
Using Context Clues
– The English word rote means “memorization through repetition.”
– How do you know Charlie meant wrote, the past tense of write instead?

Direct Teaching
Content-Area Connections
History: Nicknames
– Nickname don’t always tell about someone’s future, but it did for Swiss Psychiatrist Herman Rorschach.
– His childhood nickname was “Klek” – a German word for inkblot.
– In 1921, when he was 37, Rorschach introduced the psychological inkblot test.
– During the test, people are asked what images they see in 10 inkblots.

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Plot
– Plot is a series of related events that make up a story.
– The first part of the plot, the exposition, introduces the characters and their conflicts.
  • Describe the main character in the story.
  • What conflict does he face as the story opens?
Direct Teaching
Reading Skills
Using Context Clues
– How can context clues help you figure out the meaning of caut?

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Subplot
– This is the first appearance of the title character, the mouse, Algernon.
– What do Charlie and Algernon have in common?
– What might their relationship be?

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Conflict
– What is the first major hurdle Charlie must overcome?
– How is it resolved?
Direct Teaching
Reading Skills
Making Inferences
– What does this comparison of Charlie to Algernon suggest about the way the doctor’s regard Charlie?

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Character
– How would you describe Charlie, based on Dr. Strauss’s assessment?

Direct Teaching
Vocabulary Development
Homophones
– Charlie uses the possessive pronoun your when he should use the contraction you’re.
– English has many homophones, pairs or groups of words that should alike but have different spellings and meanings.
– What other homophones can you name?
**Direct Teaching**

**Literary Focus**

**Foreshadowing**

– Why might the author have included the bad luck omen at this point in the story?

**Subplots**

– The subplot of Algernon will parallel the man plot involving Charlie.
– Describe Charlie’s feelings about Algernon at this point in the story.

**Reading Skills**

**Making Inferences**

– Why does Charlie want so badly to be smart?
**Direct Teaching**

**Literary Focus**

Parallel Episodes

– This is the first time Charlie has raced Algernon or taken tests since the operation
– What do these events indicate about the outcome of the procedure?

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**Direct Teaching**

**Reading Skills**

Using Context Clues

– Which of the surrounding words and phrases can help you figure out the meaning of *dint*?

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**Direct Teaching**

**Literary Focus**

Subplots

– What do Dr Strauss’s comments about Algernon indicate about Charlie’s own prospects for improvement?
Direct Teaching

Literary Focus

Character

- What can you tell about Charlie from his laughing at his own ridicule and his certainty that these men are really his friends?

Direct Teaching

Reading Skills

Speculating

- Why do the other factory workers make fun of Charlie?

Finding Details

- In what ways do Charlie’s progress reports show that he is getting more intelligent?

Direct Teaching

Correcting Misconceptions

Science Fiction

- Science fiction is a type of writing that involves technology that has not yet been invented but that is based on a prediction or on scientific possibility.
Direct Teaching
Correcting Misconceptions
Science Fiction
- Since no one has yet invented an operation to improve human intelligence, and since sleep teaching is unproven, this story can be considered a work of science fiction.
- It is not always thought of that way, however, because the character development is more important to the plot than the technology.

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Character
- What does Charlie’s comment “The late, late, late, late show” reveal about him?

Direct Teaching
Vocabulary Development
Word Origins
- Look in the dictionary to determine the origin of the words conscious and subconscious.
**Extra Support**

**Finding Details**
- What tricks do the factory workers play on Charlie?

**Slang**
- Card means a witty comical, or clowning person.
- Potted means intoxicated or drunk.

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**Literary Focus**

**Parallel Episodes**
- How does this episode with Algernon differ from previous ones?
- What does it indicate about Charlie?

**Subplots**
- What might Miss Kinnian have to be scared of when she sees Charlie?

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**Advanced Learners**

**Acceleration**
- What do Charlie’s feelings about Robinson Crusoe suggest about Charlie’s future?
Content-Area Connections

Literature: Robinson Crusoe

– Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) became famous with his very first novel, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

– Published in 1719, when Defoe was nearly 60 years old, *Robinson Crusoe* was based on the real life adventures of the sailor Alexander Selkirk, who was shipwrecked on an island off the coast of Chile.

Reading Skills

Making Inferences

– Does Miss Kinnian really get something in her eye?

– What else might explain her sudden exit?

Interpreting

– How does this entry illustrate both the progress Charlie is making and how far he still has to go?

Identifying Cause and Effect

– Why is Charlie learning so fast?
Flowers for Algernon, Part 1

Direct Teaching

**Literary Focus**

**Subplots**
- Why doesn’t Charlie need to race Algernon anymore?

**Parallel Episodes**
- How does Charlie’s feelings about this drinking episode differ from the earlier one?

Direct Teaching

**Reading Skills**

**Using Context Clues**
- What does it mean “to pull a Charlie Gordon”?
- How can you figure this out?

**Finding Details**
- What phrase in this passage suggests that Charlie is becoming exceptionally intelligent and increasingly confident?

Direct Teaching

**Reading Skills**

**Evaluating**
- Charlie thinks that getting smarter will solve his problems
- Do you think he is right? Why or why not?
Content-Area Connections

Social Science: I.Q. Test

– Proposed by German psychologist William Stern and used by American psychologist Lewis Terman in 1915, intelligence quotient (I.Q.) is a mathematical measure of intelligence.
– It is a number based on one’s mental age divided by one’s chronological age and multiplied by 100.

Content-Area Connections

Social Science: I.Q. Test

– Mental age is calculated from the results of a test such as the Revised Stanford-Binet Test.
  • An I.Q. of 100 is considered average.
  • An I.Q. of 130-140 is considered gifted.
  • An I.Q. of 200 is extremely rare.

Literary Focus

Parallel Episodes

– How is Charlie different from the way he was the first time he took the Rorschach test?
Direct Teaching

Reading Skills

Using Context Clues

– From other parts of the paragraph, how can you tell that feebleminded means “unintelligent”?

Direct Teaching

Literary Focus

Parallel Episodes

– How has Charlie’s attitude about lying changed from the last time he took his test?

Direct Teaching

Reading Skills

Interpreting

– Why do Joe Carp and Frank Reilly refuse to go to lunch with Charlie?
– The new impressively intelligent Charlie is losing his established social role.
Flowers for Algernon, Part 1

Subplots

- What kinds of feelings does Charlie seem to be developing for Miss Kinnian?

Extra Support

Interpreting Idioms

- To “ride the coattails” of another is to achieve success by relying on the efforts of that person.
- To help understand the idiom, create a mental picture of a person literally riding on the coattails of another person.

Subplots

- The relationship between Charlie and the two doctors is one of the story’s ongoing subplots.
  - Do the doctors seem to have Charlie’s best interests at heart?
  - What does Charlie’s reaction to his encounter with the doctors suggest about how he is changing?
Direct Teaching
Reading Skills
Interpreting
– Identify and examine the figurative language Miss Kinnian uses.
– What does it suggest about her intelligence?

Direct Teaching
Literary Focus
Foreshadowing
– What do Miss Kinnian’s remarks suggest about Charlie’s future?
– What might she be frightened of?

Direct Teaching
Reading Skills
Expressing an Opinion
– Do you think Charlie is really in love with Miss Kinnian? Why or why not?
Using Context Clues
– How can you use context clues to figure out the meaning of petition?
Direct Teaching
Literary Focus

Conflict
- How has Charlie’s intellectual growth led to conflict with his coworkers?
- What is the outcome of the conflict?

Subplots
- How does this episode with Fanny Girden differ from earlier episodes with Charlie’s coworkers?
- What effect does this episode have on the conflict Charlie faces as a result of his operation?