



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Flowers for Algernon

based on the book by

Daniel Keyes

Written by

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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR
DANIEL KEYES

KEYES, Daniel 1927- Award winning author Daniel Keyes was born on August 9, 1927, in Brooklyn, New York. He grew up in New York City and attended the public schools there. Keyes attended college for one year, then joined the Marines.

When his tour of duty with the Marines was completed, Daniel Keyes attended Brooklyn College and earned a B. A. in psychology. In 1950 he went to work for a magazine firm in New York as an associate fiction editor. He stayed there for one year, then went into the photography business. This career lasted only a short time, and in 1954 Keyes began teaching English at the high school which he had attended.

During the next several years, Keyes taught during the day, went to Brooklyn College at night to pursue a Master's degree in English and American Literature, and wrote on the weekends. In 1962 he joined the faculty at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, as an instructor in English. He taught there until 1966. From 1966-1972, he was a lecturer at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. In 1972 Keyes became a professor of English at Ohio University.

Flowers for Algernon is Keyes most well-known work. It was originally written as a short story. In 1959, the short story version was awarded the Hugo Award at the World Science Fiction Convention. Keyes was encouraged to develop the short story into a novel. This novel version of *Flowers for Algernon* received the Nebula Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1966. Keyes also received the Mystery Writers of America special award for *The Minds of Billy Milligan*.

In 1961, the CBS Playhouse aired "The Two Worlds of Charlie Gordon," a television play based on the short story "Flowers for Algernon." "Charly," the film version of the novel *Flowers for Algernon*, was released in 1968. Actor Cliff Robertson starred as Charlie Gordon. *Flowers for Algernon* has also been adapted for the live stage, and has been produced in Canada, England, and the United States.

Keyes's other writings include *The Touch*, 1968; *The Fifth Sally*, 1980; and *The Minds of Billy Milligan* (nonfiction), 1981.

Daniel Keyes lives in Athens, Ohio.

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, listening and speaking skills through exercises and activities related to *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes. It includes nineteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the plight of the main character in the novel through a hands-on activity. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 8 to 12 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. It might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 8 to 12 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II gives students dictionary definitions of the words and has them match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete extra discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the separate vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the reading of the book, two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel. These questions are done

as a **group activity**. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the themes of the novel.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about the book with the entire class; thus, the entire class gets exposed to many different ideas regarding the themes and events of the book.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to **persuade**. Students will persuade a doctor that they should be chosen to receive an experimental procedure designed to make them smarter. The second assignment is to **inform**. Students will write a news story based on Charlie's operation. The third assignment is to give a **personal opinion**. Students will give their opinion on using science and technology to alter the human condition.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Flowers for Algernon*. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities packet** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

UNIT OBJECTIVES *Flowers for Algernon*

1. Through reading *Flowers for Algernon*, students will analyze characters and their situations to better understand the themes of the novel.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
4. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with it.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Flowers for Algernon*.
6. Students will practice writing through a variety of writing assignments.
7. The writing assignments in this are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - b. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - c. To make students put those ideas into perspective
 - d. To encourage critical and logical thinking
 - e. To provide the opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

UNIT OUTLINE *Flowers for Algernon*

1	2	3	4	5
Unit Intro Distribute Unit Materials PV 1-8	Read 1-8 Study?s 1-8 Nonfiction Ass't.	PVR 9-10 Oral Reading Eval.	Quiz 1-10 PVR 11	Writing Assignment 1
6	7	8	9	10
Study ?s 11 PVR 12-13	Study ?s 12-13 PVR 14	Study?s 14 Writing Assignment 2	Writing Conference	PVR 15-16 Study ?s 15-16
11	12	13	14	15
PVR 17 Study ?s 17	Extra Discussion ?s	Writing Assignment 3	Library Work	Vocab Review
16	17	18	19	
Movie & Discuss	Non-Fiction Ass't.	Unit Review	Unit Test	

Key: P=Preview Study Questions V=Vocabulary Worksheet R=Read

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET
Flowers for Algernon

Date Assigned	Chapters (Progress Reports)	Complete By Date
	1-8	
	9-10	
	11	
	12-13	
	14	
	15-16	
	17	

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce the *Flowers for Algernon* unit
2. To relate students' prior knowledge to the new material
3. To distribute books and other related materials
4. To do the prereading work for Progress Reports 1-8

Activity #1

Distribute copies of a maze. (Most magazine racks have books of puzzles and mazes.) Have students work with a partner to time each other as they complete the maze. Find the average length of time it took for students to work the maze. Then categorize students as average, below average, and above average. Invite students to discuss how they feel about being labeled on the basis of a test.

Activity #2

Introduce the novel *Flowers for Algernon*. Tell students it is a science fiction novel. Science fiction is defined as literature that has elements of science or technology as a focus of the conflict or setting. It is often concerned with the effects of science and technology on people. Encourage students to look for the scientific and technological elements while they are reading. The main character in the novel is asked to complete mazes like the one the students just did. Ask why someone would be asked to perform such a task.

Activity #3

Ask what students think the title could be referring to. Do a group KWL sheet with the students (form included.) Put any information the students know in the K column (What I Know.) Ask students what they want to find out and put that information in the W column (What I Want to Find Out.) Keep the sheet and refer back to it after reading the novel, and complete the L column (What I Learned.)

Activity #4

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should preview the study guide questions before each reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in that section. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *Flowers for Algernon*

PROMPT

At the beginning of the novel, Charlie was being considered for a special scientific experiment. He told the doctors why he wanted to be chosen. Alice Kinnian also recommended him. A research hospital near you has recently tested a method for increasing intelligence in animals. Now they are ready to experiment on a human being. You want to be chosen for the experiment. You must write a letter to the doctor conducting the experiment explaining why you are the best candidate for the procedure.

PREWRITING

The first thing you need to do is think about why you want to have the procedure done. What is your motivation?

Next, make a list of the reasons you are a good choice for the experiment. Include things like current health, and contributions you have already made to your school or community. How will increasing your intelligence help you? How will you use your new abilities to help others?

When you have finished your list, arrange the items in the order in which you want to present them.

DRAFTING-

In the first paragraph, introduce yourself and tell what you want. Next, give more background about yourself, including the reasons you think you are a good choice for the experiment. You may want to use one paragraph for each reason. Make sure to include details and examples to explain your reasons. Write a paragraph telling how you will use your new intelligence to help others. In your concluding paragraph, restate your desire to be chosen. Thank the readers for their time.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask another student to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

You may want another student to look at your display. Ask for information about its neatness and attractiveness.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper, double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.