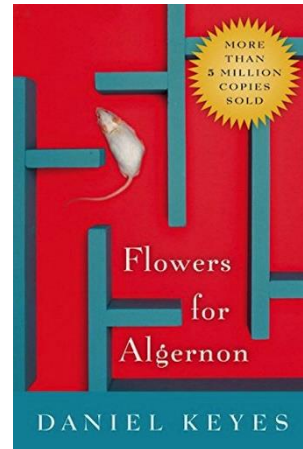


Flowers for Algernon



ISBN-13	978-0-15-603030-4
Author	Daniel Keyes
Publisher	Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
First Published	1959
Print Year	2004
Lexile	910L
Genre	Science fiction
Synopsis	Charlie Gordon agrees to have an experimental brain surgery that may increase his intelligence. Before Charlie, this surgery was successfully performed only once on a lab mouse named Algernon.
Themes	Appreciation of Diversity and Justice; Special Needs; Physical and Mental Health; Happiness and Contentment

Character-Based Literacy Program Independent Study Lesson Plan, *Flowers for Algernon*, Week 1



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Resourcefulness Requires Initiative. Being resourceful means applying my knowledge and skills to solve problems creatively and independently. It requires that I keep trying even when solutions do not come easily.

What Is Intellectual Disability and How Many People in the US Have It?

Three percent of people living in the United States—about seven to eight million individuals—have an intellectual disability. Intellectual disability is identified when a person has deficits in intellectual functioning (e.g., memory problems and skill learning) and adaptive behavior (e.g., social skills), and these problems start at an early age. If a person is evaluated and scores an IQ of 70 or lower, he or she is considered to have an intellectual disability.

What is the Rorschach test?

The Rorschach test examines personality traits and disorders. The tester gives the person cards with symmetrical ink blots and asks the patient to describe what he or she sees. The answers are analyzed in terms of level of detail (e.g., attention to color and the perception of movement in the image). It is a projective test, because there are no right or wrong answers, only the hidden emotions and thoughts conveyed through the interpretation of the images. The abstract images can trigger a wide variety of free associations, including repressed memories and state of mind. For example, through this test, it is possible to identify people who suffer a high level of stress, internal conflict, and sense of helplessness. Responses to the Rorschach test, for example, the cognitive complexity, originality, and vocabulary used to describe the image in detail, are related to people's level of intelligence.

What are Ethical Standards and Ethical Dilemmas?

Ethical standards determine the right course of action in personal and professional contexts.

Ethical dilemmas are situations in which two ethical standards conflict. In this case, the decision-maker(s) should decide between two or more courses of action.

Analyze the Following Case Study: The Ethics of Intelligence Enhancing Devices

A team of a team of neuroscientists and engineers is developing a brain implant that increases human intelligence. People who purchase this product will learn faster, remember more, and be better able to solve problems. In fact, they will become so

smart that they may compete with machines equipped with artificial intelligence. However, the costs of the development, production, and medical operations of this device are so high, that only rich people – the top one percent of society – will be able to afford it. Successful development of this brain implant will advance the field of medicine and inform medical treatments to people suffering from dementia, Alzheimer disease, Epilepsy, and other brain disorders. You are a wealthy philanthropist with a great reputation for investing in projects that benefit society. You were invited to invest in the research and development of the brain implant. Would you donate money to support this cause?

Use the following tool for the case study analysis: Ethics Framework Poster available at <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/ethical-decision-making-poster/>

What are the Ethical Responsibilities of Scientists Conducting Research with People Diagnosed with Intellectual Disabilities?

Scientists and treatment providers should directly ask the patient about his or her thoughts and feelings about the goals for the treatment – both at the beginning and throughout the course of the treatment and follow-up. The treatment provider should be worded concretely and delivered in multiple segments using simple language and multiple checks for understanding. Adults—regardless of disability status—are presumed competent unless legal (court) proceedings have formally determined that they lack competency to make decisions. Even if a person has been found legally incompetent (to give consent for participation), every effort should be made to explain the treatment processes, the expected positive and negative outcomes, and presentations to the scientific community and the public. All information should be given in appropriate language and request the patient's assent for any new decisions made during the research project. Having an appointed guardian does not automatically include the right to make decisions on behalf of the patient.

What is The File Drawer Problem?

If the results of the surgery will prove to be temporary, it will be the ethical obligation of the research team to inform the public about the failure of the experiment. In various fields of research, scientists may be sometimes reluctant to share such findings. This is called The File Drawer Problem. Scientists and academic journals may not publish papers on negative effects or no effects of interventions and on effects that are hard to explain (for example, because they contradict theories and past research). The lack of reporting creates a bias in the research literature and can misinform the public as well as researchers about the potential harmful effects of interventions.

Word Wall Here are 25 vocabulary words to define and add to the Word Wall.

apperception (5)	personality (6)	experiment (6)	operation (9)	subconscious (29)
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punctuation (39)	plateau (39)	opportunist (69)	cynic (69)	pessimist (69)
invariably (96)	etymologies (96)	specialization (97)	delegations (105)	petitions (105)
preliminary (113)	specimen (113)	ingratitude (145)	inhibition (147)	irreversible (147)
exigencies (217)	permanence (218)	temporary (218)	imperceptibly (235)	lethargy (239)

Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- Mention the setting and main character
- Point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read the selection.

Read pages 3–241 in the book, *Flowers for Algernon*

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important events on the timeline.

Flowers for Algernon: Week 1 Timeline

Instructions: Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *get the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events.
- Write one sentence per event.

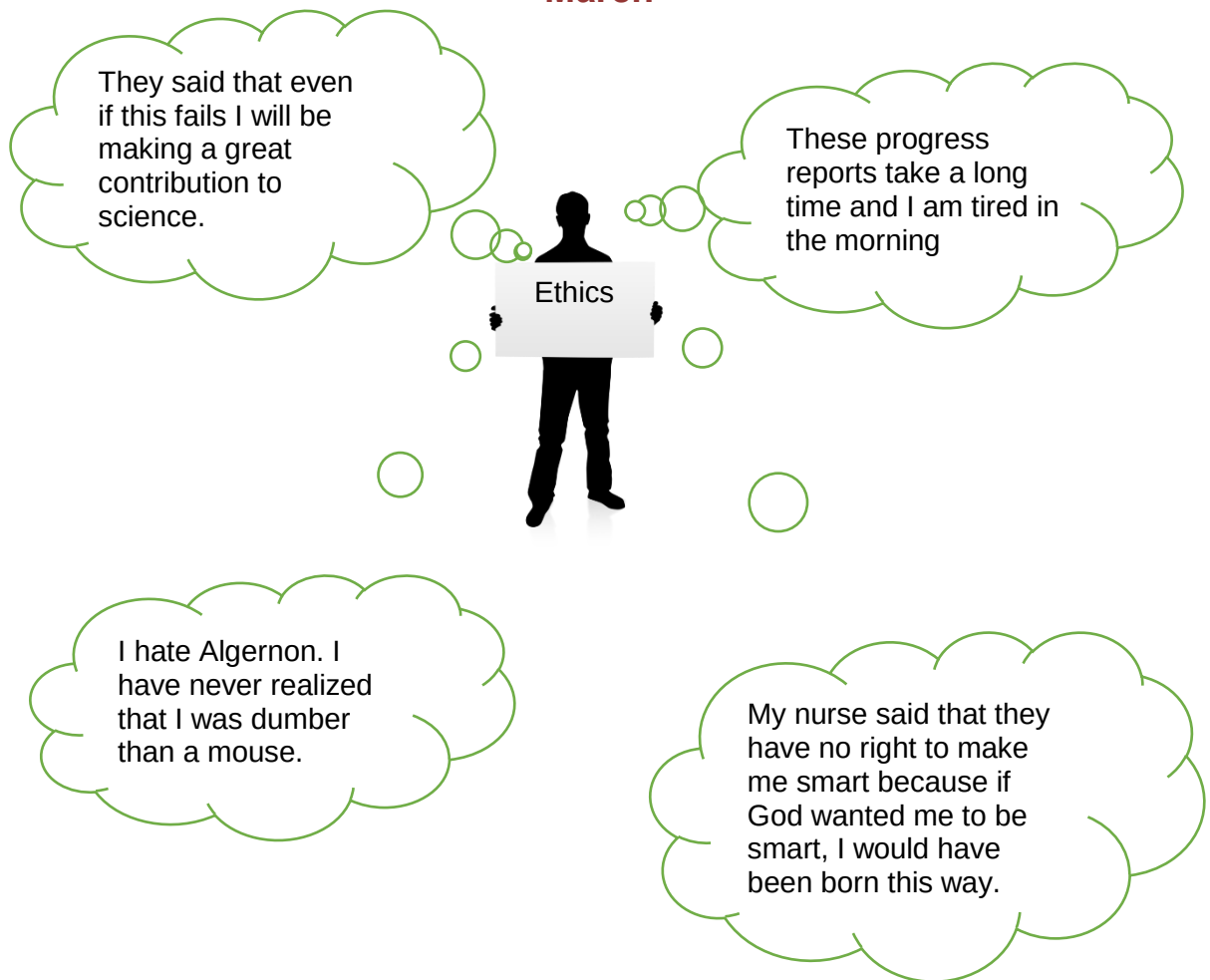
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Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: Mark key places in the barrio.

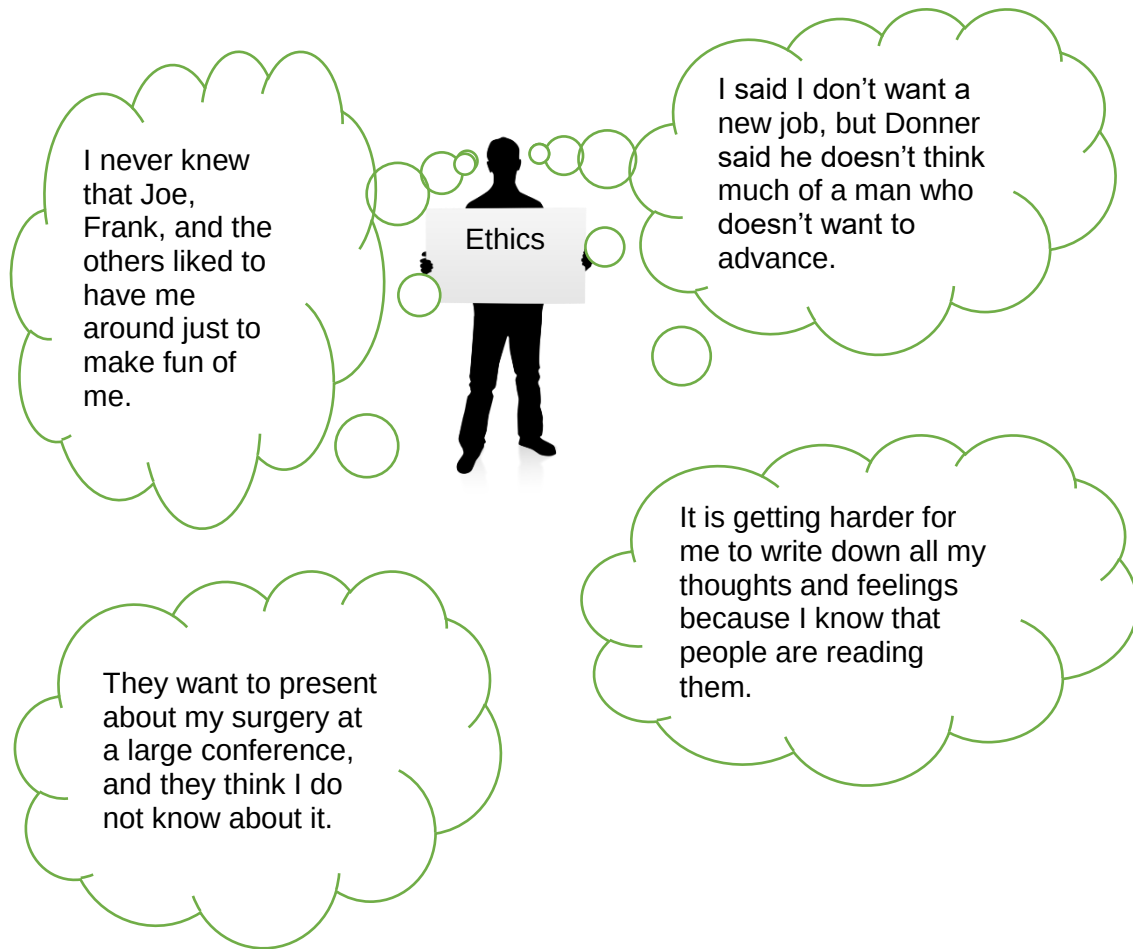
Using the mapping exercise, you will explore some of the ethical questions that came up every month in Charlie's progress reports. For each month, choose *one* of the thought clouds and analyze it from an ethical perspective. Your analysis should address all of the following questions:

- What is the ethical problem or dilemma suggested by the statement in the thought cloud?
- Who is affected by it (emotionally, socially, financially, physically, etc.)? How are they affected by it?
- Can this problem be solved? Are there alternative solutions to this problem?
- Who is responsible for solving this problem? What should they do?

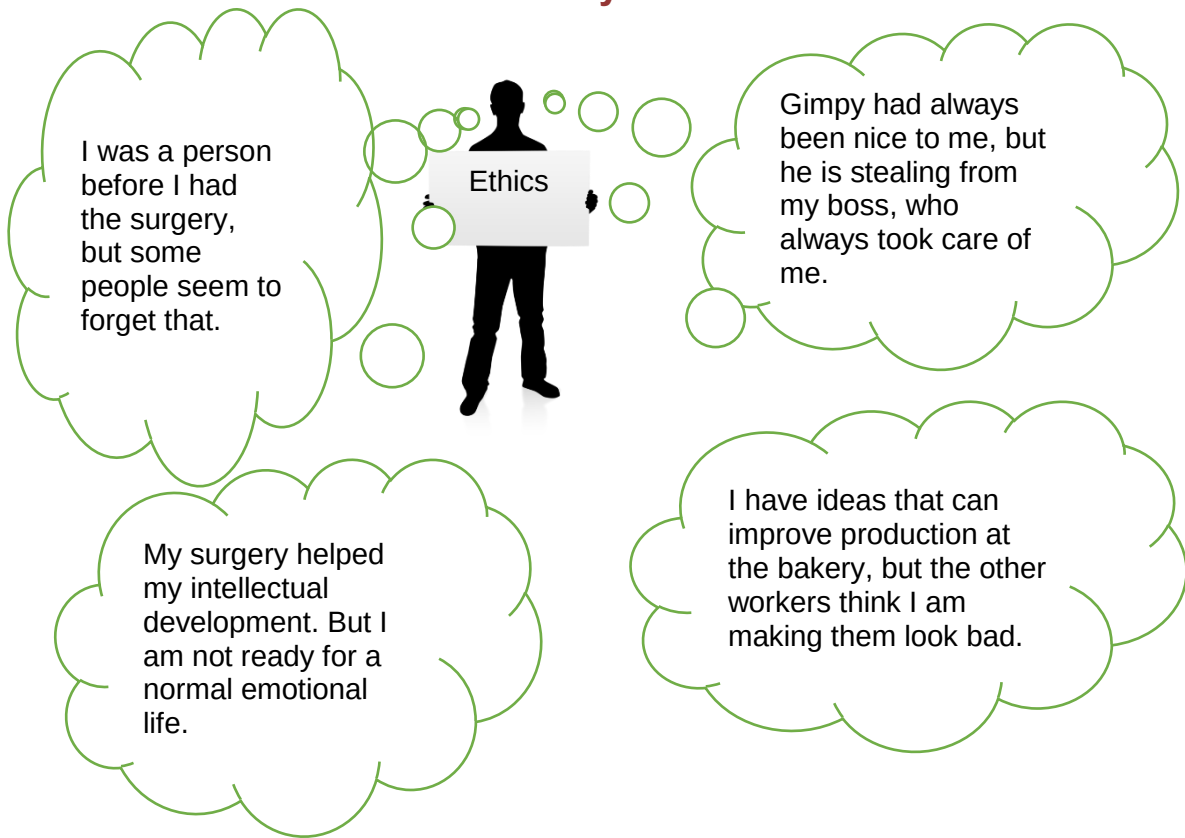
March



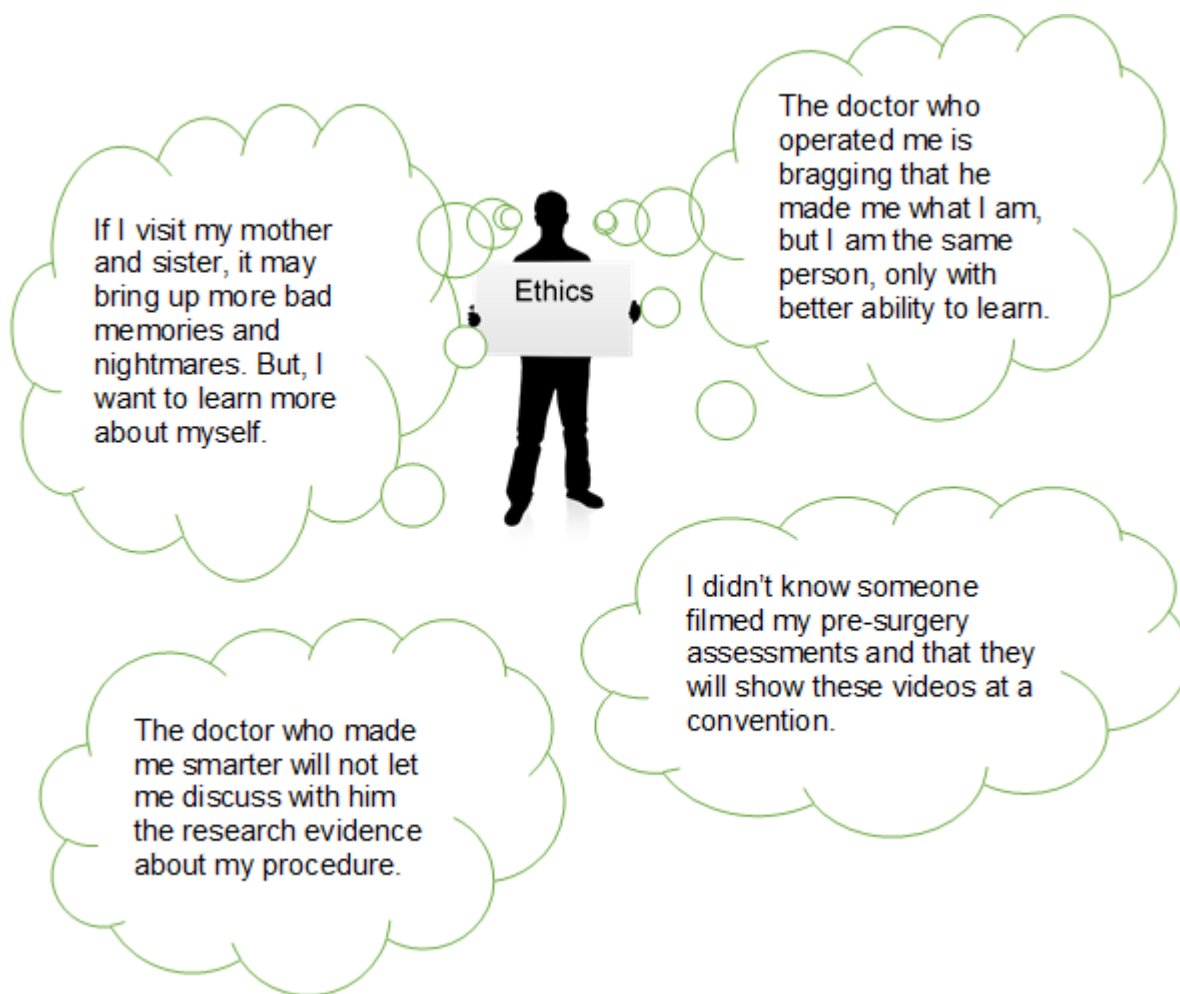
April



May



June



July

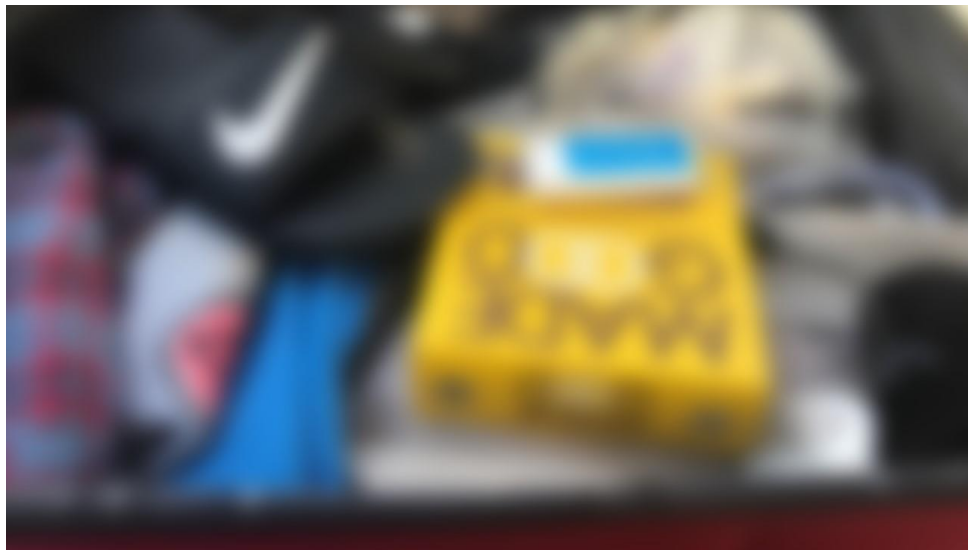


EXPLORE

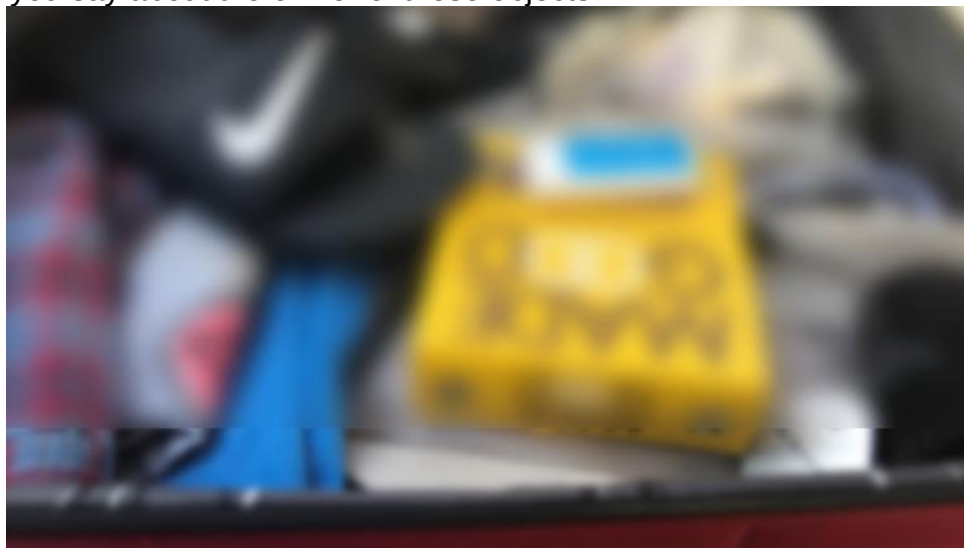
Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

People with disabilities (intellectual, vision impairment, etc.) may experience disadvantages because they may not see, hear, or understand the information around them. In this simulation, we will attempt to make sense of a picture with limited access to information. Look at the picture and answer the questions as best you can. Be sure to complete each picture before moving on the next. The questions are the same, but the picture will gradually become clearer.

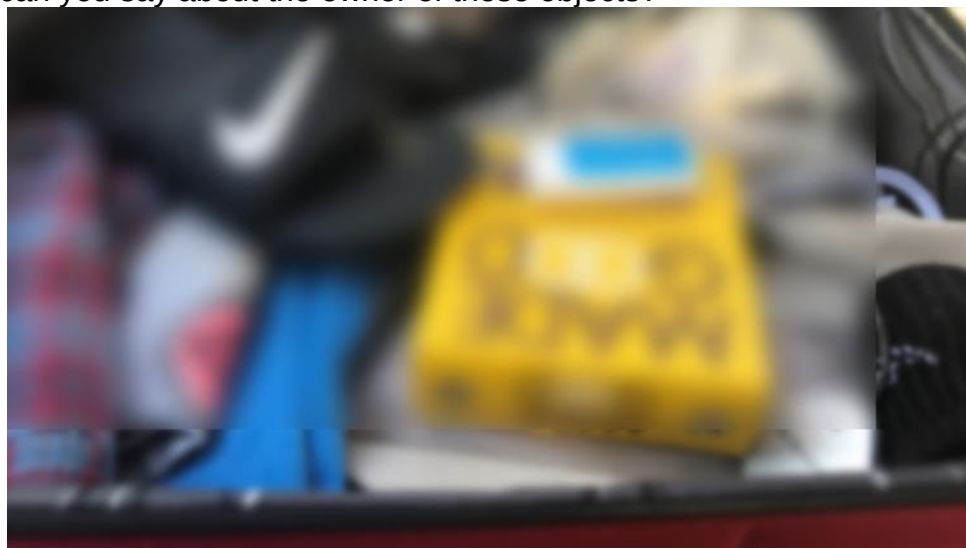
1. What is in the picture? Make a list of the objects and their purpose.
2. What can you say about the owner of these objects?



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Discussion Ask discussion questions.

Answer the key questions. Use evidence from the text.

March Progress Reports (pp. 1–34)

1. Why was Charlie chosen to participate in the experimental brain surgery?
2. Is Charlie independent? Is he generally happy? Provide evidence from the text.

April Progress Reports (pp. 34–76)

1. In what ways has Charlie been misunderstood, ignored, and bullied because of his intellectual disability?
2. Why does Charlie like to spend time at the college?

May Progress Reports (pp. 76–113)

1. Why did Mr. Donner fire Charlie?
2. Why is Alice reluctant to get involved with Charlie?

June Progress Reports (pp. 113–211)

1. What made Charlie upset during the convention?
2. Why does Charlie want to contact the Wellberg Foundation?

July Progress Reports (pp. 212–241)

1. What is happening to Algernon? Describe the different types of symptoms.
2. What did Charlie learn during his visit at the Warren State Home and Training School?

Analyze the key paragraph.**P. 32**

“I don't think it's right to make you pass a test to eat. How would Burt like to have to pass a test every time he wants to eat.”

P. 68

“Nemur: ‘I'm not afraid of regression anymore. I've checked and rechecked everything. An interim report will do no harm. I feel sure nothing can go wrong now.’”

P. 106

“What did he do? Hear that, Joe? I'll tell you what you did, *Mister* Gordon. You come pushing in here with your ideas and suggestions and make the rest of us all look like a bunch of dopes. But I'll tell you something. To me, you're still a moron. Maybe I don't understand some of them big words or the names of the books, but I'm as good as you are—better even.”

P. 200

“There is so much that can be done with this technique, if it is perfected. If I could be made into a genius, what about the more than five million mentally retarded in the United States? What about the countless millions all over the world, and those yet unborn destined to be retarded? What fantastic levels might be achieved by using this technique on normal people. On geniuses?”

Independent Study, Week 1

Flowers for Algernon

P. 225

"I'm very fond of my boys. It's not easy work, but it's rewarding when you think how much they need you." The smile left her for a moment. "Normal kids grow up too soon, stop needing you...go off on their own...forget who loved them and took care of them. But these children need all you can give—all of their lives."

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, you will write an essay titled *Human Dignity*. The essay will be about the importance of treating all people with respect and consideration.

1. In the *March* progress reports, you have read about the way Joe and Frank treat Charlie. Charlie is not aware that they are not treating him with respect. Is Charlie's lack of awareness of the meaning of their actions makes their behavior more or less justifiable? Should Charlie's level of understanding be considered at all when judging the morality of Joe and Frank's actions? Present your arguments with supporting details in one or two paragraphs.
2. In the *April* progress reports, you have read about Charlie's growing awareness of his need for privacy. He made his case – and the two scientists agreed – to let Charlie keep his progress reports that detail his private emotions, thoughts, and dreams away from the people in the lab, at least for a while. Does Charlie have an obligation to share his private thoughts with the research team? Or, does he have the right to disclose only some of his thoughts, feelings, and experiences? Summarize your arguments with supporting details in one or two paragraphs.
3. In the *March* reports, you have read about Charlie's conflicts with the workers at the bakery. They made fun of him when he was less smart than them and were hostile towards him when he became smarter than everyone at the bakery. As the owner of the bakery, what was Mr. Donner's responsibility in both situations? Did he make good decisions? Are there other actions he could have taken? Summarize your arguments and supporting details in one or two paragraphs.
4. In the *June* reports, you have read about Charlie's growing discomfort at the International Psychological Convention. What issues bothered Charlie? Could the professors have prevented Charlie's discomfort and resentment? Write one or two paragraphs summarizing your arguments and the supporting details.
5. In the *July* reports, you have read about Charlie's visit to the Warren State Home and Training School and got a glimpse of the dedication of the staff. What character virtues do the staff members show at this school and home? Write one or two paragraphs.

Character-Based Literacy Program Independent Study Lesson Plan, *Flowers for Algernon*, Week 2



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Resourcefulness Requires Initiative. Being resourceful means applying my knowledge and skills to solve problems creatively and independently. It requires that I keep trying even when solutions do not come easily.

How is the Book, *Flowers for Algernon* Relevant to Cases in Bioethics?

In this unit, you are learning about health research ethics, and in particular the ethics of including human subjects with intellectual disabilities. Although this book is science fiction, there are real-world case studies that bring up similar issues. Read and analyze the ethics case study, The Radioactive Oatmeal Experiment.

The Radioactive Oatmeal Experiment

In the 1940s, the Departments of Food Technology and Physics of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) partnered with the Fernald State School in Waverly, Massachusetts to conduct a study with a grant from the Quaker Oats Company.

The study participants were teen boys, ages 12 to 17 years, living at the Fernald School, with IQ scores ranging between 65 and 70. At breakfast time, participants ate oats coated with radioactive iron tracers, drank milk with radioactive calcium tracers, and were given injections of radioactive calcium. The participants were told that they were selected for a "Science Club" because of their good behavior. As rewards, the researchers promised the children that they will receive gifts or trips to Red Sox games.

The primary goal for the experiment was to address a concern that certain diets rich in cereal might affect iron absorption and thus result in malnutrition. The children and their families were not properly informed of the potential risks of consuming radioactive iron. The research did not promise any therapeutic benefit to the children. The researchers were aware that the children's intellectual disability made them vulnerable to exploitation without hold the researchers accountable for putting the health of the participants at risk. Fifty years after the experiment, in a lawsuit settlement, MIT and Quaker Oats Co. agreed to pay \$1.85 million to the study participants for violation of their human rights.

What Can Schools Do to Protect Students with Intellectual Disabilities?

Schools should take bullying and harassment of students with disabilities very seriously. Both teachers and students are responsible for protecting students with disabilities. This includes treating them with respect and reporting any violation of students' rights to feel safe, respected, and valued. In a 2014 Dear Colleague letter, the Assistant Secretary

for Civil Rights, provided guidance to schools. Here is an excerpt from the letter: “Bullying of a student on the basis of his or her disability may result in a disability-based harassment violation under Section 504 and Title II. As explained in OCR’s 2010 Dear Colleague Letter on Harassment and Bullying, when a school knows or should know of bullying conduct based on a student’s disability, it must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If a school’s investigation reveals that bullying based on disability created a hostile environment—i.e., the conduct was sufficiently serious to interfere with or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school—the school must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent it from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects. Therefore, OCR would find a disability-based harassment violation under Section 504 and Title II when: (1) a student is bullied based on a disability; (2) the bullying is sufficiently serious to create a hostile environment; (3) school officials know or should know about the bullying; and (4) the school does not respond appropriately.”

Word Wall Here are fifteen vocabulary words to define and add to the Word Wall. Note: The book includes a section titled A Selected Glossary. Use this Glossary to learn new words in Spanish.

inexplicable (242)	tangible (244)	insufferable (246)	indebted (246)	dissociation (248)
objectively (256)	precautions (256)	righteous (260)	inevitable (271)	platitudes (274)
quarreled (278)	associations (281)	hallucination (282)	encompassing (282)	insistence (285)

Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- Mention the setting and main character
- Point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read the selection.

Read pages 241–311 in the book, *Flowers for Algernon*.

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important events on the timeline.

Over the course of the next week, you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

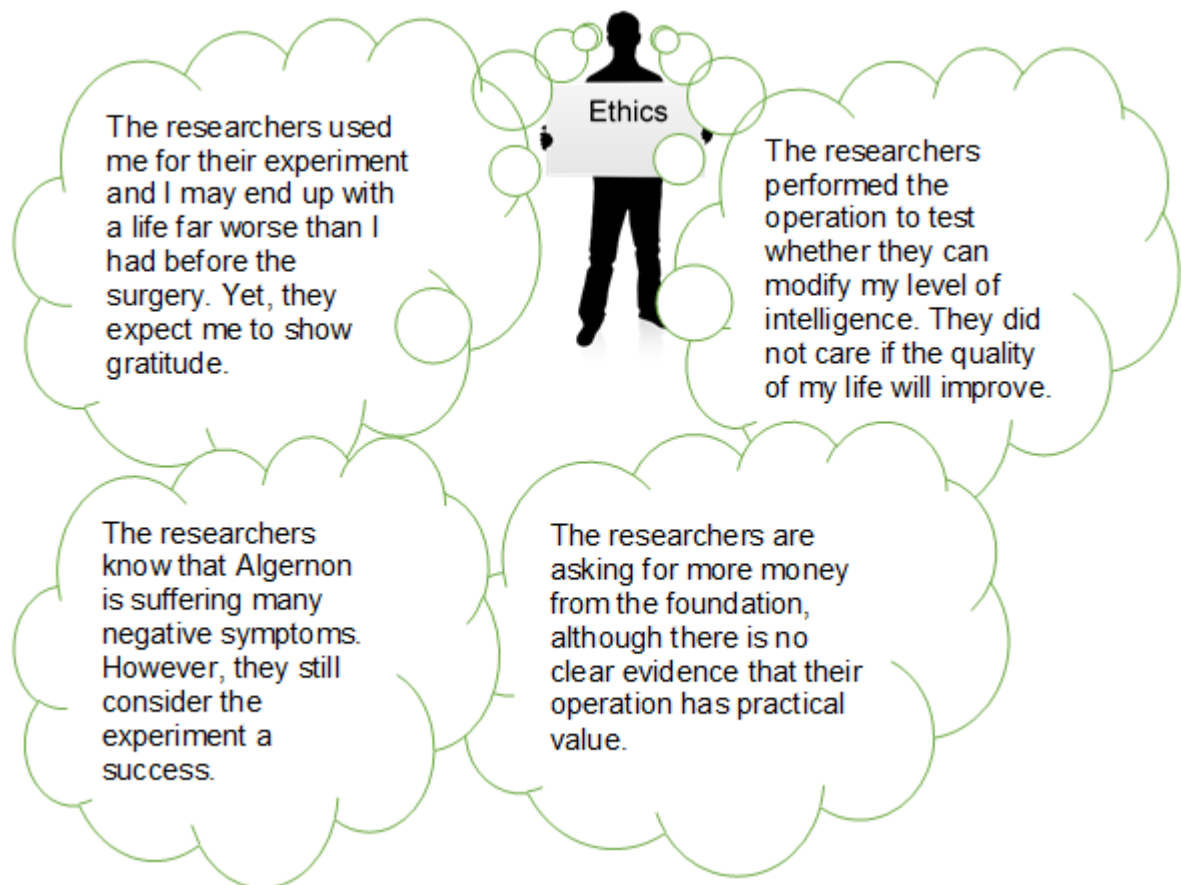
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Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: Mark key places in the barrio.

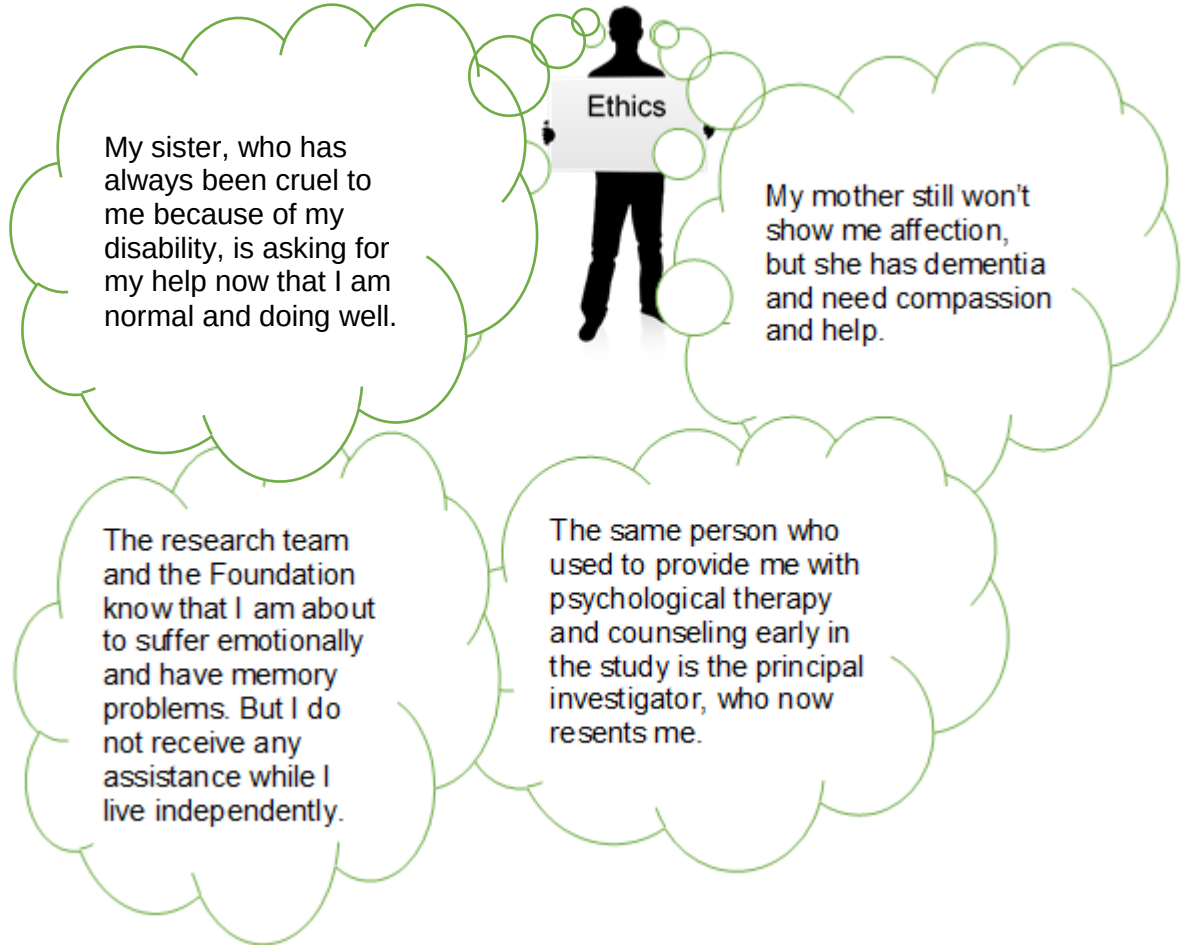
Choose one of the thought clouds and analyze it from an ethical perspective:

- What is the problem? What are the facts?
- Who is affected by it? What are the risks (social, emotional, health, economic, scientific, etc.) and benefits associated with this situation?
- Are there alternative solutions or options? Which option best addresses the situation?
- Who is responsible for implementing the preferred solution with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all who are involved?

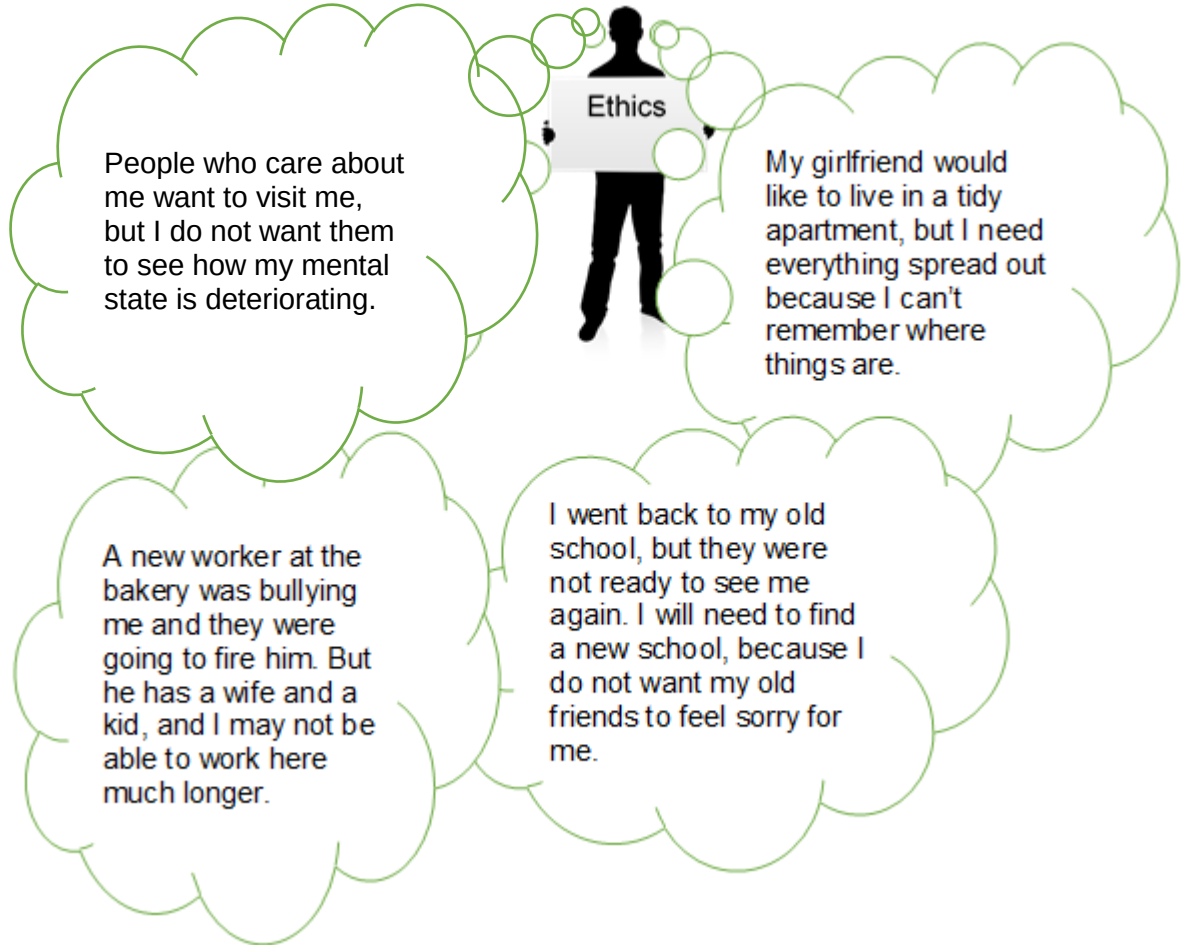
August



September



October and November



EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Continue working on the simulation activity. Look at the picture and answer the questions as best you can. Be sure to complete each picture before moving on the next. The questions are the same, but the picture will gradually become clearer. The last picture will reveal the image in full clarity.

1. What is in the picture? Make a list of the objects and their purpose.
2. What can you say about the owner of these objects?



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1. What is in the picture? Make a list of the objects and their purpose.
2. What can you say about the owner of these objects?
3. How did you feel when you answered Questions 1 and 2 using the blurred picture? How has this simulation increased your understanding of people with intellectual disabilities or visual impairment?



Discussion Ask discussion questions.

Answer the key questions. Use evidence from the text.

August progress reports (pp. 241–255)

1. What happens to Charlie when he gets drunk?
2. Why does Charlie think that in some ways he would be better off without the brain surgery?
3. What is The Algernon—Gordon Effect?

September progress notes (pp. 256–278)

1. What are the initial symptoms of the worsening in Charlie's mental condition?
2. How does Charlie's visit at his childhood house affect his relationship with his sister, Norma?

October and November progress notes (pp. 278–311)

1. How fast does Charlie lose his cognitive abilities?
2. Why does Charlie decide to take books with him to the Warren State Home?

Analyze the key paragraph.**P. 249**

"But I've learned that intelligence alone doesn't mean a damned thing. Here in your university, intelligence, education, knowledge, have all become great idols. But I know now there's one thing you've all overlooked: intelligence and education that hasn't been tempered by human affection isn't worth a damn."

P. 268

"I knew it would happen. I always said it would happen someday. I tried everything I could. You were too young to remember, but I tried. I told them all that you'd go to college and become a professional man and make you mark in the world. They laughed, but I told them."

P. 310

"I dont know why Im dumb agen or what I did rong. Maybe its because I dint try hard enuf or just some body put the evel eye on me. But if I try and practis very hard maybe Ill get a little smarter and no what all the words are."

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, you will write an essay titled *Human Dignity*. The essay will be about the importance of treating all people with respect and consideration.

6. In the *August* reports, you have read about Charlie's argument with professor Nemur at the cocktail party. Charlie accused professor Nemur of treating him as something he has created rather than as a person he has helped. Why is it important to Charlie to be recognized as a whole person – both before and after the surgery? Write one or two paragraphs. Support your evidence from the text.
7. In the *September* reports, you have read about Charlie's visit at the house where his mother and sister live. Charlie remembers his fear and shame as a child but is also compelled to show the kindness and compassion that his mother and sister need. How is Charlie responding to his family? Is Charlie showing forgiveness? Summarize your arguments in one or two paragraphs. Use evidence from the text.
8. Your final product is an essay titled *Human Dignity*. The essay will be about the importance of treating all people with respect and consideration. Focus your essay on accepting people with different skills, capacities, and knowledge. Describe the ethical responsibilities of children, parents, as well as professionals, including teachers, school principals, doctors, and researchers.