**Prompt**: Analyze how the opening three pages (p. 285-87) reveal aspects of Charlie’s character (motivations?).

**DO WHAT**

Analyze Charlie’s motivations

**Pick:**

fears failing the tests;

believes it is very hard to be smart but still wants to try;

asks for more chances to get the inkblot test ‘right’;

feels proud when he overhears Dr. Strauss says he is motivated

feels upset when Algernon beats him 10 times;

willing to have operation to improve his intelligence even though it might not last

best student in Miss Kinnian’s class;

writes down words he overhears Dr. Nemur say so he can look them up later

wants to be used in the experiment because it seems important to others;

Label each, then group:

1. **Wants to be smart** - fears failing the tests; feels upset when Algernon beats him 10 times; willing to have operation to improve his intelligence even though it might not last
2. **Motivated to learn** - believes it is very hard to be smart but still wants to try; best student in Miss Kinnian’s class; writes down words he overhears Dr. Nemur say so he can look them up later
3. **Wants to please others** - asks for more chances to get the inkblot test ‘right’; wants to be used in the experiment because it seems important to others; feels proud when he overhears Dr. Strauss says he is motivated

**Organize:**

**T**: how Charlie’s motivations are revealed

**I**: wants to be smart

**D**

**I**: motivated to learn

D

**I**: wants to please others

**D**

**Write**

The opening pages of “Flowers for Algernon” reveal important aspects of Charlie’s character. In these pages, Daniel Keyes uses Charlie’s self-written progress reports to show Charlie to be someone who wants to be smart, who is motivated to learn, and who wants to please others. Charlie’s developmental disability makes him different and the opening pages of the story reveal his overall motivation is that he wants to be accepted by others.

Charlie longs to be “smart” and goes to great lengths to try to achieve this goal. He fears failing the inkblot and Rorschach tests when he “dint see nothing in the ink but he said there was picturs.” When the tester tells him to think, he closes his eyes “for a long time to pretend.” He feels quite upset to appear to be less smart than a mouse when Algernon wins “10 times with difernt *amazeds*.” He is even willing to go so far as to have a serious operation to get the chance to improve his intelligence, even though he is aware he is the first person that this surgery has been attempted on and also that any positive results might not last.

Related to Charlie’s desire to be smarter is his motivation to learn. In his “progris report 3--martch 7,” he writes that he’s wants to be smart all his life and it is “very hard to be smart.” Even so, he wants to try. He finds out about a night school where he can learn to read and spell and figures out how to go on his own, despite his disability. His night school teacher, Miss Kinnian tells him that he is the best student in her class because he tries so hard. His doctor, Dr. Strauss, pushes to choose him for the experimental surgery because of the uniqueness of his motivation to improve. When he overhears words he doesn’t understand an argument between during Dr. Strauss and Dr. Nemur, Charlie makes notes so that he can look them up later. Charlie’s motivation to learn and improve is revealed in the opening pages of the story through his comments in his progress reports and also the comments he mentions hearing from others about him.

Finally, in the opening pages of “Flower for Algernon,” Charlie’s motivation to please others is revealed. When he is being given an inkblot test that he knows he is not getting right, he asks the tester for more chances. Charlie is aware the tester isn’t pleased with him when the tester “looked very sad so that wasnt it.” He wants to ‘get it right’ whatever “it” is. He feels great pride when he overhears Dr. Strauss saying that he “had a good *motor-vation*” even though he doesn’t know what that is. After the operation, Dr. Strauss tells Charlie to try to write about what he thinks. Even though Charlie amidst he doesn’t know what he thinks, he tries anyway even though nothing seems to happen. If it is important to Dr. Strauss or someone ‘smarter,’ Charlie tries because he is eager to please them.

The opening pages of “Flowers for Algernon” reveal that Charlie wants to be smarter, wants to learn, and wants to please others. Altogether, he wants most of all to fit in with other people. He knows that he is not very smart and feeling different makes him sad and lonely. Later in the story, when he begins to recognize that people he thought were his friends were actually making fun of him, he feel ashamed. When he becomes so smart that he can’t communicate complex ideas to other people, Charlie once again feels lonely. From the beginnings pages of the story to the very end, Charlie’s main motivation has been a desire to be accepted as an equal to others.