

## Culminating Writing Task Exemplar Student Response #1

Charlie Gordon is a man, but he has a mind like a little kid. Even though he isn't very smart, Charlie is very motivated and kind. He wants to be smart, so when Charlie is selected for an experiment to triple his intelligence, he willingly participates. The experiment is a success, but it is also temporary. Charlie ends the story like he begins the story with the mind of a child. Despite this, Charlie's life improves because he is more knowledgeable about people and thankful for what he has.

At the beginning of the story, Charlie is not aware of what people think about him. This changes by the end of the story. At first he says, "all my friends are smart people but there good. They like me and they never did anything that wasnt nice." (April 15). Charlie doesn't understand that Joe and Frank and the other guys at his job keep him around to make fun of him because he isn't very smart. They take Charlie out and get him drunk and then leave him. Miss Kinnian gets upset when she realizes what they are doing to Charlie. As Charlie gets smarter, he realizes what Joe and Frank are doing. Charlie becomes upset and ashamed. He ends up quitting his job when his coworkers sign a petition for Charlie to leave his job. Charlie says, "This intelligence has driven a wedge between me and all the people I once knew and loved" (April 30). Being upset and ashamed doesn't sound like a good thing, but it is for Charlie. Charlie realizes that his new intelligence is not helping him belong or have friends. While this is painful to learn, Charlie's life improves because has more knowledge about people around him than he did before.

Charlie's life is also improved because his experiences from the surgery make him thankful for what he has. Throughout the story, Charlie learns that he is a good person. Miss Kinnian recommends Charlie for the surgery because he is the "bestist pupil in the adult nite scool becaus I tryed the hardist and I reely wantid to lern" (March 7). Miss Kinnian also teaches Charlie to be proud of what he has done. She says, "for a person who god gave so little to you done more then a lot of people with brains they never even used" (April 15). Charlie learns that while he may not be "smart" he has a lot to offer others, like hard work ethic and willingness to get better. At the end of the story, when Charlie loses his intelligence, he says, "Im glad I got a second chance to be smart becaus I lerned a lot of things that I never even new were in this world and Im grateful that I saw it all for a littel bit" (July 28). Charlie decides he is going to continue to try really hard to be smart and he will always remember that he did something for science. So, even though Charlie loses his intelligence, he is thankful for what knowledge he does have and the opportunities he got.

Even though the surgery is temporary and Charlie loses his intelligence, he has a different understanding of who he is. He has more knowledge about people and what a friend is. He also feels good about what he has done and learned, even though he was only able to keep the learning for a little bit. Charlie is better off in the end because of the surgery.

## Culminating Writing Task Exemplar Student Response #2

Charlie Gordon is motivated and hardworking, but he isn't very smart. What Charlie lacks in smarts, he makes up for by getting along with others and being kind. Charlie is selected for an experiment to triple his intelligence which works at first. While it could be said that Charlie is better off from the surgery because he did become smart for a little bit, he doesn't stay smart. In the end, Charlie doesn't benefit from the surgery because he realizes his friends make fun of him and then he ends up completely isolated and feeling incredibly lonely.

Charlie doesn't benefit from the surgery because he realizes that others have been making fun of him and taking advantage of him. For example, Charlie's friends, Joe and Frank, aren't very kind to him and they keep Charlie around to make fun of him. Charlie is not aware of how his "friends" invite him to parties to get him drunk, and then laugh at him. Also, Charlie isn't aware at first that at work, when someone makes a mistake, they all say that person "pulled a Charlie Gordon." As Charlie gets smarter, he realizes what Joe, Frank, and his other friends at work are doing. When Charlie realizes this, he says, "Now I know what it means when they say 'to pull a Charlie Gordon.' I'm ashamed" (April 20). Having more intelligence doesn't make Charlie better. It makes him feel embarrassed.

Charlie also doesn't benefit from the surgery because he ends up isolated and lonely. Charlie wants to be smart more than anything, but it doesn't end up being good for him. As he gets smarter, Charlie learns that being smart isolates him from his friends and his loved ones. Charlie says, "This intelligence has driven a wedge between me and all the people I once knew and loved" (April 30). Once Charlie becomes intelligent, people like Ms. Kinnian cannot understand him or follow his logic because it is so advanced. When he loses his intelligence, Charlie admits, "I don't want Miss Kinnian to feel sorry for me. Evry body feels sorry at the factory and I don't want that eather so Im going someplace where nobody knows that Charlie Gordon was once a genius and now he cant even reed a book or rite good" (July 28). Charlie decides to leave New York because he doesn't want people to feel sorry for him. He ends the short story in an even worse situation than he began. Whereas he may not have been that smart at the beginning of the story, at least he had friends and a home. As a result of the surgery, Charlie is isolated from his friends, his teacher, and his home.

Charlie changes throughout the story. He goes from being not very smart to incredibly intelligent to not very smart again. He learns lots of information about people and the world when he is smart, but he doesn't keep any of it. While Charlie does become smart at first like he wants, it doesn't benefit him in the end because he loses his intelligence, his friends, and his home.