Raygor Readability Estimate

Passage 1

Im out of the hospital but not back at work yet. Nothing is happening. I had lots of tests and different kinds of races with Algernon. I hate that mouse. He always beats me. Prof Nemur says I got to play those games and I got to take those tests over and over again.

Those amazes are stoopid. And those pictures are stoopid to. I like to draw the pictures of a man and woman but I won't make up lies about people.

And I can't do the puzzels good.

I get headaches from trying to think and remembir so much.

Passage 2

At first, I admit, I was in awe at the picture of an international convention of scientists and scholars, gathered for an exchange of ideas. Here, I thought, was where it all really happened. Here it would be different from the sterile college discussions, because these were the men on the highest levels of psychological research and education, the scientists who wrote the books and delivered the lectures, the authorities people quoted. If Nemur and Strauss were ordinary men working beyond their abilities, I felt sure it would be different with the others.

When it was time for the meeting, / Nemur steered us through the gigantic lobby with its heavy baroque furnishings and huge curving marble staircases, and we moved through the thickening knots of handshakers, nodders, and smilers.

Passage 3

I must not panic. Soon there will be signs of emotional instability and forgetfulness, the first symptoms of the burnout. Will I recognize these in myself? All I can do now is keep recording my mental state as objectively as possible, remembering that this psychological journal will be the first of its kind, and possibly the last. This morning Nemur had Burt take my report and the statistical data down to Hallston University to have some of the top men in the field verify my results and the application of my formulas. All last week they had Burt going over my experiments and methodological charts.
This gives a reading level of about seventh grade for *Flowers for Algernon*.

**Interpretation of Readability Estimate**

*Flowers for Algernon* is a difficult novel to level. While the beginning and end portions of the book are very simple and easy to read, the middle sections, when Charlie is at the height of its intelligence, are much more complicated and difficult. Passage 1 above is at about a third grade reading level while passage 2 is about twelfth grade. Because of this range the average reading level is not entirely accurate. Because Charlie changes so much there really are no representative passages. The majority of the novel is probably around the level of passage 3 (about a seventh grade reading level) but about a fourth of the book is probably at a high school level. Therefore, I would suggest that in order to avoid students become frustrated with the middle of the novel, this novel probably should not be taught below the high school level.

In addition to difficulty, there are subject-related issues in this novel that would not be appropriate for younger children. Some of the science in the novel would be frustrating and confusing for younger children. Charlie discusses his sexuality and has sex with two different women in the novel. Although these discussions of sexual issues are treated very tastefully and not described specifically, they are more adult issues than most middle schoolers could handle.

A lot of the novel is concerned with psychology, repression and dreams and images that Charlie experiences. These psychological phenomena are important for understanding the novel and understanding Charlie’s past experiences. While these passages are not difficult according to this kind of readability estimate, understanding the imagery and the significance of these abstract ideas in the novel is complicated and would probably be beyond the abilities of most middle school students.